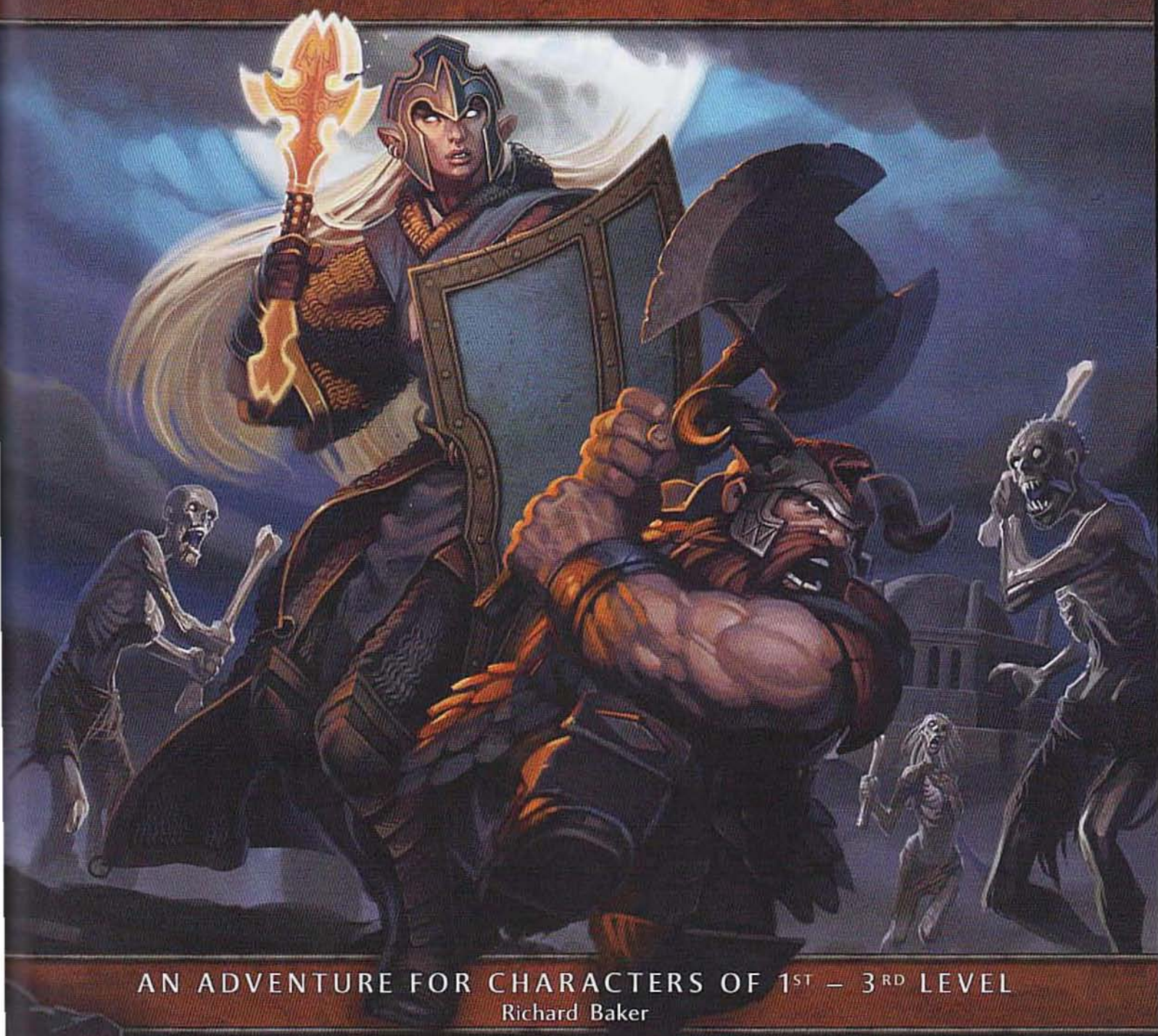


A HEROIC TIER ADVENTURE

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

ENCOUNTERS™

DARK LEGACY OF EVARD



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 1ST – 3RD LEVEL

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS™, an exciting official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® program. This adventure is a mini-campaign season designed to be played in one-encounter sessions once per week at your local Wizards Play Network location. Each week, players can earn in-game rewards for their characters and Renown Points toward special program-exclusive DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fortune Cards™ that can be used in this and future seasons.

Preparing for Play

The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS play kit provides all you need to DM this adventure, including poster maps of encounter areas and a sheet of tokens to represent monsters, adventurers, and battlefield effects. Follow the steps below to prepare for play.

Before you run Session 1:

- ◆ Read the Adventure Background and Adventure Summary to get a feel for the flow of the story.
- ◆ Read **Session 1: The Old Owl**, page 7, and **Shadows Gather**, page 10. If you are starting at another point, read the appropriate sections and what has come before.

At the table of your first session:

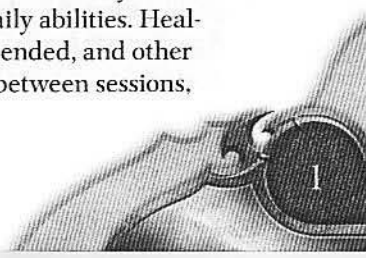
- ◆ Ensure that each player has a character to play. Players can use one of the characters provided in the kit or can create their own personas using the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules.
- ◆ Give each player a D&D Encounters Play Tracker. This sheet, found in the play kit, allows the players to track treasure, experience, and Renown Points earned for each play session.
- ◆ Get a session tracking sheet from the organizer. Record all the players' DCI/RPGA numbers on it, along with your DCI/RPGA number. If you or any of the players don't have a DCI/RPGA number, ask the organizer for a membership card.

During the session:

- ◆ Each session is one encounter. Just DM the encounter assigned for that week's session. Typical playing time for one encounter is 90 minutes to 2 hours.
- ◆ Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the game. As the DM, you can make some adjustments to the adventure (see the sidebar on page 2) to facilitate player fun.

At the end of your first session:

- ◆ Have the adventurers take a short rest if they want, but remind them to track their daily abilities. Healing surges used, daily powers expended, and other daily resources do not refresh in between sessions.



only at the end of each chapter. Make sure your players track this information on their D&D Encounters Play Trackers.

- ◆ Turn in your session tracking sheet to the organizer. Make sure you've recorded all the DCI/RPGA numbers on it, along with names and the play date.
- ◆ Report Renown Point totals earned for each player to the organizer. The organizer fills out the Renown Point Tracker for the location and tells you if any players have earned *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fortune Cards*.
- ◆ Give out treasure and experience points. Make sure the players write down rewards on their D&D Encounters Play Trackers.
- ◆ Collect your special reward for providing your time as a DM to make the event happen. Your organizer has more details on this reward.

At the end of each chapter:

- ◆ The adventurers take an extended rest, regaining all of their healing surges, hit points, and daily powers. Also, their action point total resets to 1.

Creating a Character

Players are responsible for bringing their own characters to each play session. A first-time player can bring a 1st-level character created using the rules found in the *Heroes of the Fallen Lands™* rulebook, *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms™* rulebook, or the *Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow™* rulebook. In addition, players can use rules presented in *Dragon®* magazine in support of those products.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTERS

Chapter 1 assumes you have a normal party of five 1st-level characters and players familiar with the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game. Chapter 2 assumes a party of 1st- and 2nd-level characters. Chapter 3 assumes a party of 2nd- and 3rd-level characters. Compare your group to this assumption, using the following guidelines.

Weak Party: You have a weak party at your table if it consists of only four characters, or most or all the players are new to the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game. If you have a weak party, remove one of the lowest-level or least important nonminion monsters from the encounter.

Strong Party: You have a strong party at your table if it consists of six characters, or most or all of the players are veteran *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* players who like added challenge. If you have a strong party, add one of the simplest nonminion monsters among those in the encounter whose level most closely matches the encounter level.

If a player doesn't have a character or doesn't want to create one from scratch, several pregenerated adventurers are provided in the play kit.

At the end of each session, you award experience points, treasure, and Renown Points. The players record that information on their D&D Encounters Play Trackers, and you report the Renown Points each player earned to the organizer.

Changing Characters: Players can switch characters during a *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS* season. If a player wants to do so, he or she can bring a new character with an amount of experience points equal to the character he or she previously played in the season. However, the new character does not keep any treasure or items from the previous character.

Character Death: If a character dies during a session, the player has two choices. He or she can bring the same character back at the beginning of the next session with four fewer healing surges, or he or she can start a new level-appropriate character. If a character dies and has fewer than four healing surges remaining, that character loses all of his or her remaining healing surges and can return next session with full hit points.

No other penalty exists for death except for the potential loss of Renown Points for surviving eight or more sessions without dying.

Advancement

The Reward section indicates how many experience points to award the characters. The point total includes the encounter reward plus any exploration or story rewards. Each character receives the same amount of experience points, regardless of group size or player participation. Reward XP at the end of each session.

Milestones: For every two encounters a character completes without taking an extended rest, the character reaches a milestone, gaining an action point.

Leveling: Players need not wait until their characters take an extended rest to level. *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS* uses an accelerated XP award system to allow players to experience their characters at levels one, two, and three.

Treasure

As the characters progress through the mini-campaign, they have the opportunity to gain treasure in the form of gold pieces, valuables, and magic items. Whenever characters discover treasure, follow the instructions provided in the adventure. Use the following rules to divide treasure among the characters. All the magic items in this adventure come from the *Heroes of the Fallen Lands* rulebook or the *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms* rulebook.

Awarding Magic Items: When the characters find a nonconsumable magic item, the players can decide which character receives it. Usually, these decisions will be easy, since certain items are better suited for certain characters. If this is not the case, then you should assign the new item to a character who has no nonconsumable magic items. If two or more characters lack nonconsumable magic items, have each of those players roll a d20. The character of the high roller receives the new item.

Selling Items: If none of the characters wants a particular magic item, the group can sell it at the end of the session using the rules from *Rules Compendium*™. Divide the gold pieces received evenly among the party members.

When to Gear Up: Characters can buy equipment at the start of each chapter.

A CHANGING GROUP

Since you can never tell who's going to show up to a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS session, you might wind up with a different group of players from week to week. Some players might have missed a session or two, and others might have played sessions with a different DM. That's fine. Catch new players up with a brief summary of what has come before, and make sure that returning players have marked off resources they spent (healing surges, daily powers, and so on) since their last extended rest.

Majority Rules: If some element of the adventure plot hinges on the adventurers making a decision in a previous session, and the group is different during the current session, find out how the decision went down from the players. Go with the majority, and if it's an even split, side with the most positive result. For example, if three of five players' characters at your table defended the armory in a previous encounter and two didn't, the armory is considered to be defended for your session this week.

Renown Points

One of the great rewards for playing in a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS season is the accumulation of Renown Points (RPs), which are given out for accomplishments by players during, and sometimes in-between, sessions. These Renown Points are tracked at the Wizards Play Network location and reaching certain thresholds garners the player a tangible reward—an exclusive D&D Fortune Card.

Players can use these cards during the current DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS season, subsequent seasons, or possibly both. Each card provides a certain benefit as detailed on the card. Rules on using the cards

during play sessions can be found in booster packs or online at www.DungeonsandDragons.com.

As the Dungeon Master, you award Renown Points at the end of a session of play, just like you would grant experience and treasure. Unlike experience and treasure, Renown Point totals earned for each player must be reported to the organizer at the conclusion of the session when you turn in your session tracking sheet. The organizer can then tell you if any players have qualified for a card.

The Renown accomplishments, their frequency, and the point values of each are listed below.

RENOWN POINT AWARDS

Achievement	Frequency	RPs
Complete an encounter	Session	3
Bring a new player	Session	2
Moment of greatness	1/chapter	2
Revive a dying adventurer ally	1/chapter	2
Hit for 15+ damage against 1 enemy	1/chapter	2
Kill 3 minions in 1 attack	1/chapter	2
Take 50 enemy damage in 1 session	1/chapter	2
Create your own character	Season	5
Create a PC with Character Builder	Season	5
Survive 8+ sessions without dying	Season	5

Bring a New Player: Current players can earn this award for bringing a player who has never before participated in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS program (current and past seasons included).

Moment of Greatness: When a player does something inventive, daring, or just plain cool during a session, the DM can grant this optional award or allow the other players to vote on whether it should be awarded.

Fortune Cards

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fortune Cards are a new game-play enhancement that showcases the chaotic and unpredictable nature of adventuring in a fantastic world of danger and magic. Every time players begin a session, they draw cards from their decks, activating the game benefit of the card at the appropriate time. Each card provides a game effect that enhances attacks or defenses, or provides some other sort of benefit to a player character. These cards are featured in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS seasons going forward—player rewards will consist of exclusive promotional Fortune Cards. Although players don't have to purchase cards to play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS, we think they'll enjoy this new enhancement to their game experience.

Fortune Cards are available in 8-card booster packs with differing levels of rarity (common, uncommon, and rare) and bring more excitement to the game table. Players can crack open packs of cards just prior to

participating in a game session or come to their game with pre-built decks. For players wanting to take advantage of this gameplay enhancement, we recommend purchasing 2 boosters per play session or bringing a deck built according to the Fortune Card rules, available in the booster packs or online at www.DungeonsandDragons.com. The set available for purchase and use during this season of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS is called *Shadow Over Nentir Vale™*.

D&D Encounters Cards: D&D Encounters Cards awarded in prior seasons have benefits similar to Fortune Cards. For this season, players can either use a D&D Encounters Card or a deck of Fortune Cards during each session. They cannot play with both options during the same session.

Renown Rewards

When a player earns 20 RPs, he or she receives the first DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fortune Card, called *cunning plan*. At 40 RPs, the player earns *lack of scruples*, and at 60 RPs he or she receives *countering fate*. These cards are awarded to the player immediately following the session in which the card is earned. Players can add these cards to their Fortune Card decks upon earning them. These cards are distributed by the organizer and any questions regarding availability or quantities should be directed to him or her.

THE DESPAIR DECK

The Shadowfell: Gloomwrought and Beyond™ presents a new component for a DM to enhance his or her game. The Despair Deck represents the unnatural behaviors and neuroses that affect those who visit or live in the Shadowfell. The deck contains 30 cards with names such as "Hopeless," "Paranoid," and "Forgetful." Each card has an effect that temporarily hampers a character, and when overcome, provides a boon. At certain junctures in *Dark Legacy of Evard*, players are prompted to draw cards. If the players still have their cards at the end of the session, have them record the effects of the card on their D&D Encounters Play Tracker, and ask them to return the cards. They'll have an opportunity to overcome the effects in future sessions.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This adventure is a story of three wizards: Nathaire, an ambitious mage eager to master the powers of shadow; the infamous Evard, who is supposedly buried in the cemetery of Duponde; and Vontarin, once Evard's rival. Player characters are travelers who are passing the night in Duponde. Another traveler, Nathaire, has followed rumors that Evard is buried in Duponde. He plans to perform a ritual to trap Evard's soul in a magic orb, hoping to gain Evard's mastery of shadow magic.

Unfortunately for Nathaire, Evard is not buried in Evard's Tomb. Evard destroyed Vontarin in a duel almost fifty years ago. Seeing an opportunity to throw other enemies off his trail, Evard allowed the terrified townspeople to believe that he had died, not Vontarin. After arranging for the remains to be interred under a marker with his name on it, Evard wove wards of umbral magic over Vontarin's resting place. The master of shadows then left Duponde. Over the years, the citizens came to believe that Vontarin left after defeating Evard, since neither wizard has since been seen in Duponde.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Dark Legacy of Evard is organized into thirteen sessions, summarized in this section.

Session 1: Weary from travel, the adventurers pass the night in the town of Duponde. They meet a few fellow travelers, including the wizard Nathaire, who tells them the story of Evard. Later that night, the characters are awakened when Duponde and its surroundings are suddenly shifted into the Shadowfell. Gargoyles adorning the inn come to life and attack.

Session 2: The adventurers explore the town and discover that Duponde is no longer in the world. They learn not only that Nathaire's valet, Remy, has fled the town, but also that the local armory is infested with shadow monsters. The characters face a choice: Follow Remy or clear out the armory so the guards can arm themselves.

Session 3: Characters continue with the choice they made in Session 2. If they pursued Remy, they catch up to their quarry in the woods outside town. They find Nathaire's journal, which helps them later in the adventure. If the adventurers remained in town to battle monsters, it's a fight against spiders and shadows on Duponde's streets.

Session 4: Regardless of which path characters took in Sessions 2 and 3, it's now clear that the trouble started at Evard's Tomb. The characters make their way to Duponde's graveyard, battling restless undead.

Evard's Tomb has been opened, but the skeleton is still in its coffin, and no sign of Nathaire can be found.

Session 5: A Vistani boy comes to the characters and leads them to the home of the seer Mother Grivelda. Grivelda explains that Duponde now suffers under a powerful curse. She tells the characters that Evard isn't buried in the graveyard, his enemy Vontarin is. Unless the characters can placate Vontarin's soul, the Shadowfell might claim Duponde and its people. While the characters are visiting the wise woman, a pack of wolves attacks.

Session 6: Following the advice of Mother Grivelda, the adventurers, searching for clues to Nathaire's intentions, seek out Vontarin's long-abandoned manor. They find that the forgotten manse is now home to a band of tieflings who welcome no guests.

Session 7: Characters continue their exploration of Vontarin's manor, fighting its current occupants. The explorers learn that Nathaire came to the manse but found little.

Session 8: At sundown, Duponde again slips into the shadows, and the monsters threatening the town return. Before the adventurers can resume their search for Nathaire, they have to defend the town once more. They must decide where they can do the most good.

Session 9: Vontarin's ghost, still possessing Nathaire's body, decides to drive off the townsfolk of Duponde. He animates a wave of undead attackers and sends them against the town. The characters must defend Duponde against a force of skeletons.

Session 10: The attack of the skeletons provides a key clue to the location of Nathaire's lair. These undead came from the crypts of the ruined Saint Avarthil Monastery. The adventurers can visit the abbey's crypts and battle more of Nathaire's lackeys.

Session 11: The characters continue their exploration of Saint Avarthil Monastery, battling more of Nathaire's servants. The adventurers might learn that the friars removed several of Vontarin's possessions from his manor when the wizard disappeared.

Session 12: Characters finish their search of the abbey, and they corner Nathaire in the library. They battle Nathaire and the creatures serving him. When the characters defeat Nathaire, they find that the purple orb he carries traps Vontarin's hateful soul. The curse remains unbroken, however.

Session 13: Vontarin's soul must be freed from the orb at the place where his body is buried, or else it might roam free and the curse might never be broken. The adventurers shatter it, but a ghostly remnant of Vontarin appears and fights furiously against being laid to rest. With the defeat of Vontarin's ghost, the ritual is undone. The mage rests again, and the town returns to the world for good.

DUPONDE

Duponde is a town of about 1,000 inhabitants on the banks of the White River. Large areas within the crumbling walls have been abandoned in the last hundred years, especially in the southern half of the town. Heavy undergrowth and trees grow in and among the dilapidated houses.

1) Walls, Gates, and Roads: A 12-foot wall of fieldstone encloses Duponde, and a rickety wooden walk lines the inside for defenders to fire over the wall top. The walls are in bad shape, with countless gaps. A guard normally attends each of the three gates.

Roads lead north, south, and west from the town. A pair of ancient bridges leads east, continuing the King's Road, but they were destroyed in recent flooding.

Various locales—such as the Vistani farmhouse, the forgotten manor, and the old monastery—stand within a few hours of Duponde.

2) The Old Owl Inn: The Old Owl Inn stands near the town's North Gate, a large yard surrounding it. This location is where the characters are staying during the adventure. The Old Owl Inn is operated by Tilda, who employs several cooks, barkeeps, and stable hands.

3) Chapel of Peace: The Chapel of Peace is not far from the Old Owl Inn. Brother Zelan and two young acolytes maintain this rundown shrine. Zelan is an old, fat, stubborn Pelorite with a blustering manner, but he's wiser than he lets on.

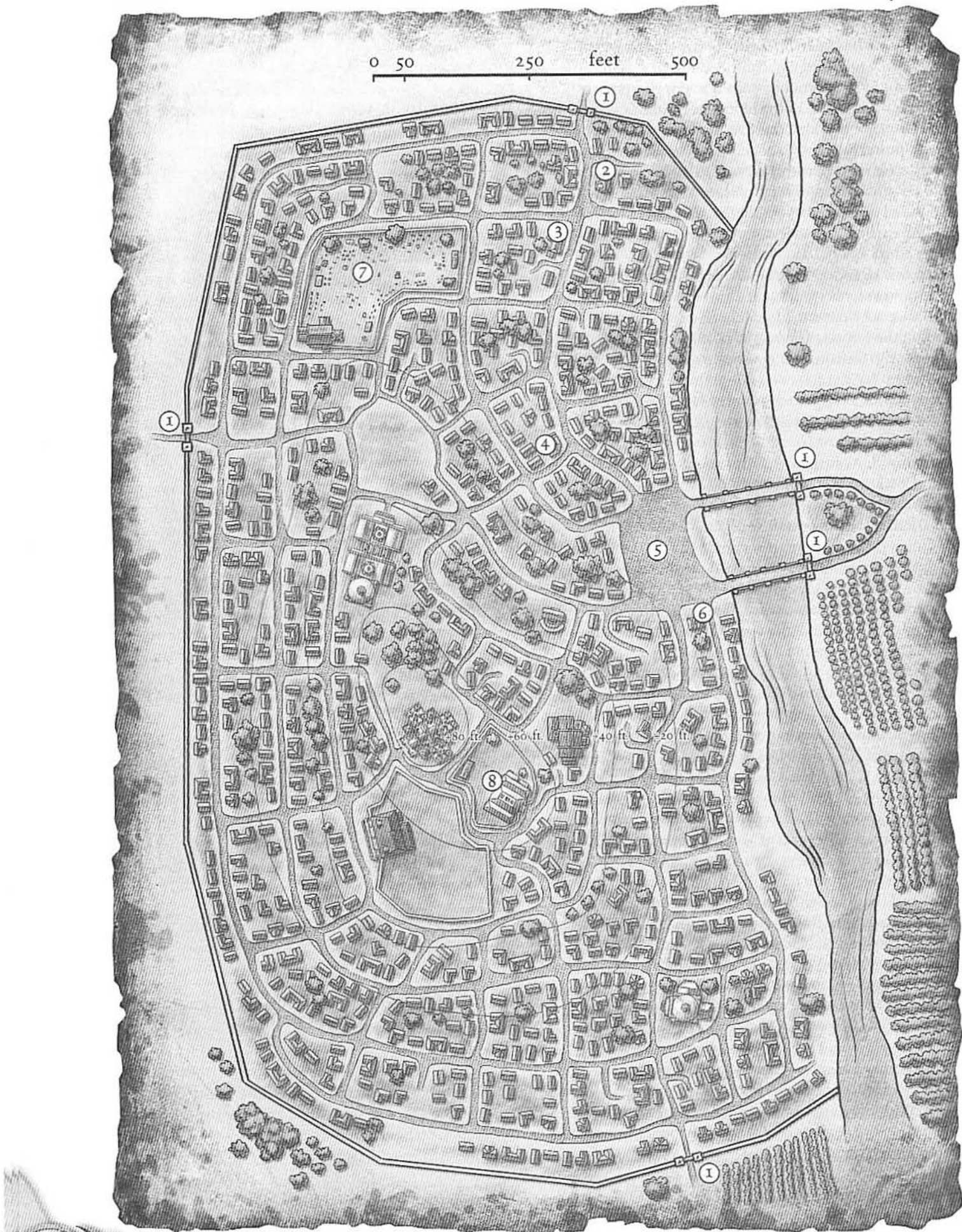
4) General Store: The General Store is down the street from the Old Owl Inn, near the Town Courtyard. It is operated by a grumpy dwarf named Krugan. He has standard adventuring gear for sale, as well as common magic items. He is cranky, because a band of tieflings have recently been intercepting caravans bringing goods to his store.

5) Town Square: The Town Square is normally a meeting place for the residents of Duponde.

6) Town Armory: The armory sits near the Town Square, alongside several aqueducts that bring water from the river. Marshal Grimbolt's offices are here.

7) Graveyard: There is a large cemetery in the western end of the town. The graveyard is where Evard's Tomb stands.

8) Lady's House: A large hilltop manor in the middle of town is home to Lady Celice Arnaud, hereditary ruler of Duponde. Lady Arnaud is a soft-spoken human woman of sixty who keeps four watchmen and a handful of servants and clerks in attendance. Duponde's guards answer to her, but Lady Arnaud allows Grimbolt to manage the town's defenses.



CHAPTER 1

At the beginning of *Dark Legacy of Evard*, each character starts with full hit points and healing surges, as well as 1 action point.

SESSION 1: THE OLD OWL

Characters begin the adventure in the common room of the Old Owl Inn in Duponde. The town sits on the banks of the White River, a few days' travel north of Harkenwold. Acting as couriers, the adventurers are carrying correspondence from Fallcrest to the city of Sarthel. Duponde is just a brief stopover on their journey. Read:

Tired after a long day of marching in cold rain, you're warming yourselves by the hearth of the Old Owl Inn in the town of Duponde. You've been traveling the King's Road for a week, heading south to the city of Sarthel with correspondence from Lord Markelhay, the Lord Warden of Fallcrest.

When you arrived in Duponde, you discovered that the city's two bridges had been damaged by recent flooding in the Nentir River. Now, you must wait a few days while the stonemasons repair the bridge.

Prompt the players to introduce their characters and describe them. Ask players whether they've agreed to serve as couriers or are just traveling with characters who have. Take a moment to reinforce the idea that the characters are already acquainted if not friends. They share a few rooms in the upper floor of the inn.

If characters are curious about the messages they're carrying, they can break the seals and read the missives. The letters deal with negotiating the marriage of Markelhay's son Ernesto to Vespa, a noblewoman of Sarthel.

When the players are ready, read:

Shortly after dark, the rain lets up and wind rises outside. It rattles the windowpanes and moans eerily in the chimney. The common room begins to empty as the locals finish their ale and make their way back to their homes. Soon, the only people remaining in the Old Owl's common room are a trio of dwarf travelers, a dark-haired young man in the robes of a scholar and his halfling servant, a burly guard in a brown cloak, the barkeep, a gray-bearded old man, and the Old Owl's proprietress, a stout woman of middle years who introduced herself as Tilda Grenfield when you took lodging for the night.

The guard finishes a mug of hot cider. "Think I'd best be on my way," he says to Tilda.

"Take care of yourself, Grimbolt," Tilda replies. "We'll shut the tap early, I think. It's no night for good folk to be out and about."

"Aye?" one of the dwarves asks. "And why is that?"
"Because ghosts walk abroad on nights such as this, friend," the guard answers.

The young scholar looks up. "Could the ghost of Evard be among them?" he asks.

"Some say," Grimbolt replies. "You might know more about that than I do."

"Hush, both of you!" says Tilda. "That's a name better left unspoken."

Grimbolt packs up to head out on rounds, but he's willing to engage the characters in conversation before leaving.

CHARACTER PROFILE: GRIMBOLT

Marshal of Duponde, Grimbolt is the town's chief law-keeper and captain of the militia. During ordinary times he's little more than a night watchman who supervises a few gate-keepers and carries the keys to the armory.

Key Traits: Skeptical, stubborn, and smarter than he looks. Grimbolt doesn't look like much of a leader, but he's a steady man in a crisis and well respected by the townsfolk. He is a keen observer and doesn't miss much going on in town, but tends to keep his opinions to himself.

Goal: Grimbolt wants to organize a defense of the town against the immediate threats posed by the Shadowfell and solve the mystery of what happened and why. Without the help of the heroes, his only recourse would be to abandon the town and hope that some of the people survive.

Motivation: Protect the people of Duponde. Grimbolt has lived in this town all of his life, and the townsfolk are his neighbors and kin. He's wise enough to ask for help if someone else can do a better job of it than he can.

Fears: Grimbolt is afraid of making things worse by making a poor decision. He is aware that he knows nothing about dire curses, angry ghosts, and shadow magic. Evard's curse is his worst nightmare—a threat he doesn't know how to fight.

Weaknesses: Doubt and hesitation. Grimbolt second-guesses himself constantly, especially in dealing with matters he knows are beyond him.

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: The marshal is dour and close-mouthed, rarely using two words when one will do. He is a tall, round-faced man of about forty, slow and deliberate in both speech and action. He wears leather armor and carries a crossbow and a cudgel, which he replaces for old mail and a plain sword when things go wrong.

Others in the Old Owl

The people in the inn sit up a little longer. The characters can engage them in discussion, or vice versa.

The Dwarves: "Ghosts? Nonsense."

Katha, Kristyd, and Kildrak are siblings—two sisters and a brother—who are skilled stonemasons. They've come here from Hammerfast to perform repairs on Duponde's bridges. They bicker with each other about trivial matters. They scoff at ghost stories.

Harald, the Barkeep: "Travelers from the north, eh? What brings you to Duponde?"

Friendly and talkative, if not too bright, Harald was once a trapper and hunter in the nearby forest. He gave it up and took work at the Old Owl years ago after he lamed himself with one of his own traps. Harald knows little about Evard, and he is very superstitious.

Marshal Grimbolt: "I've seen some strange things, but Duponde's a quiet town. We like it that way."

Grimbolt is a big, round-faced man of forty or so. He's the leader of the town's militia. For his duties, he wears leather armor, and he carries a crossbow and a large cudgel. Grimbolt suspects a dark influence in Duponde from time to time. He thinks that if people use common sense, they have little to worry about.

Tilda Grenfield: "Never mind that talk. Just enjoy the fire and make yourselves at home!"

Short and stout, Tilda is a friendly chatterbox of a woman about fifty years of age. Her husband died a couple of years back, leaving her to run the Old Owl with a handful of cooks, barkeeps, and stable hands. It has been hard, but she's making a good go of it. She's a clever, insightful woman who knows the town's history and prefers to let it stay buried.

Nathaire: "It's fascinating—the most ordinary town at first glance, but oh, the secrets it harbors!"

Nathaire is an ambitious wizard from the city of Sarthel. A tall, thirty-year-old man who has dark hair and dark eyes, he comes from an aristocratic family. He is clever, intense, and arrogant. His servant is a loyal half-ling named Remy, who never leaves Nathaire's side. Nathaire claims to be in Duponde to research the story of Evard.

EVARD THE BLACK

A character who succeeds on a DC 19 History or Arcana check knows the following about Evard:

Evard is a famous wizard who was active several decades ago. He is renowned for his mastery of shadow magic; his most famous spell is Evard's Black Tentacles. He was ambitious and cunning, and although rumors of his death have circulated, none have ever been confirmed. He had many enemies, the most powerful of which was the wizard Mordenkainen.

CHARACTER PROFILE: NATHAIRE

An ambitious and talented wizard, Nathaire comes from an aristocratic family in the city of Sarthel. He doesn't want to say much about his true purpose for being in Duponde, because he doesn't want to deal with any "unreasonable" fears or concerns from locals.

Key Traits: Clever, confident, somewhat patronizing. Nathaire is full of himself, but he stops short of picking fights by being downright insulting. If a hero takes offense to something he says, the wizard swallows his pride and provides a reasonably sincere apology.

Goal: Perform the rite to capture the remnants of Evard's shadow-powers for his own. Nathaire anticipates nothing but success, and expects to leave Duponde in a day, perhaps two.

Motivation: Ambition and a hunger for magical power. Mastering Evard's powers would make him a very powerful mage. Nathaire isn't out to hurt anybody in Duponde; as far as he knows, his ritual shouldn't have any effect on the town.

Fears: Delay and ignorance. Nathaire knows what he wants and he's ready to take it. He worries that thickheaded authorities and benighted commoners couldn't possibly understand the importance of his research, and might impede his efforts.

Weaknesses: Overconfidence and impatience. Nathaire thinks he knows more than he does and is anxious to put his project into motion.

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: Precise speech, big vocabulary, sharp wit, and expensive tastes. Nathaire is clearly a man of high breeding, and like many aristocrats, he's condescending toward social inferiors. He is a tall, good-looking fellow of about thirty, clean-shaven, with dark hair and dark eyes.

Spinning Stories

Depending on which people the characters talk to, they might hear some or all of the following.

Ghosts (Harald, Grimbolt, Tilda): "Every now and then, on cold autumn nights, people see things around the town—a pale specter that freezes the heart with dread and disappears, tree branches that seem to reach out, black shadows that fall where they shouldn't be and follow after those who see them. Some people have been terribly frightened, but no one's ever been hurt. Nothing to it, probably."

Evard's Tomb (Grimbolt, Tilda): "Forty, fifty years back, a wizard named Vontarin lived here in Duponde. A rival, Evard—a notorious fellow, as wizards go—came to Duponde to destroy him. They fought one night with black magic and left the old monastery in ruins with their spells. Vontarin was never seen again after that night, but the friars found Evard dead in the wreckage and buried him in the town graveyard."

Evard (Nathaire): "Evard was a powerful wizard who disappeared about fifty years ago. His specialty was magic infused with the power of shadow, and he devised several new spells—perhaps you've heard of Evard's Black Tentacles? I've been trying to piece together the story of his adventures for years, and the trail led me here. I never expected to find his tomb in a forgettable little town like Duponde. Now I can fill in the end of the story and—between you and me—leave this backwater."

Nathaire (Grimbold, Harald, Tilda): "A nice enough fellow, although he's used to better than Duponde and makes that a little too clear. He's been here for a few days. Pays his way and even spreads some extra around. Says he's studying up on Evard's Tomb."

NATHAIRE'S STORY ARC

For much of the adventure, the characters are trying to discover where the wizard Nathaire is and what he's up to. Here's a summary of his actions during the adventure.

Session 1 (first night): Nathaire attempts a shadow-magic ritual at Evard's Tomb in the middle of the night. The ritual goes wrong, and Vontarin—the wizard buried in Evard's Tomb—possesses Nathaire. Duponde is pulled into the Shadowfell. Nathaire's servant, Remy, flees.

Session 2 to 4 (first night): Under the control of Vontarin's soul, Nathaire calls a small number of dark ones to his service, using a ritual he knew as Vontarin. He goes to Vontarin's manor, intending to arm himself with Vontarin's old spellbooks and implements. He finds that the old possessions are missing, but he determines that the monks of Saint Avarthil Monastery removed the items years ago.

Session 5 through 7 (first day): At daybreak, Nathaire remains in the Shadowfell when Duponde returns to the world. Evard's curse keeps him there.

Sessions 8 and 9 (second night): At sunset, Duponde returns to the Shadowfell. Nathaire goes to the ruins of Saint Avarthil Monastery, and he begins looking for the items and tomes that were removed from Vontarin's house. He begins by animating the skeletal remains in the monastery's crypts and dispatching them into Duponde to drive off anyone who might interfere. At daybreak, Nathaire again remains in the Shadowfell when Duponde returns to the world.

Sessions 10 to 12 (third night): When night falls again, Duponde appears in the Shadowfell. Nathaire resumes his search of the monastery, looking for Vontarin's old treasures. The characters catch him.

Session 13 (third night): Duponde remains caught in the Shadowfell until the characters shatter Nathaire's orb, reuniting Vontarin's soul with his physical remains, returning the ghost to its eternal rest, and returning Duponde to the world.

INSIGHT CHECKS

If any players want to use the Insight skill to try to learn more, allow DC 12 Insight checks.

The Dwarves: Katha, Kristyd, and Kildrak seem unimpressed by small-town ghost stories.

Harald: He's not terribly bright, and seems like someone who believes anything he's told.

Grimbold: He's not truly worried, but he's happy to stay inside out of the weather for a chat.

Tilda: She's a little spooked, and doesn't want to scare herself silly with more ghost stories.

Nathaire: He admires Evard, but thinks a wizard of Evard's power shouldn't have been defeated so easily. He believes the townsfolk don't understand the importance of Evard's Tomb.

Other Actions

If the characters decide to look around the area, accompany Grimbold on his rounds, set a guard, or head straight out to visit the graveyard, nothing out of the ordinary happens. It's a cold, cloudy, windy night. Duponde is an ordinary town, now buttoned up for the evening. The other people staying at the tavern go to bed, and nothing happens until you're ready to begin the encounter.

Midnight Madness

Characters can talk to any of the people remaining in the common room, or they can go to bed. When the players are done talking, their characters turn in for the night.

In the middle of the night, Nathaire and his servant slip out of the inn through one of the back doors or out the window of Nathaire's room. They go to the graveyard, and then Nathaire's ritual sets events in motion. When you're ready to begin, read:

In the middle of the night, a powerful sensation rouses you. It feels like you're being wrenched in multiple directions without the ability to orient yourself. Nothing in the room is missing, but furnishings are subtly out of place, the air is cold, and the walls have gone slightly askew. Candles and lamps are strangely dim, and shadows press in from all sides.

Characters can quickly dress and arm themselves if they were sleeping. Go to the **Shadows Gather** encounter.

SHADOWS GATHER

Encounter Level 1

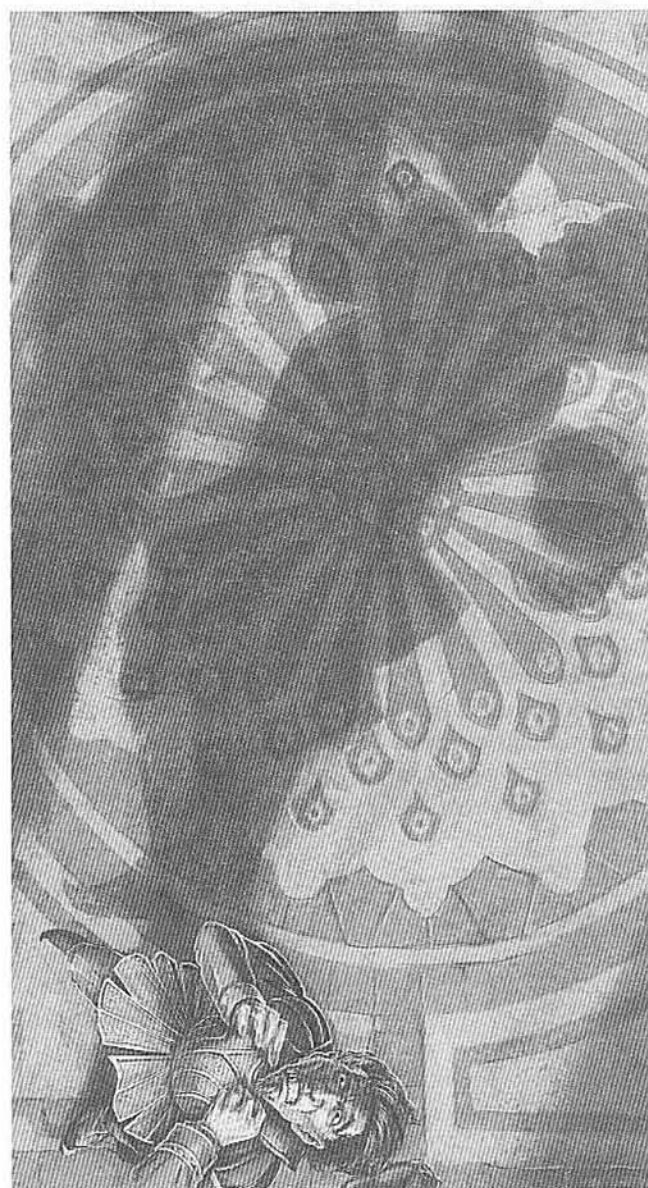
Setup

3 animated gargoyles (G)
2 shadow stalkers (S)

If any players ask what the strange lurching sensation was or want to know why things seem dark and distorted, allow a DC 12 Arcana check. A successful character realizes that the inn and its surroundings have passed into the Shadowfell, a phenomenon known as shadowfall.

After the characters equip themselves or start to head downstairs, read:

A scream of terror erupts from the inn's common room downstairs, followed by cackles and the breaking of crockery. The Old Owl is under attack!



The presence of the gargoyles and the shadows are side effects of the shadowfall in Duponde. Don't place the shadows on the map yet. They're not visible at the start of the encounter.

As the characters enter the taproom, read:

The old barkeep, Harald, is motionless on the floor at the foot of the stairs. No one else is here, but small, winged creatures flutter around the room. You realize that they are the carved gargoyles that adorned the inn's doorway.

Tactics

Animated Gargoyles: These creatures work together to bedevil those who enter the room. One gargoyle each round uses *harry* to knock a character prone, and the others swoop in to claw at those on the ground.

Shadow Stalkers: The shadows are hidden at the start of the encounter. To detect them, a character must succeed on a DC 20 Perception check. They use *shadow stalk* to enter the fight, each picking out its own victim. As long as its shadow stalk lasts, the shadow attacks its victim with *shadowy touch*. When the target saves, the shadow flits back to a place where it can hide and then attack again.

2 Shadow Stalkers (S)	Level 3 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid	
HP 25; Bloodied 12	Initiative +9
AC 15, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +3
Speed 8; phasing	Darkvision
Resist insubstantial; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
Born of Shadows	
The stalker can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has partial concealment instead of needing total concealment.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ Shadowy Touch (necrotic) ⊕ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 necrotic damage.	
↓ Shadow Stalk (necrotic) ⊕ Recharge when the stalker uses shadow step	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d6 + 8 necrotic damage, and the stalker shifts into the target's space and melds with its shadow (save ends). While the stalker is melded with the target's shadow, it remains in the target's space and moves with the target without provoking opportunity attacks. The stalker also gains a +4 bonus to all defenses and a +5 bonus to attack rolls against the target. When the target saves, the stalker appears in a square adjacent to the target.	
TRIGGER ACTIONS	
Shadow Step (teleportation) ⊕ At-Will	
Trigger: A living creature within 5 squares of the stalker drops to below 1 hit point.	
Effect (Free Action): The stalker teleports to a square adjacent to the triggering creature and gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.	
Skills Stealth +10	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 19 (+5) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 12 (+2) Cha 11 (+1)
Alignment evil	Languages Common

3 Animated Gargoyles (G)**Level 1 Skirmisher**

Small shadow animate

HP 30; Bloodied 15

Initiative +5

AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12

Perception +1

Speed 6, fly 6

STANDARD ACTIONS**⊕ Claw ⊕ At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage (2d6 + 5 against prone targets), and the target can't make opportunity attacks against the gargoyle until the end of its next turn.

⊕ Harry ⊕ Encounter

Effect: The gargoyle shifts up to 2 squares.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target falls prone. The target is dazed until the end of the gargoyle's next turn.

Str 10 (+0)

Dex 16 (+3)

Wis 13 (+1)

Con 14 (+2)

Int 7 (-2)

Cha 8 (-1)

Alignment unaligned

Languages Common

Features of the Area

Illumination: Glowing fireplace embers, along with several oil lamps turned down low, cast dim light over the entire area. Outside the inn, it's dark. In any location, light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Bar, Bed, and Table: These squares are difficult terrain.

Doors: The doors are closed but unlocked.

Fireplaces: Hot coals fill these hearths. A creature that enters a fireplace square takes 1d6 fire damage.

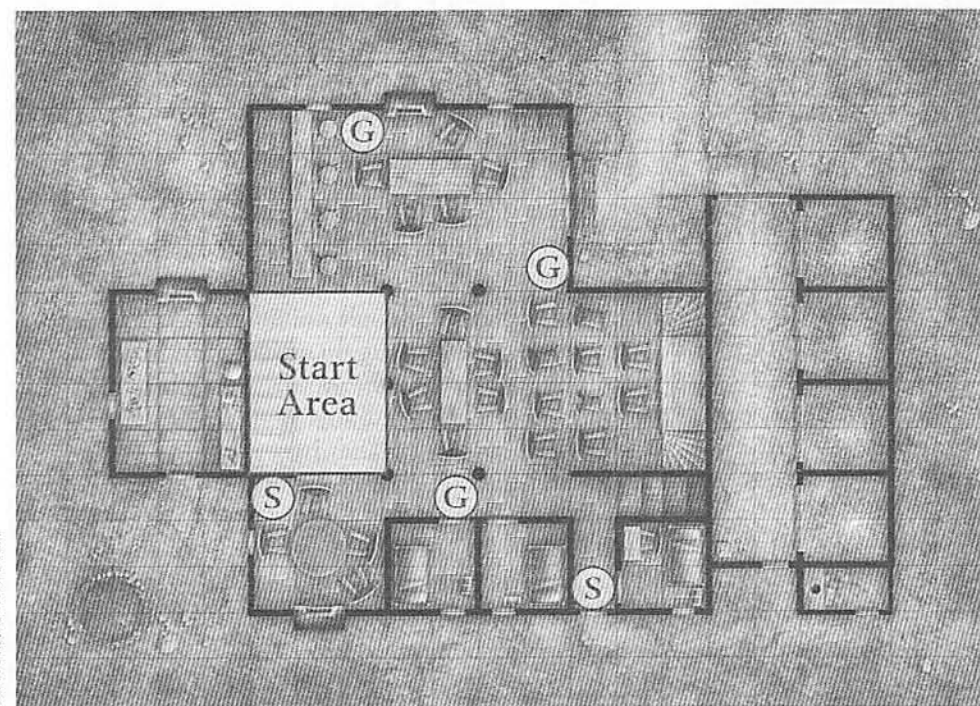
Furniture: Furnished squares are difficult terrain.

Conclusion

Harald is unconscious—the gargoyles attacked him. He can be roused with a successful DC 12 Heal check, or wakes up on his own ten minutes later. A quick check



of the inn reveals that Tilda and the dwarves are fine. Grimbold is, presumably, out on his rounds. Nathaire and Remy are missing.



Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 250 XP for interacting with the people staying in the tavern and for battling the monsters.

SESSION 2: WITCHING HOUR

Duponde and its surroundings are no longer in the world. Old warding magic that Evard laid over the place where he buried his rival Vontarin has pulled the town into the Shadowfell.

This session begins with the characters gathered in the common room of the Old Owl Inn. The night outside is supernaturally gloomy, cold, and menacing. Other denizens of the Old Owl—Tilda, Harald, and the three dwarf travelers—are ready to barricade themselves inside until morning. No sign can be found of the scholar, Nathaire, or his servant.

When you're ready to begin, remind the players where they are and what happened last time, then ask them what they'd like to do. Allow the characters to explore the inn and its surroundings for a short time. When you're ready to continue, go on to *Grimbold's Return*.

Into the Shadows

This is a chance for the characters to study their circumstances and see for themselves exactly what sort of trouble Duponde is in. Some possible alternatives include:

Wait Inside the Old Owl

No answers are to be found at the inn. Tilda, Harald, and the dwarves remain inside, barricading the common room against more monsters. They have no idea what's going on, but they're happy to have a party of bold adventurers guarding them. If the characters ask Tilda what to do, she suggests exploring the area to see how far the supernatural gloom extends and to protect the townsfolk from any other monsters. Grimbold, seeking help, eventually returns to the Old Owl.

Search for Nathaire and Remy

A quick check reveals that Nathaire and Remy are not in their rooms. Nathaire occupied the ground-floor room that has a desk. Remy stayed in the room just across from that one. (No one was staying in the third.) Ordinary clothing and gear remain behind, and their mounts are still in the stable (see *Investigate the Darkness*). It does not appear they packed up for a journey.

Investigate the Darkness

If the characters venture into the gloomy night outside the inn, they quickly discover a few unsettling facts.

Chill: A pervasive cold seeps into the bones, no matter how warmly dressed or close to a fire one is.

Dread: An oppressive sense of anxiety and hopelessness presses down on Duponde. It feels like the wisest course of action is to go back to the Old Owl and hide.

Gloom: It's a dark, cloudy night, and an eerie gloom has settled over Duponde. Light sources illuminate only half their normal radius while Duponde is in the clutches of the Shadowfell. (Remember this whenever the characters are in the Shadowfell. It applies for the rest of the adventure.)

Twisted Reflection: This is not the same Duponde the characters arrived in hours ago. Streets don't seem to meet the same way; buildings stand subtly distorted and menacing.

Using Skills

Players might ask if skills can help them to figure out what's going on. The skills most likely to be useful are Arcana, Nature, and Religion.

Arcana (DC 12): The gloom, chill, dread, and twisted appearance indicate that the Old Owl and its surroundings are now in the Shadowfell.

Arcana (DC 19): Areas of the mortal world can shift into the plane of shadow under the effect of powerful curses. This event is called a shadowfall. Sometimes such shifts are permanent, and sometimes they recur intermittently or end after a time.

No gain is to be had in trying to find how far the effect extends. Duponde is now in the Shadowfell, and anyone who leaves the town just travels into the wider plane of shadow and greater peril. The best chance to return to the world is to be in Duponde when it shifts back, either by waiting for it to happen on its own or by figuring out what caused the shadowfall.

Nature (DC 12): The Old Owl and its environs are no longer in the natural world.

Religion (DC 12): The gloom and dread suggest the Shadowfell is intruding into the world somehow. The Shadowfell is the plane through which the souls of the dead pass on their path beyond death. Dark magic and undead often draw on its power.

Explore the Town

Characters gain the same information they gain from investigating the darkness. In addition, they determine that Duponde's people are now awake and very alarmed. Most are locking themselves inside, unwilling to venture outdoors. As the adventurers explore, they catch frequent glimpses of threatening shadows that quickly slip out of sight. They hear strange sounds—clatters, thumps, and muffled shouts of alarm—lost in the darkness.

Go to Evard's Tomb: If the characters head straight for the graveyard, they make it about halfway when Grimbold runs into them. Continue with *Grimbold's Return*.



Grimbold's Return

After the adventurers have had a chance to consider Duponde's predicament, they meet up with Grimbold again. If the characters are still in or around the Old Owl, Grimbold finds them there. Otherwise, the guard runs into them on the streets in this manner:

A dim light appears in the gloom. Several armed men approach. The leader raises his lantern high, and in its light you recognize Grimbold with a couple of armed townspeople. "Ah, the travelers," he says. "I'm glad to see you. Some dark curse has fallen over Duponde. You look like you can handle some trouble. Can you help us?"

Grimbold asks what the characters have seen and listens carefully to any information they offer. If the characters ask about compensation, Grimbold looks a little disappointed. He says that the town has little financial compensation to offer, due to the expense of the bridge repairs. However, he concedes that Lady Celice Arnaud would surely award the party at least 250 gold pieces in exchange for uncovering and dealing with the source of the trouble.

If the adventurers ask how they can help, or when you're ready to move on, the marshal adds:

"There's trouble all over town. Monsters are roaming the streets, and people are terrified. Something is lurking in the armory, and our militia volunteers need to get in there to properly arm themselves. And, not ten minutes ago, I found poor Eddin, the guard at the north gate, bleeding at the side

of the road. He told me that the halfling—the one who serves that young wizard who's been poking around Evard's Tomb—fled the town like he had a dozen demons on his heels.

When Eddin tried to stop that little scoundrel, the halfling stabbed him. I think that halfling's got something to do with this, but we also need to get the armory open. The armory or the fugitive—which can you look into for me?"

Eddin is wounded but should live, if the characters ask about him. Grimbold looks favorably upon this small kindness.

Decision Time

The players have a decision to make: Do they pursue Remy to find out what he knows, or do they stay in town?

If the players decide to chase Remy, they gain the quest **Catch Remy**. Continue with the **Dark Woods** encounter. While the characters are out chasing the halfling, Grimbold finds enough guards to deal with the armory.

If the players instead stay in town, they gain the quest **Protect Duponde**. Go to **The Armory** encounter. Grimbold sends a couple guards after Remy, but they don't catch him.

DARK WOODS

Encounter Level 1

Make sure you know what the characters are using for a light source.

Begin by reading:

You set out northward, following the road leading out of Duponde. A mile outside town, the road crosses a small stream on an old stone bridge. The woods are growing thicker, and you've left behind the farmhouses and fields surrounding Duponde.

Setup

1 umbral sprite swarm (U)

1 sporeback frog (S)

2 thornskin frogs (T)

When the characters reach the encounter area, read:

Croaking echoes from the shadows around you, and then high-pitched voices, lots of them, giggling, singing, and squabbling. A dim, purple cloud darts and swirls in the shadows of the trees. Something big splashes in the water close by!

Sporeback Frog (S)		Level 2 Controller
Medium natural beast (aquatic)		
HP 42; Bloodied 21		Initiative +4
AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 13, Will 12		Perception +3
Speed 3, swim 5		Low-light vision
TRAITS		
Aquatic		
The sporeback can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
① Bite ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the sporeback's next turn.		
† Barbed Tongue ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d6 + 2 damage, and the sporeback pulls the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
⚡ Spore Release (poison) ♦ Encounter		
Trigger: The sporeback drops to 0 hit points.		
Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (creatures in burst); +5 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 1d6 + 7 poison damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).		
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 16 (+4)	Wis 15 (+3)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 9 (+0)
Skills Stealth +9		
Alignment unaligned Languages —		

2 Thornskin Frogs (T)		Level 1 Brute
Medium natural beast (aquatic)		
HP 35; Bloodied 17		Initiative +4
AC 13, Fortitude 12, Reflex 13, Will 11		Perception +2
Speed 4, swim 6		Low-light vision
TRAITS		
Aquatic		
The thornskin can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
① Bite ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage.		
† Pounce ♦ Recharge ☒ ☒		
Effect: The thornskin shifts its speed.		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target falls prone.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
† Tongue Grab ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex		
Hit: The thornskin pulls the target up to 2 squares.		
Str 16 (+3)	Dex 18 (+4)	Wis 14 (+2)
Con 15 (+2)	Int 3 (-4)	Cha 9 (-1)
Alignment unaligned Languages —		

Umbral Sprite Swarm (U)		Level 4 Controller
Medium fey humanoid (swarm)		
HP 55; Bloodied 27		Initiative +6
AC 18, Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15		Perception +8
Speed 4, fly 6 (hover)		Blindsight 6
TRAITS		
☼ Swarm Attack ♦ Aura 1		
An enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 3 damage.		
Swarm		
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
① Swarm of Fangs and Blades ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage.		
⚡ Darkwave (necrotic, zone) ♦ Recharge ☒ ☒		
Attack: Close burst 1 (one creature in the burst); +7 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d8 + 3 necrotic damage.		
Effect: The burst creates a zone of darkness that lasts until the end of the swarm's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Fade Away (necrotic) ♦ Encounter		
Trigger: The swarm takes damage		
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The swarm becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it hits or misses with an attack.		
Skills Stealth +11		
Str 8 (+1)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 13 (+3)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 13 (+3)	Cha 15 (+4)
Alignment unaligned Languages Elven		



fight. They use *tongue grab* against a target they have no other way to reach with *bite* or *pounce*, or against a target they can pull into the water.

Features of the Area

Illumination: It's dark. Light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Boulders and Logs: These squares are difficult terrain.

Low Bluff: Creatures can descend the bluff as if it were difficult terrain. Climbing up the bluff requires a successful DC 8 Athletics check.

Pond: Water south of the bridge is deep. Creatures can move through these squares only by swimming. No check is required, but each square requires 2 extra squares of movement. Those in the pond gain partial cover against attacks from outside the water.

Stream: This water is difficult terrain.

Trees: A tree trunk's square is difficult terrain. Climbing it requires a DC 8 Athletics check. The trees are about 20 feet tall.

Conclusion

Close to the bridge, characters find a tattered bedroll and an empty saddlebag. Small, muddy boot prints continue north down the road. Remy had a close scrape with the frogs when he passed through this area, and he lost some of his gear as he made his escape.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 100 XP for battling the monsters.

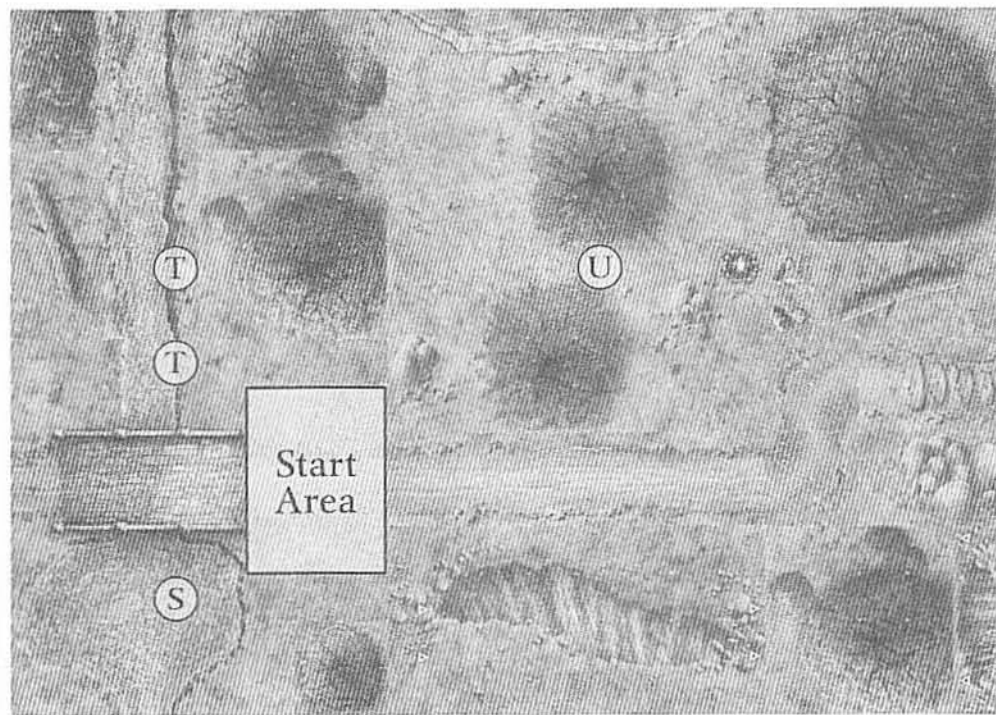
Tactics

The sprites are hovering near the carnivorous frogs, hoping that the amphibians waylay someone interesting.

Sporeback Frog: This amphibian hangs back by the pond, moving only close enough to use its *barbed tongue* attack. If it can, it pulls its target into the pond, where the frog has the advantage of its aquatic trait.

Sprite Swarm: This horde flies into the best position to use its *darkwave* attack against the most characters possible. The swarm cares little about the frogs, but it tries to avoid impeding the frogs' attacks. After using *darkwave*, the sprites skirt around the outer edges of the battle, attacking with swarm of fangs and blades. If the swarm is bloodied and the frogs are dead, the swarm flees. It might save *fade* away for its escape.

Thornskin Frogs: These frogs each move to attack the two nearest characters, using *pounce* to begin the



THE ARMORY

Encounter Level 1

When the characters enter the area, read:

Following Grimbold's directions, you move through the darkened streets to the armory. The gloom seems to be alive, shadows flowing around the dim glow of light sources. Finally, your group reaches the edge of the river, where an aqueduct runs through the town. You can barely make out the silhouette of a large, two-story stone building in the shadows.

Setup

2 spider swarms (S)

1 deathjump spider (D)

3 leeching shadows (L)

Do not place the monsters until the characters cross the bridge. The deathjump spider is hidden atop the roof at the start of the encounter. A character must succeed on a DC 18 Perception check to detect it. The leeching shadows are not visible. They emerge from the statues during their turn.

When the characters reach the opposite side of the bridge, read:

The door to the armory is ajar, and the body of one of Duponde's soldiers lies on the threshold. The body is covered in small bites. As you see this, the windows of the armory begin to undulate as hundreds of spiders begin pouring out.

2 Spider Swarms (S)	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural beast (spider swarm)	
HP 44; Bloodied 22	Initiative +6
AC 19, Fortitude 13, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +3
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)	Tremorsense 5
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks;	
Vulnerable 5 to close and area attacks	
TRAITS	
☼ Swarm Attack ♦ Aura 1	
Any enemy that starts its turn in the aura is slowed until the start of its next turn.	
Swarm	
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.	
Web Walk	
The spider ignores difficult terrain composed of webs.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⬆ Swarm of Fangs (poison) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Skills Athletics +6, Stealth +9	
Str 11 (+1) Dex 17 (+4) Wis 14 (+3)	
Con 12 (+2) Int 1 (-4) Cha 7 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned Languages —	

Deathjump Spider (D)	Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium natural beast (spider)	
HP 52; Bloodied 26	Initiative +5
AC 18, Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +7
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)	Tremorsense 5
Resist 5 poison	
TRAITS	
Web Walk	
The spider ignores difficult terrain composed of webs.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⬆ Bite (poison) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
⬆ Death from Above ♦ Recharge ☼ ☼ ☼	
Effect: The spider jumps up to 6 squares. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. After the jump, the spider uses bite, knocking the target prone on a hit.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Prodigious Leap ♦ Encounter	
Effect: The spider jumps up to 10 squares. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +8	
Str 14 (+4) Dex 12 (+3) Wis 10 (+2)	
Con 12 (+3) Int 1 (-3) Cha 8 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned Languages —	

3 Leeching Shadows (L)	Level 1 Minion Lurker
Small shadow humanoid	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +7
AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +1
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)	
TRAITS	
Born of Shadows	
The shadow can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has partial concealment instead of needing total concealment.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⬆ Shadow Meld (necrotic) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4 necrotic damage, and the shadow shifts into the target's space and melds with its shadow (save ends). While the shadow is so melded, it is removed from play, and the target grants combat advantage and takes ongoing 4 necrotic damage. When the target saves, the shadow reappears in a square adjacent to the target of the shadow's choice.	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 11 (+0) Dex 16 (+3) Wis 13 (+1)	
Con 14 (+2) Int 5 (-3) Cha 10 (+0)	
Alignment evil Languages Common	

Tactics

These monsters are quick to go after the nearest potential victim, even if that means abandoning good cover.

Deathjump Spider: This arachnid is hidden atop the roof, and it uses *death from above* as its opening attack. Once bloodied, it scuttles away into the shadows again and sets up for another attack at a different target.

Leeching Shadows: These creatures remain hidden, waiting for the characters to engage other monsters. When the party's attention is focused on the spiders, the leeching shadows creep out to attack characters who are hanging back.

Spider Swarms: When combat begins, these swarms rush through tiny openings in the armory walls and burst out onto the street to menace as many enemies as possible.

Features of the Area

Illumination: It's dark. Light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Aqueduct: The water is 5 feet below the level of the street, and it is 10 feet deep. No check is required to swim, but each square requires 2 extra squares of movement. Creatures in the water must use a move action and succeed on a DC 12 Athletics check to climb from the water up to the street.

Bridges: The highest level of each arched bridge is 10 feet above the water of the aqueduct.

Cart: The bed of the cart is 3 feet above the street. Moving into the cart requires 1 extra square of movement.

Doors: The doors leading into the armory (the central building) are unlocked. Other doors are locked. It

requires a DC 12 Thievery check to pick a lock or a DC 19 Athletics to force open a door.

Furniture and Goods: These squares are difficult terrain.

Roof: The roof of the armory is 20 feet high, and unlike the surrounding buildings, it is flat.

Stairway: These stairs are difficult terrain. They lead to the armory's upper floor (currently empty).

Statues: The statues at the foot of each bridge are blocking terrain.

Tables: These squares are difficult terrain.

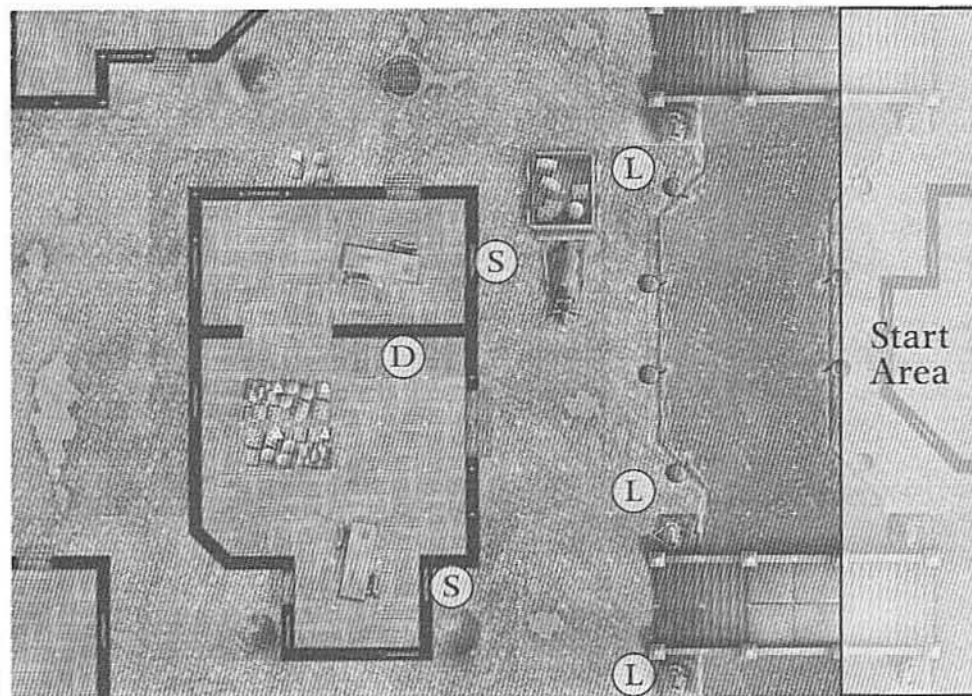
Windows: The armory windows are 5 feet above the street outside. Bars cover each window, which is about 1 foot wide and 4 feet tall.

Conclusion

The armory contains twenty suits of leather armor, twenty light shields, twenty crossbows, twenty spears, twenty clubs, and countless crossbow bolts. After the characters defeat the monsters infesting the armory, a handful of Dupond's militia begins to arrive. The guards thank the characters for the help and begin to arm up, but they report that more monsters have been seen roaming the town. Grimbold is leading other guards on a sweep of the streets. However, the danger is far from over.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 100 XP for battling the monsters.



SESSION 3: DARK DREAMS

In Session 2, the characters had two choices: Pursue Nathaire's servant Remy and catch him before he escapes, or battle the shadow-monsters roaming the streets of Duponde. During this session, the characters continue on the path they selected last time. If the characters are on Remy's trail, begin this session with Remy's Trail. Those who chose to drive the monsters out of the town armory begin this session with Streets of Duponde.

Remy's Trail

Although he might appear to be nothing more than Nathaire's valet, Remy is a talented henchman and assistant, handy with a knife and a bit of poison. During the events of Session 1, he accompanied Nathaire to Evard's Tomb and helped perform the ritual to drain the power from Evard's remains. However, the ritual went awry. The ghost of Vontarin, the wizard who is buried in Evard's Tomb, possessed Nathaire. Nathaire then killed the hired laborers who helped him to open the tomb, and that was all Remy needed to see. The halfling fled into the night, thinking of nothing but escaping from his master and the town of Duponde as quickly as possible.

Remy has friends in the area—a gang of brigands loyal to Nathaire. They guarded the wizard during the journey to Duponde and camped just outside town in case Nathaire needed a little extra muscle. The halfling intends to collect some supplies at the camp and head out at once for safer parts. It's up to the characters to catch him before he makes his escape.

USING THE DESPAIR DECK

If you are using the Despair Deck from *The Shadowfell: Gloomwrought and Beyond™*, players might have to draw cards during the skill challenge. Whenever any character fails a check as part of the skill challenge for the first time, that character's player must draw a card to determine what effect takes hold. Use the narrative to reinforce the card a player draws. For example, if a character fails a Perception check to find Remy and the player draws the Craven card, you might say that the character gets spooked by shadows flitting about in the woods. At the end of the session, ask the players to return the cards and record any despair effects still affecting their characters.

Skill Challenge: Tracking Remy

This challenge begins when the characters set out from the site of their battle against the frogs. There, characters found Remy's prints near a small bridge in the woods outside town, as well as discarded gear. The party needs to run down the halfling before he gets away.

Level: 1

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Endurance, Perception, Nature, Stealth

Endurance (DC 8; group check): The characters press on together at their best speed, trying to overtake the fugitive. Each character makes an Endurance check. The party gains one success if at least half the checks are successful.

Nature (DC 12): The character helps maintain bearings along the path.

Perception (DC 12): The character follows Remy's muddy trail in the forest.

Stealth (DC 12; group check): The party keeps noise to a minimum to listen better and avoid alerting foes. Each character makes a Stealth check. The party gains one success if at least half the checks are successful.

Success: Characters discover the encampment of Remy's bandit allies without being spotted. The party can quickly conceal its light sources to avoid alerting the bandits. Go to the **Nowhere to Run** encounter. The adventurers can attack the camp, surprising foes as long as they use no lights.

Failure: The characters are too slow. Remy directs the bandits to set an ambush for pursuers, and then he escapes before the party arrives on the scene. Go to the **Nowhere to Run** encounter. Enemies gain surprise against the characters, and Remy is not present.

TALKING TO REMY

If the characters catch Remy at the bandit camp, the halfling is willing to talk if the characters make it clear they just want to ask a few questions. When asked what he knows about Nathaire or the cause of the shadowfall, Remy reveals that he accompanied Nathaire to Evard's Tomb. There, the wizard performed a ritual. Something went wrong, and a dark presence "went into" Nathaire. The tomb walls gave off a pulse of energy that, as Remy puts it, "changed the night." Nathaire went mad, and he killed the hired laborers and tried to slay Remy. At that point, Remy fled in terror.

The Dark Woods encounter might still become a fight, since Remy absolutely refuses to return to Duponde. If he suspects that the characters intend to take him in, he orders the bandits to attack.

Streets of Duponde

Clearing out the armory is an excellent first step to helping the folk of Duponde make it through the night, but dangerous creatures still roam the streets. Worse yet, panic and despair have descended over the town.

The most dangerous threat remaining at large in Duponde is a small pack of dusk beasts, predatory creatures native to the Shadowfell. These predators see Duponde's sudden appearance in their domain as a potential feast of helpless, terrified people. The pack roams the streets, its members trying doors and sniffing at windows in the hopes of finding easy prey.

Other monsters are present, as well. Small animate shadows have sprung up all over town, and they are stalking and tormenting Duponde's people. A few dark ones were in the vicinity when Duponde appeared in their bleak domain. Their scouts and spies are already studying the lay of the land, plotting mischief. A few have joined Vontarin.

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Skill Challenge: Searching Duponde

The skill challenge begins when the characters set out from the town armory to protect Duponde from any other monsters that might be roaming the streets. They can hear bedlam breaking loose in the darkened town. More monsters are at large in Duponde, menacing the townspeople, and someone needs to search for the creatures, help those in need, and spread word to stay inside with doors barred and windows shuttered.

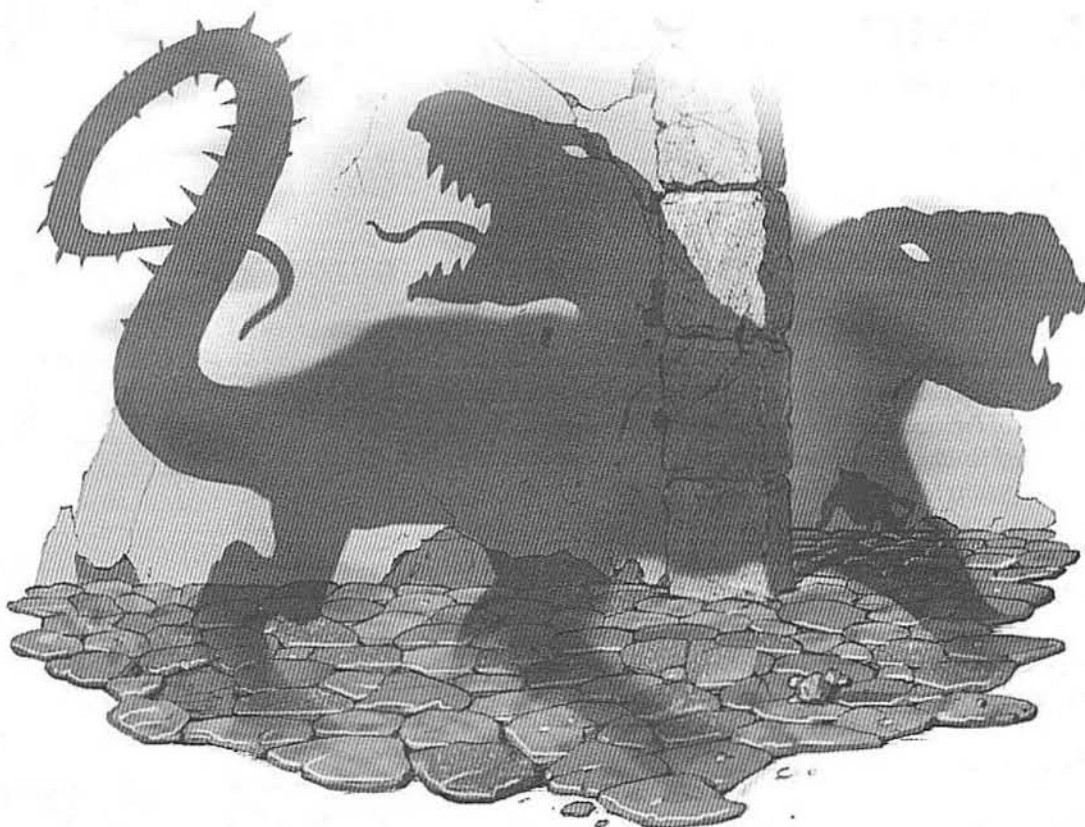
Level: 1

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, Endurance, Perception, Streetwise

Arcana (DC 19): The character makes educated guesses where shadow monsters are likely to lurk.

Streetwise (DC 19): The character anticipates the movements of enemies that are trying to avoid detection in alleyways and abandoned houses.



Arcana (DC 12): The character uses his or her knowledge of the Shadowfell to identify that one of the groups of monsters consists of dusk beasts, creatures of the Shadowfell that feed on shadows for sustenance.

Bluff (DC 12): The character feigns cries for help, trying to draw in monsters lingering nearby. Alternatively, the characters can mimic a large, aggressive group of hunters, trying to drive monsters into a dead end.

Diplomacy (DC 12): The character calms panicked townspeople and quickly gains reliable information on monster sightings.

Endurance (DC 12; group check): The characters try to cover a lot of ground quickly. Each character makes an Endurance check. The party gains one success if at least half the checks are successful.

Perception (DC 12): The character listens for distant calls for help or signs of prowling monsters, identifying the direction the party needs to go.

Success: Characters complete a sweep of the town, alerting the townspeople to the danger and locating the dusk beast pack roaming the streets. Go to the **Streets of Shadow** encounter. Each character gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls during the encounter.

Failure: The characters become disoriented in the darkness and stumble unprepared into the dusk beasts. Go to the **Streets of Shadow** encounter. The characters are surprised at the start of the encounter.

NOWHERE TO RUN

Encounter Level 2

Skill Challenge Success

If the characters succeeded on the skill challenge, they spot Remy and his companions before the villains have a chance to douse their fire. Read:

A short distance ahead is the dim, flickering light of a campfire in the woods by the side of the road. Several coarse humans and goblins are gathered around the fire. In the middle of the group is a halfling, shoving gear into a backpack and issuing instructions to the others in an urgent voice. No one seems to have noticed you yet.

Skill Challenge Failure

Characters who fail in the skill challenge blunder into a surprise attack. Remy is already gone and should be replaced—add one more common bandit and one more goblin sniper to the encounter. The bandits are under orders to waylay anyone who seems to be following Remy. Read:

The road passes through dark thickets and steep, rocky escarpments. Your chase has yet to bear results, but suddenly you hear battle cries and the sharp report of arrows loosed into the darkness. It's an ambush!

Setup

3 common bandits (B)

4 goblin snipers (G)

Remy, Nathaire's Henchman (R), or 1 additional bandit and sniper

Place monsters and the characters as you describe the scene according to the skill challenge results. Those who start this encounter with lights are at a disadvantage, since enemies in squares of total darkness can still see into an illuminated area and initiate an attack without being seen.

Tactics

If Remy is absent or dead, his allies break off and flee when only three or fewer of them remain.

Bandits: If the bandits are surprised, the first one able to do so without risking attack douses the campfire (a standard action from an adjacent square). The bandits otherwise close to melee, using dazing strike and flanking to gain combat advantage.

Remy: The halfling uses *distracting cloak* to protect himself each round, moving from foe to foe to keep combat advantage. He uses *desperate gambit* only if he has combat advantage against the target. Remy avoids fighting defenders.

3 Common Bandits (B)	Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human	
HP 37; Bloodied 18	Initiative +6
AC 16, Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +1
Speed 6	
TRAITS	
Combat Advantage	
The bandit deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Mace (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the bandit can shift 1 square.	
⚔ Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage, and the bandit can shift 1 square.	
⚔ Dazing Strike (weapon) ♦ Recharge when the attack misses	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the bandit's next turn.	
Effect: The bandit can shift 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9	
Str 12 (+2) Dex 17 (+4) Wis 11 (+1)	
Con 13 (+2) Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)	
Alignment unaligned Languages Common	
Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 daggers	

4 Goblin Snipers (G)	Level 1 Minion Artillery
Small natural humanoid	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +3
AC 13, Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +1
Speed 6	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
Sniper	
If the goblin misses with a ranged attack while hidden, it remains hidden.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Short Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
⚔ Shortbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Goblin Tactics ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 13 (+1) Dex 17 (+3) Wis 12 (+1)	
Con 13 (+1) Int 8 (-1) Cha 8 (-1)	
Alignment evil Languages Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows	

Features of the Area

Illumination: If the campfire is burning, it provides bright light within a 5-square radius. It's dark if the campfire is out.

Other light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Boulders and Logs: These squares are difficult terrain.

Remy, Nathaire's Henchman (R)		Level 3 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid, halfling		
HP 45; Bloodied 22	Initiative +7	
AC 17, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +5	
Speed 6		
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⚔ Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, or 3d6 + 4 damage if Remy has combat advantage against the target.		
⚔ Desperate Gambit ♦ Encounter		
Requirement: Remy must be bloodied.		
Effect: Remy uses <i>dagger</i> . If the attack hits, the target takes 2d6 extra damage. If the attack misses, Remy takes 1d6 damage.		
MOVE ACTIONS		
☂ Distracting Cloak ♦ At-Will (1/round)		
Effect: Remy shifts up to 3 squares and gains partial concealment until the end of his turn.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
⚔ Second Chance ♦ Encounter		
Trigger: An enemy hits Remy with an attack.		
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The triggering enemy must reroll the attack roll and use the new result.		
Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +8, Thievery +10		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 9 (+0)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 13 (+2)	Cha 14 (+3)
Alignment unaligned		Languages Common
Equipment leather armor, dagger, cloak		

Low Bluff: Creatures can descend the bluff as if it were difficult terrain. Climbing up the bluff requires a successful DC 8 Athletics check.

Pond: Water south of the bridge is deep. Creatures can move through these squares only by swimming. No check is required, but each square requires 2 extra squares of movement. Those in the pond gain partial cover against attacks from outside the water.

Stream: This water is difficult terrain.

Trees: A tree trunk's square is difficult terrain. Climbing it requires a DC 8 Athletics check. The trees are about 20 feet tall.

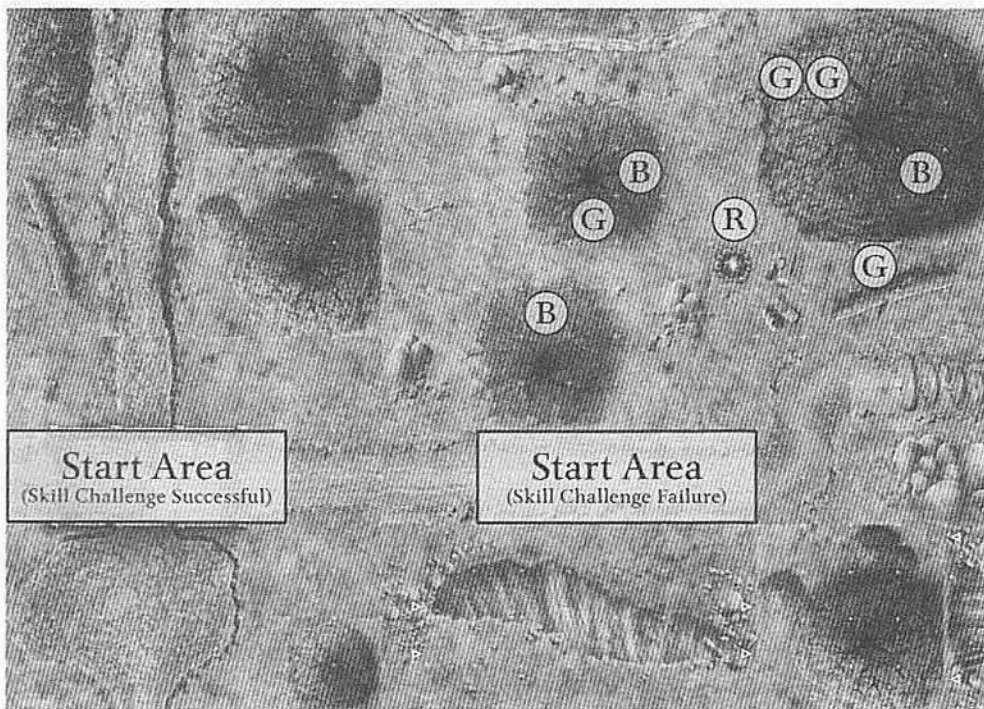
Conclusion

If the characters defeat the bandits, with or without Remy, they discover a mysterious journal bound in black leather near the fire. Remy discarded it to make room for provisions in his pack. The journal is written in a code of Nathaire's devising, and it will take time to decipher. See Session 5 for more information on the journal's contents.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 150 XP for facing the skill challenge and battling the monsters. Successfully questioning or defeating Remy in this encounter completes the Catch Remy quest, and each character receives an additional 300 XP. If the characters talk to Remy and don't fight his bandit allies, award the characters full XP for the encounter. The objective was to find out what Remy knows, and talking accomplishes that.

Treasure: The characters can also take the bandits' gear, which includes 400 sp, 60 gp, a fine opal (100 gp), and a +1 *amulet of protection*.



STREETS OF SHADOW

Encounter Level 2

Setup

- 3 dusk beasts (D)
- 2 leeching shadows (L)
- 1 shadow bolter (B)

Do not place the shadow bolter or the shadows during setup. The characters can't see the dark one from their starting position, and the shadows are not visible. They emerge from the shadows of the buildings during their turns.

When you're ready to begin, read:

As you make your way toward the center of town, the gloom hanging over Duponde makes the streets a hazy maze. Turning a corner, you spot three creatures prowling from door to door. Made of solid shadows, they resemble predatory drakes. Each has a long barbed tail and two distinct heads, each one's maw full of fangs. With menacing hisses, the beast-shadows turn to confront you.

When the leeching shadows join, add:

From beneath nearby eaves, small, animate shadows abruptly emerge and flow toward you. They look like the shades of hunched children.

When the shadow bolter attacks, add:

A small, cloaked humanoid lurks in the alleyway between two houses. Its feet are cloven hooves, and it wears dark leather armor. The creature wields a crossbow, which begins to gather dark energy as it prepares to strike.

Tactics

Shadow Bolter: This creature hangs back, sniping with *black bolt* at any character who appears to be in trouble. He attacks those who are already flanked to gain the most out of *deadly precision*. The bolter flees if the other monsters are defeated.

Dusk Beasts: Sensing fresh prey, the dusk beasts charge the nearest characters and attack. They eventually split up and go after different characters, since each beast wants its own kill. Each beast tries to push targets into solid objects to knock its prey prone and employ *two-maw rend*.

Leeching Shadows: These creatures steal into the fight cautiously, attacking characters isolated from their companions.

3 Dusk Beasts (D)

Level 2 Brute

Medium shadow magical beast

HP 44; Bloodied 22

Initiative +3

AC 14, Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 14

Perception +3

Speed 6

TRAITS

Two-Headed Guard

Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the dusk beast. While dazed, the dusk beast can take opportunity actions and immediate actions.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Bite ⚔ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the dusk beast can push the target 1 square. If the dusk beast can't push the target, the dusk beast knocks the target prone instead.

⚔ Two-Maw Rend ⚔ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one prone creature); +5 vs. AC

Hit: 3d6 + 4 damage.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

⚔ Barbed Tail ⚔ Recharge when first bloodied

Trigger: An enemy enters a square adjacent to the dusk beast.

Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 2 (the triggering enemy); +5 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the dusk beast knocks the target prone.

Str 17 (+4)

Dex 14 (+3)

Wis 15 (+3)

Con 14 (+3)

Int 2 (-3)

Cha 10 (+1)

Alignment unaligned

Languages –

2 Leeching Shadows (L)

Level 1 Minion Lurker

Small shadow humanoid

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

Initiative +7

AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12

Perception +1

Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)

TRAITS

Born of Shadows

The shadow can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has partial concealment instead of needing total concealment.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Shadow Meld (necrotic) ⚔ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex

Hit: 4 necrotic damage, and the shadow shifts into the target's space and melds with its shadow (save ends). While the shadow is so melded, it is removed from play, and the target grants combat advantage and takes ongoing 4 necrotic damage. When the target saves, the shadow reappears in a square adjacent to the target of the shadow's choice.

Skills Stealth +8

Str 11 (+0)

Dex 16 (+3)

Wis 13 (+1)

Con 14 (+2)

Int 5 (-3)

Cha 10 (+0)

Alignment evil

Languages Common

Shadow Bolter (B)**Level 5 Artillery**

Small shadow humanoid, dark one

HP 50; Bloodied 25

Initiative +6

AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 16

Perception +9

Speed 6

Darkvision

TRAITS**Combat Advantage (necrotic)**

Whenever the shadow bolter hits a creature granting combat advantage to it, the bolter deals 5 extra necrotic damage, and each of that creature's adjacent allies takes 5 necrotic damage.

Deadly Precision

The shadow bolter's ranged attacks have combat advantage against any enemy that the bolter's allies are flanking.

STANDARD ACTIONS**① Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC

Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.

② Black Bolt (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +10 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes 5 damage each time it provokes an opportunity attack (save ends).

MOVE ACTIONS**Dark Step ♦ At-Will**

Effect: The bolter moves 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by this movement, and gains combat advantage against each creature that it ends its move adjacent to until the end of the bolter's next turn.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS**Killing Dark**

Trigger: The bolter drops to 0 hit points.

Effect (No Action): Each enemy adjacent to the bolter is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.

Skills Stealth +11

Str 11 (+2)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 15 (+4)

Con 14 (+4)

Int 11 (+2)

Cha 11 (+2)

Alignment unaligned Languages Common

Equipment dagger, crossbow, 20 bolt

Features of the Area

Illumination: It's dark. Light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Bushes and Hedges: These plants are difficult terrain, and their squares are lightly obscured.

Cart: The bed of the cart is 3 feet above the street. Moving into the cart requires 1 extra square of movement.

Doors: Exterior doors are closed and locked. It requires a DC 12 Thievery check to pick a lock or a DC 19 Athletics to force open a door. Interior doors are open.

Furniture and Goods: These squares are difficult terrain.

Large Tree: The tree trunk's square is blocking terrain. Climbing it requires a DC 8 Athletics check. This tree is about 40 feet tall.

Pavilion: This shelter is open underneath, so it doesn't hinder movement.

Stairways: These stairs are difficult terrain.

Well: This water source is 3 feet high. The water is 20 feet below the edge. It takes a DC 19 Athletics to climb out. Due to the well's height and the bucket framework, a creature pushed, pulled, or slid into the well's square gains a +5 bonus to the saving throw to avoid falling in.

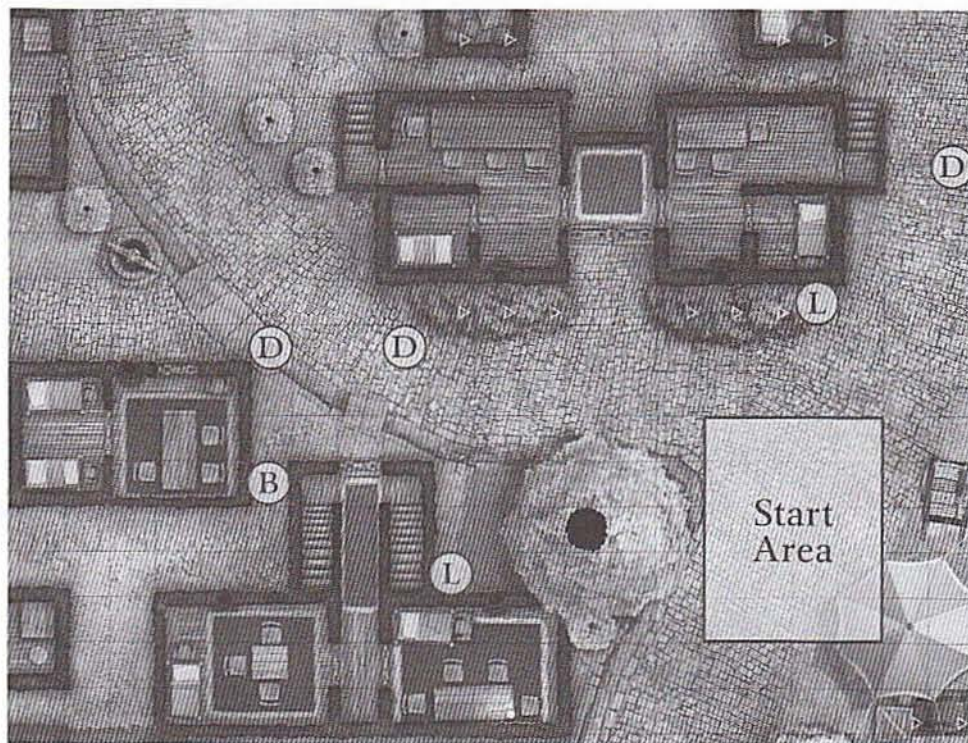
Conclusion

A quick check of the houses in this area reveals the townsfolk are unharmed. After thanking the characters for their help, the citizens hide behind locked doors again.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 450 XP for facing the skill challenge, battling the monsters, and completing the Protect Duponde quest.

Treasure: In a pouch at its belt, the dark one carries 100 gp and an emerald (100 gp). It wears a +1 amulet of protection.



SESSION 4: EVARD'S TOMB

Up to this point, the characters have been dealing with immediate threats and challenges of the shadowfall—the appearance of dangerous monsters in town or the escape of Nathaire's servant. Now it's time for the adventurers to seek some answers. If the characters spent the last session pursuing Remy, begin this session with Returning to Duponde. Characters who spent the last session hunting down the monsters in town start this session with Chapel of Peace.

Returning to Duponde

When the characters return to Duponde, they find Grimbold anxious to speak with them and find out what they've learned. Begin by reading:

After dealing with the thugs outside town, you turn around and retrace your steps, returning a couple of hours after you set out. When you reach the town, you find a group of four guards watching the gate. They send for the marshal, Grimbold, who soon arrives. Grimbold and the guards with him look like they've seen plenty of fighting in your absence.

"You're back!" the marshal says. "What news? Did you find the halfling?"

Encourage the players to recount highlights of the last two sessions as their characters saw them. The marshal

interrupts to ask questions about exact numbers of opponents or to clarify details. He wants to know if anything in the woods poses a threat to the town. If Remy escaped, Grimbold is disappointed, but he thanks the party members for trying, especially in light of their encounters with monsters and bandits.

Grimbold explains what has happened in the town while the characters have been gone. He has managed to round up guards and arm them to stem off the worst of the monster attacks—black spiders at the armory, roaming shadow beasts in the streets, and packs of giant rats by the warehouses. Creatures have broken into homes or attacked foolhardy souls who ventured out. Several townsfolk are injured or dead.

Grimbold encourages the characters to keep helping out. If they ask what they can do next, he tells them that he's worried about the graveyard. Go on by reading:

"If you're still willing to help, my guards tell me that people who live near the cemetery say they saw and heard strange goings on there just before this started—a voice chanting in some dark language, shadowy figures skulking around the mausoleums, ghost lights dancing beneath the trees. Then the night turned to what's around us now. I don't have any guards to spare, not with the trouble in the streets. If you'd look into the graveyard, I'd be in your debt."

Continue to the **Pillaged Tomb** encounter when the player characters go to the graveyard.



Chapel of Peace

If the characters protected Duponde by clearing out the armory and scouring the streets of shadow monsters, they quickly become heroes to the townsfolk. Start by reading:

Soon after your battle against the pack of beasts roaming the streets, a pair of town guards finds you and informs you that Brother Zelan at the Chapel of Peace is asking for you. They lead you to the western end of town and a small temple that has a crumbling bell tower. The shrine is serving as a makeshift stronghold. A number of townspeople huddle inside, and six warriors guard the doors and watch the street.

A short, thick-waisted old priest tends to the people, but when he sees you enter, he draws you aside. "I am Brother Zelan, and I run this chapel," he says. "Grimbold's men tell me that you're slayers of shadows. I think I might have something to aid you."

Brother Zelan is a stubborn, aggressive old man who says that he'd be out hunting monsters with mace and holy symbol himself if he didn't have to look after the people seeking shelter in the chapel. It's mostly bluster. Beneath his loud talk he's wise enough to know that the dangers threatening Duponde are more than he can deal with. He asks the characters about what they've seen and done so far this night, interrupting with remarks such as "Serves them right!" or "That foul creature had it coming!"

When he's heard the tales, Brother Zelan provides the party with some news of his own.

"All this trouble started in the graveyard just down the hill. Just before the shadows came, I heard dark voices chanting in the distance. I came out on the steps to look, and I could see ghost lights dancing around the trees and dark figures skulking about the tombs. I think I saw that wizard fellow whose been staying at the Old Owl.

I started toward the villains, but before I could confront them, I heard a terrible cry. A wave of dark power swept out from the cemetery and changed the night to . . . this.

"Enough talk, though. I have a gift to aid you. When I was a young acolyte here, fifty years past, the wizard Vontarin came to the chapel and put this in our keeping just before he disappeared. He said that this was a potent talisman against the power of shadow, and that if shadows ever threatened Duponde, it could be of service. Maybe you can go to the graveyard and put it to use?"

Brother Zelan then gives the characters a golden holy symbol containing a red gem. This symbol, which he calls the symbol of dawn, is nonmagical, but it has a special effect when the characters confront Vontarin in Session 12.

Brother Zelan urges them to hurry to the cemetery and investigate what happened there. When the



characters are ready to venture into the graveyard, continue to the **Pillaged Tomb** encounter.

Daybreak

At the conclusion of this session, Duponde's long, dreadful night comes to an end. Dawn arrives, and as the sun comes up, the town shifts from the Shadowfell back to the normal world.

Leaving the dank shadows of the mausoleum, you find the graveyard is quiet. No more undead or shadow monsters lurk nearby, but you have found no sign of the missing wizard. The first rays of dawn glow dimly in the east.

Suddenly, the same dizzying jolt you felt hours ago at the Old Owl Inn spins your head and innards. The world becomes brighter, colors return, and the oppressive dread you've felt all night fades away. Duponde seems to be returning to the normal world, but how long it will stay there is anyone's guess.

After this session, characters can take an extended rest, sleeping through the day and replenishing expended resources.

PILLAGED TOMB

Encounter Level 3

Setup

- 3 grasping zombies (Z)
- 4 leeching shadows (L)
- 2 ghoul flesh seekers (G)

Before you set up, have the players make a DC 18 group Perception check. If at least half the characters succeed, they spot the leeching shadows at the same time that they see the zombies. If at least half the characters achieve a result of 21 or higher, they also spot the ghouls. Any creatures the characters fail to see begin the battle hidden. Do not place hidden monsters on the map until they attack.

When the characters arrive, read:

Duponde's cemetery is filled with mossy old tombstones leaning at odd angles, gnarled, leafless trees, and crooked cobbled paths littered with cracked stones and wiry tufts of grass. The unnatural gloom hanging over the town is especially dense here—palpable fear lingers in the air. Ahead is a stone mausoleum, its roof decorated with small, leering gargoyles. But between you and the tomb, several clumsy figures dressed in dirt-stained garb shamle through the shadows. They look freshly slain.

3 Grasping Zombies (Z)	Level 1 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)	
HP 33; Bloodied 16	Initiative -1
AC 13, Fortitude 14, Reflex 11, Will 11	Perception -1
Speed 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
TRAITS	
Zombie Weakness	
A critical hit automatically reduces the zombie to 0 hit points.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⬇ Slam ⬆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 3 damage, or 1d12 + 8 against a grabbed target.	
⬇ Zombie Grasp ⬆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The zombie grabs the target (escape DC 12) if it does not have a creature grabbed.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Deathless Hunger ⬆ Encounter	
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.	
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.	
Str 16 (+3)	Dex 8 (-1)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 1 (-5)
Alignment unaligned	Languages —

2 Ghoul Flesh Seekers (G)	Level 4 Lurker
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	
HP 45; Bloodied 22	Initiative +10
AC 18, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +9
Speed 8	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic;	
Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
Shadow Skulk	
The ghoul flesh seeker can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has cover or concealment instead of needing superior cover or total concealment.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⬇ Claw ⬆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
⬇ Prepare for Sacrifice ⬆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature the flesh seeker was hidden from at the start of the flesh seeker's turn); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the flesh seeker knocks the target prone and grabs it. The target takes a -2 penalty to attempts to escape the grab and cannot stand up until the grab ends.	
⬇ Render unto Orcus (weapon) ⬆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one prone creature grabbed by the flesh seeker); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage.	
Skills Acrobatics +11, Stealth +11	
Str 12 (+3)	Dex 19 (+6)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 10 (+2)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages Common
Equipment dagger	

4 Leeching Shadows (L)	Level 1 Minion Lurker
Small shadow humanoid	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +7
AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +1
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)	
TRAITS	
Born of Shadows	
The shadow can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has partial concealment instead of needing total concealment.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⬇ Shadow Meld (necrotic) ⬆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4 necrotic damage, and the shadow shifts into the target's space and melds with its shadow (save ends). While the shadow is so melded, it is removed from play, and the target grants combat advantage and takes ongoing 4 necrotic damage. When the target saves, the shadow reappears in a square adjacent to the target of the shadow's choice.	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 11 (+0)	Dex 16 (+3)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 5 (-3)
Alignment evil	Languages Common

Tactics

Ghoul Flesh Seekers: If the ghouls are hidden at the start of the battle, they wait for characters to come close enough for the ghouls to reach in a single move, opening the fight with *prepare for sacrifice*. If they aren't hidden, they begin combat by closing in and moving to a place where they can make Stealth checks to become hidden, so that they can use *prepare for sacrifice* on the following round.

Grasping Zombies: These corpses shambling toward the nearest living creature and attack. Each one uses *zombie grasp* on a target, and then uses *slam* against the grabbed target. They fight with little intelligence, ignoring potential flanking situations.

Leeching Shadows: These creatures wait for the party to engage the zombies and then mount a sudden rush when the characters are occupied. They use the zombies as flanking partners.

Features of the Area

Illumination: It's dark. Light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Benches: These squares are difficult terrain.

Bushes and Hedges: These plants are difficult terrain, and their squares are lightly obscured.

Mausoleum: This tomb's iron door is open, and the building has no windows. The roof is about 10 feet above the ground at the edge. It requires a DC 19 Athletics check to climb the wall.

Open Grave: Creatures that fall in this shallow grave take 1d6 damage. Scrambling out of the grave requires 2 extra squares of movement.

Ponds: The water of the pond is difficult terrain.

Statues: The pedestals are 5 feet tall, and they're blocking terrain. A creature can climb to the top of one with a successful DC 8 Athletics check.

Tombstones: A square containing a monument is difficult terrain.

Trees: A tree trunk's square is difficult terrain. Climbing it requires a DC 8 Athletics check. The trees are about 20 feet tall.

Conclusion

With the undead haunting the graveyard defeated, the characters can examine Evard's Tomb. Someone used crowbars, now discarded on the path, to pry open the mausoleum door. The three laborers who helped Nathaire open the tomb were transformed into the zombies in this encounter.

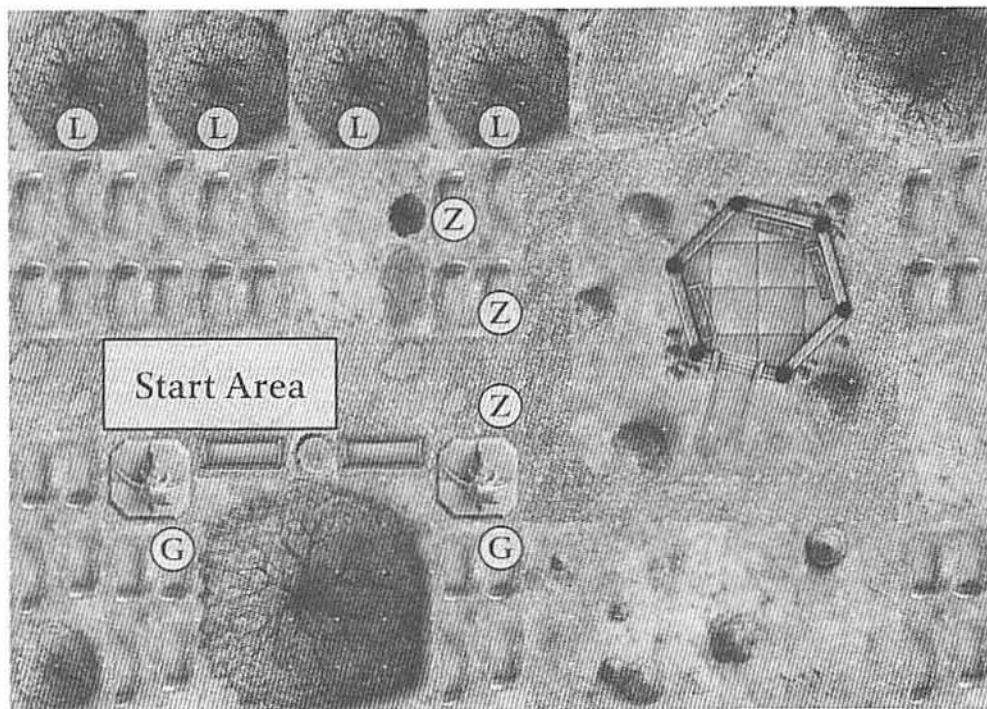
Searching the Tomb: Inside, the tomb contains a large sarcophagus, which has also been forced open. Inside is a black-boned skeleton clad in tattered robes. These bones, which the characters and townsfolk believe to be Evard's, are the mortal remains of Vontarin. The bones are well preserved, despite being blackened. They look undisturbed, as though whoever opened the sarcophagus stopped as soon as the seal was broken. A character who succeeds on a DC 19 Arcana check can tell that some kind of magic trap has been recently triggered here.

Nathaire's Journal: If the characters did not find Nathaire's journal in the Nowhere to Run encounter in Session 3, they can find it here. The journal is a book bound in black leather near the base of the sarcophagus. The journal is written in a code of Nathaire's devising, and it will take time to decipher. See Session 5 for more information on the journal's contents.

Daybreak: When the characters have had a chance to examine the scene, return to Daybreak, page 25.

Reward

For fighting the monsters, interacting with Grimbold or Zelan, and helping investigate the graveyard, each character gains 200 XP. If a player has attended every session this season, his or her character should have 1,000 XP if the character completed the quest in Session 3. That character now advances to level 2.



CHAPTER 2

This marks the beginning of the second chapter of *Dark Legacy of Evard*. The encounters in this chapter assume that the characters are 2nd level. If most of your group is 1st level, see **Adjusting the Encounters** on page 2. Each character has had an extended rest and should have full hit points and healing surges, as well as 1 action point and access to his or her daily powers.

Despair Deck: If you are using this component, have each player draw a card from the Despair Deck. A player's card affects his or her character.

SESSION 5: VISTANI

Duponde's long night has finally come to an end. With the arrival of dawn, the town shifted back from the Shadowfell to the world. The question is how long the respite might last, and whether the characters can unravel the mystery of what has happened here.

NATHAIRE'S JOURNAL

Those who possess Nathaire's journal might want to read through it and determine what exactly he was up to. However, the journal consists of difficult arcane lore, cryptic symbols, and a tricky code Nathaire created to protect his notes from snooping eyes. It takes hours to read. The extended rest at the start of this session provides the characters with their first opportunity to decipher the journal.

Deciphering the writing is a simple skill challenge. Each try requires 2 hours and a DC 19 Arcana, History, or Insight check. The readers successfully solve the journal if they achieve 4 successes before 3 failures. If a character fails, he or she can't try it again until gaining a level. Successful readers gain an advantage in the skill challenge in Session 13 and learn:

- ◆ Nathaire is a talented wizard and a student of umbral (shadow) magic.
- ◆ He is extremely ambitious and impatient, seeking shortcuts to true power.
- ◆ He has created a ritual he intended to use to summon the soul of a dead spellcaster so that he can drain it of arcane energy, storing the stolen power in an orb or similar vessel.
- ◆ Nathaire has been searching for Evard's Tomb because Evard is famed as the discoverer of shadow magic. Nathaire dreams of making himself just as powerful as Evard was.

Valkan's Summons

Shortly after the characters finish the extended rest, a human boy named Valkan comes to them to deliver a message. Valkan is a Vistani lad, part of a group that knows much about the Shadowfell. When he comes, read:

You are just readying yourselves when a dark-haired human teenager approaches. He bows to you and says, "Forgive me for troubling you, masters. I am Valkan of the Vistani. My grandmother told me to tell you that you must come to her house today, before night falls again. She peers into the unseen world, and she says that you must know what she sees. I can take you."

Valkan is a quiet, serious boy who seems wiser than his years. He is very polite, and he replies with answers such as "Mother Grivelda said you would say that," "I know little of such things, but Mother Grivelda is very wise," or "You should ask Mother Grivelda; please, it is not far to her house."

History (DC 12): The Vistani are a clannish people who are known as rovers, mystics, and troublemakers. They're said to travel into the Shadowfell from time to time.

Insight (DC 12): Valkan is sincere. He earnestly believes that it's vital for the characters to speak with his grandmother as soon as possible.

If the characters are reticent about following Valkan, other people in Duponde suggest that it might be wise to hear what the elderly soothsayer has to say. They don't fully trust the Vistani woman, but they know of Grivelda's reputation as a seer of that which is hidden. Assuming the characters agree to follow Valkan, allow them to make any preparations they wish to make before setting out. Continue with Mother Grivelda's House.

Mother Grivelda's House

When the characters agree to follow Valkan to his grandmother's house, read:

Valkan leads along the road heading south from Duponde into the countryside. After a walk of a mile or so, he turns down a lane leading to a lonely farmhouse that has a large, painted wagon parked in its fenced yard. He shows you to the house's front door and knocks once before going inside.

"Grandmother, I have brought them," he calls.

Through the open door, you see an old woman in a colorful shawl sitting by a fire. "Good, Valkan, good," she answers. "Be a sweet lad and put the teapot on the fire for me. Our visitors and I have much to talk about."

She waits for you to come in, and then gives you a chilling smile. "Now, sweeties, answer my riddle: Who is buried in Evard's Tomb?"

Grivelda acts like a kindly grandmother, calling her guests "child" or "sweetie," and smiling at any compliments paid her. But every now and then her voice sharpens and her gentle manner falls away, replaced by a tone of cold, calculating certainty. She is extremely perceptive and instantly picks up on any skepticism or doubt.

Grivelda knows or guesses everything covered in the Adventure Background. She knows that Evard is the one who survived the wizards' duel fifty years past, and that he buried Vontarin in Duponde's graveyard under a false name. She has no idea where Evard is now or whether he is still alive. However, her gift of second sight has shown her that Vontarin's ghost possessed the rash wizard who disturbed the tomb. Specific replies Grivelda might give include:

Who's buried in Evard's Tomb? "Not Evard, my children. The spirits made the truth known to Mother Grivelda. You see, long ago, Evard came to Duponde and defeated his enemy. He buried Vontarin in Duponde's graveyard, and allowed everyone to believe that it was he who died that night—a clever ploy for a man who has as many enemies as Evard does."

What did Nathaire do? "Was that his name? I have seen only his face. I did not meet him, but I know that he was an ambitious young wizard, full of confidence and the desire for power. I know that he woke Vontarin's ghost, children. How or why, I cannot say."

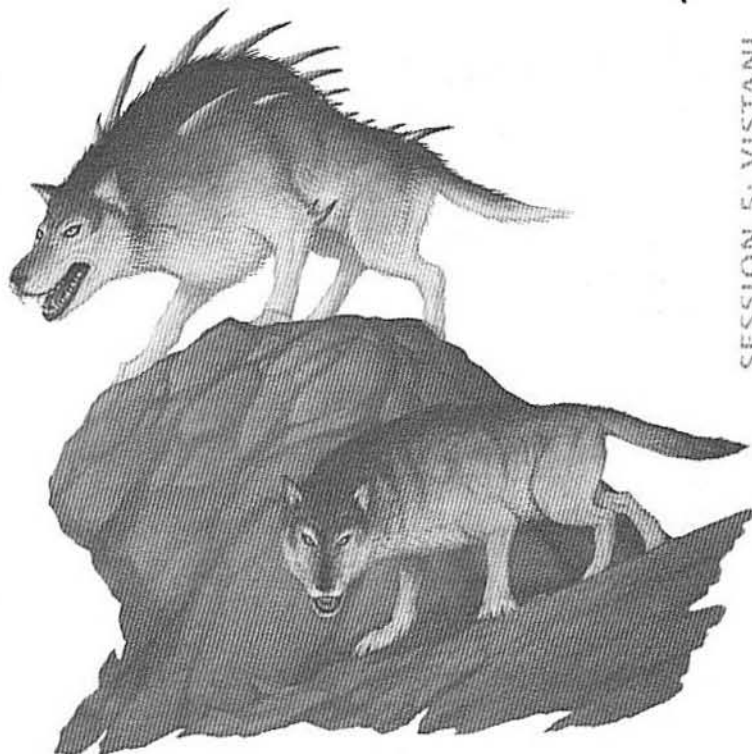
Why did Duponde slip into the shadows? "It is the curse of Evard. He crafted terrible spells to imprison his enemy Vontarin if he should ever grow restless in his grave. Those spells now imprison us, as well."

Isn't Duponde safe now? "Oh no, my sweeties. At each sunset, Duponde again falls into shadow, and there it stays until sunup comes again. For a few days and nights, it will stay like that, but soon, soon, Duponde will not return from the dark side. Evard's curse is inevitable."

How can we save Duponde? "You must set right what the young wizard put wrong. Vontarin's soul walks free of its old bones, within the young wizard, and Evard's curse seeks to trap Evard's enemy in shadows forever. Quiet Vontarin again, and quiet Evard's curse in doing so. You must find the young wizard and wrest Vontarin's soul from within him."

Where is Vontarin now? Or Nathaire? "It is hard to see, my children. They might be on the other side. But I might, if I were you, begin by looking in Vontarin's manor. His soul surely has not forgotten the house he lived in for so many years."

This begins the Explore Vontarin's Manse quest.



GRIVELDA'S FORTUNE TELLING

Mother Grivelda offers to tell the fortune of any character who wants it done. Have the player roll a d20. Record the result for use later in this session. Don't tell the player what the roll is for until the player makes an attack roll or a saving throw during the encounter later in this session.

On a roll of 10 or higher, the player can substitute that roll for one attack roll or saving throw made later during this session. Grivelda describes this as "Fortune smiles upon you soon!"

On a roll of 9 or lower, the player must substitute the roll for the first attack roll or saving throw result of 10 or higher he or she rolls later this session. Grivelda clucks her tongue and says, "An ill hour approaches. Be careful!"

Howling Wolves

When the players are done speaking with Mother Grivelda, or when you're ready to continue with the combat encounter for the session, go to the **Howling Wolves** encounter. Drawn to the outskirts of Duponde by the dark curse that has settled over the town, a werewolf and its pack of gray wolves are on the hunt.

HOWLING WOLVES

Encounter Level 1

Setup

1 frenzied werewolf (F)

3 gray wolves (W)

Mother Grivelda

Valkan

Characters start in the cramped kitchen and sitting room of the farmhouse. Any characters who chose to stand watch or remain outside are within a couple of squares of the front door.

When the encounter begins, read:

A howl rises just outside. Three lean wolves bound through the trees toward the house. A humanoid wolf-creature that has long claws runs swiftly on its hind legs alongside the beasts.

"Grandmother, wolves!" Valkan cries.

Mother Grivelda nods grimly. "Dark creatures stir under the shadow's touch, boy. This is only the beginning. Let us hope our visitors can protect us."

3 Gray Wolves (W)

Level 2 Skirmisher

Medium natural beast

HP 38; Bloodied 19

Initiative +6

AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13

Perception +7

Speed 8

Low-light vision

STANDARD ACTIONS

Ⓢ Bite ⚡ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, or 2d6 + 5 against a prone target. If the wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target falls prone.

Effect: The wolf shifts up to 4 squares.

Str 13 (+2)

Dex 16 (+4)

Wis 13 (+2)

Con 14 (+3)

Int 2 (-3)

Cha 10 (+1)

Alignment unaligned

Languages –

Tactics

The pack tries to force the front door, and if that fails, the creatures try to scramble in through windows in the bedrooms and the hall. If the characters come outside to fight, the monsters oblige. At first, the pack focuses on the characters rather than the Vistani.

Frenzied Werewolf: This lycanthrope begins the encounter in hybrid form, and it uses its *lycanthrope fury* power recklessly.

Gray Wolves: These canines surround and flank their opponents, knocking foes prone and savaging them on the ground. If the werewolf and at least one gray wolf are killed, the remaining gray wolves might run away.

Frenzied Werewolf (F)

Level 4 Brute

Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human

HP 63; Bloodied 31

Initiative +6

AC 18, Fortitude 19, Reflex 18, Will 16

Perception +9

Speed 6 (8 in wolf form)

Low-light vision

TRAITS

Regeneration

The werewolf regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the werewolf takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS

Ⓢ Claw ⚡ At-Will

Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, or 2d8 + 8 against a bloodied target, and the target falls prone.

Ⓢ Bite (disease) ⚡ At-Will

Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1).

Ⓢ Club (weapon) ⚡ At-Will

Requirement: The werewolf must be in human or hybrid form.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 2 damage, or 2d8 + 7 against a bloodied target.

Ⓢ Lycanthrope Fury ⚡ At-Will

Requirement: The werewolf must be in hybrid form.

Effect: The werewolf uses claw and bite. Then the werewolf takes 5 damage.

MINOR ACTIONS

Change Shape (polymorph) ⚡ At-Will

Effect: The werewolf alters its physical form to appear as a Medium wolf, unique human, or hybrid.

Skills Bluff +8, Intimidate +8

Str 19 (+7)

Dex 17 (+6)

Wis 13 (+4)

Con 18 (+7)

Int 10 (+3)

Cha 11 (+3)

Alignment evil

Languages Common

Equipment club

Werewolf Moon Frenzy

Level 4 Disease

This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.

Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a -2 penalty to Will.

Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.

Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.

Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.

10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.

11-14: No change.

15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Development

Valkan and Grivelda aren't combatants in this encounter, but as a Vistani wise woman, Grivelda has some power. At the end of the first round, she moves to within sight of the werewolf and gives it the infamous Vistani evil eye, saying, "I twice curse you, foul shape-shifter, and sever you from the moon's dark blessing!" This causes the lycanthrope to lose its regeneration and ability to pass on moon frenzy (save ends). Grivelda then grabs Valkan and her broomstick, thumps her broom on the floor, and magically jumps into the rafters of the house with the boy. She and Valkan remain safe in the rafters until combat ends.

To add tension to the scene, you might want a monster to attack one of the Vistani. Assume that the Vistani are hit if attacked, using their injuries for color. They come to serious harm only if the characters utterly fail to defend the farm.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Doors: Exterior doors are closed, but neither locked nor barred. A character inside a house and adjacent to such a door can bar it as a minor action. It takes a DC 19 Athletics check to break through the barred door.

Interior doors are open. If a character closes a door, a gray wolf can force it open with a successful DC 12 Strength check made as a move action.

Garden Vegetation: These plants are difficult terrain.

Fieldstone Fence: The fence is difficult terrain.

Fireplace: A fire burns here. A creature forced into the fireplace square takes 1d6 fire damage.

Furnishings: The bed, chairs, table, counter, and other furnishings are difficult terrain.

Trees: A tree trunk's square is difficult terrain. Climbing it requires a DC 8 Athletics check. The trees are about 20 feet tall.

Well: A sturdy wooden cap makes this well nothing more than difficult terrain.

Windows: These casements are 2 feet wide, 3 feet tall, and 4 feet off the ground outside. A creature can climb through an open window. Doing so requires a DC 8 Athletics or Acrobatics check and 2 extra squares of movement.

A character adjacent to a window can close or open its heavy shutters as a minor action. It takes a DC 12 Athletics check to force a shuttered window open from outside.

Conclusion

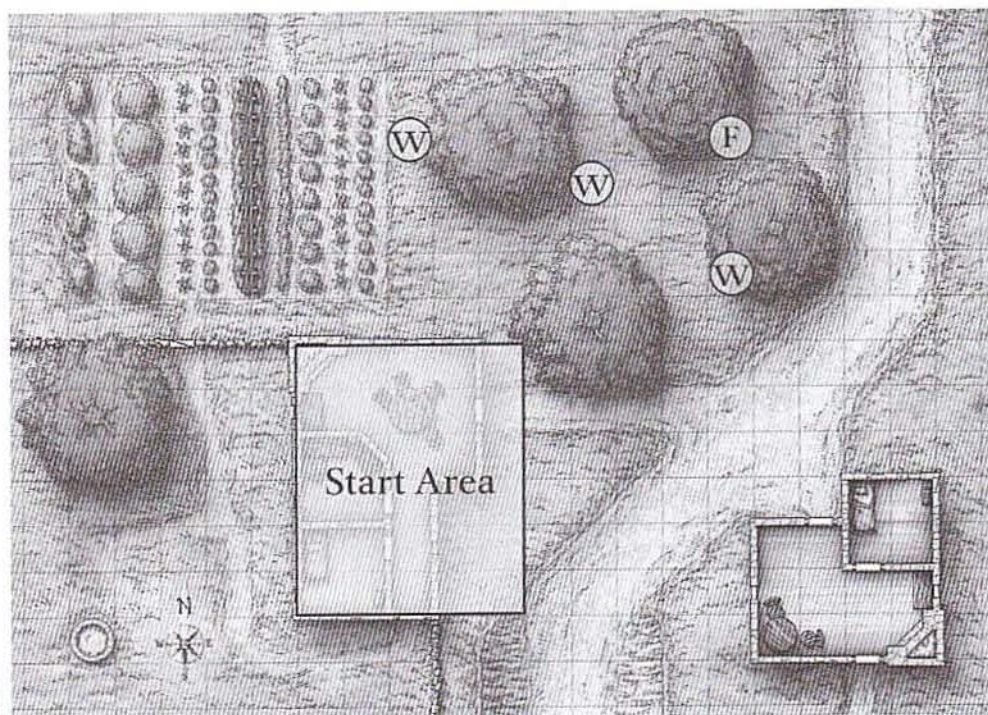
Grivelda reveals any information required to start the characters on the aforementioned quests.

The old woman is capable of brewing common potions and silvering weapons. The characters have to pay for such items and services, but Grivelda offers her saviors a 20 percent discount.

Reward

Each character gains 250 XP at the end of the session for interacting with Valkan and Mother Grivelda and for battling the monsters.

Treasure: Grivelda is grateful for the protection. She retrieves a bundle from beneath loose boards in the kitchen floor and gives it to the characters, saying, "I think you can find a use for this, children." It's a +1 vicious weapon. She also gives the party 2 potions of healing.



SESSION 6: VONTARIN'S HOUSE

With the advice of Mother Grivelda to guide them, the characters have a daunting task ahead. They need to find Vontarin's restless ghost and put it to rest again. Grivelda believes that Vontarin might have returned to his old home. Since the characters have few other leads at this point, this is clearly the next move.

Any of the people in Duponde can direct the characters to Vontarin's old manor. It stands about a mile southwest of town. If Valkan survived the fight against the wolf pack, he is happy to lead the party directly to the place, although he is unwilling to venture into the manor grounds.

New Owners

Vontarin's house has been abandoned for decades, but a few months ago, the mage Harrumor and his murderous gang of tiefling cutthroats discovered the place and decided to make it their hideout. The tieflings have been preying on barge traffic on the nearby river, waylaying the occasional traveler on the road to Duponde,

and pilfering from the town's warehouses and stores. Townsfolk know that bandits lurk nearby but have no idea who they might be or where they're hiding.

After possessing Nathaire, Vontarin went straight to his old home, only to find it in ruins. He managed to fight through Harrumor's gang and descend into the dungeons. There, he searched for his old possessions. Discovering that the meddlesome friars of Saint Avarthil removed the items decades ago, Vontarin left in disgust.

Since the manse is their secret hideout, Harrumor's followers are determined to kill any intruders. It's almost certain that the characters clash with the tieflings and their pets just by setting foot in the manse. As soon as the tieflings discover any interloper in or near their lair, the battle is on. Go to the **New Owners** encounter.

Manse Grounds

When the characters reach the manse, begin by reading the following to the players.

In the countryside south of Duponde, you follow an old cart track. A couple miles from town, you find the correct turn



onto a long, tree-lined lane that winds through the thickets on a small hill and finally ends in a cobblestone court before a ruined mansion.

A large fountain stands in the center of the court, but its waters are black and slimy. The upper story shows signs of fire damage, and most of the roof has collapsed. Small gargoyles and elegant cornices lean at crooked angles. Thick ivy covers the walls and grows over what's left of the roof. Heavy shutters cover the windows. A large front door faces the fountain, and a smaller door leads into the side of the building.

If a character succeeds on a DC 19 Perception check, add:

A faint whiff of wood smoke is on the air, along with a musky animal scent. You can see that the path leading up to the manse is well trodden, by both humanoids and beasts.

Manse Interior

If the characters have a chance to look around the manse without a fight, or if they search through the place after they've beaten the tieflings in this encounter, read:

The furnishings and décor of this manor house are now rotten and ruined. Cobwebs fill the corners, and piles of cracked plaster have fallen from the ceiling overhead. Charred beams and soot show the damage of a fire that consumed most of the upper floor. Mice, rats, and other small vermin have left ample signs of their presence in the old house.

Foyer

The room looking out over the courtyard and fountain was formerly the manse's entrance hall.

This room is the manor's grand foyer. A sweeping staircase once led up to the second floor, but it collapsed long ago—jagged, burned beams along the walls mark where it once stood. The wreckage has been cleared away, and several old chairs that are in reasonably good shape have been arranged in a sitting area.

Kitchen

The room on the west end of the manor is the kitchen. A large hearth is still intact and functional. The tieflings do most of their cooking here.

A large hearth dominates this room, which also has a table and chairs. Warm embers glow in the hearth, and fresh firewood is stacked nearby.

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Perception check notices that a few of the kitchen knives are silver. These count as daggers and are considered to be silvered.

Drawing Room

The room at the manor's east end is in the best shape of any of the remaining rooms. The tieflings use it as their sitting room.

The smell of mildew isn't as strong in this large parlor. Several old portraits in gilded frames still hang on the walls. The most prominent shows a haughty human nobleman with a shaved head, fierce eyes, and a forked goatee. Several chairs have been cleaned off and positioned around a table here. The table is covered in playing cards and coins.

The tieflings were in the middle of a card game when the characters arrived. A character inspecting the table finds several piles of gold, silver, and copper. The wealth totals 35 gold pieces. There is also a complete deck of Three Dragon Ante cards.

A character that succeeds on a DC 19 Perception check or has an equivalent passive Perception notices that the word "Nimdel" has been scratched onto the table with a knife. This phrase is the password for the trap in the basement.

Banquet Room

The largest room in the manse is the banquet room, along the south side of the old building.

This must have been a grand old dining room back in its day. Remains of a balcony on the second floor encircle it on three sides, and a row of high windows face south. Large patches of sky now show through the ceiling and the ruined floor above, and the great windows are broken. An old table and chairs stand near a large heap of provisions in sacks, barrels, crates, and other containers. Close at hand is a trapdoor in the floor.

Provisions: These goods are new and bear the markings of various trading posts and provisioning companies from the area. Most of the goods are of no value to the characters, though they do discover a potion of healing, a quiver of 20 arrows, 2 sunrods, 50 feet of hempen rope, and a belt of vigor.

The tieflings looted the provisions from nearby farms and caravans. Marshal Grimbolt would be very interested to learn that they've been found here. He lets them keep the items mentioned above.

Trapdoor: The trapdoor reveals a staircase leading down to the manse cellars. If the characters want to investigate, they'll have to wait until next week during Session 7.

NEW OWNERS

Encounter Level 2

A character can approach the manor quietly with a successful DC 16 Stealth check. Failure to approach stealthily starts a battle.

Setup

- 2 crested felldrakes (C)
- 3 Fell Court ruffians (R)
- 1 hissing felldrake (H)
- 1 Fell Court underboss (U)
- Trapdoor (T)

The characters might see within the building. Use the descriptions in the earlier section on the manor. Describe the monsters as they attack.

When the characters near the manor, read:

The manor house isn't as abandoned as it looks. Soft sounds of movement and reptilian hissing from within indicate someone or something is home.

Hissing Felldrake (H)	Level 3 Artillery
Medium natural beast (reptile)	
HP 38; Bloodied 19	Initiative +5
AC 17, Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +8
Speed 7	
Resist 10 acid	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Bite ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage.	
☞ Fell Spit (acid) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d10 + 6 acid damage.	
Effect: If the target is bloodied, it is slowed until the end of its next turn. If the target is already slowed, it is instead dazed (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +10	
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 3 (-3) Cha 13 (+2)
Alignment unaligned Languages –	

Tactics

The tieflings prefer to fight in the manor, but if necessary, they engage the characters outside. They try to use the doorway as a choke point.

Fell Court Ruffians: These tieflings come to close quarters beside their felldrake pets and use their *dances* with drakes power. If the underboss and at least half the drakes are dead, any surviving ruffians flee.

Fell Court Underboss: This tiefling also enters melee combat. He uses *drake wrangler* to help his felldrake pets.

3 Fell Court Ruffians (R)	Level 2 Minion Brute
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +3
AC 14, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 13	Perception +2
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Resist 5 fire	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Club (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC, or +8 vs. AC if the target is bloodied	
Hit: 5 damage.	
Miss: 3 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
☞ Dances with Drakes ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: A drake ally makes a melee attack against an enemy adjacent to the ruffian.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The ruffian uses club against the triggering enemy.	
Skills Bluff +5, Stealth +8	
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 8 (+0)
Alignment evil Languages Common	
Equipment leather armor, club	

Fell Court Underboss (U)	Level 3 Soldier (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling	
HP 47; Bloodied 23	Initiative +6
AC 19, Fortitude 15, Reflex 15, Will 14	Perception +8
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Resist 5 fire	
TRAITS	
☞ Drake Wrangler ♦ Aura 1	
Drake allies gain resist 5 fire and a +2 power bonus to AC while in the aura.	
☞ Hellbound (fire) ♦ Aura 1	
Any creature takes 5 fire damage when it leaves the aura.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Bastard Sword (fire, weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC, or +9 vs. AC if the target is bloodied	
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage.	
Effect: Until the end of the underboss's next turn, the target takes 5 fire damage each time it uses an attack power that doesn't include the underboss as a target.	
☞ Diabolical Strike (fire, weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex, or +9 vs. Reflex if the target is bloodied	
Hit: 1d10 + 6 fire damage. If the underboss has combat advantage against the target, the target cannot shift until the end of the underboss's next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
☞ Infernal Wrath (fire) ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares of the underboss hits it with an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The triggering enemy takes 1d6 + 4 fire damage.	
Skills Bluff +9, Intimidate +9, Stealth +9, Streetwise +9	
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 15 (+3)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 18 (+5) Cha 17 (+4)
Alignment evil Languages Common, Infernal	
Equipment leather armor, bastard sword	

2 Crested Felldrakes (C)**Level 2 Skirmisher**

Small natural beast (reptile)

HP 39; Bloodied 19

Initiative +6

AC 16, Fortitude 15, Reflex 15, Will 12

Perception +8

Speed 8

TRAITS**Pack Frenzy**

The felldrake gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls while adjacent to a felldrake ally.

STANDARD ACTIONS**① Bite ♦ At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage, and a felldrake ally within 2 squares of the felldrake can shift up to 2 squares as an immediate reaction.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS**Undaunted Strider ♦ At-Will**

Trigger: The felldrake is hit by an opportunity attack.

Effect (Free Action): The felldrake shifts up to 2 squares.

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +9

Str 16 (+4)

Dex 16 (+4)

Wis 15 (+3)

Con 15 (+3)

Int 3 (-3)

Cha 11 (+1)

Alignment unaligned Languages –

Felldrakes: Crested felldrakes fight better in a pack, and they try to remain near each other to take advantage of *pack frenzy*. The hissing felldrake moves to positions where it can use *fell spit* against open targets.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Doors: Exterior doors are closed and locked from inside. It requires a DC 12 Thievery check to pick a lock or a DC 19 Athletics to force open a door.

Fallen Trees: This debris is difficult terrain.

Fountain and Pond: These water features are difficult terrain.

PROVIDING A HOOK

The characters might wonder whether it's necessary to continue investigating Vontarin's manor. To provide a hook for them to continue, the tieflings might disclose the following pieces of information during combat (bemoaning their bad luck), or after the battle if the characters spare one of them.

- ♦ The gang didn't find anything useful in the manor when it first came here.
- ♦ A darkness descended on the manse last night, and a chill spread through the house.
- ♦ The gang's boss, Harrumor, has no tolerance for intruders, but even he couldn't stop "the wizard."
- ♦ After dawn came, Harrumor and some of the other tieflings went downstairs to investigate.

Furnishings: The bed, chairs, table, counter, and other furnishings are difficult terrain.

Provisions: These squares are difficult terrain.

Statues: The pedestals are 5 feet tall, and they're blocking terrain. A creature can climb to the top of one with a successful DC 8 Athletics check.

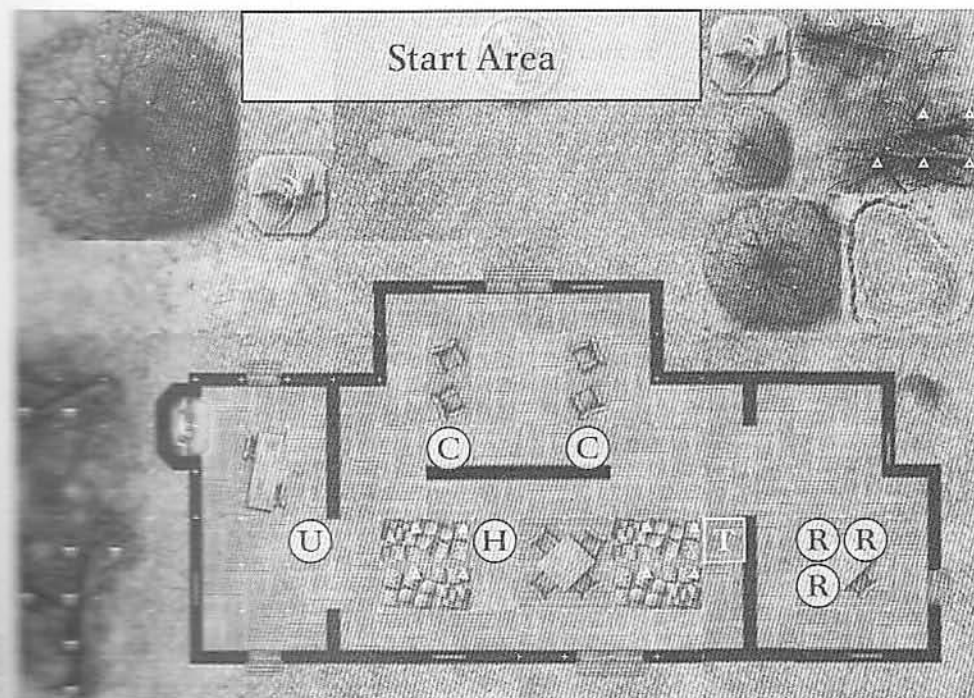
Trapdoor: This access is in plain view. It leads to a stairway down to the cellars, which the characters can explore next session.

Trees: A tree trunk's square is difficult terrain. Climbing it requires a DC 8 Athletics check. The trees are about 20 feet tall.

Windows: These casements are 2 feet wide, 3 feet tall, and 5 feet off the ground outside. Each one is shuttered, but a character adjacent to a window can close or open its shutters as a minor action. A creature can climb through an open window. Doing so requires a DC 8 Athletics or Acrobatics check and 2 extra squares of movement.

Reward

Each character gains 200 XP at the end of the session for battling the monsters.



SESSION 7: VONTARIN'S CELLARS

Characters began their search through the ruins of Vontarin's house last session, only to discover that a gang of vicious tiefling bandits now occupies the place. In this session, the characters continue their explorations, descending into the cellars where the mage once had his workrooms and laboratories.

Nathaire is no longer in the manse. Vontarin's ghost possessing him, he searched the old home earlier in the adventure. Finding that the friars of Saint Avarthil Monastery removed his tomes and implements decades ago, he was furious. Before he could leave, dawn came and he was stranded in the Shadowfell. However, characters can find a clue to Nathaire's current whereabouts in Vontarin's secret cellars.

Begin this session with the characters assembled on the stairs leading down to the cellar from the trapdoor in the manse's banquet hall.

Cellars

The tiefling bandits use the cellars as their chief hideout.

A steep, narrow stairway descends 20 feet from the trapdoor to a dank passageway of gray-green brick.

Imp Statue

Vontarin created a magic trap here to guard the entrance to his secret sanctum. An invisible glyph

Fiery Imp Statue	Level 3 Trap
Object	
Detect Perception DC 19, Arcana DC 17	Initiative –
HP 20	
Resist 10 to all damage	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Attack ♦ At-Will	
<i>Trigger:</i> A creature enters the glyph square (the square marked T on the map on page 39) without speaking the password.	
<i>Attack:</i> Close burst 2 (originates from the imp statue; creatures in the burst); +4 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 6 damage.	
<i>Miss:</i> Half damage.	
COUNTERMEASURES	
♦ Disable: Thievery DC 19. <i>Success:</i> The glyph is disabled for 5 minutes. <i>Failure (14 or lower):</i> The glyph triggers.	
♦ Alternative Password: Arcana DC 19. <i>Requirement:</i> The creature must be adjacent to the glyph. <i>Success:</i> The creature can pass through the glyph unharmed for five minutes. <i>Failure (14 or lower):</i> The glyph triggers.	
♦ Jump: Athletics DC 12. A creature can jump over the glyph, but the angle and stairs make it difficult. <i>Failure (11 or lower):</i> The character triggers the glyph.	
♦ Password: <i>Requirement:</i> The creature must be adjacent to the glyph. A creature that speaks the password can pass through the glyph unharmed for five minutes.	

triggers a blast of fire to fill the short hallway at the foot of the stairs. If an intruder sets foot in the cistern room without speaking a password, fire bursts out from the imp statue. The password is "Nimdel," which the tieflings discovered in scattered notes they found in the house above.

To the right of the stairway's bottom stands the statue of a small winged devil, grinning slyly. It faces the hallway to the left.

Cistern Room

Three large pits in this room were once cisterns used to store water collected from catchments in the manor's roof. Fire destroyed those catchments as it ravaged the upper floors years ago, and the cisterns have run dry.

Three large pits yawn in the floor of this room. Each has a low lip of masonry surrounding it and is about 10 feet deep. The pit floors are full of damp brick and debris. Barrels, sacks, and crates of different sorts are heaped at the west end of the room, next to iron double doors.

The iron doors are unlocked and open easily. Containers here hold provisions like those on the mansion's first floor. These provisions include fourteen casks of wine, five tankards of ale, several pounds of dried meats, and a variety of clothes.

Misty Hallway

This was formerly another one of Vontarin's traps, but the old enchantments have dissipated. Now all that remains is purple smoke.

The hallway here is filled with a thick, purple mist that hangs eerily in place. Through the mist is a hall that continues to another set of doors.

The misty squares are lightly obscured. They're otherwise harmless. If the party takes too long to enter the mist, you can begin Encounter 7 by having one or more of the tieflings step out into the hallway on some routine errand.

When the characters move beyond the mist, read:

Large iron double doors lead to the north and to the east. Judging by the brackets and rusted chains discarded in the corner, you can tell the set of doors to the north was chained up at some point. A broken bronze seal that secured the chain in place remains among the links. Glyphs and a stylized sun symbol adorn the seal.

Religion (DC 12): *The seal—which looks aged but recently broken—is intended to avert evil. It's a prayer to Pelor.*

Unknown to anyone still in Duponde, friars from Saint Avarthil Monastery sealed the northern doors when

they emptied Vontarin's cellars after his disappearance. Harrumor and his tieflings broke the seal when they took over the manse.

Menagerie

This cage-filled room is where Vontarin kept interesting creatures he intended to study. It now serves as fell-drake kennels.

Half a dozen iron cages line the walls of this large room. Old straw covers the cage floors, which are otherwise devoid of furnishings. More goods are heaped up against the far wall.

If the characters haven't begun combat, they find some of the villains here. Go to the **Fell Designs** encounter.

Vontarin Family Crypt

This room was the burial chamber for Vontarin's ancestors. The tiefling bandits have set up a few bedrolls here, making it into a barracks.

Two impressive stone sarcophagi stand in the center of this room. One cover bears the image of a regal human lord and the other a noble lady. Rows of old bronze plaques line the walls, marking the locations of additional tombs. Along one side of the room are several bedrolls.

If the characters haven't begun combat, they find some of the bandits here. Go on to the **Fell Designs** encounter.



Perception (DC 12): The eastern sarcophagus has scrape marks on the lip of the lid, signs of having recently been opened. The tiefling bandits are using the sarcophagus to store their accumulated loot. Several large sacks contain 1,000 sp, 240 gp, a silver necklace decorated with tiny diamonds (250 gp), and +1 black iron armor.

Vontarin's Workroom

Vontarin conducted most of his magic research in this chamber. Harrumor, the tieflings' leader, chose this room as his own when the gang settled on the manor as their hideout.

Bookshelves, worktables for alchemical instruments, and cupboards full of glassware indicate that this was the laboratory of a wizard. A good deal of material is missing—the shelves are mostly empty and much of the glassware is broken. Complex arcane sigils inscribed on the walls have been deliberately damaged with hammer and chisel, leaving small piles of stone chips beneath each one. Judging by the dust on the shelves and glass, the place was cleaned out a long time ago.



FELL DESIGNS

Encounter Level 2

Setup

Group 1 (Menagerie)

4 Fell Court ruffians (R)

1 Fell Court blackheart (B)

Group 2 (Crypts)

4 Fell Court ruffians (R)

1 Fell Court blackheart (B)

Harrumor, Fell Court hellmage (H)

Do not place any of the monsters on the map until the characters see the creatures, such as by opening a door into one of the inhabited areas. Begin combat with the first monster group the characters disturb. The unengaged group hears the nearby fighting and joins the battle starting on the second round. Creatures in the reinforcing group gather just on their side of the doors and throw them open. Start these enemies on the map near the doorway leading into their room.

Harrumor, Fell Court Hellmage (H) Level 4 Artillery	
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling	
HP 42; Bloodied 21	Initiative +6
AC 18, Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 17	Perception +12
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Resist 5 fire	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Staff (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC, or +10 vs. AC if the target is bloodied	
Hit: 2d4 + 7 damage.	
⚡ Infernal Bolt (fire, implement, radiant) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex, or +10 vs. Reflex if the target is bloodied	
Hit: 1d8 + 3 fire and radiant damage, and ongoing 5 fire and radiant damage (save ends).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Infernal Wrath (fire) ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares of Harrumor hits it with an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The triggering enemy takes 1d6 + 5 fire damage.	
☠ See You in Hell ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: Harrumor drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Harrumor uses <i>infernal bolt</i> , and the attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
Skills Arcana +12, Bluff +10, History +12, Stealth +11	
Str 15 (+4)	Dex 19 (+6) Wis 20 (+7)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 21 (+7) Cha 17 (+5)
Alignment evil Languages Common, Infernal	
Equipment staff, dagger	

8 Fell Court Ruffians (R) Level 2 Minion Brute	
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +3
AC 14, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 13	Perception +2
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Resist 5 fire	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Club (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC, or +8 vs. AC if the target is bloodied	
Hit: 5 damage.	
Miss: 3 damage.	
Skills Bluff +5, Stealth +8	
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 8 (+0)
Alignment evil Languages Common	
Equipment leather armor, club	

2 Fell Court Blackhearts (B) Level 2 Lurker	
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling	
HP 37; Bloodied 18	Initiative +10
AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13	Perception +8
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Resist 5 fire	
TRAITS	
Blackhearted Scoundrel	
Whenever the blackheart deals damage to an enemy granting combat advantage to it, that enemy cannot spend healing surges (save ends).	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Deadly Sickle (necrotic, weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC, or +8 vs. AC if the target is bloodied	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 necrotic damage.	
☠ Sly Attack (necrotic, weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex, or +6 vs. AC if the target is bloodied	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 necrotic damage, or 2d6 + 14 necrotic damage if the blackheart started its turn in smoke form.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Smoke Form ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The blackheart assumes smoke form until it reverts to its normal form as a free action or until it drops to 0 hit points. While in smoke form, the blackheart cannot attack or be attacked and cannot regain hit points. Enemies can enter its space, and it can occupy the same space as another creature. It moves at full speed instead of half speed while squeezing. If the effect ends while the blackheart is occupying another creature's space, the blackheart reverts to its normal form in the nearest unoccupied space.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Blood Curse ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: The blackheart drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (Free Action): One enemy that the blackheart can see loses healing surge.	
Infernal Wrath (fire) ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares of the blackheart hits it with an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The triggering enemy takes 1d6 + 3 fire damage.	
Skills Acrobatics +11, Bluff +9, Stealth +11, Streetwise +9	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 20 (+6) Wis 15 (+3)
Con 19 (+5)	Int 13 (+2) Cha 17 (+4)
Alignment evil Languages Common, Infernal	
Equipment leather armor, sickle	

Tactics

Fell Court Blackhearts: These tieflings begin the battle by using *smoke form* and moving into flanking positions behind the characters' front line. They end *smoke form* to use *sly attack*, and return to *smoke form* on the following round, alternating this way when possible. If all other tieflings are beaten, remaining blackhearts flee in *smoke form*.

Harrumor: Harrumor stays back from the melee. He relies on *infernal bolt*, picking off spellcasters in preference to other targets.

Fell Court Ruffians: These tieflings fight to defend the blackhearts and Harrumor. The ruffians flee if they're the only tieflings left in the battle.

CONTINUING THE STORY

The tieflings might disclose the following pieces of information during combat or after the battle, if the characters spare one of them.

- ◆ The mansion was already looted when they arrived months ago.
- ◆ The wizard entered the basement and made its way toward the laboratory. They tried to fight him, but he was too powerful.
- ◆ The wizard acted as if possessed by some foul spirit.
- ◆ Before they fled from the basement, one of them managed to glimpse it searching its laboratory. The wizard seemed furious that so much was missing.
- ◆ The wizard never left the basement, but when dawn came, he was gone.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Small oil lamps in the menagerie, crypts, and workroom provide bright light in these chambers. The cellars are otherwise dark.

Cages: Doors to the cages are unlocked, and no keys remain here. The bars block movement, but neither block line of sight nor line of effect.

Doors: These doors are rusty iron plates riveted on an iron frame. They are unlocked.

Mist: Misty squares are lightly obscured.

Furnishings and Provisions: These squares are difficult terrain.

Sarcophagi: These tombs are difficult terrain. Opening a sarcophagus requires a DC 14 Strength check, but only dust and old bones lay within.

Bookshelves and Rack: These features are tall and are blocking terrain.

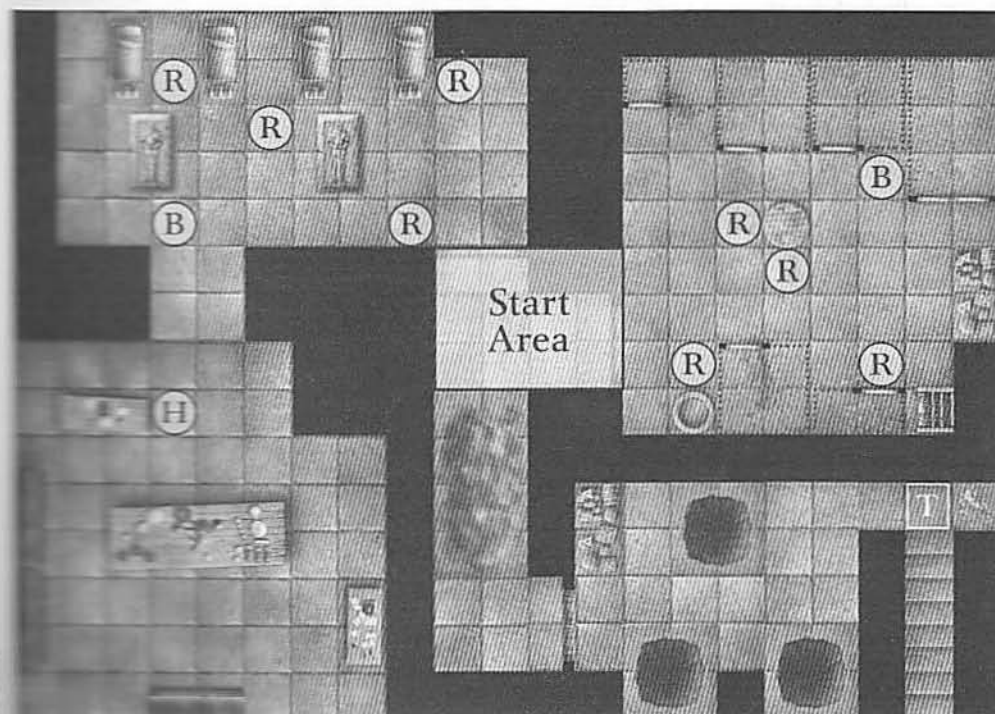
Conclusion

Make it clear to the players that if Nathaire came here, he probably found nothing. By the time the characters have finished exploring the cellars, it's getting late in the day. They've exhausted the leads available in Vontarin's house, so it's time to return to Duponde.

Reward

For battling the monsters, facing the trap, and completing the quest Search the Manse, each character receives 350 XP.

Treasure: In addition, the characters can recover a +1 *earthroot staff* from Harrumor.



SESSION 8: DARKNESS RETURNS

During the previous two sessions, the characters explored the remains of Vontarin's mansion, but they failed to find Nathaire. Returning to Duponde, they can spend the last hour of the afternoon talking to Duponde's citizens and preparing for night. Read:

You return to Duponde. The townspeople have spent the day fortifying the town. Duponde is full of unsettling rumors of dark apparitions, half-glimpsed monsters, and more. Most of the townsfolk are gathering in the chapel or the armory for protection as dusk approaches.

When the characters are finished talking to the town's residents, read:

At sunset, you feel the same strange sensation you felt the previous night. Air grows chill and an atmosphere of dread descends over the town.

Shortly after darkness falls, Marshal Grimbold comes to speak with you. "I heard that you went to see Mother Gri-velda," he says. "What did she tell you? Did you have any luck tracking down our missing mage?"

Grimbold listens closely to anything the characters have to say. When the characters finish, the marshal adds:

"I won't lie—I think we'll need your help again tonight. If you could guard the armory, Duponde would be further in your debt. It also seems that catching this Nathaire fellow is vital, too. Just before sunset, my guards saw a small humanoid in a black hood skulking near the south gate. They lost him in the alleys nearby. I don't know if it was Nathaire, but it could be worth checking."

Grimbold can provide directions to the part of town where the guards saw the dark figure. Now that night has fallen, he and his men don't dare split their strength any further. When the characters are finished speaking with Grimbold, the marshal takes his leave and heads to see to town defenses.

Decision Point

The characters have another choice to make. Do they guard the people of Duponde at the armory, or do they seek out the black-hooded creature that the guards failed to catch?

If the characters decide to stand guard, go to the **Rat Pack** encounter. Characters who decide to seek out the mysterious humanoid initiate the **Lonely Death** encounter.

RAT PACK

Encounter Level 3

Begin this encounter by reading:

Your presence at the armory must have deterred monsters from troubling the people here. Shadows flow like mist through the alleyways and cries echo through the darkness, but you spot no overt threats. A little before midnight, Tilda Grenfield, Harald the barkeep, and the dwarves—Katha, Kristyd, and Kildrak—show up at the armory. Each has minor wounds.

Tilda is furious. "Rats!" she cries. "Giant rats! They came out of nowhere and ran us out of the Old Owl. Please help! We can't stay on the streets all night."

Setup

5 scurrying wererats (W)

When the characters go to investigate at the Old Owl, have them take positions, and read the following:

The Old Owl Inn stands before you in the gloom, a darker shadow against a black sky. Glimmers of light flicker in its windows from lamps and dying hearth fires. The crash of breaking dishes and the sound of scurrying movement come from within the common room.

Since the characters know the rats are inside, they can try to achieve surprise by gathering near a door or window and suddenly storming the building. Have the party attempt a DC 12 group Stealth check. If at least half the characters succeed, the party gains surprise.

Wererat Filth Fever

Level 3 Disease

Those infected by this disease waste away as they alternately suffer chills and hot flashes.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.

Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target loses a healing surge.

Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, the target loses a healing surge. The target also takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.

Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, the target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points. The target also takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.

Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.

8 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.

9-12: No change.

13 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

5 Scurrying Wererats (W) **Level 3 Skirmisher**

Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human

HP 37; Bloodied 18

Initiative +7

AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 13

Perception +7

Speed 6, climb 4 (rat or hybrid form only)

Low-light vision

TRAITS**Regeneration**

The wererat regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the wererat takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS**Ⓢ Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will**

Requirement: The wererat must be in human or hybrid form.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage, or 2d6 + 6 if the wererat has combat advantage against the target.

Ⓢ Bite (disease) ♦ At-Will

Requirement: The wererat must be in rat or hybrid form.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d4 + 4 damage. If the target is granting combat advantage to the wererat, it also takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends). At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts wererat filth fever (stage 1).

MOVE ACTIONS**Ⓢ Rat Scurry ♦ At-Will**

Requirement: The wererat must be in rat form.

Effect: The wererat shifts up to its speed.

MINOR ACTIONS**Ⓢ Change Shape (polymorph) ♦ At-Will**

Effect: The wererat alters its physical form to appear as a Tiny rat, or a Medium unique human or hybrid.

Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10

Str 10 (+1)

Dex 18 (+5)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 15 (+3)

Int 13 (+2)

Cha 11 (+1)

Alignment evil

Languages Common

Equipment dagger

Tactics

Wererats assume rat form, and use *rat scurry* to move into flanking positions. They rely on their bite attack, too. If only one wererat remains, it attempts to flee.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Glowing fireplace embers, along with several oil lamps turned down low, cast dim light over the entire area. Outside the inn, it's dark. Light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Doors: The doors are closed but unlocked.

Fireplaces: Hot coals fill these hearths. A creature that enters a fireplace square takes 1d6 fire damage.

Furniture: Furnished squares are difficult terrain.

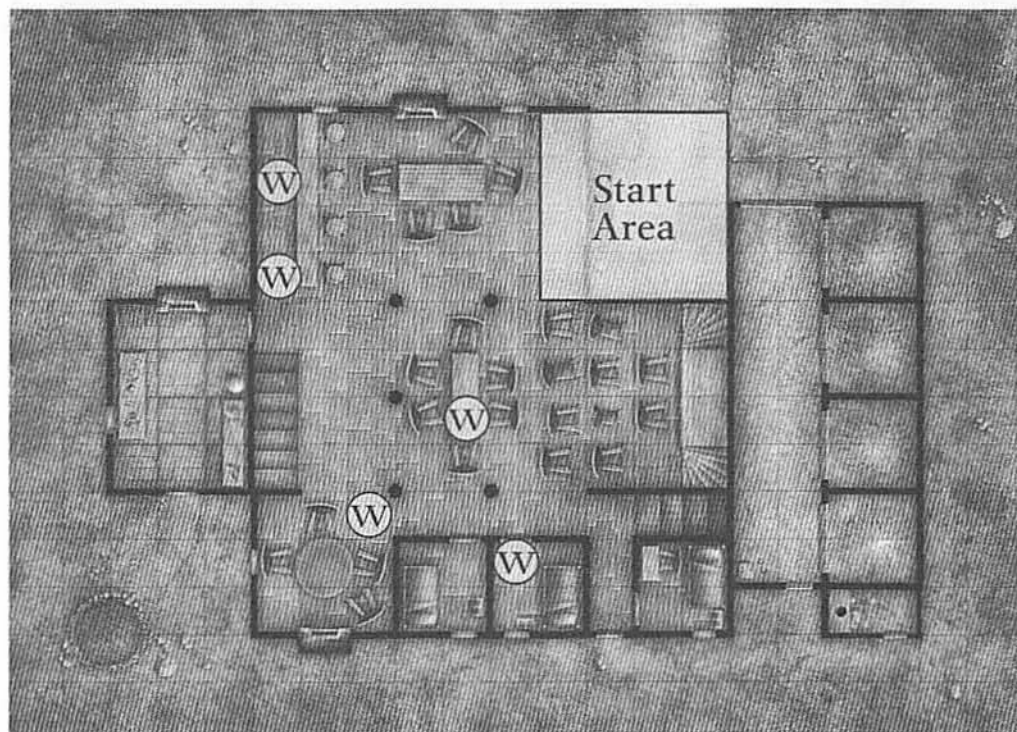
Conclusion

By defeating the rats, the characters clear the Old Owl of its unwanted guests and earn the heartfelt gratitude of Tilda Grenfield.

Filth Fever: Characters who the wererats bite might contract filth fever. Each character so bitten must attempt a saving throw at the end of the encounter.

Reward

For battling the monsters, each character receives 150 XP.



LONELY DEATH

Encounter Level 3

Setup

- 4 twig blight seedlings (S)
- 3 twig blight swampvines (T)
- 1 shadow bolter (B)

Begin this encounter by reading:

Following Grimbolt's directions, you search the quarter of the town by the south gate. Much of this area is derelict even in the natural world. In the Shadowfell, it takes on an aura of desolation and brooding malevolence. Empty houses seem to watch you through broken black windows. Thick, thorny vines choke the walls of rundown buildings and rustle with stealthy movements.

A dark figure watches you from a nearby window. It quickly ducks back out of sight.

A shadow bolter spy loyal to Vontarin is skulking around in town, searching for any clues that might help its master uncover his old belongings.

Do not place the twig blights yet. Have the party make a DC 20 group Perception check. If at least half the characters succeed, place the twig blights on the map. Otherwise, the twig blights are hidden until they act.

3 Twig Blight Swampvines (T)	Level 3 Soldier
Small fey humanoid (plant)	
HP 42; Bloodied 21	Initiative +6
AC 19, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +8
Speed 5 (swamp walk), climb 5, swim 5	Darkvision
Resist 5 poison; Vulnerable 5 fire	
TRAITS	
Rooted	
When an effect forces the swampvine to move through a pull, a push, or a slide, the seedling can move 3 squares fewer than the effect specifies.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
④ Claw (poison) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 poison damage.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
† Vine Snare ♦ At-Will (1/round)	
Effect: Melee 3 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The swampvine pulls the target up to 2 squares, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 13).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Poison Lash (poison) ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy the swampvine is grabbing uses an attack power that does not include the swampvine as a target.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Melee 3 (triggering enemy). The target takes 5 poison damage.	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 12 (+2) Dex 17 (+4) Wis 14 (+3)	
Con 10 (+1) Int 6 (-1) Cha 10 (+1)	
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	

Shadow Bolter (B)	Level 5 Artillery
Small shadow humanoid, dark one	
HP 50; Bloodied 25	Initiative +6
AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 16	Perception +9
Speed 6	Darkvision
TRAITS	
Combat Advantage (necrotic)	
Whenever the shadow bolter hits a creature granting combat advantage to it, the bolter deals 5 extra necrotic damage, and each of that creature's adjacent allies takes 5 necrotic damage.	
Deadly Precision	
The shadow bolter's ranged attacks have combat advantage against any enemy that the bolter's allies are flanking.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
④ Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.	
⑤ Black Bolt (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 15/30 (one creature); +10 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes 5 damage each time it provokes an opportunity attack (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Dark Step ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The bolter moves 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by this movement, and gains combat advantage against each creature that it ends its move adjacent to until the end of the bolter's next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Killing Dark	
Trigger: The bolter drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (No Action): Each enemy adjacent to the bolter is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.	
Skills Stealth +11	
Str 11 (+2) Dex 18 (+6) Wis 15 (+4)	
Con 14 (+4) Int 11 (+2) Cha 11 (+2)	
Alignment unaligned Languages Common	
Equipment dagger, crossbow, 20 bolts, silk rope (50 ft.), grappling hook	

4 Twig Blight Seedlings (S)	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Small fey humanoid (plant)	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +5
AC 15, Fortitude 12, Reflex 15, Will 13	Perception +6
Speed 5 (forest walk), climb 5	Darkvision
Resist 5 poison	
TRAITS	
Rooted	
When an effect forces the seedling to move through a pull, a push, or a slide, the seedling can move 3 squares fewer than the effect specifies.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
④ Claw (poison) ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Before the attack, the seedling shifts up to 2 squares.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 3 poison damage, or 5 poison damage if the target is granting combat advantage to the seedling.	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 7 (-2) Dex 17 (+3) Wis 12 (+1)	
Con 9 (-1) Int 5 (-3) Cha 10 (+0)	
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	

Tactics

The shadow bolter and the twig blights aren't allies in the strictest sense, but the dark one takes advantage of the distraction the plants provide. When the dark one saw the blights, it stealthily avoided the creatures to move into buildings that seemed promising. If forced outside, the dark one gives the twig blights a wide berth.

Shadow Bolter: The shadow bolter remains in the house, firing through windows. It uses *black bolt* against any character in sight, but it tries to target those whom the twig blights flank to use its *deadly precision* ability. The bolter flees if any characters make it into the house.

Twig Blights: The swampvines move toward the nearest enemy, use *vine snare* to grab that foe, and then attack with *claw*. The seedlings attack, trying to flank opponents.

Features of the Area

Illumination: It's dark. Light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Doors: Exterior doors are closed, but neither locked nor barred. Interior doors are closed and unlocked.

Fieldstone Fence: The fence is difficult terrain.

Furniture: Furnished squares are difficult terrain.

Trees: A tree trunk's square is difficult terrain.

Climbing it requires a DC 8 Athletics check. The trees are about 20 feet tall.

Vegetation: These plants are difficult terrain.

Well: This damp, rock-lined hole is 20 feet deep. It requires a DC 13 Athletics check to climb.

Windows: These casements are 2 feet wide, 3 feet tall, and 4 feet off the ground outside. Climbing



through a window requires 2 extra squares of movement and a DC 8 Athletics or Acrobatics check.

Conclusion

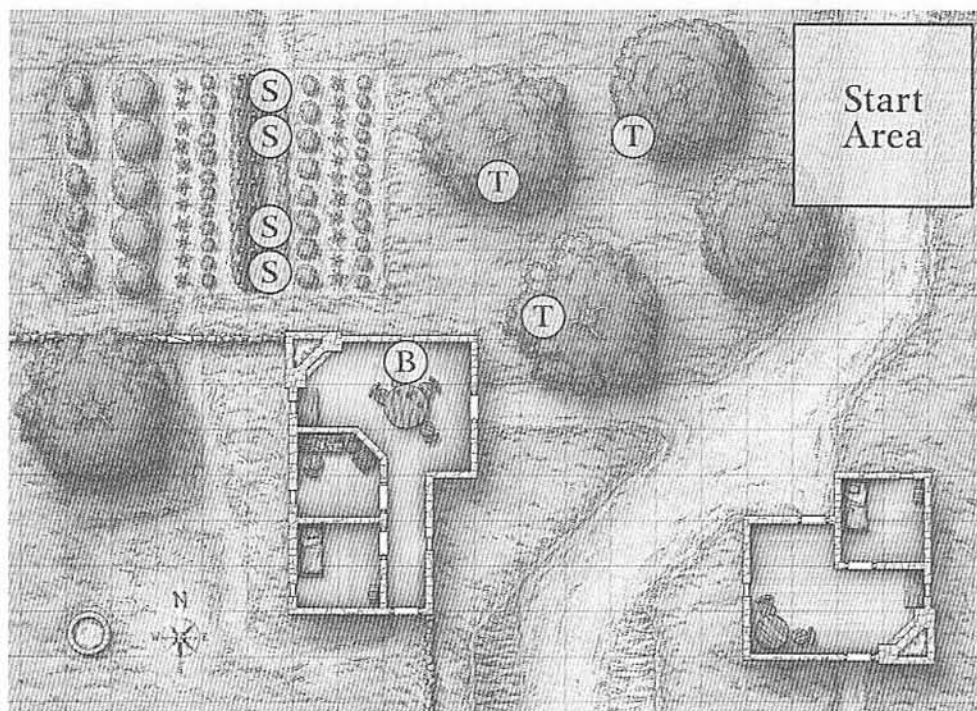
When a character reduces the dark one to 0 hit points, ask the player if he or she wants to knock it unconscious. If spared, the dark one can confirm its mission in trade for its life. It knows that Vontarin is searching

ruins of Saint Avarthil Monastery, and that the mage plans to send an army of skeletons against the town soon this same night. If the characters learn this information and want to go to Saint Avarthil's, Grimbold begs them to see to the defense of the armory while he defends the chapel against the coming skeletons.

Reward

For battling the monsters, each character receives 150 XP.

Treasure: The dark one carries a belt pouch, containing 110 sp, 89 gp, and a large amethyst (100 gp). It might offer these treasures as a bribe to save its life.



SESSION 9: VONTARIN'S WRATH

The creeping dread of the Shadowfell holds sway over the town of Duponde for a second night. Once again, the shadows are full of unsettling phantoms, sinister presences, and roaming monsters. During this session, the townspeople reach the end of their endurance just as Vontarin unleashes an attack against Duponde. When you're ready, read:

You've already dealt with one threat tonight, but dawn is still hours away. Most of the townsfolk are gathered in a few defensible spots—the chapel, the lady's manor, or the old

armory. Since the marshal's men are stretched thin, you're helping patrol the town while they guard the townspeople taking refuge.

Consequences

Depending on what the players decided to do in Session 8, they might gain a small edge in this week's session.

Rat Pack: Among the people taking shelter at the armory are the survivors of the Old Owl: Tilda, Harald, and the three dwarves. If the characters fought the rats, Tilda is very grateful for their struggle to protect the Old Owl. She aids the characters in their efforts to fight off despair and rally the people at the armory, granting a +2 bonus to checks in the skill challenge.



Lonely Death: If the characters instead searched the town, they prevent the dark one from reporting back to Vontarin before he sends his monsters against the town. Lacking knowledge of the town's defenses, Vontarin orders a number of skeletons to search the town, weakening the main attack. No skeleton reinforcements appear in the encounter. Further, if the characters questioned the dark one to learn of the impending attack and use that information when influencing the townsfolk, they gain a +2 bonus to Diplomacy and Intimidate checks in the skill challenge.

Shadow's Influence

Monsters that roam the Shadowfell are trouble enough, but the plane of shadow holds a more insidious peril—pervasive, soul-crushing despair and hopelessness that slowly saps the will of those who are exposed to it. As hours pass and Duponde sinks deeper into the Shadowfell, the malaise slowly deprives every living soul caught in the town of the will to fight on. Over the course of their watch, the characters come to realize that they have to do something to fight off the creeping despair, for themselves and for the townspeople around them.

Skill Challenge: Creeping Despair

The skill challenge begins when the characters have been on patrol for a short while. As the night wears on, a pervasive hopelessness settles over the townsfolk. Characters feel a growing numbness and weariness. People fall silent and stare ahead as if in a bleak trance. If more monsters appear, the citizens might not be able to defend themselves.

Level: 2

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Arcana, Diplomacy, Endurance, Heal, Insight, Intimidate, Religion, Thievery

Arcana or Thievery (DC 13): The character raises spirits by entertaining others with small feats of legerdemain or amusing cantrips.

Diplomacy (DC 13): The character urges the guards and townspeople to fight the despair or otherwise keeps the crowd amused.

Endurance (DC 13; group check): The characters force themselves to remain active. Each character attempts the Endurance check. The party gains one success if at least half the characters succeed.

Heal (DC 13): The character cooks up a stimulating food or beverage.

Insight (DC 20): The character identifies those in the greatest danger of surrendering to despair and suggests reasons for those people to feel hopeful.



Intimidate (DC 13): The character shakes observers out of despondency by describing the danger of the situation and the need for bravery.

Religion (DC 9): The character leads the people in hymns or prayers that help to stave off the despair.

Success: Characters successfully endure. They rally and inspire the guards, who participate fully in Encounter 9.

Failure: Despair claims victory. The guards do not participate in Encounter 9, and each character is dazed until the end of his or her first turn in the encounter. If you are using the Despair Deck, have each player draw a card from the deck. Instead of a character being dazed at the start of the encounter, he or she is affected by the card.

Vontarin's Soldiers

The ghost possessing Nathaire has ignored Duponde until now. Some of his dark ones are spying on the town, but the monsters roaming the streets are threats indigenous to this portion of the Shadowfell. After the Creeping Despair skill challenge concludes, Vontarin unleashes his first deliberate attack. He animates skeletons from the crypts beneath Saint Avarthil Monastery and orders them to attack the town, hoping to drive away any people lingering in Duponde. Go to the **Vontarin's Horde** encounter.

VONTARIN'S HORDE

Encounter Level 3

Before the encounter starts, read:

As you come to the Town Square, completing another round of your patrol, a cry goes up in the direction of the armory. In the distance, you can see bone-white forms surrounding the building.

Setup

8 - 12 decrepit skeletons (D)

2 blazing skeletons (B)

1 shadow stalker (S)

4 - 6 Duponde Guards (G1 - G6, allies; see page 64 or ask your DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS organizer for copies of the statistics blocks)

The characters can hasten to intercept the skeletons before they break into the armory. Do not place the

Shadow Stalker (S)	Level 3 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid	
HP 25; Bloodied 12	Initiative +9
AC 15, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +3
Speed 8	Darkvision
Vulnerable 5 radiant	

TRAITS

Insubstantial

The shadow stalker takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force or radiant damage. Whenever the shadow stalker takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Born of Shadows

The stalker can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has concealment instead of needing total concealment.

STANDARD ACTIONS

Shadowy Touch (necrotic) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + 6 necrotic damage.

Shadow Stalk (necrotic) ♦ Recharge when the stalker uses shadow step

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d6 + 8 necrotic damage, and the stalker shifts into the target's space and melds with its shadow (save ends). While the stalker is melded with the target's shadow, it moves when the target moves without provoking opportunity attacks, and it gains a +4 bonus to all defenses and a +5 bonus to attack rolls against the target. When the target saves, the stalker shifts to a square adjacent to the target.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Shadow Step (teleportation) ♦ At-Will

Trigger: A living creature within 5 squares of the stalker drops to 0 hit points or fewer.

Effect (Free Action): The stalker teleports to a square adjacent to the triggering creature and gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Skills Stealth +10

Str 12 (+2) Dex 19 (+5) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2) Int 12 (+2) Cha 11 (+1)

Alignment evil

12 Decrepit Skeletons (D) Level 1 Minion Skirmisher

Medium natural animate (undead)

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 16, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 13

Speed 6

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Initiative +5

Perception +2

Darkvision

STANDARD ACTIONS

Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Effect: The skeleton can shift 1 square before the attack.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 4 damage.

Shortbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Effect: The skeleton can shift 1 square before the attack.

Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 3 damage.

Str 15 (+2)

Dex 17 (+3)

Wis 14 (+2)

Con 13 (+1)

Int 3 (-4)

Cha 3 (-4)

Alignment unaligned Languages -

Equipment longsword, shortbow, 20 arrows

2 Blazing Skeletons (B) Level 5 Artillery

Medium natural animate (undead)

HP 53; Bloodied 26

AC 19, Fortitude 15, Reflex 18, Will 16

Speed 6

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 fire, 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Initiative +6

Perception +4

Darkvision

TRAITS

Fiery Aura (fire) ♦ Aura 1

Any creature that ends its turn in the aura takes 5 fire damage.

STANDARD ACTIONS

Blazing Claw (fire) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Flame Orb (fire) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +10 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Str 13 (+3)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 15 (+4)

Con 17 (+5)

Int 4 (-1)

Cha 6 (+0)

Alignment unaligned Languages -

shadow stalker when you set up the encounter unless the heroes spot them. It requires a DC 20 Perception check to spot the shadow stalkers.

Tactics

Blazing Skeletons: These undead fight with more intelligence. Each uses *flame orb*, targeting those who seem to pose a serious threat. They avoid catching allies in their fiery aura.

Decrepit Skeletons: Four decrepit skeletons position themselves as artillery, using their shortbows. The rest engage in melee, employing their longswords.

Shadow Stalker: This creature waits for the characters to spread out, picks a target to attack, and uses *shadow stalk* to enter the fight. As long as *shadow stalk* lasts, the shadow attacks its victim with *shadowy touch*. If the target saves, the shadow flits back into concealment and hides again.

Development

Guards: Depending on the party's success in this session's skill challenge, the guards might be cooperative or completely despondent. If the guards are despondent, they take no actions, raising no hand to defend anyone, including themselves. If characters' efforts have rallied the guards, allow each player to control one guard in the fight. A guard that a player controls act just after that player's character in the initiative order.

Reinforcements: If the characters defeated the dark one in the Lonely Death encounter, nothing further happens in this encounter. Otherwise, when the characters destroy four decrepit skeletons or one blazing skeleton, four additional decrepit skeletons join the battle. They appear at the edge of the map, near the square marked R.

Features of the Area

Illumination: It's dark. Light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Aqueduct: The water is 5 feet below the level of the street, and it is 10 feet deep. No check is required to swim, but each square requires 2 extra squares of movement. Characters in the water must use a move action and succeed on a DC 12 Athletics check to climb from the water up to the street.

Bridges: The highest level of each arched bridge is 10 feet above the water of the aqueduct.

Cart: The bed of the cart is 3 feet above the street. Moving into the cart requires 1 extra square of movement.

Doors: The doors leading into the armory (the central building) are damaged and no longer lock. Other doors are locked. It requires a DC 12 Thievery check to pick a lock or a DC 19 Athletics check to force open a door.

Furniture and Goods: These squares are difficult terrain.

Roof: The roof of the armory is 20 feet high, and unlike the surrounding buildings, it is flat.

Stairway: These stairs are difficult terrain. They lead to the armory's upper floor (currently filled with citizens of Duponde).

Statues: The statues at the foot of each bridge are blocking terrain.

Tables: These squares are difficult terrain.

Windows: The armory windows are 5 feet above the street outside. Bars cover each window, which is about 1 foot wide and 4 feet tall.

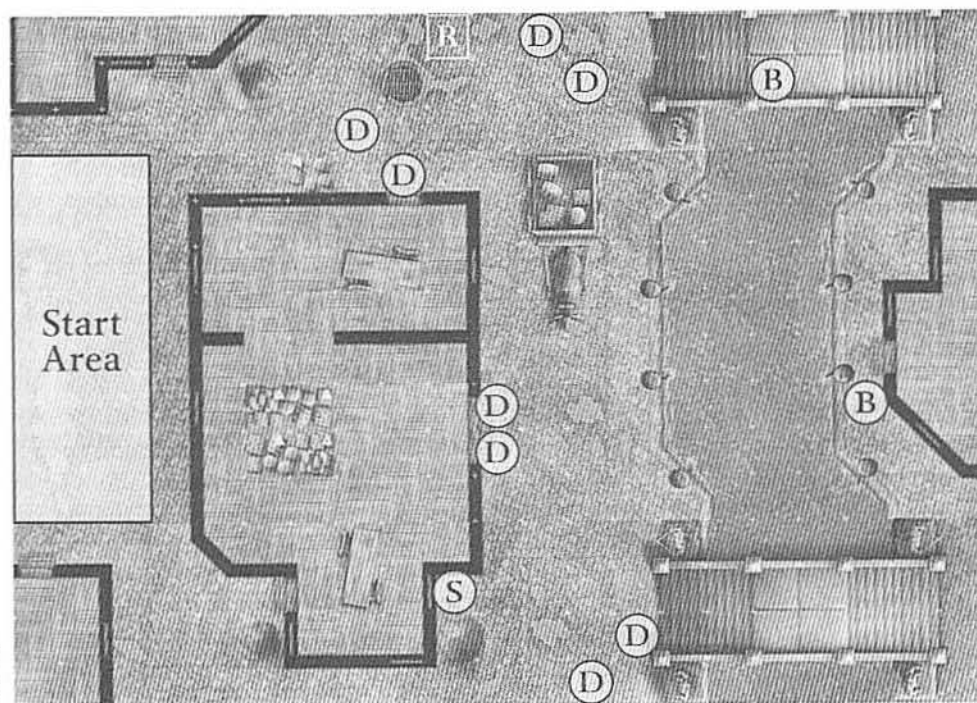
Conclusion

When the characters defeat the skeleton force, they notice each decrepit skeleton is dressed in the tattered brown robes of a friar. No one nearby knows the significance of the finding. This is a mystery for the next session.

Daybreak is at hand. The town shifts from the Shadowfell back to the world. However, the characters notice that the town's return to the world seems sluggish, as though the Shadowfell is clinging to Duponde.

Reward

For battling the monsters, facing the skill challenge, and helping to defend the town, each character receives 300 XP. If a player has attended every session this season, his or her character should have 2,250 XP if the character has completed all possible quests. That character now advances to level 3.



CHAPTER 3

This marks the beginning of the third chapter of *Dark Legacy of Evard*. The encounters in this chapter assume the characters are 3rd level. If most of your group is 1st or 2nd level, see **Adjusting the Encounters** on page 2. Each character has had an extended rest and should have full hit points and healing surges, as well as 1 action point and access to his or her daily powers.

Despair Deck: If you are using this component, have each player draw a card from the Despair Deck. A player's card affects his or her character.

SESSION 10: SAINT AVARTHIL'S CRYPTS

During another night in the Shadowfell in the previous two sessions, the characters fought off a major attack Vontarin sent against the town. Begin this session by reading:

After the shadows slowly relinquished Duponde at daybreak, you rested for several hours. Grimbold comes to see you early in the afternoon. "I heard about your defense of the armory," he begins. "That was well done, my friends. I was at the chapel last night. We lost a number of people to those skeletons. It's strange. The skeletons we fought were dressed in the cassocks of monks. Brother Zelan thinks they came from the crypts at Saint Avarthil Monastery."

Grimbold explains that Saint Avarthil's is a large, ruined abbey a few hours west of Duponde. Badly damaged during the legendary duel between Vontarin and Evard, the monastery was never completely repaired. Its last residents, Pelorite friars, abandoned it thirty or forty years ago. Grimbold can provide the characters with directions to the old abbey.

Remind the players that their characters found a bronze seal broken in the cellars of Vontarin's house. That seal has a prayer to Pelor on it. One of the characters might deduce the connection to the abbey immediately.

If the players don't pick up on the suggestion that they should go investigate the ruins, Grimbold asks the characters to do so. The marshal wants to make sure that no more skeletons emerge from the abbey crypts. He also points out that it seems likely that someone disturbed the crypts or animated the skeletons—someone like Nathaire.

Road to the Abbey

When the characters set out to investigate Saint Avarthil Monastery, begin with:

The road leading west from Duponde passes into an area of low, heavily wooded hills overlooking the White River. After

traveling for a few hours, you catch a glimpse of a large, ruined abbey on a hilltop above the waterway. Most of its roof has fallen in, and the bell tower is little more than a jagged stump.

A wide wagon-track leads up from the river road to the abbey. Nearly a hundred yards from the gate, another path splits off, leading to the foot of the bluffs facing the river. Here you find a doorway cut into the cliff—the entrance to the crypts, its large bronze doors open. The stylized sun on the doors reminds you of the broken seal you found in the cellars of Vontarin's ruined mansion.

WHERE IS NATHAIRE?

During daylight hours, the possessed mage is still in the Shadowfell analogue of Saint Avarthil Monastery. If the characters were so inclined, they can explore every inch of the abbey grounds without encountering him. However, some of Vontarin's cronies are in the world. Encounters 10 and 11 take place during the remaining hours of daylight, while Nathaire is still trapped in the Shadowfell.

After sunset, the monastery slips back into the Shadowfell. Nathaire resumes his search of the library, where the characters can confront him in Encounter 12. Any captured dark ones in the following encounters can tell the characters about Nathaire and the library.

Crypt Entrance

Vontarin's servants are inside the crypts, busy with the work of opening sarcophagi and preparing skeletons for animation when their master returns.

Perception (DC 15): The hard-packed ground outside the doors holds several tracks. It shows that the crypt doors were recently opened for the first time in a very long while. Numerous skeletal feet shuffled out of the crypt after it was opened. On a result of 20 or higher, the character also notices the tracks of small, two-legged creatures with feet like cloven hooves (dark ones). These creatures entered and left the crypt several times.

Illumination: Bronze braziers in each chamber of the crypt hold cool fires equivalent to everburning torches, providing bright light in the whole crypt. Describe the braziers as part of the scene. If removed from the crypts, a brazier's magic fails.

North Crypt

Remains of Pelor worshipers whose deeds earned them a special place rest in these crypts.

A stern angel statue watches over the room. Burial niches, plastered over and marked with corroded bronze nameplates, line the walls. A large number of niches have been broken open, leaving small piles of plaster at the foot of each wall. Two sarcophagi also rest in this room—one bears the carved image



of a well-dressed merchant, the other a robed lady. To the east, a rubble-choked stairway descends to a larger chamber.

Dozens of burial niches line the walls, stacked five high from floor to ceiling. Each is about 3 feet deep, 2 feet tall, and 6 feet long. Most are empty, since this room is the first place Nathaire's servants began to gather skeletons. A sharp blow is sufficient to poke a hole in an unopened niche. Nothing but dusty bones dressed in rotted brown robes remains within each one.

Animated skeletons guard the room. Go to the **Shadowed Crypts** encounter. Use the descriptions on this page when the characters move to other rooms.

Middle Chamber

Another statue in the shape of a harsh angelic guardian watches over this room, which also contains a well brimming with dark water.

The well in this chamber captures a small spring. Its water is cold and drinkable, and it is blessed by Pelor. A good-aligned character who drinks from the water gains a +1 bonus to all defenses until the end of his or her next encounter. The water loses its blessing if it is carried away from the well.

South Crypt

Like the north crypt, this room was used to inter the remains of lay people who served Pelor.

This crypt, another stern angel statue watching over it, contains more plastered burial niches. Most of them are unopened. One tomb in the room's center shows a lady knight in armor, and the other depicts a lord in regal robes. Steps descend to the east into a larger chamber.

This chamber is very much like the north crypt, except that only a few of the burial niches have been broken open. Most are still sealed.

More animated skeletons guard this room; see the **Shadowed Crypts** encounter.

Great Crypt

The most important monks are buried here.

Two flights of stairs descend to this burial chamber. Four pillars were meant to support the vaulted ceiling, but one has fallen. Several sarcophagi that have lids carved into the images of robed priests in repose occupy the room's center. Two of the tombs are open, and one shattered lid lies on the floor. A row of smaller sarcophagi lines the back wall, each stone coffin beneath an angel statue. Piles of rubble mark places where ceiling or walls have collapsed, and a crevasse divides the room in two.

A blazing skeleton guards this room. Two dark ones who serve the possessed Nathaire work to prepare more skeletons here. The open sarcophagi contain their handiwork.

SHADOWED CRYPTS

Encounter Level 3

Setup

- 2 hex knights (K)
- 1 blazing skeleton (B)
- 8 decrepit skeletons (D)

A battle starts as soon as the characters attract the attention of the skeletons. Place monsters only in areas characters can see. From the crypt entrance, characters can see down into the great crypt only if they move to a square adjacent to the steps leading down.

When the characters enter, read:

A couple of skeletons in faded brown cassocks stand here, each gripping a rusty longsword. They raise their swords and advance the instant they see you.

8 Decrepit Skeletons (D) Level 1 Minion Skirmisher

Medium natural animate (undead)
 HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +5
 AC 16, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 13 Perception +2
 Speed 6 Darkvision
 Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic

STANDARD ACTIONS

- ⊕ Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will
 Effect: The skeleton can shift 1 square before the attack.
 Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
 Hit: 4 damage.
- ⊙ Shortbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will
 Effect: The skeleton can shift 1 square before the attack.
 Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
 Hit: 3 damage.

Str 15 (+2) Dex 17 (+3) Wis 14 (+2)
 Con 13 (+1) Int 3 (-4) Cha 3 (-4)
 Alignment unaligned Languages –
 Equipment longsword, shortbow, 20 arrows

Blazing Skeleton (B) Level 5 Artillery

Medium natural animate (undead)
 HP 53; Bloodied 26 Initiative +6
 AC 19, Fortitude 15, Reflex 18, Will 16 Perception +4
 Speed 6 Darkvision
 Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 fire, 10 necrotic;
 Vulnerable 5 radiant

TRAITS

- ☼ Fiery Aura (fire) ♦ Aura 1
 Any creature that ends its turn in the aura takes 5 fire damage.

STANDARD ACTIONS

- ⊕ Blazing Claw (fire) ♦ At-Will
 Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
 Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
- ⊙ Flame Orb (fire) ♦ At-Will
 Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +10 vs. Reflex
 Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Str 13 (+3) Dex 18 (+6) Wis 15 (+4)
 Con 17 (+5) Int 4 (-1) Cha 6 (+0)
 Alignment unaligned Languages –

2 Hex Knights (K)

Level 4 Soldier

Small shadow humanoid, dark one

HP 54; Bloodied 27 Initiative +7
 AC 20, Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 15 Perception +3
 Speed 6 Darkvision

STANDARD ACTIONS

- ⊕ Short Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will
 Effect: The hex knight makes the following attack twice.
 Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
 Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the hex knight's next turn.
- ⊙ Hand Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will
 Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
 Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage.
- ⊕ Vicious Flurry (weapon) ♦ Recharge ☒ ☐
 Attack: Melee 1 (one or two creatures); +9 vs. AC
 Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).

MOVE ACTIONS

- Dark Step ♦ At-Will
 Effect: The hex knight moves 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by this movement, and gains combat advantage against each creature that it ends its move adjacent to until the end of the hex knight's next turn.

MINOR ACTIONS

- Shadow Hex ♦ At-Will
 Effect: One creature within 3 squares of the hex knight is marked until the end of the encounter or until the hex knight uses shadow hex again. While the creature is marked by the hex knight, whenever it makes an attack that does not include the hex knight as a target, it grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

- Killing Dark
 Trigger: The hex knight drops to 0 hit points.
 Effect (No Action): Each enemy adjacent to the hex knight is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +10

Str 15 (+4) Dex 16 (+5) Wis 12 (+3)
 Con 14 (+4) Int 11 (+2) Cha 11 (+2)

Alignment unaligned Languages Common

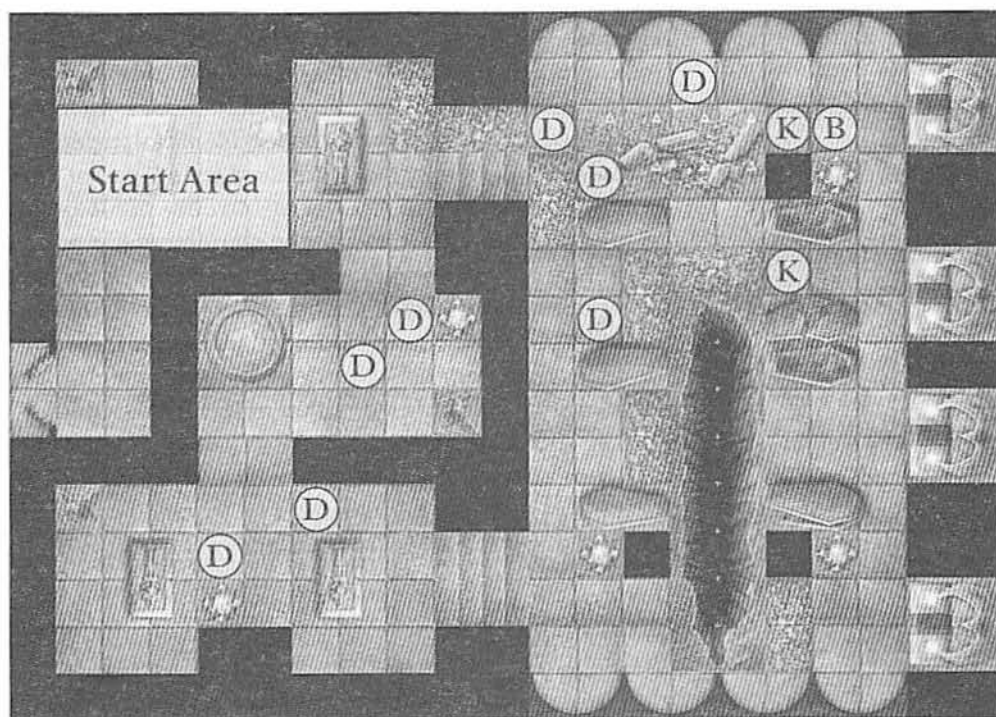
Equipment hide armor, 2 short swords, hand crossbow, 10 bolts

Tactics

The dark ones in the great crypt have command of the skeletons.

Blazing Skeleton: This creature moves just close enough to attack at range with *flame orb*. It prefers to remain in the great crypt, where it can attack any target on the steps or in squares adjacent to the top of the steps.

Hex Knights: These creatures hold their positions, using *hand crossbow* in preference to melee attacks as long as the characters aren't in the great crypt. As soon as an enemy sets foot in the great crypt, the hex knights advance to meet that foe. They use *dark step* to close the distance, and then attack with *short sword* unless two enemies are adjacent, in which case they use *vicious flurry*. The hex knights use *dark step* to escape tough enemies and go after weaker ones.



Decrepit Skeletons: Quarters are cramped in the upper crypts, so the decrepit skeletons close to attack with their swords. They attack the nearest intruder each round.

Features of the Area

Braziers: These bronze containers are difficult terrain.

Crevasse: This large crevasse is 10 feet wide and 20 feet deep. The sides are rough but steep and require a DC 13 Athletics check to climb.

Doors: The doors in this area are made of corroded bronze plates. They are unlocked.

Rubble: Debris-strewn squares are difficult terrain.

Sarcophagi: These tombs are difficult terrain.

Statues: The figures are blocking terrain.

Well: A 2-foot wall around this pool keeps it contained. The water is 15 feet deep.

Conclusion

A dark one, if captured, can tell the characters that Nathaire (Vontarin) is trapped in the Shadowfell during the day and searches the abbey's library by night. They can also inform the characters that more of Vontarin's servants are searching the ruins.

If the character dispatch the dark ones without questioning them, you can have the party find instructions written by Vontarin that relate the same information.

Tools: The dark ones have crowbars and other mundane tools they have been using to open the burial niches.

Reward

For exploring all the rooms of the crypt and battling the monsters, each character gains 250 XP.

Treasure: The middle sarcophagus of the eastern row is finely decorated, and the lid shows signs that it has been opened recently. A substantial treasure is hidden within. Several small sacks contain 1,000 sp, 140 gp, a blue topaz (100 gp), a fine silver ring with small emeralds (250 gp), and a +1 amulet of health.

If the party refuses to open the tomb for fear of desecrating it, Pelor provides his blessing to one of the characters. One character gains a +1 enhancement bonus to

Fortitude, Reflex, and Will until the end of this season. Use the normal rules for determining which character receives a magic item, preferring characters who were against opening the tomb.



SESSION 11: ABBAY GROUNDS

After dealing with the dark ones and skeletons lurking in the abbey crypts in Session 10, the characters are finally closing in on the possessed Nathaire. However, the ruins of Saint Avarthil Monastery cover a lot of ground, and monsters loyal to Vontarin's ghost still lurk in the shadows.

When you're ready to begin, read:

You've left the crypts, which are cut from the rocky bluff at the foot of the abbey walls. The ruined abbey stands on a hilltop overlooking the White River. Dozens of outbuildings and rambling walls descend from the hilltop. Smaller chapels, dormitories, refectories, and storehouses are within the crumbling walls. In its day, Saint Avarthil Monastery must have been a small town in its own right. Now, wild thickets and stands of young trees cover much of the open space and grow through several ruined buildings. The main structure is the largest feature of the sprawling grounds.

Previously, you discovered a pack of undead and two strange humanoids within the crypt, but no sign of Nathaire. You know he has been at work here, and nightfall approaches.

What do you do?

Allow the players to consider the situation and discuss their plans. If they questioned the dark ones in Encounter 10, they know to search the abbey grounds. Here are a few options:

Search the Grounds: If the characters try to look around the abbey's grounds, go to the Search the Grounds section.

Check out the Abbey: If the characters investigate the largest and most prominent ruin, the abbey itself, go to Explore the Abbey.

Rest, Set Ambush, or Wait: The players might decide to wait for sunset, to set an ambush at the crypt entrance, or to just wait before doing anything else. In any of these cases, go to Wait for Sunset.

Wait for Sunset

Nothing happens near the abbey crypts for the rest of the afternoon.

As the sun disappears below the horizon, you feel the same gut-twisting lurch from the shadowfall that you've experienced over the last two nights. Preternatural gloom quickly descends over the ruins. Thickets and trees now seem sinister, and the leaning walls take on a brooding, ominous aspect.

If the characters now go search the abbey grounds, see Search the Grounds. If the party keeps waiting, add:

A couple of hours after sunset, a small blast and faint flicker of fire briefly come from the ruins on the hilltop. Distant hissing laughter drifts down and dies away. That flash came from near the outbuildings and walls to the south of the abbey proper.

Tar devils entertain themselves by burning small animals in the ruins. This is what the characters saw and heard from a distance. When the characters investigate, go to the **Defiled Shrine** encounter. Because it's after dark, the characters have to carry lights to see clearly. Monsters in Encounter 11 notice lights approaching their location. Treat this situation as if the characters failed the skill challenge.

Explore the Abbey

Since the main abbey is the most prominent ruin in the area, the characters might decide to investigate it directly rather than poke around in the outbuildings. When the party does so, read:

The abbey ruins contain only mounds of rubble from the collapsed roof and barren walls preserving the skeletal outline of the grand building that once stood here. Thick stands of black trees and tangled masses of briars choke the abbey grounds, but you can still make out the paved footpaths winding from building to building within the crumbling walls.

The only monsters present in this area are at the southern gate (see Encounter 11), which isn't close to these ruins. Encourage the players to search the grounds or wait for sunset.

Search the Grounds

A large number of outbuildings and walls surround the abbey. Some dark ones and their infernal guards are holed up in a small shrine near the abbey's south gate, but finding the monsters takes time. If the characters aren't careful, they might stumble into an ambush.

When the characters finish the skill challenge, go to the **Defiled Shrine** encounter.

Skill Challenge: Searching

The skill challenge begins when the characters set out to search the grounds. The forest has grown over much of the old monastery, choking the crumbling walls with undergrowth and trees. Scores of places are apparent that might make good hiding places for Nathaire or his lackeys. It might take hours to thoroughly search the grounds, so it's best to do so before sunset.

Level: 3

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 4 failures); each success takes the party ever southward toward the southern gate.

Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Nature, Perception, Stealth, Religion

Arcana (DC 13; trained only): The character uses second sight to detect traces of shadow or identify the leavings of the fiends in Encounter 11.

Athletics (DC 21): The character can scramble to a wall top or scale a broken tower to gain a better vantage point. He or she spots something useful, such as fresh tar or a slain animal.

Perception (DC 13): The character looks for tracks and other signs of monsters hiding in the area. A glimpse of motion or the finding of strange, hooflike footprints leads the party onward.

Nature (DC 13): The character looks for signs of habitation—birds chirping in some areas but not others, animal burrows or dens that have been abandoned, or damaged foliage.

Stealth (DC 13; group check): Characters try to keep their noise to a minimum to listen better and avoid giving away their presence. Each attempts a Stealth check. The party gains one success if at least half the characters succeed.

Religion (DC 9): The character uses familiarity with religious settlements to identify various buildings and make informed guesses about the layout of the ruins.

Success: Characters discover the monsters in Encounter 11, spotting the dark ones and the devils before the encounter begins. The monsters are surprised at the start of the encounter.

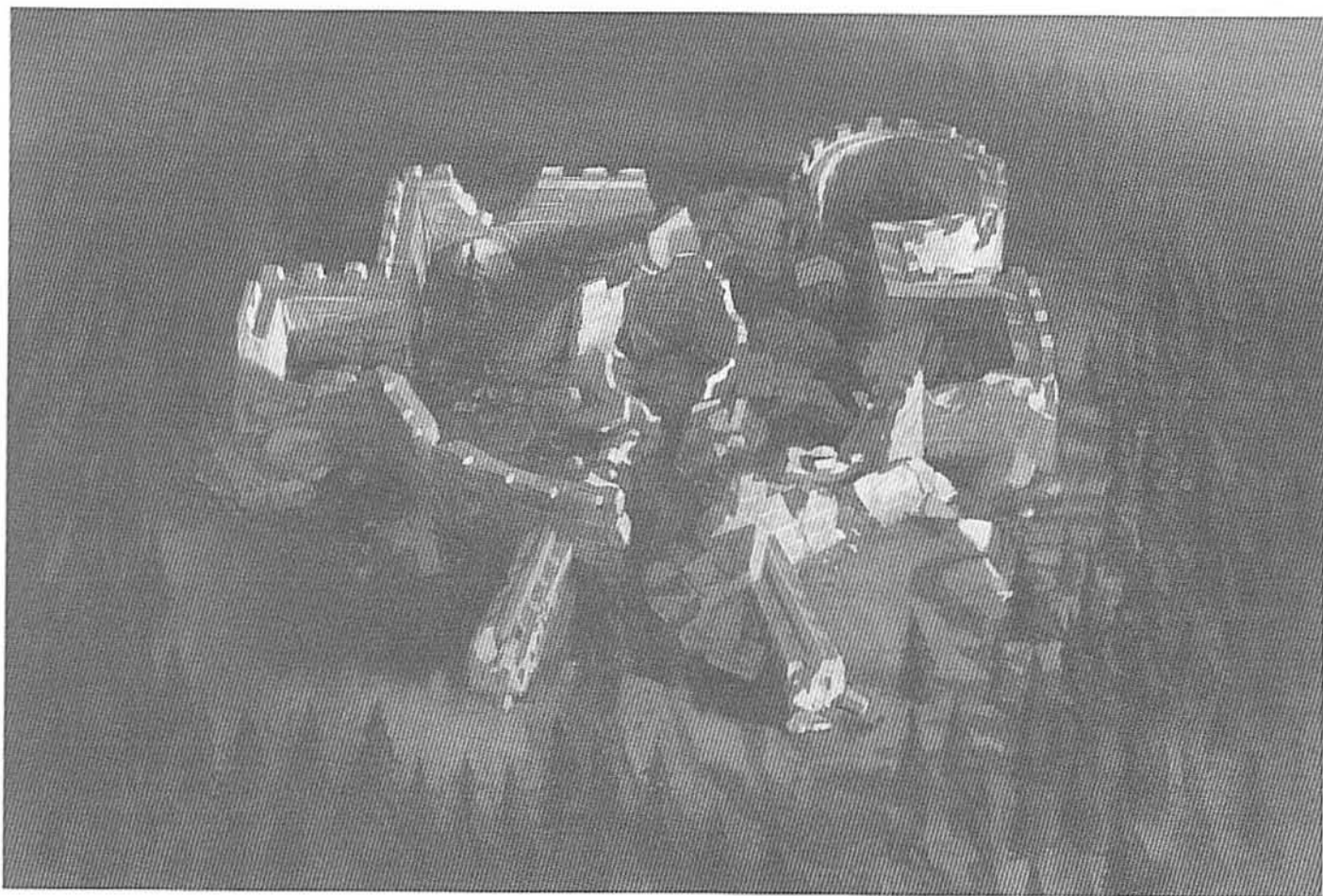
Failure: The party blunders into an ambush in Encounter 11. The characters are surprised at the start of the encounter.

Sighting the Library

Characters who searched the grounds start Encounter 11 while the sun still shines. At the end of Encounter 11, the sun sets and the abbey and its grounds shift to the Shadowfell again. If the characters waited and had to fight in the dark, change the description here to account for the fact that the sun has already set. Otherwise, when the battle ends, read:

Sunset arrives soon after your battle ends. As the sun sinks below the horizon, the abbey and its grounds slide into the Shadowfell with a familiar dizzying sensation. As in Duponde, the transition skews proportions. Ruins nearby take on a crooked, leering aspect, and the woods and thickets grow black and dense. Not far off, a two-story building that was in ruins a moment ago now seems intact. It might be a chapel or perhaps a library. A glimmer of lantern light shows through the windows of its upper floor.

The characters have finally found Nathaire's hiding place, but the players have to wait until the next session to see what happens.



DEFILED SHRINE

Encounter Level 3

Setup

- 2 shadow bolters (B)
- 2 tar devil brawlers (T)
- 2 leeching shadows (L)

Nathaire ordered a couple of his dark ones to stand guard by the abbey's southern gate. He provided them with some extra muscle in the form of a pair of summoned tar devils. Place monsters only when a character has line of sight to them. The leeching shadows begin the encounter hidden. Spotting them requires a DC 18 Perception check.

When the encounter starts, read:

An old lane leads to a gate in the abbey walls. A flight of stone steps goes up to a small courtyard, containing a tiny shrine and a dilapidated storehouse. The walls are about 20 feet high on the exterior side, but the battlements on top are crumbling ruins. Narrow windows look out from the wall over the grounds.

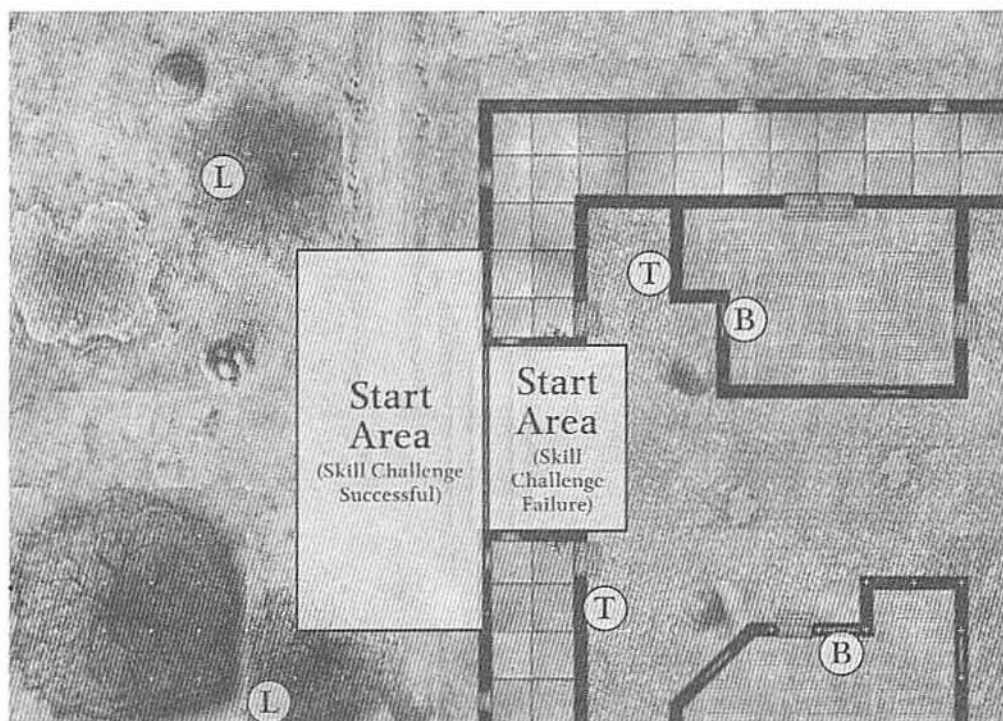
If the characters failed the Search the Grounds skill challenge or wait approach in the dark with lights showing, the monsters surprise them.

Characters who succeeded on the skill challenge spot a tar devil crossing the courtyard entrance, and they can surprise the monsters.

2 Tar Devil Brawler (T)	Level 3 Brute
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	
HP 53; Bloodied 26	Initiative +4
AC 15, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +6
Speed 6	Darkvision
Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 5 acid	
TRAITS	
☠ Tar Splatter ♦ Aura 1	
Any enemy that starts its turn in the aura cannot shift during that turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Slam (fire) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 7 fire damage.	
⚔ Tar Strike (fire) ♦ Recharge ☒ ☐	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 5 fire damage, and the target is immobilized and takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends both).	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)
	Wis 11 (+1)
Alignment evil	Languages Supernal

2 Shadow Bolters (B)	Level 5 Artillery
Small shadow humanoid, dark one	
HP 50; Bloodied 25	Initiative +6
AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 16	Perception +9
Speed 6	Darkvision
TRAITS	
Combat Advantage (necrotic)	
Whenever the shadow bolter hits a creature granting combat advantage to it, the bolter deals 5 extra necrotic damage, and each of that creature's adjacent allies takes 5 necrotic damage.	
Deadly Precision	
The shadow bolter's ranged attacks have combat advantage against any enemy that the bolter's allies are flanking.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.	
⚔ Black Bolt (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +10 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes 5 damage each time it provokes an opportunity attack (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Dark Step ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The bolter moves 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by this movement, and gains combat advantage against each creature that it ends its move adjacent to until the end of the bolter's next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Killing Dark	
Trigger: The bolter drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (No Action): Each enemy adjacent to the bolter is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.	
Skills Stealth +11	
Str 11 (+2)	Dex 18 (+6)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 11 (+2)
	Wis 15 (+4)
	Cha 11 (+2)
Alignment unaligned	Languages Common
Equipment dagger, crossbow, 20 bolts	

2 Leeching Shadows (L)	Level 1 Minion Lurker
Small shadow humanoid	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +7
AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +1
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)	
TRAITS	
Born of Shadows	
The shadow can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has partial concealment instead of needing total concealment.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Shadow Meld (necrotic) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4 necrotic damage, and the shadow shifts into the target's space and melds with its shadow (save ends). While the shadow is so melded, it is removed from play, and the target grants combat advantage and takes ongoing 4 necrotic damage. When the target saves, the shadow reappears in a square adjacent to the target of the shadow's choice.	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 11 (+0)	Dex 16 (+3)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 5 (-3)
	Wis 13 (+1)
	Cha 10 (+0)
Alignment evil	Languages Common



Tactics

Serving Vontarin's interests, the tar devils and dark ones are allied. They fiercely defend the gate area. The shadows are predators drawn to the fighting.

Shadow Bolters: The shadow bolters try to remain indoors, sniping with *black bolt* from the windows to take advantage of the cover. They know the layout of the passages, and they go to a window facing the exterior if doing so allows them to snipe at characters outside the shrine.

Leeching Shadows: These creatures wait for the adventurers to fully engage the monsters in the courtyard before slinking out of the trees to attack characters who have no allies nearby.

Tar Devils: These fiends avoid descending the steps to get at characters outside the courtyard, since they want to fight so that their allies can participate with ranged attacks. If they have to, the tar devils ready actions to charge characters when the characters reach the courtyard. They use *tar strike* at every opportunity.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light, unless the characters waited for dark.

Doors: These doors are closed, but they are neither locked nor barred.

Pond: This water is difficult terrain.

Steps: The stairway is gradual, offering no impediment to movement.

Trees: A tree trunk's square is difficult terrain. Climbing it requires a DC 8 Athletics check. The smaller trees are about 20 feet tall, and the largest is 30 feet tall.

Walls: This wall—20 feet tall outside, 10 feet tall in the courtyard—is crumbling and covered in slippery moss. It requires a DC 20 Athletics check to climb it. The top of the wall (depicted as intact passages on the map) is difficult terrain.

Windows: These open windows are 2 feet wide and 3 feet tall. Moving through a window requires 3 extra squares of movement and a successful DC 9 Athletics or Acrobatics check.

Conclusion

When the characters are done here, go on to the section *Sighting the Library*, page 53.

Dark Ones: These creatures, if captured, can tell the characters that Nathaire (Vontarin) is trapped in the Shadowfell during the day and searches the library by night.

Reward

For facing the skill challenge and battling the monsters, each character gains 250 XP.

Treasure: The shadow bolters have been indulging their larcenous tastes, systematically pillaging the place. They have had some success. One of the dark ones carries a pouch, containing 100 sp and 90 gp. The other has a +1 *lifedrinker* weapon. Both also have satchels stuffed with old Pelorite scrolls and tomes. These mundane texts are evidence that the dark ones have spent time pilfering a library in the ruins.

SESSION 12: BLACK LIBRARY

The characters are finally in the right place at the right time to confront their mysterious quarry. When the Saint Avarthil Monastery shifts back into the Shadowfell at sunset, the old library appears around the missing Nathaire with Vontarin's ghost possessing him.

When you're ready to begin, read:

The cold gloom of the Shadowfell surrounds you once again. A library has formed a short distance away from the small courtyard by the abbey's gates. Faint light flickers in the windows of its upper floor.

Making an Entrance

The library is only a short distance from the courtyard, but the characters have one small hurdle to negotiate before they confront the villain. They have to find a way inside.

Doors: Outer doors are made of sturdy old oak with iron fittings. They are locked. It requires a DC 22 Athletics to break open the doors or a DC 20 Thievery check to pick the lock. Using a heavy piece of masonry or statuary as a battering ram grants a +2 bonus to the Athletics check and allows another character to assist.

Windows: The first floor has no windows. A character can climb the exterior wall to one of the second-floor windows 20 feet up. Doing so requires a DC 21 Athletics check. The windows are a tight squeeze. Entering one requires a DC 9 Athletics or Acrobatics check and 3 squares of movement. Failure by 5 or more causes a character to fall.

Teleport: A character who has a teleportation power can teleport, but it's hard to see inside the library from the ground outside. The roof caves are 25 feet from the ground. Someone on the roof can hang down and slide into a window (see above).

Knock: If characters bang on the door and ask for admittance, Vontarin directs the shadow bolter to investigate, with a dusk beast as backup. The dark one asks who's there without opening the door. If the characters can persuade the creature that they wish only to talk to Vontarin, the dark one admits them.

Nathaire or Vontarin?

When the characters make their way inside the library, read the following:

Huge bookshelves and tattered purple curtains divide the interior, which bronze lanterns light with weak but steady flames. In the south wall, a staircase winds up to the second floor, which forms a balcony above.

Living shadows in the shape of reptilian beasts prowl the floor among the bookshelves. On the upper floor, a man



stands by the balcony rail. You recognize him as the wizard Nathaire, whom you met at the Old Owl, but his eyes are completely black. A purple crystal orb swirling with weird energy rests in a holster on his hip.

If the characters didn't surprise Nathaire and his servants, he addresses them before combat begins:

"That's far enough. You must be the ones my spies told me about," Nathaire says with a cold smile. His voice vibrates like two different voices combined. "I have no particular wish to destroy you, strangers. You are prisoners of that thrice-cursed villain Evard, just as I am. None of you have a chance to escape his trap if you interfere with me now."

If the characters speak with Vontarin, they find he carries himself as an aristocrat, expecting some amount of deference and common courtesy. Beneath his veneer of good manners is a cold, arrogant heart

filled with the burning drive to keep his stolen body and escape Evard's curse. He hopes to persuade the characters to leave him be, casting Evard as the grand villain of the story.

Vontarin is proud, and he reacts poorly to any insolence. He has also spent a long time in shadow, which has warped his emotions. A character who insults him provokes an immediate attack. The ghost mage also lashes out if it becomes clear that the characters can't be persuaded to stand aside.

Vontarin knows everything covered in the Adventure Background. He also believes he can break Evard's curse by crafting a counter-ritual once he retrieves his spellbooks and implements. Some specific replies Vontarin might give to the characters include:

Are you Nathaire? Or Vontarin? "This body is Nathaire's, but I am its master now. I am Vontarin, sometimes called the Gray Hand. I am a student of the necromantic arts, which allowed me to preserve my existence—after a fashion—when Evard defeated me."

You attacked Duponde! "The Shadowfell is full of monsters. I have no doubt some of them wander into Duponde when the town transitions to the plane of shadow. That, of course, is Evard's curse and is not my doing. If you're referring to the good friars of Saint Avarthil's, well, it seemed wise to make sure the folk of Duponde fear me enough not to interfere with my plans. Consider it a sharp warning to stay out of my path. I'll be finished with this place soon enough."

What's important about the abbey? "The good friars of Saint Avarthil's apparently took it into their heads to remove my spellbooks and arcane devices from my manor after my death. I am looking for my belongings here."

We have to put your ghost back in your corpse to end Evard's curse. "Hmm. That might work, but I reject that course. I much prefer life, thank you. Once I escape this shadowy prison, I'm sure the curse will fail."

Insight (DC 16): Vontarin isn't sure at all. He cares only about escaping the Shadowfell.

You stole Nathaire's body. "Well, the young fool shouldn't have meddled with magic he didn't understand. I can hardly give it back, since his soul has already departed. I'm the only one in here, I'm afraid."

Die, monster! "Death has no hold over me, you fools! Slay this body if you think you can! I'll soon find another!"

When Vontarin flies into a rage or determines he can't persuade the characters to leave him to his work, or when the characters decide to attack him, combat begins. Go to the **Nathaire at Bay** encounter.

SYMBOL OF DAWN

If the characters obtained the holy symbol from Brother Zelan in Session 4, they find that the item glows brightly as this encounter starts, inspiring the characters with hope, and dazing Nathaire. Each character gains a +2 bonus to saving throws during the encounter, and Nathaire starts the encounter dazed (save ends).

Vontarin's Defeat

When Nathaire's body is killed, Vontarin's ghost is instantly drawn back to the mysterious purple orb at his belt. Read the following:

As Nathaire's body falls, dark mist suddenly streams out of his eyes, ears, and mouth, taking on a twisted humanoid shape. But, then, the strange orb at the wizard's belt flashes with a sinister purple light. The misty figure lets out a howl of rage, and it is then drawn instantly into the purple orb. It seems the orb has trapped Vontarin's ghost.

If players want to break the orb or otherwise take immediate action, tell them they have to wait until next week. Dealing with the orb and its trapped ghost is the challenge of Session 13.

WHAT ABOUT THE REAL NATHAIRE?

At your option, the real Nathaire might survive his encounter with the characters, proving that Vontarin lied about Nathaire's soul departing the body. If a character knocks Nathaire unconscious instead of killing him, or if a character succeeds on a DC 13 Heal check at the end of the encounter, you can allow Nathaire to be stabilized. Nathaire can fulfill the role of Mother Grivelda in Session 13, telling the characters what they need to know to break the curse. He is too weak from his ordeal to help break the curse or fight the ghost, and he has learned some humility from the experience. He defends his actions, truthfully stating that he never intended ill to befall Duponde. The party can decide how to deal with him. He is not above bribing the characters to spare him. He suggests that if the characters accompany him to Sarthel after the curse is broken, he can deliver on his promise.

NATHAIRE AT BAY

Encounter Level 4

Setup

4 dusk beasts (D)

1 shadow bolter (B)

Nathaire, possessed mage (N)

The shadow bolter is hidden at the start of the encounter. A character must succeed on a DC 21 Perception check to spot it. Unless the shadow bolter lets the characters into the library, it stays hidden while characters converse with Nathaire.

If the characters are inside the library, they set up just inside the inner doors. That's as far as they get before Nathaire addresses them.

When combat begins, read:

Nathaire's eyes flash with dark fury. He snatches the orb from his belt and points a finger at you, conjuring a bolt of black energy. Dusk beasts prowling the library snarl and attack.

Shadow Bolter (B) Level 5 Artillery

Small shadow humanoid, dark one

HP 50; Bloodied 25 Initiative +6
AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 16 Perception +9
Speed 6 Darkvision

TRAITS

Combat Advantage (necrotic)

Whenever the shadow bolter hits a creature granting combat advantage to it, the bolter deals 5 extra necrotic damage, and each of that creature's adjacent allies takes 5 necrotic damage.

Deadly Precision

The shadow bolter's ranged attacks have combat advantage against any enemy that the bolter's allies are flanking.

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.

② Black Bolt (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +10 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes 5 damage each time it provokes an opportunity attack (save ends).

MOVE ACTIONS

Dark Step ♦ At-Will

Effect: The bolter moves 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by this movement, and gains combat advantage against each creature that it ends its move adjacent to until the end of the bolter's next turn.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Killing Dark

Trigger: The bolter drops to 0 hit points.

Effect (No Action): Each enemy adjacent to the bolter is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.

Skills Stealth +11

Str 11 (+2) Dex 18 (+6) Wis 15 (+4)
Con 14 (+4) Int 11 (+2) Cha 11 (+2)

Alignment unaligned Languages Common

Equipment dagger, crossbow, 20 bolts

4 Dusk Beasts (D)

Level 2 Brute

Medium shadow magical beast

HP 44; Bloodied 22 Initiative +3
AC 14, Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 14 Perception +3
Speed 6

TRAITS

Two-Headed Guard

Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the dusk beast. While dazed, the dusk beast can take opportunity actions and immediate actions.

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Bite ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the dusk beast can push the target 1 square. If the dusk beast can't push the target, the dusk beast knocks the target prone instead.

② Two-Maw Rend ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one prone creature); +5 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 4 damage.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

③ Barbed Tail ♦ Recharge when first bloodied

Trigger: An enemy enters a square adjacent to the dusk beast.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 2 (the triggering enemy); +5 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target falls prone.

Str 17 (+4) Dex 14 (+3) Wis 15 (+3)
Con 14 (+3) Int 2 (-3) Cha 10 (+1)

Alignment unaligned Languages –

Nathaire, Possessed Mage (N)

Level 5 Controller

Medium natural humanoid, human

HP 64; Bloodied 32 Initiative +3
AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 17 Perception +7
Speed 6
Resist 5 necrotic

TRAITS

☼ Deathly Presence ♦ Aura 1

Enemies take a -2 penalty to saving throws while within the aura.

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Despair's Touch (fear, psychic) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 6 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends). In addition, Nathaire slides the target up to 2 squares.

② Shadow Tendril (necrotic) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

③ Enervation (necrotic) ♦ Recharge when first bloodied

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target is enervated (save ends). While the target is enervated, it takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage and any of its allies that end their turns adjacent to it take 5 necrotic damage.

Miss: Half damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

MINOR ACTIONS

Dark Imperative (necrotic) ♦ Recharge when first bloodied

Effect: Close burst 5 (one ally in the burst). Nathaire slides the target up to 3 squares, and the target gains 5 temporary hit points. Until the target has no temporary hit points, its melee attacks deal 5 extra necrotic damage.

Skills Arcana +12, History +12, Insight +7

Str 10 (+2) Dex 13 (+3) Wis 10 (+2)
Con 16 (+5) Int 20 (+7) Cha 18 (+6)

Alignment evil Languages Common, Draconic

Equipment robes, orb

Tactics

The dusk beasts and dark one are extremely loyal to Nathaire (Vontarin). They give their lives to protect him.

Shadow Bolter: The shadow bolter lurks in the north end of the library's ground floor, looking for chances to attack characters who are already flanked to gain the best use of *deadly precision*.

Dusk Beasts: These creatures attack the nearest characters. The dusk beast on the upper floor stays near the top of the staircase, guarding against characters climbing up from below. If a character makes it to the balcony anyway, the creature abandons its post and comes to Nathaire's aid.

Nathaire: Nathaire remains on the balcony and uses *shadow tendrils* to attack enemies on the ground floor. He moves around the perimeter of the balcony to gain line of sight to characters who are under the balcony. If caught in melee, Nathaire uses *enervation*, calls for help from the nearest dusk beast, and uses *dark imperative* to bring his allies to him. He tries to slide enemies off the balcony.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Outside the library, it's dark. Inside the library, bronze sconces hold small lamps that provide bright light.

Balcony: The second floor is 15 feet above the first floor, and a rail guards the open edges. This rail provides a +2 bonus to saving throws to avoid falling over the balcony's edge.

Bookshelves: These furnishings are 8 feet tall and are blocking terrain. Climbing them requires a DC 9 Athletics check. A bookshelf can be pushed over.

Bookshelf

Single-Use Terrain

Standard Action

Requirement: The creature must be adjacent to the bookshelf.

Check: Athletics DC 13

Attack: Close blast 3 (origin square adjacent to the shelf; creatures in blast); +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: The area of the blast becomes difficult terrain.

Chairs and Desks: These furnishings are difficult terrain.

Curtains: These cloths block line of sight.

Doors: Interior doors are closed and unlocked.

Stairs: This stairway is difficult terrain.

Windows: The first floor has no windows. A character can climb the exterior wall to one of the second-floor windows 20 feet up. Doing so requires a DC 21 Athletics check. The windows are a tight squeeze. Entering one requires a DC 9 Athletics or Acrobatics check and 3 squares of movement.

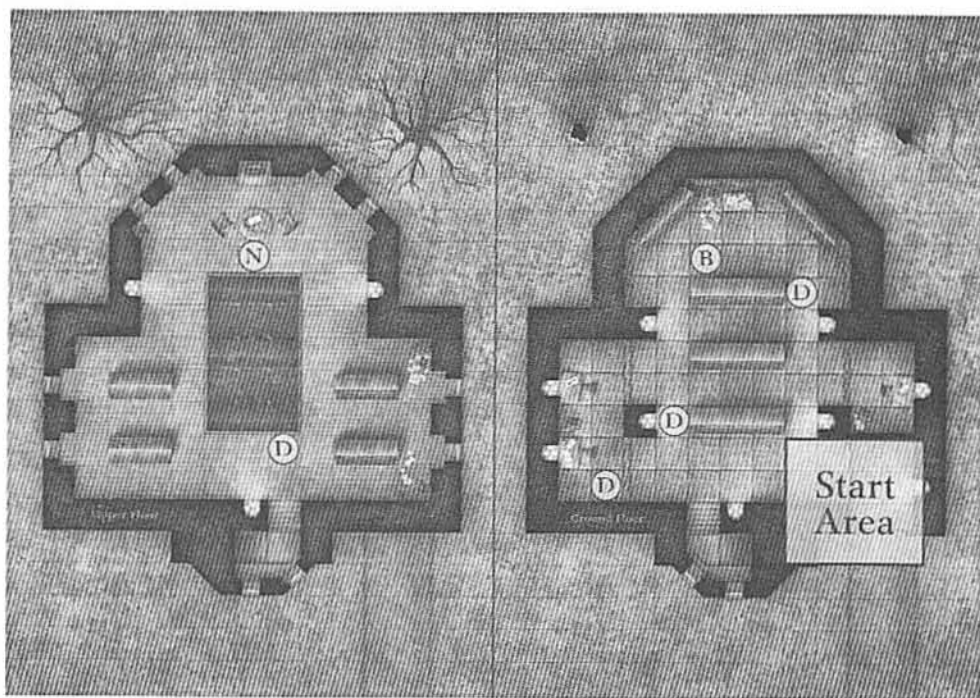
Conclusion

When the characters defeat the monsters, go to Vontarin's Defeat, page 57.

Reward

For interacting with Nathaire and battling him and the monsters, each character gains 250 XP.

Treasure: On the upper floor near the fireplace, the characters find a trunk, containing possessions Vontarin recovered from the abbey grounds and crypts. It holds 800 sp, 120 gp, a handsome emerald (100 gp), a +1 rod of *malign conveyance*, and +2 magic armor.



SESSION 13:

SOUL OF DARKNESS

The characters have finally defeated Nathaire, capturing the ghost of Vontarin in the orb with which Nathaire had hoped to trap the soul of Evard. Begin by reading:

You have defeated Vontarin's ghost, and it has been drawn back into the orb possessed by Nathaire. It is still early in the night, and with the Shadowfell's grasp on Duponde growing stronger by the hour, it seems imperative that you deal with the orb and put an end to Evard's curse. What do you do next?

If the players tell you they want to take the orb to the cemetery and reunite Vontarin's soul with its mortal remains, go to the Reversing the Ritual skill challenge.

If your players aren't sure what they're supposed to do next, point out that a couple nonplayer characters might know more. Mother Grivelda, the wise woman, is the obvious choice. People like Grimbolt or Tilda suggest the characters listen to her counsel. When the characters seek out the seer, go to Mother Grivelda's Advice. Brother Zelan can also steer the characters in the right direction. Just substitute him for Mother Grivelda if the characters go to him.

By the time they return to town, morning is approaching, but there is no sign that Duponde will return to the world.

If the characters want to examine the orb more closely, go to Vontarin's Soul. The characters cannot shatter the sphere unless they are in the graveyard. See Breaking the Orb if they shatter the sphere.

Mother Grivelda's Advice

If the characters seek out Mother Grivelda, she can tell them what they need to do.

You find Mother Grivelda and her grandson at their farmhouse, a short distance outside Duponde. The wise woman's eyes widen when she sees the orb you're carrying, and she quickly raises her hand in a gesture of warding. "Be careful with that, my dearies! A soul of great power—and evil—is trapped in that crystal. You must take it to its body and return it to the sleep of death. Only then might Evard's curse abate."

The wise woman's second sight is uncannily accurate. She knows what must be done, although she lacks the means and the will to do it.

How do we put the soul back into its body? "You must bring the orb near Vontarin's resting place and reverse the ritual that the reckless young wizard began. Doing so should force Vontarin's soul out of the orb and back into its

rightful place. He should sleep again. But hurry, my children! The sooner this is done, the better."

We don't know the ritual. "Are any of you trained in the arcane arts? Then you know enough to proceed. Prayer could be helpful, too."

A character who has training in Arcana or Religion knows of a few general ceremonies, chants, or procedures that might work.

Can we just break the orb? "That could work, but it's very dangerous. Vontarin's soul might try to escape. If you must, break it near his grave, and hope for the best."

How do we abate Evard's curse? "Evard's curse is meant to trap Vontarin's soul in the Shadowfell. As long as Vontarin's soul is not in its rightful place, Duponde is in peril of remaining in the Shadowfell forever. Return Vontarin to his resting place and reverse the ritual that reckless young wizard performed. Then Evard's curse should be put to rest with Vontarin."

Vontarin's Soul

When the characters killed Nathaire's body in the last session, Vontarin's soul was forced into the nearest suitable receptacle—the orb of purple crystal Nathaire carried at his belt. If a character examines the orb closely, he or she can make out Vontarin's ghost trapped in its depths. Read:

When you peer into the orb, you can see the wrinkled face of a bald man with a goatee looking back at you. His eyes are inky black. "Let me share your body for a time," he whispers. "I can grant you great power! You have only to carry me with you until I find another host. Draw me forth from this orb, I command you!" The ghost wails in fury and misery. "Don't put me back in the tomb!"

Vontarin's soul can't respond to conversation. It can't see or hear outside the orb, and it only dimly senses the presence and thoughts of someone holding the orb in hand. For Vontarin to take possession of someone, the person holding the orb must deliberately invite the ghost to do so. In that case, Vontarin's soul seizes that person's body.

Arcana or Religion (DC 9): Vontarin's soul is held in the orb. With the proper rites, it can be transferred to a willing host or a suitable body. Outright possession and loss of one's own soul seems much more likely than sharing one's body with Vontarin's invading soul.

Insight (DC 13): The ghost would say anything to persuade someone to become its host.

Religion (DC 13): A disembodied soul is strongly connected with its original body. The ghost might not be able to resist returning to that body if the corpse is nearby.

Breaking the Orb

Returning Vontarin's ghost from the orb to the dead mage's bones isn't as easy as smashing the orb with a hammer and hoping for the best. Nathaire freed Vontarin's soul with a complicated ritual, and to undo the ritual's effects, the characters must carefully reverse it. If at any point the characters decide to break the orb while Vontarin's ghost is within, the attempt works only if the characters are in the graveyard near Vontarin's remains. The result is the same as failing the skill challenge in this session.

Skill Challenge: Reversing the Ritual

A pale, ghostly spark glimmers in the depths of the purple orb the characters took from Nathaire's body. They need to reverse Nathaire's rite and return the ghost to the remains of the dead wizard entombed in the mausoleum mistakenly known as Evard's Tomb. This skill challenge begins when the characters begin the ritual to return Vontarin's soul to his bones.

Level: 3

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures). If the characters have successfully deciphered Nathaire's journal, they begin this skill challenge with two successes. In addition, Arcana checks in this challenge are DC 9.

Primary Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Religion, Thievery

Arcana (DC 13): The character helps perform a necromantic rite, binding the ghost of Vontarin to his mortal remains.

Bluff (requires the character to observe one Arcana or Religion success; DC 21): The character echoes the words and actions of a character who has succeeded on an Arcana or Religion check, contributing to the rite.

Diplomacy (DC 13): The character supports others who are engaged in Arcana or Religion checks, helping keep them focused and aware of the ritual's progress.

Insight (DC 13): The character observes the ghostly image in the orb, gaining a sense for which steps of the rite appear most effective, helping adjust the words and gestures for maximum effect.

Religion (DC 13): The character recites holy verses or prayers of protection, battling the dark power gathered in the tomb.

Thievery (DC 21): The character carefully damages the orb holding Vontarin's soul, facilitating the ghost's release at the right moment.

Success: Characters force Vontarin's soul from the orb back into the mage's bones. A fragment of the soul resists the transfer and necromantic energy infuses the cemetery, creating a number of monsters the characters must defeat. Go to the **Mad Ghost** encounter. Vontarin begins the encounter dazed (save ends).



Failure: The party botches the rite. Vontarin's soul leaves the orb, but it animates a number of monsters with intense necromantic energy. Go to the **Mad Ghost** encounter. Characters start the encounter taking ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends). If you are using the Despair Deck, have each player draw a card from the deck. Instead of a character having ongoing necrotic damage at the start of the encounter, he or she is affected by the card.

Concluding the Adventure

When the characters defeat Vontarin's ghost, they reverse Evard's curse. Read:

The unnatural dread brooding over the graveyard abruptly relaxes. You can feel life and color returning to the world around you. The curse entrapping Duponde is broken.

Congratulations! Your players have unraveled the *Dark Legacy of Evard*, completing this season of **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS**. Duponde's citizens are extremely grateful to the party, and the characters are treated as the saviors of the town for as long as they care to remain. If the players want, feel free to roleplay the conclusion of the adventure, allowing the characters to interact with the people of Duponde.

MAD GHOST

Encounter Level 5

Setup

3 twig blight swampvines (T)

2 flesh-crazed zombies (Z)

Vontarin, mad ghost (V)

Impose the skill challenge results on the ghost or on the characters. If the party has a large number of 1st- and 2nd-level characters in this encounter, reduce the number of monsters by one or two.

When the encounter starts, read:

The sky grows dark and the wind rises in wild gusts. A dark, ghostly figure erupts from the crumbling orb and is then drawn toward the nearby tomb. Thrashing and wailing in a hateful voice, the ghost resists, but some of its essence rips away to the pull of the grave. Portions of ghostly substance go astray, bringing life to vines around the tomb and causing corpses to stir in nearby graves.

"I shall not return to death," the ghost screams in fury. "I'll destroy you all for this!"

3 Twig Blight Swampvines (T) Level 3 Soldier

Small fey humanoid (plant)

HP 42; Bloodied 21 Initiative +6
AC 19, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 15 Perception +8
Speed 5 (swamp walk), climb 5, swim 5 Darkvision
Resist 5 poison; Vulnerable 5 fire

TRAIT

Rooted
When an effect forces the swampvine to move through a pull, a push, or a slide, the seedling can move up to 3 squares fewer than the effect specifies.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⬇ **Claw (poison) ♦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 poison damage.

MINOR ACTIONS

⬇ **Vine Snare ♦ At-Will (1/round)**
Effect: Melee 3 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: The swampvine pulls the target up to 2 squares, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 13).

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Poison Lash (poison) ♦ At-Will
Trigger: An enemy the swampvine is grabbing uses an attack power that does not include the swampvine as a target.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Melee 3 (triggering enemy). The target takes 5 poison damage.

Skills Stealth +9
Str 12 (+2) Dex 17 (+4) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 10 (+1) Int 6 (-1) Cha 10 (+1)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven

2 Flesh-Crazed Zombies (Z) Level 4 Skirmisher

Medium natural animate (undead)
HP 55; Bloodied 27 Initiative +6
AC 18, Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 14 Perception +3
Speed 6 (8 when charging) Darkvision
Immune disease, poison

TRAIT

Flesh-Crazed Charge
While the zombie is charging, its movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Zombie Weakness
A critical hit automatically reduces the zombie to 0 hit points.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⬇ **Club ♦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, or 2d8 + 6 if the zombie charged the target.

⬇ **Bite ♦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the zombie's next turn.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Deathless Hunger ♦ Encounter
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.

Str 18 (+6) Dex 15 (+4) Wis 13 (+3)
Con 15 (+4) Int 1 (-3) Cha 3 (-2)
Alignment unaligned Languages –
Equipment club

Tactics

Twig Blights: These plants prefer to remain in their starting squares, using *vine snare* to grab and drag enemies into range for claw attacks.

Vontarin's Ghost: This creature is a hateful remnant of the evil necromancer's soul. It attacks aggressively, using *enervation* at each opportunity and *despair's touch* when *enervation* is recharging. Vontarin slides strong enemies into melee with allies, keeping weaker characters close by. With *dark imperative*, Vontarin slides allies into useful positions.

Zombies: These undead begin by clawing up out of their graves (a move action) and charging the nearest enemies. After that, they rely on *bite*.

Features of the Area

Illumination: It's dark. Light sources illuminate only half their normal radius.

Benches: These squares are difficult terrain.

Bushes and Hedges: These plants are difficult terrain, and their squares are lightly obscured.

Mausoleum: This tomb's iron door is open, and the building has no windows. The roof is about 10 feet above the ground at the edge. Climbing the wall requires a DC 19 Athletics check.

Open Grave: Creatures that fall in this shallow grave take 1d6 damage. Scrambling out of the grave requires 2 extra squares of movement.

Vontarin, Mad Ghost (V) Level 5 Controller (Leader)

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

HP 64; Bloodied 32

Initiative +3

AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 17

Perception +7

Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic

TRAITS**☠ Deathly Madness ♦ Aura 2**

Enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to saving throws.

Vontarin slides an enemy that ends its turn in the aura up to 2 squares.

Insubstantial

Vontarin takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever Vontarin takes radiant damage, he loses this trait until the start of his next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS**☠ Despair's Touch (fear, psychic) ♦ At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Will

Hit: 2d6 + 6 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends). In addition, Nathaire slides the target up to 2 squares.

☠ Enervation (necrotic) ♦ Recharge ☞ ☞

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target is enervated (save ends). While the target is enervated, it takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage and any of its allies that end their turns adjacent to it take 5 necrotic damage.

Miss: Half damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

MINOR ACTIONS**Dark Imperative (necrotic) ♦ Recharge when first bloodied**

Effect: Close burst 5 (one ally in the burst); Vontarin slides the target up to 3 squares, and the target gains 5 temporary hit points. Until the target has no temporary hit points, its melee attacks deal 5 extra necrotic damage.

Skills Arcana +12, History +12, Insight +7

Str 6 (+0)

Dex 13 (+3)

Wis 10 (+2)

Con 16 (+5)

Int 20 (+7)

Cha 18 (+6)

Alignment evil

Languages Common, Draconic

Ponds: The water of the pond is difficult terrain.**Statues:** The pedestals are 5 feet tall, and they're blocking terrain. A creature can climb to the top of one with a successful DC 8 Athletics check.**Tombstones:** A square containing a monument is difficult terrain.**Trees:** A tree trunk's square is difficult terrain. Climbing it requires a DC 8 Athletics check. The trees are about 20 feet tall.

Conclusion

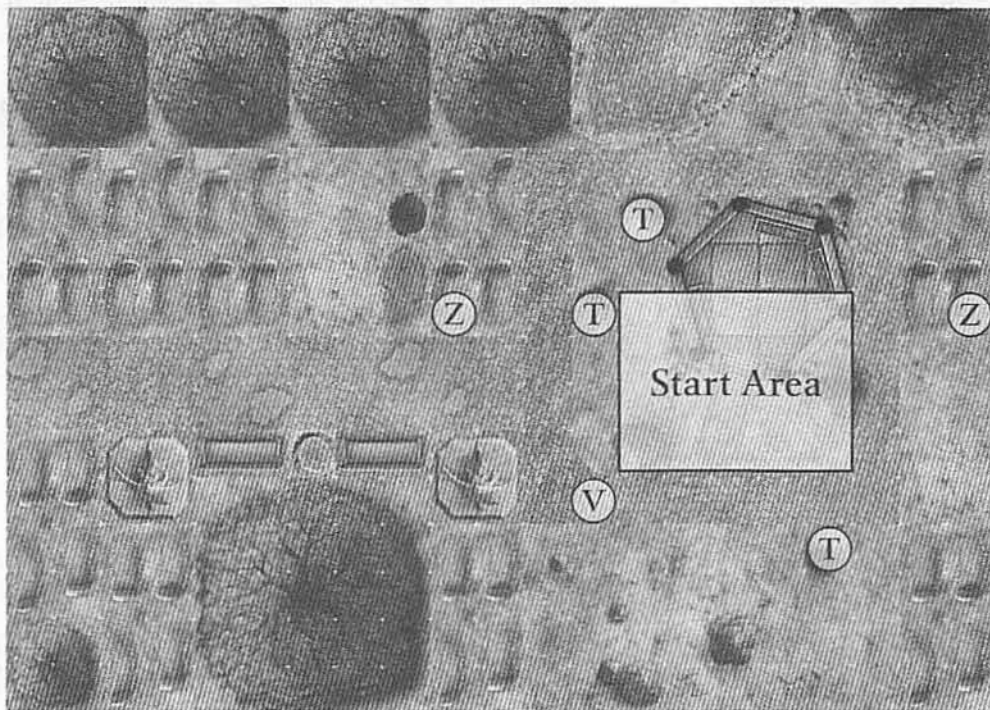
When Vontarin is defeated, read:

The ghostly remnant of Vontarin's soul shrieks in agony. Its body breaks apart into tatters of mist, which flit into the nearby tomb.

The twig blights and zombies gain their dark vitality from Vontarin's ghost. Roleplay them as disturbed when Vontarin is wounded to give the players a clue to this end. They battle on for a round or two after Vontarin is defeated; then the energy animating them fades away. Any monsters surviving at that point collapse and die. When the encounter is over, go to Concluding the Adventure, page 61.

Reward

For facing the skill challenge, battling Vontarin and the other monsters, and breaking the curse of Evard, each character gains 500 XP. If a player has attended every session this season, his or her character should have 3,750 XP if the character has completed all possible quests.



Duponde Guard (G1) Level 1 Minion

Medium natural humanoid, human

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 15, Fortitude 14, Reflex 13, Will 12

Speed 6

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 4 damage.

② Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 3 damage.

Str 16 (+3) Dex 12 (+1) Wis 11 (+0)

Con 14 (+2) Int 10 (+0) Cha 10 (+0)

Equipment chainmail, longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts

Duponde Guard (G2) Level 1 Minion

Medium natural humanoid, human

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14

Speed 6

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 4 damage.

② Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 3 damage.

Str 16 (+3) Dex 12 (+1) Wis 11 (+0)

Con 14 (+2) Int 10 (+0) Cha 10 (+0)

Equipment chainmail, longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts

Duponde Guard (G3) Level 1 Minion

Medium natural humanoid, human

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14

Speed 6

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 4 damage.

② Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 3 damage.

Str 16 (+3) Dex 12 (+1) Wis 11 (+0)

Con 14 (+2) Int 10 (+0) Cha 10 (+0)

Equipment chainmail, longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts

Duponde Guard (G4) Level 1 Minion

Medium natural humanoid, human

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14

Speed 6

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 4 damage.

② Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 3 damage.

Str 16 (+3) Dex 12 (+1) Wis 11 (+0)

Con 14 (+2) Int 10 (+0) Cha 10 (+0)

Equipment chainmail, longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts

Duponde Guard (G5) Level 1 Minion

Medium natural humanoid, human

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14

Speed 6

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 4 damage.

② Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 3 damage.

Str 16 (+3) Dex 12 (+1) Wis 11 (+0)

Con 14 (+2) Int 10 (+0) Cha 10 (+0)

Equipment chainmail, longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts

Duponde Guard (G6) Level 1 Minion

Medium natural humanoid, human

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14

Speed 6

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 4 damage.

② Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 3 damage.

Str 16 (+3) Dex 12 (+1) Wis 11 (+0)

Con 14 (+2) Int 10 (+0) Cha 10 (+0)

Equipment chainmail, longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
ENCOUNTERS

SHADOWS IN THE NIGHT

Evard, master of shadow magic, is dead—or is he? A sinister force has the citizens of Duponde in its clutches. Even as it threatens to drag the whole town into darkness, an unlikely band of heroes stands on the threshold of the Shadowfell to deny evil its prize.

Dark Legacy of Evard is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Roleplaying Game adventure designed for the spring 2011 season of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS™ official play program. The adventure includes three full-color battle maps, thirteen ready-to-play encounters, and information on the program.

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