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FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2

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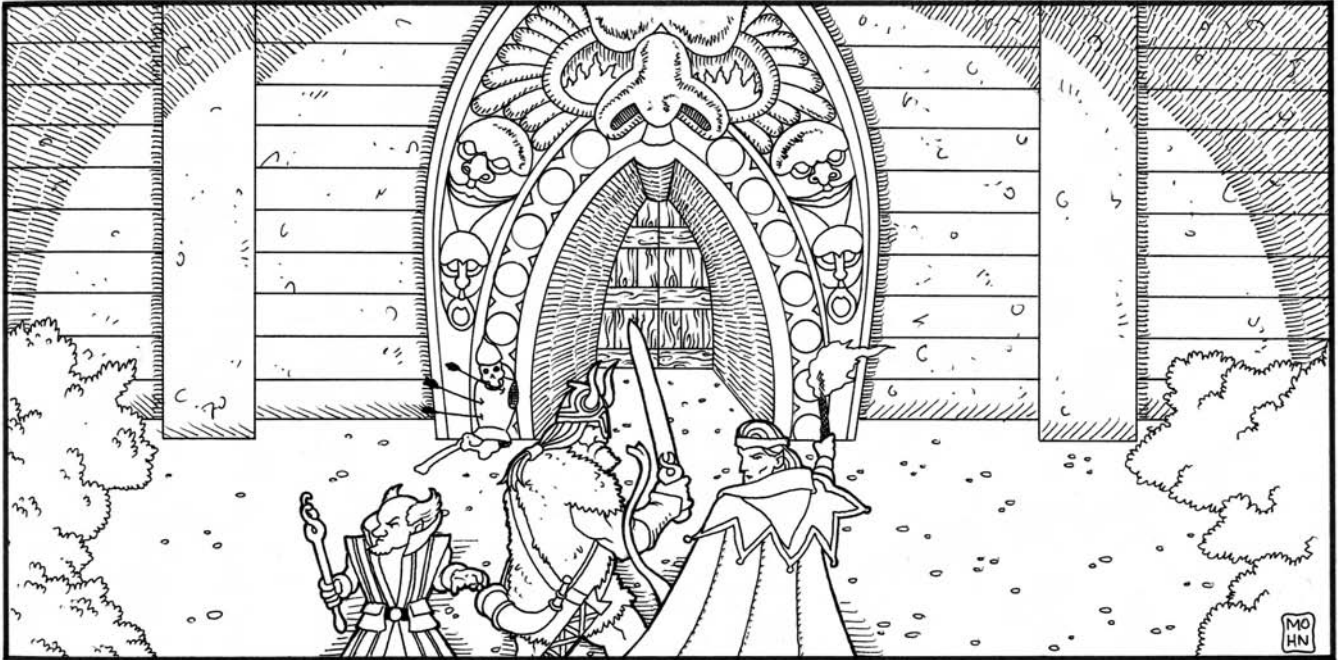


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Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Adventure Begins

A COMPILATION OF ADVENTURES FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



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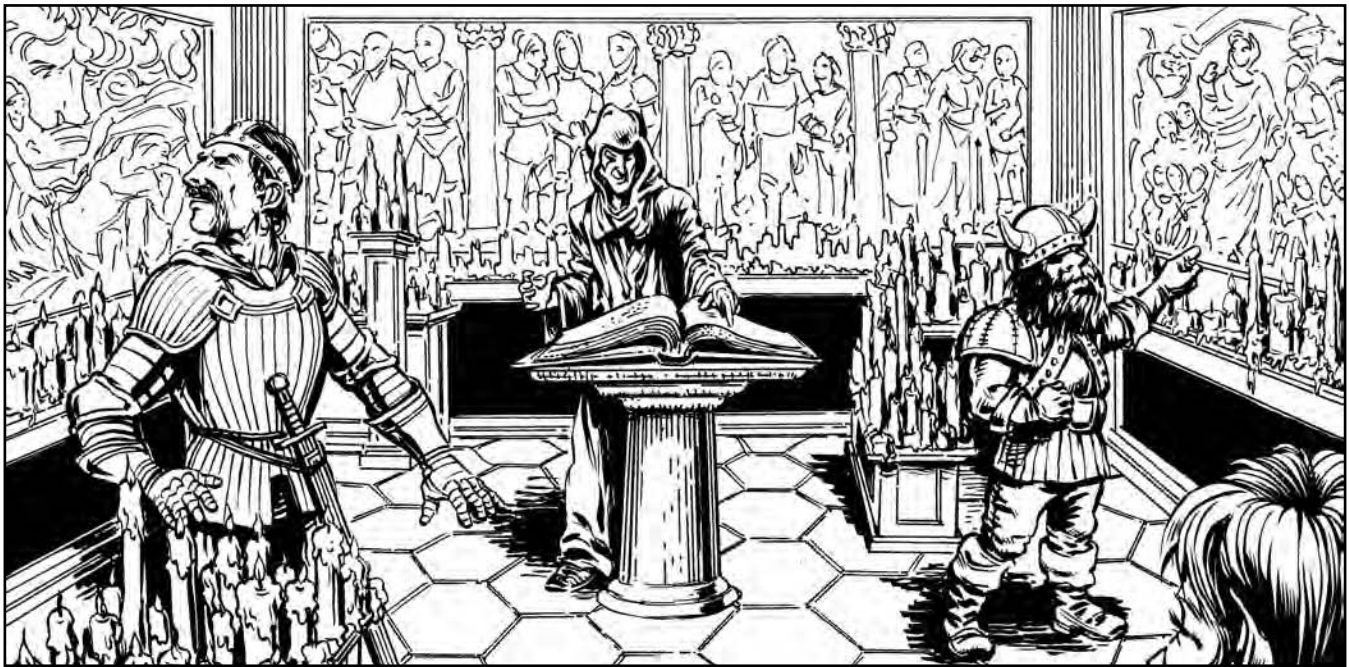
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Dungeon Crawl Classics Tower of the Black Pearl

By Harley Stroh
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Tower of the Black Pearl is designed for four to six characters of 1st through 2nd level. Characters can be of any class, although a well-rounded party will have the best chance of success. Rogues will find their talents in high demand during the exploration of the Tower. In lieu of rogues, spellcasters will have their creativity and resourcefulness put to the test.

Adventure Summary

Once every decade, the tides of the Emphyrean Ocean recede far enough to reveal the highest eaves of a mysterious undersea tower. Long ago this was the eldritch fastness of a powerful mage, but now the tower is known simply as the final resting place of the fabled Black Pearl – an artifact rumored to bring doom upon all who dare to possess it.

Tonight the moon nearly fills the sky, and the tides have already begun to recede. The PCs have eight short hours to explore the tower before the dark waters return. Unfortunately, a ruthless band of motley pirates has already made it to the Tower. The adventurers must outwit and outfight the pirates, dodge ancient traps, and solve arcane puzzles to reach the Tower's inner sanc-

tum. The fabled Black Pearl will be theirs for the taking...if they can survive the Pearl's curse.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	5	C	3 Pirates	2
1-2	6	T	<i>Burning hands</i> trap	2
1-3	6	C/T	4 animated fetishes	2
			Camouflaged pit trap	1
1-4	7	P	Portal puzzle	3
1-5	7	C	3 pirates	2
1-6	8	C/P	Skeleton	1/3
1-7	8	C/T	<i>Savage Quenn</i> , Ftr1	3
			2 pirates	
			Wall blade trap	1
1-8	9	T	Flooding room trap	3
1-9	9	T	Spear trap	1
1-10	10	C	Skeleton	1/3
1-12	10	C	25 sea vipers, Tiny	6
		P	Black Pearl Shrine	4

Scaling Information

The Tower of the Black Pearl is an adventure designed for 4-6 characters of 1st-2nd levels. You can adapt the scenario to higher level parties with a few simple modifications.

Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 2nd level): Add 3 pirates to every pirate encounter, giving each an additional level in warrior. Increase Savage Quenn's fighter levels by 2. Increase the DC of all traps by 5, and make the vipers in area 1-12 Medium size.

Getting the Players Involved

Use one the following plot hooks to get the characters directly into the dungeon.

- All of the locals know stories about the fabled Black Pearl, and the underwater tower that can be reached but once a decade. An aging pirate, drowning in his cups, informs the PCs that this is such a night, and that a band of hearty souls might make their fortune tonight if they were willing to risk life and limb. He offers directions to the tower and the use of his skiff exchange for 20 gp and 1/10 the haul.
- While relaxing in a seaside inn, the PCs overhear a scuffle taking place outside. Running to the rescue, they discover two of Savage Quenn's rogues mugging a robed magician. The rogues flee the instant they sight the PCs, but for the magician it is already too late. Investigating his corpse, the PCs discover a map directing them to what seems to be an underwater tower; the back of the map is covered in a complex series of astrological equations. A DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) check determines the equations to be tidal and lunar patterns. Judging from the equations, the tower is not underwater *tonight*.
- The PCs are approached by a sharp-eyed merchant. He offers the PCs a proposition: he'll pay the PCs 50 gp each to retrieve the Black Pearl from the tower of the same name. He'll provide the map and the skiff, the PCs will provide the wits and brawn, and the PCs are welcome to keep any other loot they happen to find. There's only one problem to the merchant's plan: his arch-nemesis, Savage Quenn, has already left for the tower!

Background Story

The Tower of the Black Pearl is a popular tale in seaside taverns. Nearly everyone has heard of the tower that appears but once every ten years, when the tides are right and the seas at their lowest. Fewer stories recall the wizard Sezrakan that built the tower to house his

corpse, but all the stories agree on two points: that a enormous black pearl is hidden in the tower, and that certain doom awaits any thief who dares to steal the Pearl.

Savage Quenn and the Pirates of the *Black Mariah*

The nefarious pirate known as Savage Quenn is feared up and down the coast. Quenn has terrorized the sea lanes for three years now, and the local lord has finally decided to bring the pirate's career to an end. But Quenn has no plans to end his career by stretching a noose. Instead he sold his ship and dismissed his entire crew, save for a few handpicked rogues.

Tonight his band will sack the Tower of the Black Pearl, and if all goes as planned, the savage pirate-lord will be the only one to emerge from the tower, Pearl in hand. Quenn will vanish into retirement, and none will be the wiser.

Quenn is a comely half-elf who would appear more at home in a sylvan court than on the deck of warship. The fancy silk doublet and dainty rapier disguise a ruthless, self-absorbed murderer, who has put entire cities to the torch.

Quenn's pirates are a motley band of desperate ruffians and rogues. All are wanted men and will do everything in their power to avoid capture. All are mongrel humans: a mix of human and half-orc, sprinkled with the ancestry of half a dozen other goblinoid races. Their appearance is a testament to their desperate lives: rude, homespun trousers and vests, bare feet, sun-weathered skin, and colorful, sprawling tattoos that cover their bodies. All sport multiple piercings and brands from time spent as convicts. They fight with fierce cunning; no trick or deception is too low for them.

Player Beginning

Start the adventure by reading or paraphrasing the following:

The dark sea rolls, solemn and quiet beneath the bone-white moon. The old Maiden of the Sea, waxing full, seems especially close tonight, its reflection unbroken on the gently rolling waters. Dim lights of town twinkle in the distance, and when the wind is right you can still hear sea chanties being sung in the night.

A cry goes up from the front: your companions have sighted something breaking the water's surface. Could it be the fabled tower? With wide grins and bright eyes, you bend your backs to the oars.

The Tower of the Black Pearl

The tower and adjoining caves were built centuries ago by Sezrakan the Elder, a mage of great renown who cherished his privacy. As the mage grew older, he became obsessed with researching means to extend the span of his life. What became of the mage is a mystery; one day he simply vanished, and was never heard from again.

His tower remains, a testament to Sezrakan's power. The tower is almost one hundred feet tall, encrusted in mollusks, kelp and coral. The inside of the tower is constantly damp, but the sea water is kept out by a magic shrine powered by the Black Pearl. Removing the Pearl from the shrine permits the water to rush in through a thousand small cracks and holes, but clever PCs may find a way to escape with both the pearl and their lives (see area 1-12 for more information).

All of the tower and caverns are lit by *torches of continual flame*; the enchantments are wearing thin, and the torches provide only meager light.

Time is crucial to this adventure. Once they step foot on the tower, the characters have precisely eight hours to explore the tower and return to the surface. One minute longer, and the sea begins to rise over the top of the tower, pressing the exit closed. PCs will simply be unable to lift up the portal from inside the tower, although it could be chopped open from below. Of course, this breaks the pearl's magic seal and sends hundreds of tons of sea water flooding into the tower, sucking PCs along for a deadly ride. Even if they survive the crush of the water, the characters will still have to survive long enough to swim 50 feet to the surface of the ocean. Any boat moored to the tower will have been sunk by the rising tides, leaving PCs adrift in the open sea.

Iron Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28.

Magic-Wrought Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick; hardness 20; hp 500; Break DC 40; Climb DC 15.

Wandering Monsters

Check for wandering monsters once every half hour, or whenever the characters make a significant amount of sustained noise. Roll d12; an encounter occurs on a 1. If an encounter is called for, roll 1d4 to determine the encounter.

Roll (d4)	Result
1	Animated fetishes, Tiny
2-3	1d2 pirates
4	1d3 dire rats

Animated Fetishes, Tiny (4): CR 1/2; Tiny Construct;

HD 1/2d10; hp 2; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -9; Atk/Full Atk Slam +1 melee (1d3-1); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA -; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, hardness 8; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -5; Str 8, Dex 14, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: -

Hardness (Ex): An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated.

Note: See area 1-3 for examples of animated fetishes.

Pirate, male human War1: CR 1/2; Medium Human; HD 1d8+1; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6+1/19-20) or dagger +2 ranged (1d4+1/19-20); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 8, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Balance +3, Climb +2, Escape Artist +3, Jump +2, Profession (sailor) +3; Agile, Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)).

Possessions: Dagger, short sword, 10 gp in jewelry.

Dire Rats: CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease); SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse

Disease (Ex): Filth fever-bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Dire rats can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Tower of the Black Pearl (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The tower rises from the sea like something out of a fairy tale. And yet, it must be real, for waves lap at it just as they lap at the planks of your skiff.

Snarling gargoyles crown the four corners of the tower, peering from coral-encrusted battlements. More worrisome than the eldritch tower or the snarling gargoyles is the worn longboat moored on the far side of the tower. Squinting through the darkness, it seems that the deck of the longboat is empty.

Three pirates are asleep atop the tower beside a keg of rum. Quenn left them with orders to guard the ship, but rum and poor discipline have rendered them senseless. Any loud noise (like the PCs' skiff



knocking the side of the tower) wakes the pirates, who fight equally well drunk or sober. Given warning, the pirates make use of the cover afforded by the battlements, firing their bows at the PCs and trying to knock any boarders into the ocean.

The entrance to the tower is an iron trapdoor sealed by magic. Atop the trapdoor, covered in seaweed, is a flat stone inscribed with a large glyph, the mark of Sezrakan. Tracing the glyph causes the lock to open and the door to fall away, revealing an iron ladder; otherwise the door can be picked open or broken.

Pirates (3): See above.

Trapdoor: 6 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 120; Open Lock DC 15; Break DC 30.

Area 1-2 – Hall of Mysteries (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The air is wet and stale here, as if the room hasn't been disturbed in years. Hundreds of candles line the walls, their flames swaying and dancing to your every move. Some are tall, as if they were lit just moments ago, while others are burnt down to stubby mounds of wax.

In the center of the room stands an onyx pedestal supporting a massive tome bound in gold and worn black scales.

The walls are decorated with detailed murals depicting what must be the lives of heroes. You can see warriors rising up from humble beginnings to lead armies against forces of darkness; humble apprentices inheriting arcane powers from their masters, casting down kings and emperors with a wave of their wands; meek rogues growing to become daring shadow-lords; and destitute warrior-monks rising to become leaders of holy armies.

Eons ago, long before he succumbed to madness, Sezrakan watched over the forces of Good, providing lore and subtle clues to stalwart heroes, and aiding worthy adventurers in their time of greatest need. The aged wizard watched the heroes from his chamber, using methods of scrying that have since been lost to the ages.

Each candle in this room is keyed to the life of a hero of the Realm; newer candles represent adventurers beginning at the start of their lives (like the PCs), while older candles represent aged heroes coming to the end of their days. Extinguishing a candle ends a life; lighting it brings the hero back to life, as if by *resurrection*. A candle can be re-lit only once.

The tome atop the pedestal is a registry of every hero to ever adventure in the Realm (written in Common). The names of living heroes are noted with the location of their candle. Fallen heroes have their names drawn through in black ink. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check allows the PCs to determine the location of their own candles; if a PCs dies during the course of the adventure, her candle can be re-lit.

Each candle is protected by a *burning hands* trap. The trap is triggered whenever someone tries to extinguish a candle or remove it from its place along the wall. The candles can be taken from the room, but it is extremely difficult to keep the flames lit (DC 20 Ref save every 5 minutes).

Choosing to extinguish the flames for the purpose of slaughtering heroes is an *extremely* evil act that draws the violent attention of a trio of astral devas.

Burning Hands Trap: CR 2; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*burning hands*, 1st-level wizard, 1d4 fire, DC 11 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

Area 1-3 – False Hopes (EL 2, 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

A trickle of sea water runs down the staircase. The wooden stairs are rotten in places and in one case they've fallen through altogether. Passage will require vaulting the gap.

The walls along the stairs shelter a trio of small alcoves. In each alcove are small figurines: hand-painted fetishes carved from ivory and decorated with hair and small beads. The first nook holds a fierce-looking barbarian, the second a pair of snarling panthers, and the last a somber knight.

The gap in the stairs is 7 feet across, and with the drop in elevation it is an easy jump (DC 10), even for small creatures. The landing is deceptive – the marked area of the map notes where the rotted steps break away, pitching PCs down onto the next flight of stairs below. Leaping the full distance to safety requires DC 20 Jump check, but roping down to the stairs below is far safer.

The fetishes are actually tiny animated objects. If

disturbed, they launch into a coordinated defense, doing their best to force attackers off the stairs.

Animated Fetishes, Tiny (4): CR 1/2; Tiny Construct; HD 1/2d10; hp 2; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -9; Atk/Full Atk Slam +1 melee (1d3-1); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA –; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, hardness 8; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -5; Str 8, Dex 14, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: –

Hardness (Ex): An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. In this case the hardness is 8.

Collapsing Stairs Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 10 ft. deep (1d6, fall); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC –.

Area 1-4 – Chamber of Portals: Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is dominated by a trio of arches set against the walls of the room. Each arch resembles a snarling dragon; all are carved from dark mahogany and bound in bronze.

The arches would be identical were it not for their gemstone eyes. The dragon in the southwest corner of the room has emeralds for eyes; the dragon in the northwest corner, pearls; the dragon in the northeast is missing its gemstones and the eye sockets are empty.

Beneath the arches are flat slabs of blank obsidian.

An enormous eldritch sigil is etched into the stone floor, dividing the room into three distinct vectors. A fight must have taken place here recently: fresh blood is pooled near the pearl archway.

Each archway is a portal. In order to activate a portal, blood must be poured onto the sigil directly before the arch. This doesn't require a great amount of blood – a single drop will do – activating the portal for 5 rounds. During this time the obsidian slab is washed over by a shimmering, rippling pool of absolute blackness.

Puzzling out the portals is made more difficult because presently only the pearl portal can be activated (it leads to area 1-5). The northeast portal can only be activated once the rubies from area 1-11 are placed in the dragon's eye sockets (it leads to area 1-12). The emerald portal can only be activated with the blood from an 8 HD+ creature. Its destination is not specified; the GM should make it lead

to some interesting location in his own campaign world where he'd like to take the characters once they're of a higher level.

Players should be encouraged to work out the portal puzzle on their own, but Knowledge (arcana) checks can provide hints for stumped parties. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes the archways as portals. A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that blood is likely what activates the portals, and that the third portal needs its gemstone eyes before it can be activated. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that "powerful" blood is required to activate the emerald portal.

Prying the gems from an arch disables a portal. The emeralds are worth 65 gp each, and the pearls 50 gp.

Area 1-5 – Ambush! (EL 2): This cave is the bottom-most level of the tower. It is located below sea level and is accessible only via the portal in area 1-4. A trio of pirates wait in this room, with orders to attack anyone stepping through the portal. Activating the portal alerts the pirates, setting their plan into motion. They lurk on either side of the portal, lashing out when someone steps through.

Once the pirates have been killed or subdued, read or paraphrase the following:

The regular, masonry walls of the tower give way to natural stone walls. In this roughly rectangular room, you face a series of natural stone stairs to the north, and a closed door to the right. The air is different here, fresh with the tang of salt. From somewhere in the distance comes the thrumming roar of the surf.

The walls are decorated with carvings depicting some sort of evolving dragon. On the floor, before the portal you entered, a sigil is carved into the stone.

Give the players handout A. This antechamber is decorated with a series of carvings depicting a human transforming into a multi-headed dragon. Each stage is carved in incredible detail, so that it is possible to discern that the final dragon sports the heads of white, blue and black dragons.

The carvings accurately depict the transformation of Sezrakan; a DC 15 bardic knowledge check will recall terrifying legends of such a beast, although it is not commonly known that the dragon is Sezrakan.

The floor before the portal has a smaller sigil mirroring the sigil in area 1-4, and is activated by blood, just like the portals in area 1-4.

Pirates (3): See above.

Area 1-5A – Ceremonial Chamber: Read or paraphrase the following:

The air in this room is thick with the scent of mold. Rotting crimson robes hang from hooks on the walls, and several dark vessels rest on a rickety shelf. A seemingly endless series of runes is carved into the floor, walls and ceiling, covering every inch of the room.

Resting on the floor, in a shallow, gold bowl, is a rusty knife with a long, curved blade.

This is where Sezrakan and his apprentices performed the rituals necessary to transfer the soul of the mage into the body of a dragon. The vessels on the shelf contain Sezrakan's organs; though painted black, each is plated in hammered gold. The five vessels and the bowl are each worth 25 gp.

The secret door hidden in the back of the room cannot be opened from this side. The door is made of a mighty granite slab with 500 hit points and a hardness of 10.

Area 1-6 – Boatman of the Depths (EL 1/3): Read or paraphrase the following:

Roughhewn steps descend to a wooden dock and dark lake that wends its way out of sight. A brazier stands to either side, wreathed in cold flames.

A skiff emerges from the darkness, poled by a cloaked boatman. As the boatman draws nearer, you can see the cloak's hood hides a pale skull with blue flames for eyes. The skiff brushes up against the dock, and the boatman extends a single skeletal hand.

The silent boatman is a normal skeleton with two *continual flame* spells cast on its eye sockets. It will accept any coin as payment, but will not shove off until every passenger has paid at least one coin. Unless the skeleton is paid two coins per passenger (one for the return trip), it will deliver the PCs safely to area 1-7, and then attack the PCs when they pass over the rope bridge (area 1-10).

PCs can choose to avoid the boatman and swim to area 1-7, but the unnaturally cold waters inflict 1d2 points of cold damage for every round spent in the water. Swimming in the cold is very difficult, requiring a DC 20 Swim check each round. The lake is 20 feet deep here, growing to a depth of 40 feet near area 1-7.

The braziers are lit with *continual flames*.

Treasure: The skeleton does not keep any of the fares it collects. Instead it casts the coins over the side of the skiff, where they sink into the mud and

muck. PCs willing to brave the frigid waters find a random amount of coins with each successful DC 10 Search check. Roll 1d4 to determine the search results:

1d4	Search Result
1	1d12 gp, 1d6 sp
2	1d8 sp, 1d4 cp
3	1d6 cp, 1d2 pp
4	1d12 pp

Boatman (human skeleton): CR 1/3; Medium Undead; HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk Pole +1 melee (1d6+1); Space/Reach 5 ft./15 ft. (boat pole); SA -; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

Area 1-7 – Gate of Iron (EL 3, 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The lake winds through the darkness like a serpent. High above, nearly hidden in the shadows, hangs a decrepit rope bridge connecting two caves on opposite sides of the lake. Rotting planks dangle loosely from the tattered ropes. Climbing the overhung, algae-covered walls to the caves seems impossible.

The lake ends at a dock rising to a small, natural cave. A brazier stands to either side, wreathed in cold flames.

The back of the cave is dominated by a pair of mighty iron doors. The doors arch from floor to ceiling, and are inscribed with the heads of dragons, twisted into ferocious masks of anger.

If PCs stop mid-lake and attempt to scale the walls, they find the climb to be extremely difficult (DC 25).

Savage Quenn and three of his pirates are here, trying to determine a way to safely unlock the gates. They will hail the PCs, offering a truce. Given the chance, Quenn will offer the following terms: he and his men will join the PCs and split all treasure evenly, with the PCs getting first pick of magic items.

Of course this is only a ploy. Quenn will turn on the PCs to just as soon as the gate is opened or the blade trap is sprung. If the battle goes poorly, Quenn will abandon his men by leaping into the lake. He won't survive the swim; later investigations reveal his frozen corpse floating in the darkness.

The gate is locked by a series of tumblers concealed inside the maw of one of the dragon heads. The lock can be picked with a DC 15 Open Lock

check, or broken by a DC 30 Strength check. The gate is trapped with a scythe blade that strikes from a grate in the ceiling; the trap is triggered anytime anyone fails to pick the lock.

PCs examining the *inside* of the gate after it has been opened (Search DC 10) notice that the gate seems specifically designed to form a seal of some sort. Three rounds after the gate is opened, powerful water-driven pistons force the gate back closed. Items used to block the gates open will be crushed, and the gate closes after one round. This may be delayed – but not stopped – by a PC making a DC 25 Strength check. Breaking the gates defeats the trap in area 1-8.

Treasure: PCs providing proof of Quenn's demise will be awarded 250 gp and an audience with the local lord. If the PCs comport themselves well, the lord will be quick to see the value of enterprising and discrete PCs, sending them on valorous missions across the Realm.

A DC 10 bardic knowledge check will allow PCs to recall the bounty on Quenn's head.

Savage Quenn, male half-elf Ftr1: CR 1; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in.); HD 1d10; hp 9; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk *Whisker* +3 melee (1d6+2/18-20) or dagger +3 ranged (1d4+1/19-20); SA –; SQ half-elf traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 9, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Climb +2, Disguise +3, Intimidate +7, Profession (sailor) +0, Swim +3; Persuasive, Weapon Finesse.

Possessions: Chain shirt, dagger, *rapier* +1. Quenn's rapier is named "Whisker," the weapon of choice for at least three generations of infamous pirate captains. The sword has a pommel cast in the shape of a cat's head, with black steel blade, and a blood red channel that runs the length of the blade. Anyone openly carrying the blade will attract the notice of authorities who will assume the wielder is a pirate; the blade's notoriety grants the wielder a non-magical +1 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks made on sailors and seaside locals.

Pirates (3): See above.

Iron Gate: 6 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 120; Open Lock DC 15; Break DC 30.

Wall Blade Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); Atk +10 melee (2d4/x4, scythe); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

Area 1-8 – Chamber of Doom (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of this room are strangely discolored, as if by high water marks. The bones of many skeletons lie scattered about the room, with little or no sense to their placement. Lining the ceiling and floor are dozens of fist-sized holes.

Three rounds after the iron gates (the entrance from area 1-7) are opened, massive water-powered pistons force them closed, crushing anything in their way. The tumblers roll back into place, locking the door and sealing the room. The next round water begins to pour into the room, fed from the holes drilled into the ceiling.

During this first round, the iron gate can be easily picked from the inside by quick-thinking rogues (Open Lock DC 10) but after the first round the pressure from the water holds the portal closed, and the gates cannot be opened without being broken.

The room will fill with water, from floor to ceiling, in 6 rounds. PCs can buy themselves 2 more rounds by crowding up the eastern stairs. The room and stair stay filled with water for 10 rounds, after which the room begins to drain through the holes in the bottom lining the floor.

Unless the PCs manage to escape back to area 1-7, getting through the door at area 1-11A will be their only escape.

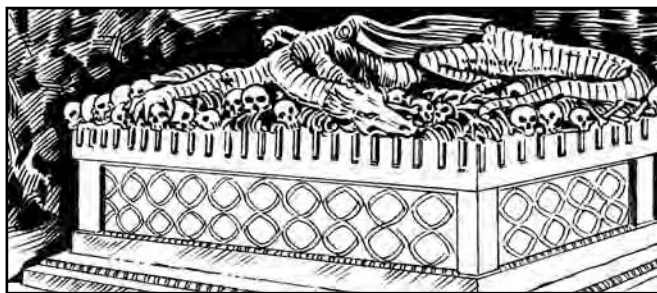
Water-Filled Room Trap: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; multiple targets (all targets in room); never miss; onset delay (6 rounds); liquid; Search DC 17; Disable Device DC 23.

Area 1-9 – Escape (EI 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stairs terminate at a short landing. A rusty iron door stands to the north, but before it rests an armored skeleton, impaled on a long iron spear. As you approach, the spear withdraws into the wall with a hiss, dropping the skeleton to the floor into a clattering pile of bones.

The door to the north is locked with a simple lock (Open Lock DC 15), but any attempts to pick the lock or break the door trigger the spear trap. A DC 15 Spot check notes that rust has eaten away at the door's hinges; breaking the door is easier than adventurers might assume.

Treasure: The last poor soul to fall victim to the spear trap wore a +1 *chain shirt*, his only possession that has survived the ravages of time. The shirt is covered by a film of rust, but with a good cleaning it will shine as brightly as the day it was forged



in the Halls of the Dwarf Lord.

Rusty Iron Door: 2 inches thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Open Lock DC 15; Break DC 20.

Wall Spear Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); Atk +10 melee (1d8/x3, spear); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 20.

Area 1-10 – Rope Bridge (EL 1/2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stairs open onto a balcony of sorts, overlooking the dark lake. A decrepit rope bridge spans the distance between the balcony and the far wall; the planks are pitted with rot, the ropes dark with mold.

The rope bridge is much more sturdy than it looks – the threat will come from below. If the PCs did not pay the boatman two coins for passage, the skeleton will pole its way beneath the rope bridge and lurk in the shadows, waiting for the PCs to cross.

As they begin to make their way across, the boatman will strike from below, lashing out at the rope bridge in an attempt to drop the PCs into the icy water 15 feet below. His long pole has a 15 ft. reach.

Boatman: See area 1-10.

Rope bridge: Hardness 2; hp 15.

Area 1-11 – Tomb of Sezrakan: Read or paraphrase the following:

An immense stone sarcophagus rests in the center of this shallow cave. The cover of the sarcophagus depicts a dragon in repose atop a mound of skeletons. The cool air seems to crackle with energy, setting your hair on end.

This is the final resting place of Sezrakan's body; though his spirit lives on in the form of a terrible monster. The heavy stone lid can be removed with a DC 20 Strength check; up to four PCs can work together at once. Inside rests a tall skeleton arrayed in moldering robes and a golden crown. The robes are worthless, but the crown is worth 50 gp.

A careful search of the sarcophagus (Search DC

15) will reveal a pair of ruby gemstones – the eyes to the portal dragon in area 1-4. If the rubies are returned to the dragon above the portal, they will allow the portal to be activated permitting access to area 1-12. Otherwise the gems are worth 80 gp each.

Area 1-11A – Secret Tunnel: Read or paraphrase the following:

The narrow tunnel bores through solid rock ending in a blank wall of finished stone. To the left, an iron lever protrudes from the floor.

If the lever is pulled, the blank wall rises, permitting access to area 1-5A. The wall descends back into place after 3 rounds, inflicting 3d10 points of crushing damage to anything caught beneath it (Reflex save DC 14 avoids).

Area 1-12 – Shrine of the Black Pearl (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The portal opens onto a wide platform flanked by a pair of burning braziers. Steep stone steps descend into the water-filled room below. At the far end of the room you can see the statue of a snarling dragon, rearing back as if to strike. Clutched in the serpent's mouth is the goal of your quest: an enormous black pearl. Even though the statue is set lower than the stairs before you, the waters are held back from the statue, as if by magic.

Squinting, you are able to make out slithering shapes ahead: dozens of black snakes writhe and squirm in the waters before you, causing the dark pool to boil and roll.

Show the players handout B. The water vipers, though small, represent one of the greatest dangers of the tower. A character falling into the water will be attacked by snakes from all sides, likely killing the poor soul. Characters will have to be cautious and careful about how they go about reaching the black pearl.

The snakes, unprovoked, will not attack anyone outside of the water. The water level, however, may rise unpredictably – see below.

The black pearl is roughly the size of a human fist. Removing the pearl is easy – a DC 18 Strength check is sufficient to wrench it from the maw of the dragon statue. Doing so destroys the spell that keeps the ocean from flooding the tower.

If PCs remove the pearl, the tower floods in 13 rounds. The flooding begins with the bottom levels – area 1-12 – and quickly proceeds to the rest of the tower, as the bottom levels of the tower are filled

with rushing sea water. The effects of the flooding will be immediately obvious: the waters in area 1-12, held away from the statue, come rushing in, crushing the unfortunate thief against the statue. Anyone standing before the statue, and failing a DC 15 Reflex save, is struck for 1d6 points of crushing damage.

Area 1-12 is flooded on rounds 1 and 2; areas 5 through 11 on round 3; area 4 on round 11; area 3 on round 12; and area 2 on round 13. (The candles in area 1-2 are protected by powerful magics; if left undisturbed, they have the ability to burn underwater.)

Clever PCs, anticipating the flood, might be able to flee the rising waters, or avoid their path by mundane or magical means.

The floor before the portal has a smaller sigil mirroring the sigil in area 1-4, and is activated by blood, just like the portals in area 1-4.

Treasure: If sold in a major metropolis, the Black Pearl easily worth over 2,000 gp. Contrary to most rumors, the Curse of the Pearl is not *entirely* malevolent. The possessor of the black pearl receives a +1 enhancement bonus to all saving throws, and a +1 enhancement bonus to her armor class. The possessor receives a +1 enhancement bonus to attack rolls, and casts spells as if her effective level were +1. Finally, all skill checks receive a +1 bonus.

Unfortunately, the pearl also *triples* the likelihood of wandering monster encounters, and draws the attention of any intelligent, evil 5+ HD creatures within a five mile radius. The creatures won't understand why they are drawn to the PCs, but they will be possessed by a strange, gnawing hunger that is only sated when they are stalking the owner of the pearl.

There was a reason, after all, why Sezrakan chose to build his tower five miles from the shore.

Sea Snake, Tiny (25): CR 1/3; Tiny Animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1; Init +3; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -11; Atk/Full Atk Bite +5 melee (1 plus poison); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +5; Weapon Finesse

Poison (Ex): A viper snake has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Con, Fort DC 10. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Further Adventures

There are a number of adventures that can stem from an adventure in the Tower of the Black Pearl. The second (and more dangerous) half of the tower remains to be explored – after all, the PCs only adventured through the top four levels before they took the portal to the caverns; there are several remaining levels in between. Characters can expect to encounter deadly monsters and the guardians of Sezrakan's secrets. Whether or not Sezrakan, the Transformed Mage, still haunts the tower depends entirely on the GM's whim and the respective level of PCs. The spellcasting, multi-headed dragon will surely be a match for the highest level characters, and might become a returning villain in dragon-oriented campaigns.

Even selling the pearl can become a challenging adventure, especially if good-aligned PCs allow the pirates to live. The road to the nearest city is surely fraught with brigands, and thieves' guilds will surely be awaiting the character's arrival. Confronted by vengeful pirates, greedy brigands, ruthless guild thieves, and double-dealing merchants, heroes may come to rue the day they sacked the Tower of the Black Pearl.

Optional Ending: Dark Age of Heroes

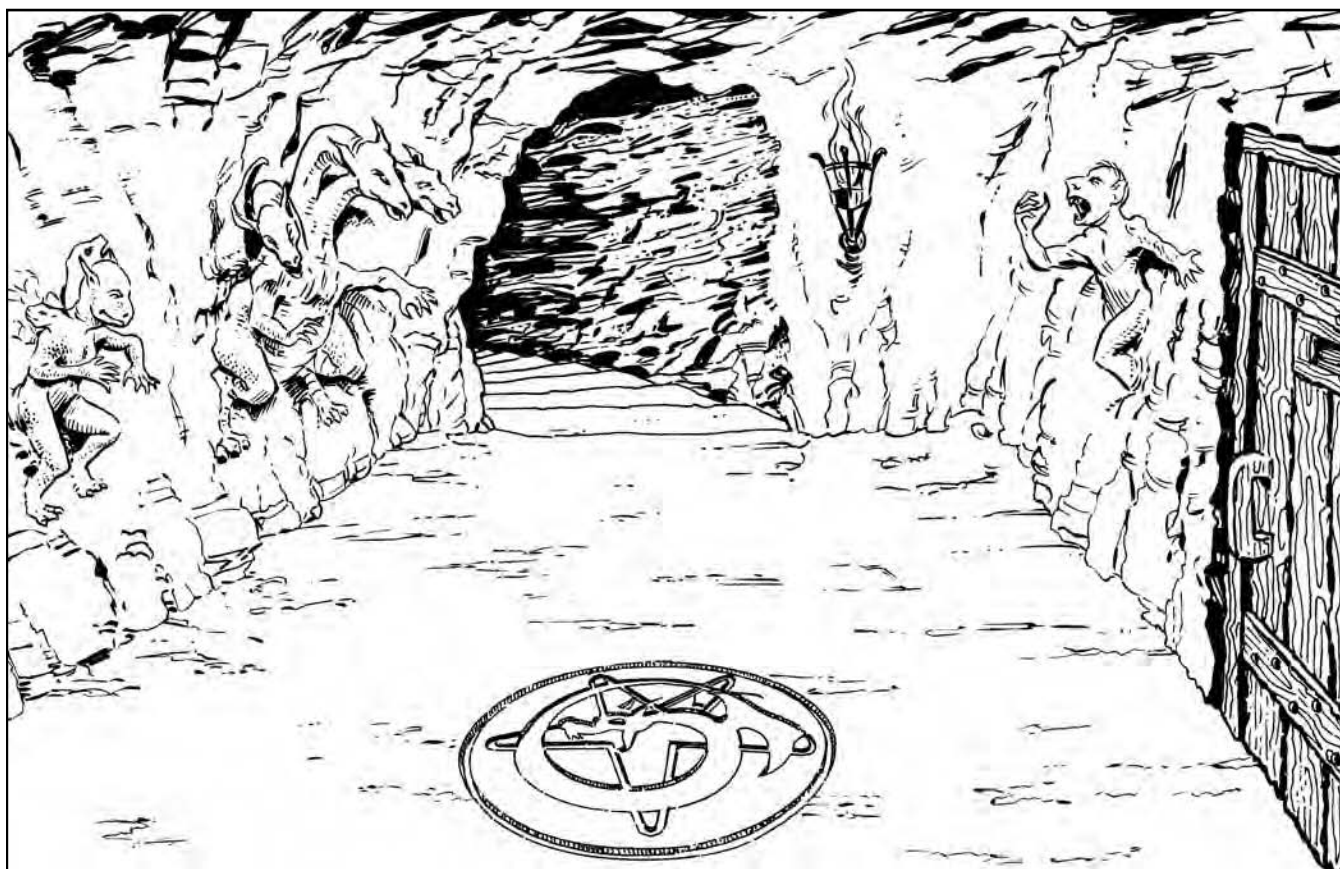
GMs can use this adventure to set the stage for an epic campaign set in a grim, dark age world. GMs interested in this sort of long-term story arc need only allow the rising waters to extinguish the hero candles burning in area 1-2.

This *immediately* slays every good-aligned NPC hero (e.g., above level 5) in the world. The PCs are spared the effects because of their proximity to the tower. Instead, the wave of radiating power *bestows* one additional, permanent hit die to each PC. Adventurers might rejoice at first, but as they learn what has happened to the rest of the world, they may come to rue the day they ever set foot in Sezrakan's accursed tower.

With all their good rulers gone, the civilized nations quickly collapse into feuding city-states. It is a full year before the evil powers begin to war on the fractured nations, but lesser challenges (humanoid tribes, unintelligent evil monsters, wandering undead) almost immediately become a threat to formerly protected communities. Without good heroes to lead the defense, the towns and cities turn to the PCs. And as the powers of evil lead their march upon the nations of good, it falls to the PCs to lead armies in their defense.

Quickly the PCs will find themselves in the spotlight. Other heroes will slowly rise through the ranks, but all will look to the PCs to set an example of goodness and righteousness in the enduring dark age.

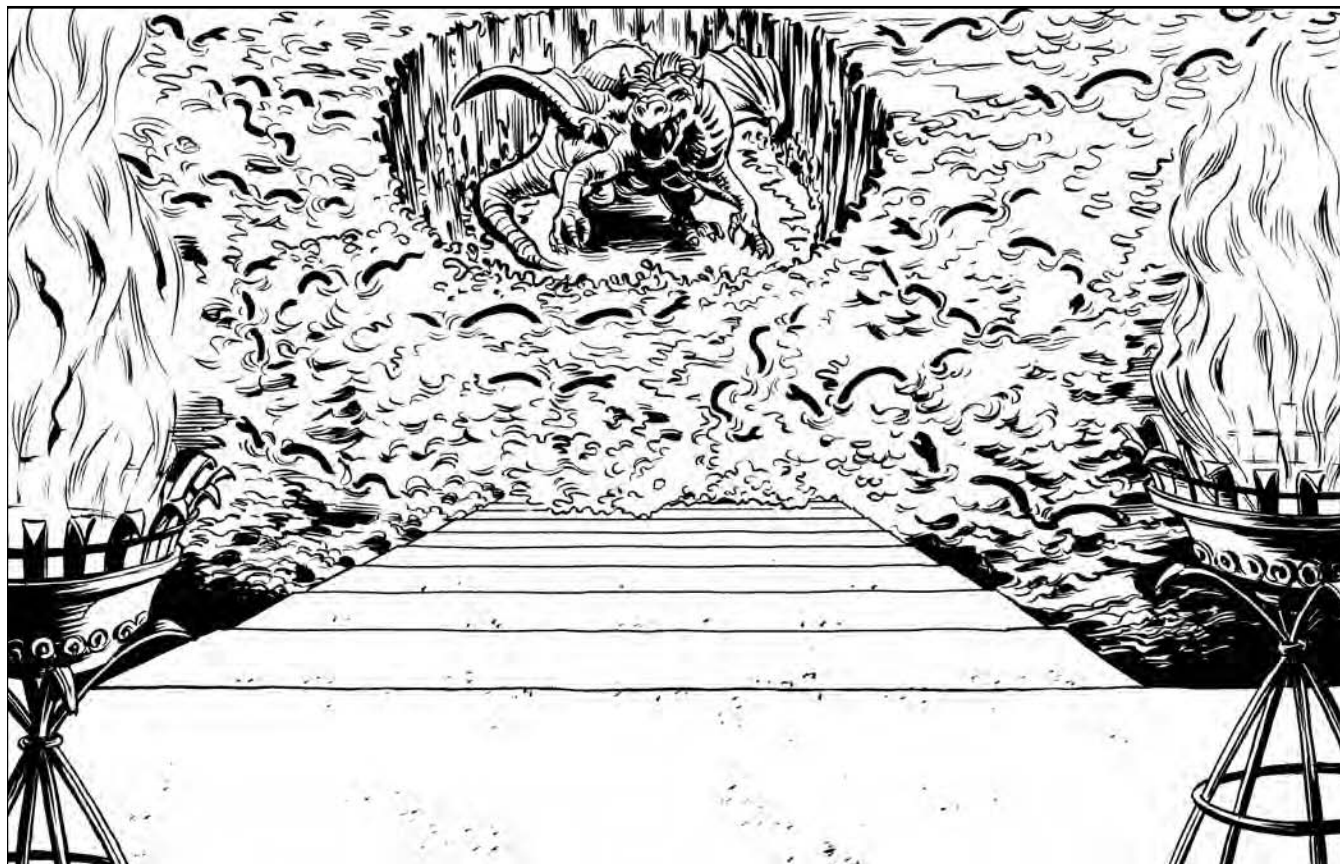
Players' Handout A



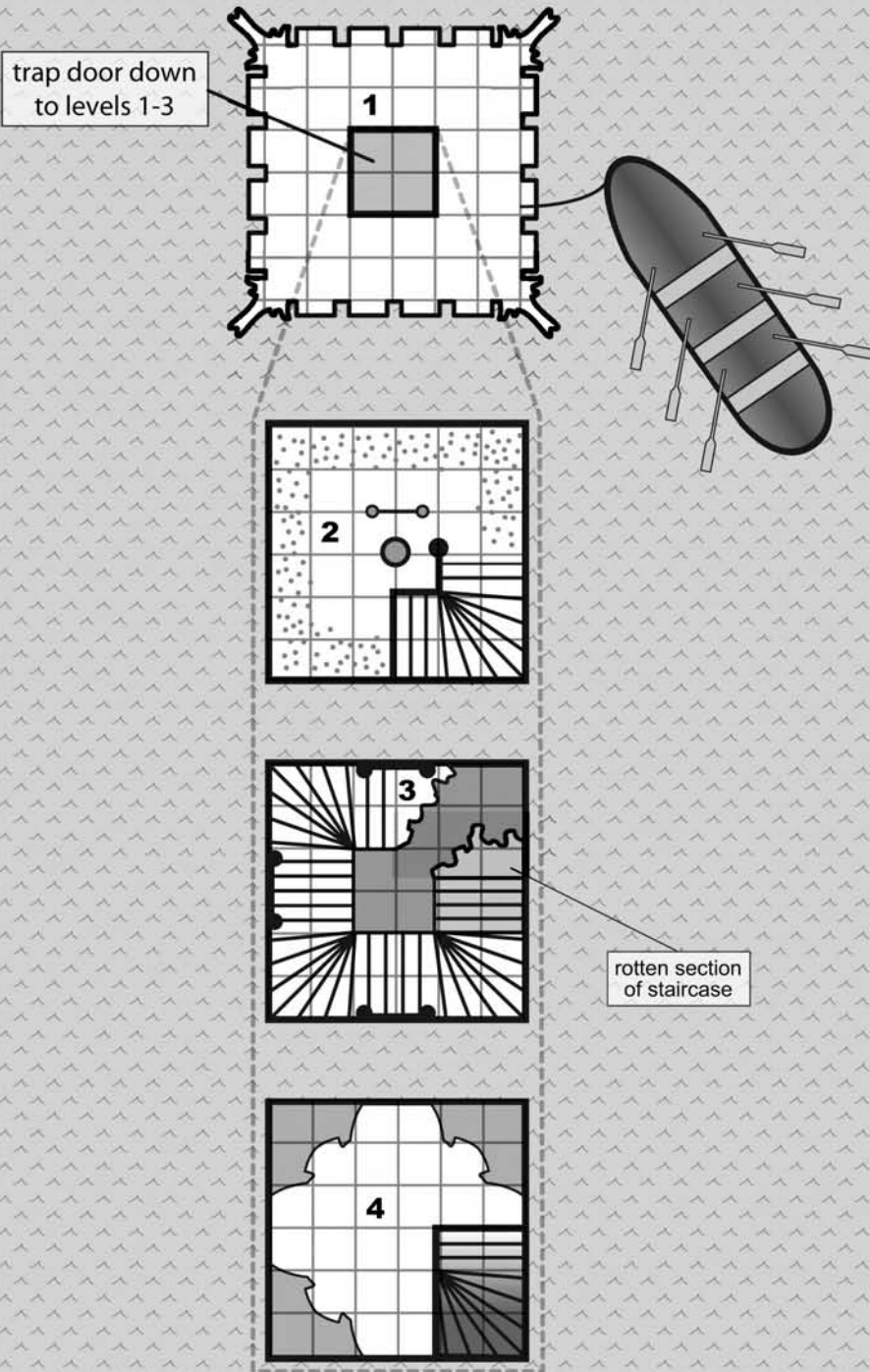
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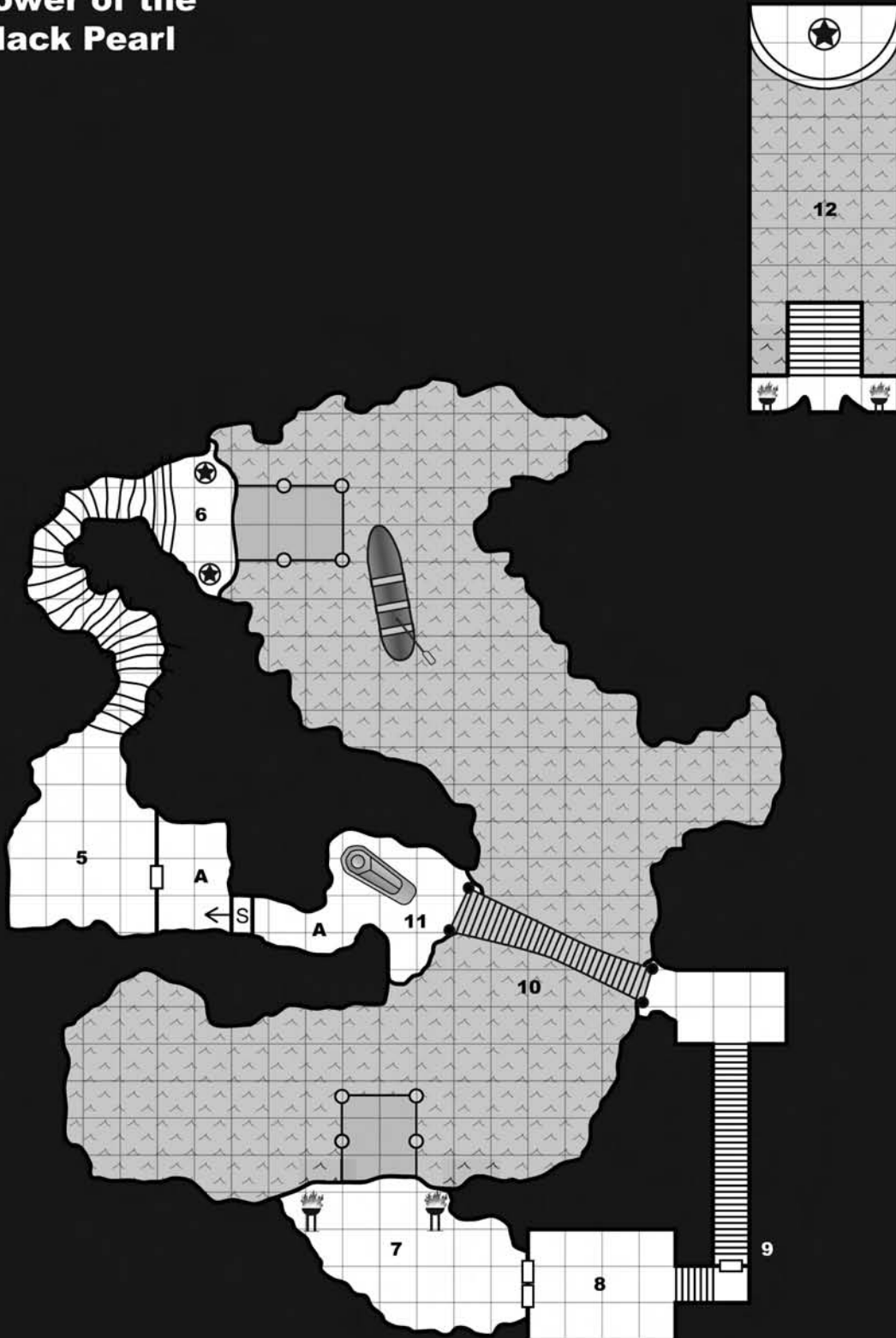
Players' Handout B



Tower of the Black Pearl



Tower of the Black Pearl



Dungeon Crawl Classics

Old Feodol's Basement

By Adrian Pommier

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

Old Feodol's Basement is designed for four to five players of 1st level. While the characters can be of any basic character class, those possessing high detection skills (Listen, Search, and Spot) will be in demand. Since most of the combats will involve trained animals, a druid is particularly useful in this adventure. The characters should be armed with ranged weapons of some sort, or one of the encounters may be very difficult. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's unique style of play.

Adventure Summary

Old Feodol the miser has been dead less than a day. His two greedy children have approached the PCs, each seeking to cheat the other out of an inheritance. They ask the PCs to venture into their recently deceased father's basement to retrieve his will in the hope they can forge a different one. Unknown to the siblings, their father was closely allied with the local druids, and the secret chambers of his basement are stocked with trained animals and an invisible predator fungus! Furthermore, it turns out that the entire inheritance is

supposed to go to the druids. It will fall to the PCs to determine who gets the will (and therefore the inheritance). Regardless of the choices made, by the end the adventurers will have made powerful enemies (and possibly a powerful ally).

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-2	17	C	Caber the guard dog	1
1-3	18	C	Trained monkeys (6)	1
		T	Portcullis trap	1
1-4	19	C	"Dennel" and "Larissa," baboons (2)	1
1-5	20	C	Phantom fungus	3
Return to 1-1	20	C	Gillis Beir, Wiz2	1 or 3
		C	Aronarg, Hobgoblin Ftr1	

Scaling Information

Old Feodol's Basement is a short adventure designed for four to five characters of 1st level. You can adapt the scenario for stronger parties with a few simple modifications. In area 1-2, use additional guard dogs to increase the EL of that encounter. The monkeys running rampant in areas 1-3 and 1-4 could have a supply of alchemical goods that they throw, like thunderstones and alchemist's fire. If the candle from area 1-2 and the flour packet from area 1-4 are removed, the phantom fungus becomes a threat. Finally, adding more class levels to Gillis Beir and Aronarg in area 1-1 will greatly increase the difficulty of that encounter, especially if the PCs are likely to side with the druids.

Getting the Players Involved

The presumption of this adventure is that the PCs are swords-for-hire who have been approached by Dannel and Larissa. Alternately, they could have been sent by the church of a LN deity to assure impartial mediation of the will, only to have been approached anyway by the siblings. It could also be that the PCs are just looting Old Feodol's basement for their own reasons, although this means they will not have handouts A and B. The name of the city where the action takes place is intentionally left blank so this adventure can be plugged into any campaign.

Invisibility and a Fungus

This section reviews some crucial points of handling invisibility for the encounter with the phantom fungus (area 1-5).

Invisible creatures are undetectable by vision, including darkvision. They are immune to sneak attack damage and to a ranger's favored enemy damage. They leave tracks, displace water, and can be detected by the scent ability.

A character within 30 feet of an invisible creature may make a DC 20 Spot check to know something is nearby, but not pinpoint location. Similarly, a Listen check can determine the presence of the phantom fungus. Made from the doorway to area 1-5, the DC is the fungus' Move Silently skill check.

Once the fungus is detected, the characters still have to hit it. A character can make a touch attack with a hand or a weapon into two adjacent 5 foot squares as a standard action; if the fungus is in that square there is a 50% miss chance on the touch attack. If successful, the fungus' location is pinpointed (until it moves). The fungus can also be pinpointed whenever it strikes a PC; they know where it is automatically. Even when pinpointed, the fungus still receives the 50% miss chance granted by total concealment.

A PC trying to attack a non-pinpointed creature designates a square where he or she thinks the creature to be and attacks into that square. The creature still has the miss percentage, and the GM should secretly roll even if the creature is not in that square to keep the player guessing as to whether they missed due to the creature not being there or due to the miss percentage.

Background Story

Feodol Batharda made his fortune early in life, and he had the arrogance that came with being so young and wealthy. One night, despite the warnings of his friends, Feodol tried to take a wagon of goods out to Garland's Fork in a winter storm. The wagon threw a wheel and the horses broke and ran, leaving Feodol stranded in the woods. There he would have died if not for a kind, older woman who appeared and led him to shelter. Feodol discovered that she was a druid, and vowed to repay her kindness. When he returned home, however, he soon forgot his promise and made plans to expand that same road, hoping to establish Garland's Fork as a major trading hub for his business. The same druid came to him and asked him to stop, but he laughed at her. That night, she tried to sneak into the workmen's camp, but was caught and killed by Feodol's guards. When Feodol found out he was overcome by guilt, and he abandoned his plans for Garland's Fork.

In subsequent years, Feodol Batharda was known as a miser, a man who made fantastic wealth from his businesses but lived poorly and hoarded his riches. The truth is that he secretly contributed most of his money to the local druids and their causes, eventually earning their friendship and atoning for what he had done.

No one understood why Old Feodol never enjoyed his worth, especially his children Dannel and Larissa. When they came of age, they had a falling out with their father and each other, both vowing to claim the fortune for themselves. Dannel grew to be a wizard of some stature, and Larissa became entwined with the thieves' guilds, each one biding their time and gathering power on their own. Old Feodol began to fear that his avaricious children would steal away his fortune, and built a secret vault to keep it safe. When Old Feodol finally died alone and unmourned, his body was hardly cool before the agents of Dannel and Larissa were searching the house for the will with the intention of making a forgery that favors one sibling over the other. Unable to locate it, they have both turned to outside help...and accidentally contacted the same adventuring group, the PCs!

They have each supplied the party with a letter that contains their offer and supplies a clue to the puzzles of Old Feodol's basement.

It was intended that when Old Feodol died, a druid would come to the basement to retrieve the will and map, but the druid has been delayed due to recent events in Garland's Fork.

Player Beginning

Read or paraphrase the following, and give the players handouts A and B:

Through the strangest of circumstances, your party has accidentally been hired by two competing employers: Dannel Batharda the Vermillion Wizard and his sister, Larissa Batharda, well known to be influential in certain less-than-legal circles. Both of them have requested that you venture into the home of their recently-deceased father, the famous miser and merchant Feodol Batharda, to find his will. Bearing letters from both parties, you have entered the dilapidated manor house and made your way to the basement where Old Feodol lived out his last years in squalor despite his purported riches. With a low creak, the door to the stairs leading down opens...

The Basement

Old Feodol, along with his druidic allies, labored in secret to build a vault to protect his wealth and his will from Dannel and Larissa. The druids also supplied Old Feodol with animal guardians that were pets to the merchant in his waning days.

Except for area 1-1, which is completely dark, this floor is well illuminated by long-burning, extra large oil lanterns hung from the walls.

Unless otherwise noted, ceilings are ten feet tall, and all doors and walls have the following statistics:

Good Wooden Door: 1.5" thick; hardness 5; hp 15; break DC 18.

Masonry wall: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; break DC 35.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – The Basement: Read or paraphrase the following:

Although the basement only runs under a portion of the crumbling manor house, it is still quite a large room, cluttered despite its size. The northeast corner has a jumble of old children's toys, a broken crate, and some casks on the floor. The southwest corner is where Old Feodol slept on a broken-down bed. Next to it is a desk that has all its drawers thrown on the ground. Just under the staircase is a battered armoire in similar condition. Finally, in the southeast corner

there is a long meeting table, now almost grey with dust, a mirror covered with a bed sheet, and a coat rack upon which hangs a red-checkered smoking jacket. The walls around this basement are adorned with a large map of this region – with notations pertaining to shipping routes and market needs – a fading portrait of Old Feodol himself in a younger day, and, over the bed, a well-maintained portrait of what must be his long-dead wife.

Give the players handout C. The smoking jacket is the key to bypassing the trained monkeys in area 1-3 and 1-4. In its pocket is a small bag of dried fruit, treats for the monkeys. The painting of the miser shows him in the smoking jacket. On the table is a bone-handled spoon – actually a *murlynd's spoon* – set next to an empty stewpot. The desk contents scattered on the floor are of no consequence and the casks contain wine that has turned to vinegar. On the bed is a pipe and a bag of tobacco that smells strongly of apples – definitely not of cinnamon as suggested in Larissa's letter. The only object in the basement of value other than the spoon is the mirror, which although cracked would fetch 150 gp just for the gilt of the frame.

This room was searched extensively for the will, but no one found the secret door in the southeast corner. Part of the wall pushes in (toward area 1-2) and then slides to the left like a sliding closet door. Opening this door does not require much strength, since Feodol had to be able to open it at his advanced age.

Stone Secret Door: 3" thick; hardness 8; hp 45; break DC 28, Search DC 20.

Area 1-2 – The Secret Study (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The secret door slides away to reveal red carpet stretching into a comfortable study. A well-cushioned chair rests next to a pair of slippers and an empty fireplace on the far wall, and the north wall features a workbench and shelf filled with beakers and tins. To the left, in the north-west corner, a large map lies spread out over a plain wooden desk complete with its own, less-cushioned chair. There is a door on the southern wall. Suddenly, a low growl fills your ears, and from behind the desk stalks a large, dark furred dog, its legs stiff and ears flat against its head. He bares his teeth as he snarls at you.

The dog does not automatically attack. The map on the desk is a smaller version of the map in area 1-1, but this one is marked with areas of city expansion into wilderness and locations of new farms

being built in virgin territory. Comparing this map with the one in area 1-1 will show that Old Feodol has no business interests in either the civic expansion or in the new farmlands. On the floor behind the desk, hidden from sight, is a dog bowl that is labeled "Caber."

The workbench has several roots, dried leaves, and natural balms scattered across its surface. These ingredients would provide a +2 circumstance bonus to anyone using the Heal skill (stacks with bonus provided by a healing kit). The shelf contains two items of note: a tin labeled "REMEMBER!" and a tin labeled "Helpful." "REMEMBER!" has a pale reddish candle that smells faintly of cinnamon. This is a plantnip candle (see sidebar), and would be useful against the phantom fungus in area 1-5. "Helpful" contains eight *goodberries* (they will detect as faint transmutation). They are still good for 24 hours before becoming normal berries again. A DC 10 Search check is required on the workbench and another on the shelf to find these items.

The door to the south opens into area 1-3.

Tactics: Caber's attitude starts at Unfriendly. If any PC except a druid using wild empathy approaches him, it becomes Hostile and he attacks. He is assigned to guard the secret study and will not leave unless he is fired on, nor will he be distracted by thrown hunks of meat or any similar tactic.

Caber the Guard Dog: CR 1; Medium Animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk bite +3 melee (1d6+3); SA trip; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +8, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +3, Survival +1*; Alertness, Track. *Caber has a +4 racial bonus to Survival when tracking by scent.

Trip (Ex): If Caber hits with a bite attack, he can attempt to trip his opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or pro-

voking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip Caber.

Area 1-3 – The Trophy Room (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The mystery of Old Feodol continues to unfold in this next room. Just around a bend in the corridor, you find yourselves in what seems to be a trophy room. A ruined suit of plate armor stands against the north wall, with a plate reading "Lord Arnost" at its feet. It stands next to a weapons rack filled with various kinds of saw blades and a plaque that reads "Orindale Logging Interests." The final object on the wall is what looks like a simple roadside sign. It reads, "Garland's Fork." The south wall bears several framed and hung documents and the mounted head of a hideous creature. A dark yellowish color, it looks insect-like but has the eyes of a horse; beneath each eye limply hangs a featherlike antenna. A wooden door stands at the opposite end of the room, and there seems to be a passageway branching off to the south. You notice that the ceiling is much higher in this room, perhaps 13 feet, and that a ledge runs along the wall at about 10 feet high.

Give the players handout D. The objects in this room represent the accomplishments and failures of Old Feodol. The framed documents are letters from various people, thanking Feodol for intervening on their behalf. There is also a heartfelt letter expressing friendship from a man named Terisin; that letter mentions "atonement many times over." Recognizing the significance of the items in this room requires a DC 12 bardic knowledge check, or a DC 15 Knowledge check in the right arena:

- Knowledge (local) or (nobility): Five years ago, the pompous noble Lord Arnost tried to build a new villa in the woods north of town, but he disappeared mysteriously.
- Knowledge (local): Thirteen years ago, the

Plantnip Candle

A plantnip candle is a very hard-to-find alchemical creation. When lit, this fast-burning candle gives off a colorless gas that smells strongly like cinnamon. One candle can fill a 30' radius circle with gas, and any plant monsters in this area must make a Fortitude save DC 14 or go dormant (treat as "asleep"; bypasses normal rules for plants) for 1d4+1 minutes. Plants must save every round they are in the area of effect but cannot be affected by the same candle twice.

A plantnip candle will burn itself out in three minutes and gives off light like a normal candle. The gas is harmless to non-plants.

Plantnip candle: Craft (alchemy) DC 30, 300 gp to purchase.

Orindale Loggers tried to cut the forest north of town but were attacked by a plague of horrible beasts that destroyed their saws, rusting them instantly.

- Knowledge (geography): Garland's Fork is a small village to the northwest. Old Feodol got his business started trading goods there.
- Knowledge (dungeoneering): The mounted head belongs to a rust monster.
- Knowledge (local): Terisin is a druid of some infamy, known for violently protecting the woodlands north and west of town. He has many powerful enemies.

The ledges that run through the wall are connected to the next room, area 1-4, by a small monkey-sized tunnel. The ledges are 10 inches wide and made of stone. The PCs may try to destroy them, so the statistics given below are for a 5 foot section of the ledge.

Stone Ledge: hardness 8, 150 hp, burst DC 24.

Four monkeys are observing the PCs from the ledges. A DC 20 Spot check is required to notice them, although a DC 10 Listen check will detect several faint chattering noises. They begin attacking if the PCs take any more steps into the room. There are three monkeys on the north ledge and three on the south ledge.

Tactics: The monkeys, who resemble capuchin, will not attack anyone wearing the smoking jacket from area 1-1. They will pelt the PCs with stones from their ledges. A monkey can only carry one stone at a time, so after each throw he must return to the bucket in area 1-4 to get another. The monkeys will only get into melee combat if they are somehow forced to.

Trained Monkeys: CR 1/6; Tiny Animals; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk bite +4 melee (1d3-4) or thrown stone +4 ranged (1); SQ low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +10, Hide +10, Listen +3, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse

Exits: The door to area 1-4 is locked (Open Lock DC 20). The doorway at the end of the southward-leading corridor is trapped to drop a portcullis 7.5 ft from the door, bisecting that 5 foot square. Anyone hit by the portcullis is pinned beneath it. If it misses, the player may choose which side the character leaps to. That door opens to reveal bare masonry

behind it. The lever that retracts the portcullis is disguised as the plaque upon which is mounted the rust monster; it must be pressed into the wall. A DC 20 Search check is required to find the lever.

Portcullis Trap (CR 1): mechanical; proximity trigger (turn knob on southern door); manual reset; Atk +10 melee (3d6); Search DC 20; Disable DC 20. Damage only applies to those underneath the portcullis. It blocks the passageway.

Iron Bars: 0.5" thick, hardness 10; hp 15; break DC 20; Strength check DC 20 to lift; Escape Artist DC 30 to pass through.

Area 1-4 – The Monkey Pen (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

Like the trophy room, this area has 13' tall ceilings and a ledge running along the wall. Unlike the trophy room, it smells strongly of musk and wet fur. Knotted ropes hang from the ceiling all the way to the floor along the walls, and in the far corners of the room are large ceramic vases filled with smooth, round stones. There is also a door in that far wall, and an iron door in the north wall. Bits of hay are strewn all about the floor of this room.

Standing atop an intact hay bale near the southwest corner is a large baboon. It gives a grunting bark, which is repeated, and then bares its teeth. Another snarling baboon, this one a bit smaller, hops up from behind the hay bale and advances.

Any surviving monkeys from area 1-3 are also in here.

Tactics: "Dennel" and "Larissa" will attack anyone who enters the monkey pen, but will cease their attack if called by their names. If called by their names, they will go to the door to the pantry and jump up and down excitedly, expecting a treat.

Trained Baboons "Dennel" and "Larissa": CR 1/2; Medium Animals; HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk bite +2 melee (1d6+3); SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Listen +5, Spot +5; Alertness

The baboons make their nest on the hay bale, and behind it are two large dog bowls labeled "Dennel" and "Larissa." The door in the west wall leads to a small pantry that contains dried fruit, casks of water, a bag of flour, and several eggs. The flour could be



used against the phantom fungus in area 1-5. A DC 13 Spot check will notice that there is a small hatch-like door at the base of the iron door. This is unlocked, and opens to reveal area 1-5. It is far too small and narrow for even one of the monkeys to easily fit through. The view of the next room just shows that it is broad but narrows to 5' across and there seems to be a table at the far end; it is otherwise bare. An additional DC 10 Spot check can be made by anyone peering through the hatch to notice bits of pale reddish candle wax on the floor just inside the next room. Before Old Feodol would go into his vault, he would push a plantnip candle through the hatch to incapacitate the phantom fungus. A DC 21 Listen check made at the door will hear a faint "squelching" sound, like someone in wet clothing moving around. If the PCs use the candle, have the phantom fungus in 1-5 begin making saves immediately. If it succumbs, the PCs will hear a loud, wet "thump" and the "squelching" will stop.

Locked Iron Door: 2" thick; hardness 10; hp 60; break DC 28, Open Lock DC 20.

Area 1-5 – The Vault (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

This hourglass-shaped room is 15 feet across at its widest points, 5 feet across at its most narrow, and 30 feet long. It is completely empty except for a table against the far wall. You can see from here that resting atop the table is a slim, green leather-bound book, a letter, what

looks like four large emeralds, and two small vials.

If the phantom fungus is still active, it will attack at this point. It remains in the narrowest part of the room, the middle of the hourglass, until it begins to attack.

Tactics: The phantom fungus does not use tactics; it simply attacks whichever food source is closest. It will pursue the PCs if they flee, although it cannot open doors. The monkeys and baboons will flee rather than fight the phantom fungus.

Phantom Fungus: CR 3; Medium Plant; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk bite +3 melee (1d6+3); SQ low-light vision, plant traits, greater invisibility; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4; Alertness

Plant Traits: Immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

Greater Invisibility (Su): This ability is constant, allowing a phantom fungus to remain invisible even when attacking. It works like *greater invisibility* (CL 12th) and lasts as long as the phantom fungus is alive. This ability is not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell. A phantom fungus becomes visible 1 minute after it is killed.

The Items: The green volume is in fact the will of Old Feodol. It contains a freshly-made map that shows the true location of his material wealth. The letter was written by Old Feodol just before he died, and is handout E. If the PCs examine the will, they will find that the last of Old Feodol's fortune is to go to a man named Terisin. A DC 12 Appraise check will learn that the four emeralds are finely cut and worth 120 gp apiece. The vials are *potions of cure light wounds*.

Area 1-1 Revisited – The Choice (EL 1 or 3): This encounter occurs as the PCs leave after having acquired the will. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you exit the secret study and return to the basement proper, you see two men waiting for you. One, a gaunt man with thinning black hair, is dressed in red robes with strange designs worked on the sleeves and hem. You recognize him as Gilles Bier, an agent of Dannel Batharda, the Vermillion Wizard. The other is a hobgoblin, a hulking brute with braided black hair and a necklace of knucklebones. His armor is dented, and he hefts a trident with familiarity bred from battle. You recognize him as Aronarg,

Larissa Batharda's enforcer. Both seem to be trying to ignore the other, and therefore are keenly gazing at you, searching for the green leather-bound will.

The door out of the basement has been sealed by Gilles using a *hold portal* spell. It has the following stats:

Good Wooden Door: 1.5" thick; hardness 5; hp 15; break DC 23; cannot be opened until spell expires.

Gilles dislikes dealing with non-wizards, and if a non-wizard is present he will only address them. Aronarg values physical strength and will only speak to whomever he perceives as the greatest threat. Both will demand the will, Gilles in a sneering fashion and Aronarg in a blunt, abrasive fashion. If the PCs make a move to give the will to either of them, the other attacks. If they try to keep it, they both attack.

If the PCs say they haven't found the will, Aronarg will order them to go back and get it, and if they try to begin negotiations, Gilles will drink his *potion of discern lies*, and Aronarg will try to use Sense Motive to tell if they are lying to him.

If the PCs delay too long or seem shifty to either of them, Gilles will suggest to Aronarg in Goblin that they seize the book by force.

Neither of them has the reward money on them, saying it is hidden outside. If the PCs eventually side with either Dannel or Larissa, however, they will receive the promised money.

Gilles Bier, Human Wiz2 (Transmuter): CR 2; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 2d4+7; hp 11; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (*mage armor*), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk dagger +0 melee (1d4-1); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Forgery +4, Decipher Script +7, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +3, Spellcraft +7; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative

Spells Memorized (4/4; DC 12 + spell level; barred schools: evocation and illusion): 0 – ~~arcane mark~~ (already cast), *detect magic*, ~~resistance~~ (already cast; 5 round duration), *touch of fatigue*; 1st-level – ~~hold portal~~ (already cast; 10 round duration), ~~mage armor~~ (already cast; 30 minute duration), *sleep**, *reduce person**. *Indicates a transmutation spell (+1 DC).

Languages: Common, Draconic, Goblin

Possessions: spellbook, dagger, Guff the toad familiar, *potion of cure light wounds* (CL 2nd), *potion of discern lies* (CL 7th)

Tactics: If the PCs turn against Gilles, he hopes to put them to *sleep*. If they join him against Aronarg, he will hang back, at most using *reduce person* on the fighter. If the PCs fight both Gilles and Aronarg, there is a 20% chance each round that Gilles will turn on Aronarg. Although he fears his master, he will flee if he is reduced to 2 or less hp and he's already used his potion. Guff, his toad familiar, is hiding in the basement and is not part of the combat.

Aronarg, Hobgoblin Ftr1: CR 1; Medium Humanoid (Hobgoblin); HD 1d10+3; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk trident +3 melee (1d8+2) or short sword +3 melee (1d6+2/19-20); SQ Darkvision 60'; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +3, Jump +2, Move Silently +2, Sense Motive +4; Negotiator, Toughness.

Languages: Common, Goblin

Possessions: scale mail, heavy wooden shield, trident, short sword.

Tactics: Aronarg is in love with Larissa and has sworn to bring her the will; he fights to the death. If he ends up fighting alongside Gilles, there is a 20% chance/round that he will attack Gilles instead of a PC. If the PCs flee him, he will pursue and throw his trident (10 ft. range increment).

Wrapping Up

Read or paraphrase the following; the ending changes depending on what happened in the last encounter.

If the PCs sided with one sibling:

Exiting the ruined manor house of the Batharda family, you realize that you have made a powerful enemy this day. Time has yet to tell the consequences of your decision in Old Feodol's basement, but this case of sibling rivalry is just beginning...and now you are in the middle of it.

If the PCs sided with the druids:

Exiting the ruined manor house of the Batharda family, you realize that you have made powerful enemies this day. Time has yet to tell the consequences of your decision in Old Feodol's basement, but perhaps honoring the last wishes of a misunderstood old man will be worth the price. Perhaps...

If the PCs struck out on their own:

Exiting the ruined manor house of the Batharda family, you realize that you have made powerful enemies this day. Time has yet to tell the consequences of your deci-

sion in Old Feodol's basement, but the promise of Old Feodol's wealth is too alluring to resist. Fortune favors the bold, and you have proven yourselves to be bold indeed. Just remember also that fortune is a fickle mistress...

Extra Rewards

Several of the encounters in Old Feodol's Basement have built-in solutions. GMs should reward players who solve these encounters without combat, perhaps through bonus XP awards, by having the animals aid the PCs in the final encounter against Gilles Beir and/or Aronarg, or some other means.

Further Adventures

Larissa's Revenge: If the PCs don't give her the will, she will organize the thieves guild against the PCs. If any of them are rogues, a death contract will be put on that member. This town will no longer be safe for the adventurers until Larissa is dealt with. This can be of a fatal nature, or she can demand satisfaction in the form of a dangerous task that needs doing.

Dennel's Revenge: If the PC's don't give him the will, he will use his connections in wizardly academia against the PCs. Any magic items they buy in the area

will be more expensive, and any they sell will be for less than they're worth. If he can catch them unawares, Dennel will try to have them killed. Any wizard in the party will not receive support or shelter from any wizard in Dennel's employ, and will have a hard time replenishing spell components. This will persist until Dennel is killed, or he can demand satisfaction in the form of a dangerous task that needs doing.

Old Feodol's Revenge: If the PCs keep the will (and its map) for themselves, Feodol Batharda will return as a ghost, not letting them rest or sleep. If they actually seize his treasure for themselves, Feodol will attack them. The only way to permanently get rid of Feodol is for the PCs to give the druids the will and map or pay them the worth of the treasure. Any druid that is party to this plan will earn the disfavor of the local druids.

The Real Treasure: Old Feodol's real fortune is hidden in another location, and the map is hidden in the green journal. If the PCs keep the will and map for themselves, they could have another dungeon crawl retrieving the treasure.

Druidic Assistance: With Old Feodol dead, the druids are in need of help. If the PCs contact Terisin, he may have work for them.

Greetings.

You have - oh adventurers - this day a unique opportunity to earn the favor of a powerful wizard, namely myself. In the basement of my father's manor there will be a green leather-bound book. It is his last will and testament. I need it retrieved and brought to my agent, Gilles Beir. This must be done in haste as my sibling, Larissa of the thieves guild, is also keen on possessing this item. I am certain she means to forge a fake. I assure you I would do no such thing.

For this service I will pay each of you a sum of three hundreds of gold, in whatever coinage or gemstones you see fit. As I said, you will also have my gratitude. Rest assured that is preferable to having my enmity. I would aid you in this matter but my attentions are required elsewhere at this moment, and time is of the essence. I mention this one thing in passing, although I cannot deduce how it can be of use to you: my father once sharply said to me that the only time my sibling and I worked together was in the basement. I assumed he was referring to a forgotten incident from our childhood, but now I am not so certain.

Gilles will await your successful return.

Dennel Batharda.

Friends,

My dear, dear father recently passed on, and I fear that my villainous brother Dannel intends to cheat me out of my proper inheritance. I believe he will try to steal my father's will and forge a fake that favors him. So underhanded is he! I need some true friends to go into my father's basement and get his will first! It will be a leather-bound book the color of a spring leaf.

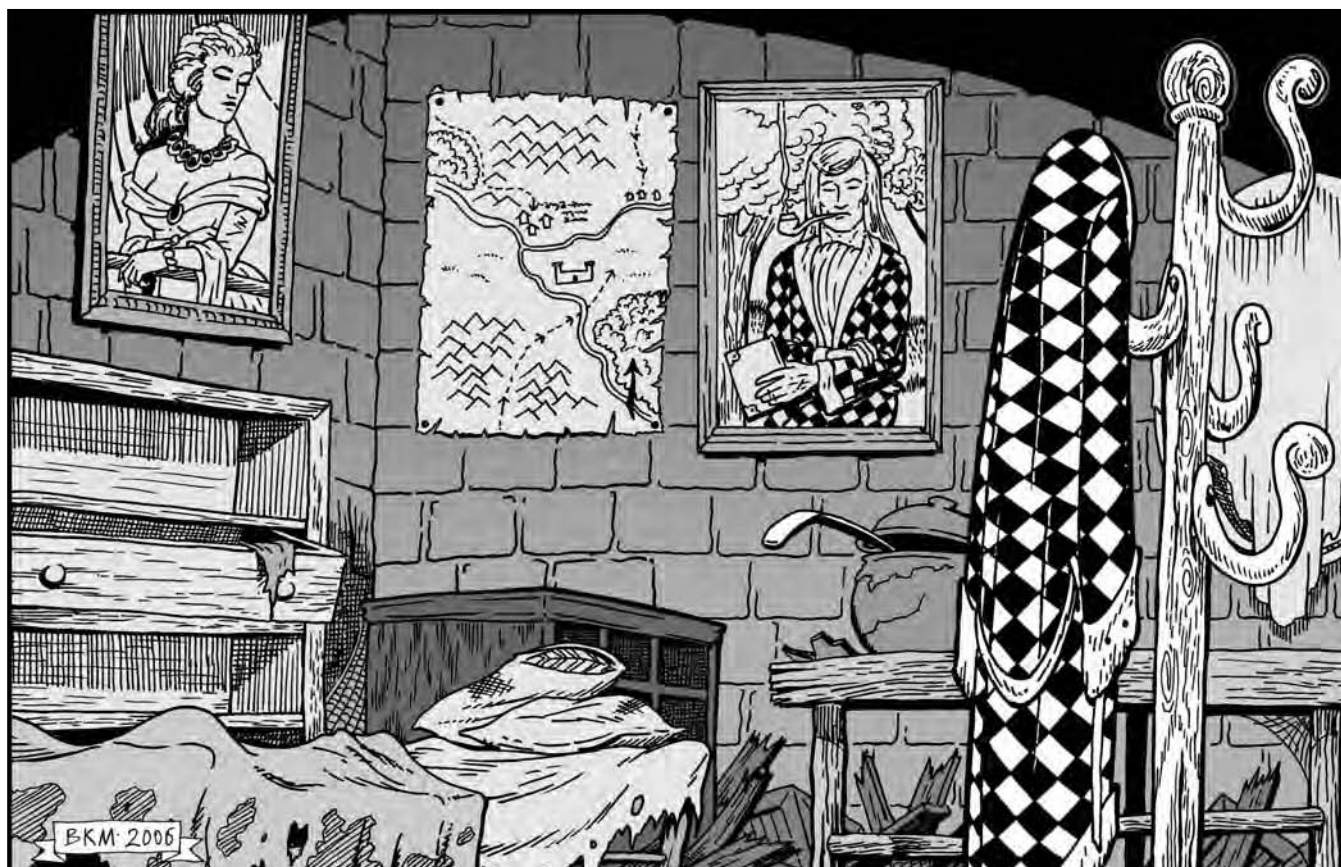
I would be oh so pleased if you could give this book to my friend Aronarg. If you do, he will have 400 gold apiece for you. I would go myself but the thought of entering that basement...it just makes me tear up. I can remember how he always smelled like cinnamon when he came upstairs, probably his pipe smoke. Oh father!

Aronarg will wait for you to get the book. Do hurry! My brother will not hesitate to hire some dastardly mercenaries to do his dirty work. Fortunately I have friends. We are friends, aren't we?

L.

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Players' Handout E

To you who found this letter,

I hope my pets were not such a bother for you. They were not really to hurt intruders so much as my ungrateful children. I hope you were able to get past them without hurting them...they were a comfort for me in my last years.

But you have not come to read about me. I would wager you have come for my money, or were sent by one of the kids for my will.

I know you owe me nothing and probably have needs of your own, but hear me out:

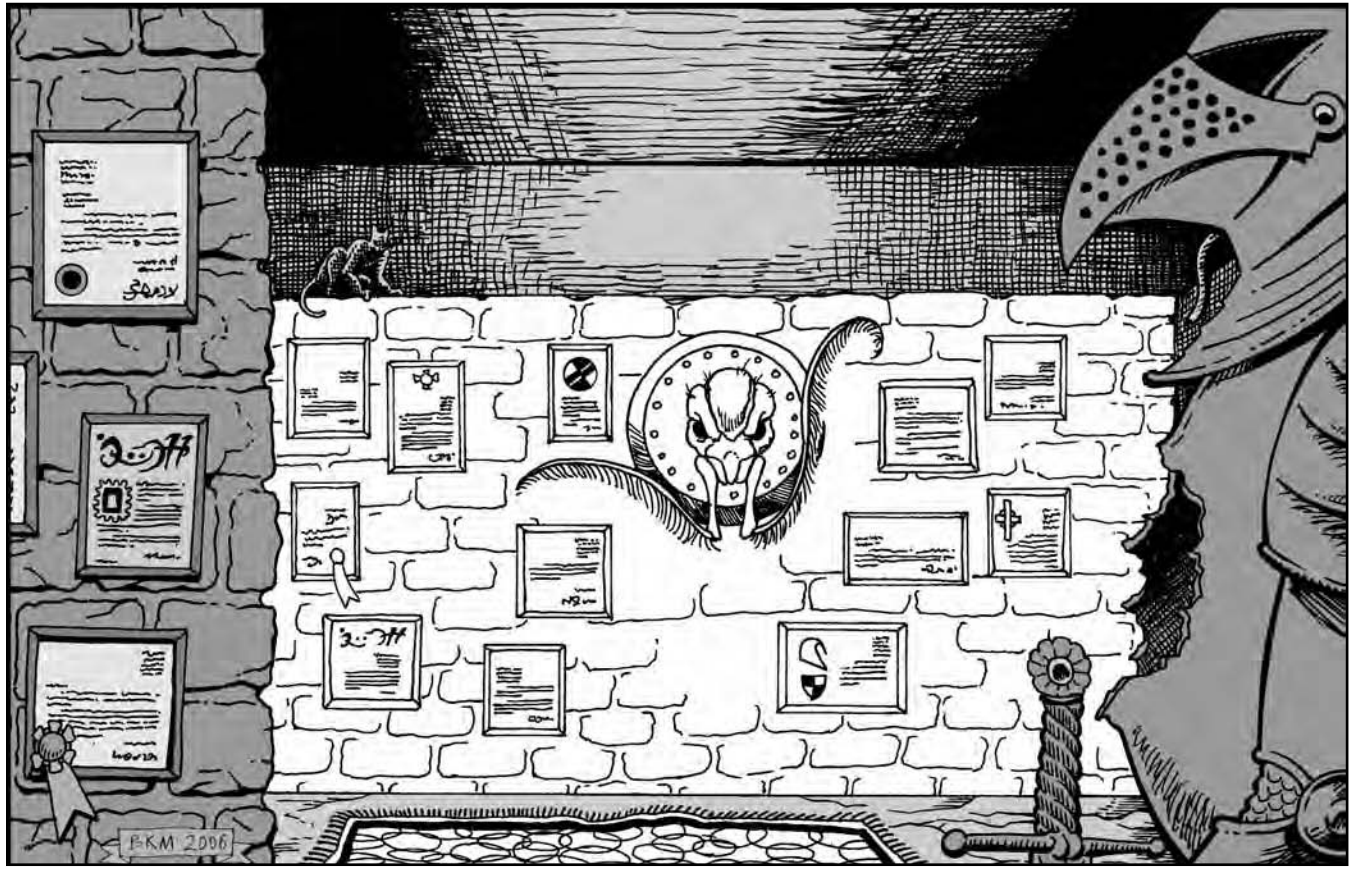
When I was young I did a few very stupid things. One of those things led to the death of a good person who had shown me kindness – a druid. I have spent my entire life – and most of my fortune! – making amends by helping her allies with money or influence.

Please, it is my last request that this will, and the treasure map it contains, be given to Terisin at the Wayward Daughter inn in town. Let my last act be one of charity, and let the druids have the last of my fortune. Please accept these gems and healing draughts as payment for this last request, and for any troubles my family and I caused you.

Thank you,

Feodol Batharda

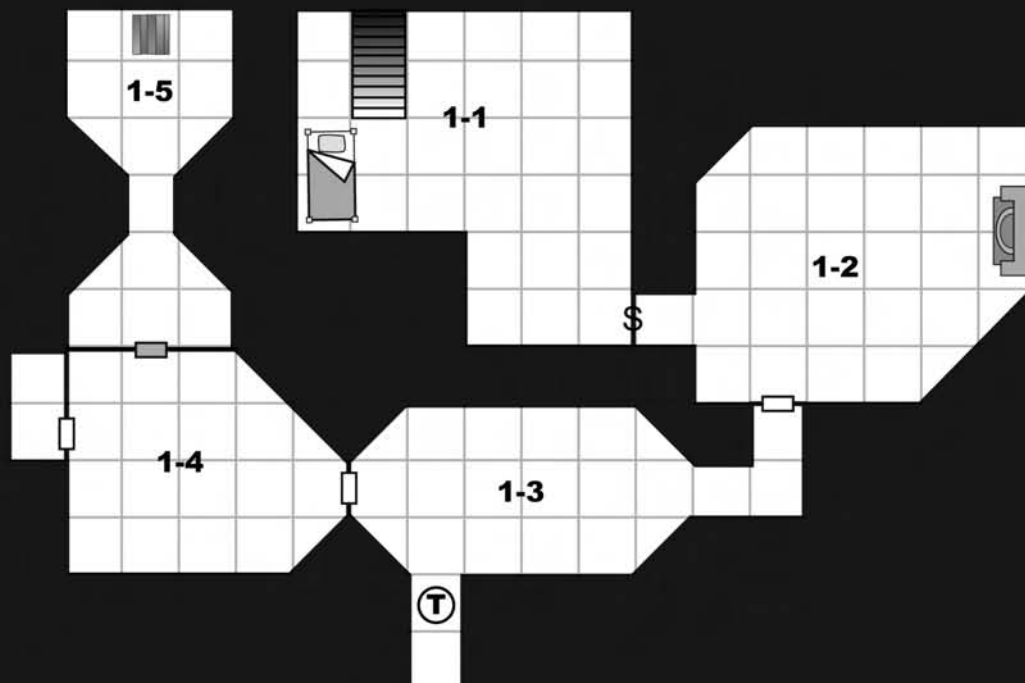
Players' Handout D



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Old Feodol's Basement



Dungeon Crawl Classics

Lair of the White Salamander

By Phillip Larwood

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

Lair of the White Salamander is an adventure for 4-6 PCs of 1st-2nd level. The adventure is set in a small coastal city known for its long tradition of wizards, but the city has been left deliberately vague to better allow GMs to slot it into their existing campaigns. This adventure caters to all types of characters, although a well-rounded party including at least one fighter, a rogue, an arcane spellcaster, and a few characters with ranks in the Swim skill would have the best chance of surviving.

Adventure Summary

The PCs must enter the basement of an abandoned wizard's guild to discover why the city of Thelport is sinking. After the PCs battle their way through mutated dire rats and zombie fey, they discover a passage that leads to a series of sea caves located beneath the city. Within the sea caves they find several crazy cultists, and a horrible giant salamander that possesses the brain of an evil transmuter. To succeed they must slay the giant salamander, thus preventing the city from becoming a flooded ruin.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	28	C	Dire rats	1
1-2	29	C	Mutanted dire rats (2)	1
1-3	30	C	Saber-toothed dire rat	2
1-4	30	C/T	6 grig zombies	1/4
			Wight mold	2
			Chill touch trap	2
1-5	31	T	Crossbow trap	1
1-6	31	C	Animated magic mirror	2
1-7	32	T	Paper storm	3
2-1	33	C/T	Gravewater, lacedon	3
			Sewer sluice trap	
2-3	34	C	4 human cultists	3
2-4	35	C/T	Killer crab swarm	4
			Cursed crab statue	
2-5	36	C	False Alasotur, mutated giant salamander	4

Scaling Information

This adventure is designed for 4-6 PCs of 1st or 2nd level, but can be modified for more powerful parties.

Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 2nd level): Add 3 more normal dire rats to area 1-1 and 1-2, and advance the saber-toothed dire rat in area 1-3 by 2 HD and give it the fiendish template. Coat the crossbow trap in area 1-5 with greenblood poison, and make the animated mirror in area 1-6 size Large. Give Gravewater in area 2-1 a lacedon companion, and increase the adepts' levels by 1 in area 2-3. Finally, add a second killer crab swarm to area 2-4.

Getting the Players Involved

Since this is an adventure for 1st-level characters it's quite feasible that the PCs are residents of Thelport, and that their homes or families are experiencing the problems that are plaguing the rest of the community. If this is the case, then the safety of the city could well become a personal issue for the PCs, whether or not it is Tayanna who hires them.

The next easiest way of getting the PCs involved is to have them be hired by Tayanna Serrengrieff (a 9th-level human female paladin). Tayanna has become the new sheriff in Thelport now that the city has been cleaned up, and has been asked by the city's noble families to hire specialists to take care of the problem. Tayanna offers the PCs 500 gp to find out what is going on, telling them that the ruins of the abandoned wizards' guild probably has something to do with the problems facing Thelport.

Background Story

Decades ago, the dingy coastal city of Thelport was infamous for its vile wizards' guild. All who lived in the city feared the guild's reach. Set up by a trio of evil spellcasters, the guild was a refuge for all manner of villains, and most of the guild members were involved in practices such as animating the dead, illegal spell research, and the acquisition of dangerous magical substances. Sometimes the guild had to buy its way out of trouble with the local authorities, yet generally the guild remained unchallenged, and anyone who attempted to shut it down mysteriously vanished.

One of the most nefarious of all the guild members was Alasotur, a transmuter who liked to practice his spells on unwilling sentient subjects. An ancient wizard of declining health, Alasotur developed a spell that would allow him to transfer his brain into another creature's body so he could live on forever. Despite the misgivings of the few guild members who knew of his plans, Alasotur kidnapped a famous actor named Tormul

Serrengrieff and took him to the horrible laboratories located beneath the guild. Once there, he began the complicated ritual for transferring his brain into the handsome young actor's body.

Unbeknownst to Alasotur, the actor's sister was a powerful paladin named Tayanna Serrengrieff. Tayanna was supposed to meet up with her brother in Thelport and was shocked to find that he had been taken. Without a moment's hesitation she rounded up her fellow adventurers and used divination magic to locate her brother. What she discovered appalled her and she stormed the wizards' guild with the aid of her friends. Fighting her way through the guild, Tayanna broke into the lab where Alasotur was ensconced and slew the wizard with a thrust of her sword just as he was in the throes of transferring his brain into Tormul's body. After Tormul's rescue, Tayanna decided that the rest of Thelport needed cleaning up as well, and with the aid of several rich patrons she closed down the wizards' guild and replaced Thelport's corrupt city watch.

The Rise of the White Salamander

When Alasotur was killed, the magical process transferring his brain into Tormul's body was disrupted. While most of the wizard's brain simply vanished into the ethereal plane, a small portion was transferred into the body of his albino salamander familiar. The creature immediately lost its standard familiar traits and became infused with a portion of the transmuter's malign intelligence.

Escaping in the chaos caused by Tormul's rescue, the salamander ventured into the sewer system beneath the city and began to feed on small fish and rodents to survive. As time passed, the salamander grew to grotesque size and Alasotur's personality took over. The once-placid amphibian became a vicious and extremely evil monster. Eventually Alasotur (as the salamander now called itself) took over a series of old sea caves located beneath the docks.

The Claw of Shifting Tides

When Alasotur moved into the sea caves under Thelport's docks, he discovered a huge piece of coral shaped like a monstrous crab claw in one of the largest caves. Also living in the sea caves were several crazy humans who worshipped a strange marine god known only as the Emperor Crab. The insane humans believed that Alasotur was the divine messenger of the Emperor Crab and showed him the power of the claw. What the giant amphibian witnessed impressed him greatly, and he realized that with the claw's control over the ocean waters he had all the power he needed to seek revenge over the city and its occupants. Now ensconced in the sea caves, Alasotur unleashes the power of the claw on the city above, hoping to transform it into a flooded wasteland.

Player Beginning

Begin the adventure by reading or paraphrasing the following:

The city of Thelport is experiencing terrible problems. Over the past few weeks the city's sewers have been overflowing with seawater, and sewage has flooded the streets. The spread of disease has become a major problem, and the smell coming from the sewers is abominable. If this weren't bad enough, all the water is beginning to transform the city into a swamp, causing buildings to sag as their foundations fall apart. The city's officials are distressed, and people are calling on the local authorities to see that everything is fixed. It has been left to you to explore the ruins of the old wizards' guild that appears to be the epicenter of the disturbances, and find out what is going on beneath the city.

The Wizards' Guild

Tayanna's attack on the wizards' guild demolished part of the central tower, causing the locals to flee in panic. These same residents subsequently pulled down the rest of the tower when the guild was shut down and its wizards fled the city. Now the tower is little more than a mass of glass and rubble lying over the remaining subterranean levels, including the guild's basement level (described below) and the guild's laboratories (still buried under several tons of debris). What remains of the guild is home to flocks of seagulls, large numbers of rats, and the occasional beggar. If PCs ask about the ruins, a DC 10 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (history) check reveals the general history of the guild, including the death of Alasotur at the hands of Tayanna Serrengriff.

Unless noted in the text, all corridors are 8 feet high and the walls are reinforced masonry. Most of the corridors have suffered structural damage from partial cave-ins. The few remaining doors in the basement are made from stout wood except for the secret stone door in 1-5. The rooms are of varying heights as noted in the individual room descriptions. Unless otherwise noted all areas in the basement are unlit.

Reinforced Masonry Wall: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 180; Break DC 45; Climb DC 15.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25 (stuck), DC 25 (locked); Open Locks DC 20 (for area 1-4).

Wandering Monsters

There is an 8% chance every half hour of an encounter occurring. If an encounter is indicated roll a d4 and consult the following table:

Roll (d4)	Result
1-2	1d3 mutated dire rats (use dire rat stats from area 1-1)
3	1 ghoul (use Gravewater's stats from area 2-1)
4	1d2 adepts (use adept stats from area 2-3)

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Storage Chamber (EL 1): As PCs approach the guild, read or paraphrase the following:

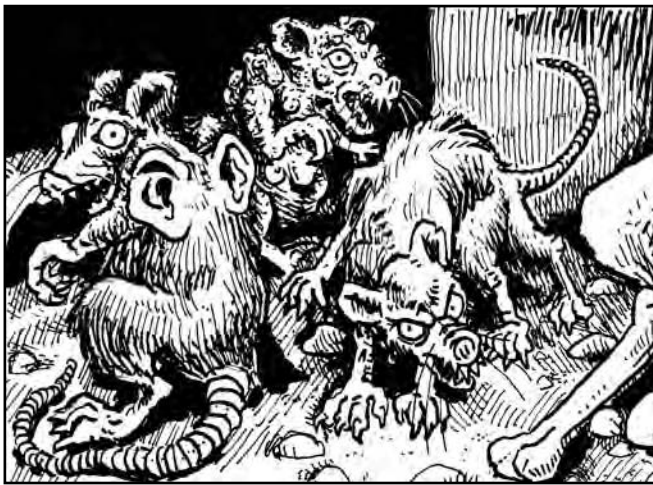
The ruin of the once-impressive wizards' guild is now little more than a massive mound of shattered glass and broken stone, a festering eyesore in the center of Thelport. Rats and other vermin scurry amongst the rubble, but most of the residents of the city avoid it as if it were cursed. Amid the rubble, a flight of stairs leads down into the abandoned depths of the guild.

Once the PCs descend the stairs, read or paraphrase the following:

At the bottom of the stairs lies a 30-foot-long by 20-foot-wide chamber that appears to be a storage area. Rotting barrels are scattered about the room and against the eastern wall is a row of decaying wooden crates. Opposite the crates is a narrow tunnel broken through the wall. Pools of standing water cover the floor of the chamber and obscure the remains of a previous campsite. A closed wooden door lies opposite the stairs.

Since the demolition of the wizards' guild, this chamber has been used by a variety of beggars and criminals (hence the previous campsite). Recently, however, the flooding and presence of the dire rats have driven the humanoid inhabitants out. Aside from the door opposite the stairs, a narrow tunnel on the western wall exits the chamber between a pair of barrels. The barrels and crates are filled with stale water or a revolting black mess that might have once been food. The door on the opposite wall has been nailed shut (treat as locked), but a small hole has been chewed through the door by the dire rats in the area (which is just big enough for a gnome or halfling to squeeze through; Medium characters cannot fit without a DC 30 Escape Artist check).

Treasure: A DC 15 Search of the area reveals a masterwork dagger wedged into one of the crates. The dagger once belonged to a wizard who was killed by one of Tayanna's companions, and its hilt still bears the wizard's *arcane mark* (a glowing



orange rune that looks like an inverted F above a curved bow).

Monsters: Several dire rats have taken over this chamber and the nearby caves, feeding on smaller vermin. Generations of exposure to the magical radiation permeating the basement level has mutated the dire rats, making them more aggressive than other members of their species. The dire rats in this chamber have the same statistics as normal dire rats, but each one carries a minor physical mutation as follows:

First dire rat: Has an extra pair of nonfunctional humanlike ears growing from its back.

Second dire rat: Has nasty weeping glowing pustules covering its body.

Third dire rat: Has an extra useless leg that it drags along behind it like an extra tail.

Tactics: The dire rats hide behind the three barrels and wait for PCs to approach before rushing out and making bite attacks. The dire rats are fearless unless faced with an open flame, and attack until slain.

Mutated Dire Rats (3): CR 1/3; Small Animal (augmented); HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease); SA disease; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

SA – Disease (Ex): Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

Area 1-2 – Dire Rat Den (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The narrow tunnel emerges into a damp cave that only has one other exit. The roof of the cave is only some 5 feet from the floor and the area is partially filled with stagnant water. A number of shiny glass pieces and other objects looted from the ruin above form a small heap in the middle of the cave. The cave does not look natural, but rather appears to be the result of a cave-in or similar occurrence.

This cave was once joined to area 1-3, forming a series of chambers that connected the basement level to the laboratory level. The destruction of the tower above caused a cave-in that separated this area from the rest, except for the narrow tunnel that now remains. Because of the standing water and debris, PCs must spend 2 squares of movement to enter each square in this cave. The DC of all Move Silently and Tumble checks is increased by 2. The dire rats are used to the conditions, and do not receive these penalties.

Monsters: Two dire rats have made this cave their home. The dire rats have been mutated like their fellows in area 1-1, but their mutations are vastly superior, giving them a distinctive edge in combat. The first dire rat resembles a vicious armadillo because of the armored plates covering its body, and is stronger and harder than normal. The second appears normal, but possesses fangs that drip toxic venom.

Treasure: Amid the useless bits of glass that the dire rats have collected are 10 azurites (6 gp each), 4 rock crystals (30 gp each), and 2 peridots (70 gp each). Finding all this treasure requires a DC 13 Search check.

Tactics: The dire rats hide above the entrance to the cave and wait until the PCs enter before leaping down onto their backs. Despite their odd mutations, the dire rats act just like normal specimens in combat. Under no circumstances do the dire rats enter area 1-3, as the giant saber-toothed dire rat there terrifies them.

Armored Dire Rat: CR 1/2; Small Animal (augmented); HD 1d8+2; hp 9; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +0; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk bite +3 melee; SA disease; SQ armor plating, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Hide +7, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Spot +4, Swim +10; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

SQ – Armor Plating (Ex): The metallic plates covering the dire rat's body give it a +4 natural armor class bonus.

SA – Disease (Ex): Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

Poisonous Dire Rat: CR 1/2; Small Animal (augmented); HD 1d8+1; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp –4; Atk/Full Atk bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease and poison); SA disease, poison; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11. Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

SA – Disease (Ex): Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

SA – Poison (Ex): bite, Fortitude DC 11, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Con.

Area 1-3 – Chamber of the Saber-Toothed Rat (EL 2): Once PCs enter this cave, read or paraphrase the following:

This large, roughly circular cave is piled high with the bones of dozens of dire rats, and judging from the remains of a tattered vest and a bloodied boot, at least one humanoid. Crouched on the pile of bones is an enormous rat easily the size of a large war dog, with long saber-like fangs jutting from its mouth. The fur of the enormous rat rises in damp bristles, and its eyes glow with feral red light as it lunges towards you.

Like area 1-2, this cave was once part of a series of rooms. Now it is choked with rubble and remains of the dire rat's previous meals, including the last person who decided to use the basement for shelter. Because of the carpet of bones and other waste, PCs must spend 2 squares of movement to enter each square in this cave. The DC of all Move Silently and Tumble checks is increased by 2. The dire rat is unaffected by these conditions.

Monster: All the other rats in the basement fear the dire rat in this cave as it eats anything that it can catch. Apart from its great size, the dire rat bears a pair of incisors that are similar to those on a saber-toothed cat. They cause terrible wounds.

Tactics: The dire rat king is fairly straightforward in combat, attacking the first creature that enters its cave. It fights to the death, as it knows it cannot retreat.

Advanced Saber-Toothed Dire Rat: CR 2; Medium Animal (augmented); HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk bite +5 melee (1d8+2/x3 plus disease); SA augmented critical, disease; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Hide +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +3, Spot +4, Swim +13; Alertness, Dodge, Weapon Finesse.

SA – Augmented Critical (Ex): Because of its saber-like fangs, the dire rat causes x3 damage on a confirmed critical hit, and its bite damage is greater than normal.

SA – Disease (Ex): Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 14, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

Area 1-4 – Necrotic Crypt (EL 5): The wooden door to this chamber is locked, and must be opened before the following description can be read:

Passing through the door, you enter a 30-foot by 30-foot octagonal chamber. It contains a wooden chest with a large intricate iron lock constructed to look like a grinning human skull. The walls of the chamber have been painted black, and a layer of white dust covers the floor.

This octagonal chamber is the only remaining vault in the wizards' guild, and stores a variety of necromantic materials. The grinning iron skull lock is part of the chest's trap, and the white dust on the floor is made from ground bones. As soon as PCs enter the chamber they see the following:

As you enter the chamber, small hidden compartments in the walls open up and out fly six tiny humanoid figures with spindly grasshopper-like legs and tattered insect wings. The figures are clearly dead, their bones poking through their withered flesh and their burning eyes sunken into their miniscule skull-like faces.

Aside from the obvious, there is another danger: a rare mold that grows near the chamber's entrance. The six figures are grigs that have been transformed into zombies and ordered to guard the vault.

Tactics: The grig zombies gang up on the nearest living creature, but attack anything that comes within reach. Their size and flying ability allows them to attack the PCs from all directions.

Wight Mold (CR 2): A rare type of furry gray mold cultivated by one of the guild's necromancers grows near the entrance to the chamber. Any living creature moving into the chamber causes the mold to react, bursting forth in a 10-foot diameter cloud of

damaging spores. The spores cause 1d4 points of damage as they kill living flesh, and any PC inhaling the spores must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become fatigued (or exhausted if already fatigued). A PC killed by the mold sprouts a patch and animates 1d3 hours later as a wight.

Trap: The wooden chest is locked (hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; Open Locks DC 30) and trapped. Anyone who tries to open the chest without the key triggers the trap.

Chill Touch Trap: CR 2; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*chill touch*, 1st-level sorcerer, 1d6 plus 1 Strength on a failed DC 11 Fortitude save); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26 (scratch out the diminutive runes etched on the skull lock's forehead).

Treasure: Inside the chest is a *wand of detect undead* made from a gnome's rib bone, a *potion of remove paralysis* in a red crystal flask, and a suit of +1 *leather armor* stitched from troglodyte skin.

Grig Zombies (6): CR 1/4; Tiny Undead; HD 1d12+3; hp 9 each; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (clumsy); AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -10; Atk/Full Atk slam +0 melee (1d3-2); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 5/slashing, single actions only, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 7, Dex 16, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Toughness.

Area 1-5 – Arcane Storage (EL 1): As soon as the PCs enter this room, read or paraphrase the following description:

A few waterlogged crates are scattered about this 20-foot wide by 30-foot long chamber. In one corner lies the body of a particularly large rat covered in swarming cockroaches, and a burnt-out sunrod lies atop the nearest crate. Aside from the corridor you just came from, there is only one other exit.

The crates are filled with mundane material components worth less than 1 gp, though most of the components have rotted away or been rendered useless through water damage. Still, a PC who spends at least an hour sifting through the crates and beats DC 20 on a Search check can find the material components for any 1st-3rd level wizard spells listed in the PHB, as long as the components have a cost of 1 gp or less and are relatively nonperishable in nature (such as crystal beads or iron filings). The corpse of the dire rat bears no external wounds and died from an internal mutation that eventually proved fatal.

Secret Door and Trap: The secret stone door in this chamber can be located with a DC 20 Search check. Pressing a small stone spigot-like mechanism on the wall opens the door, and also activates the crossbow trap unless a secret catch is flipped (which stops the bolt from firing). The crossbow bolt for this trap was once poisoned, but the poison has long since dried up. The dried poison stains the bolt a dark green color.

Crossbow Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger (try to open secret door); manual reset; Atk +10 ranged (1d8/19-20); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20 (jams firing mechanism) or DC 25 (bypass switch).

Area 1-6 – Mirror Chamber (EL 2): As soon as the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

Part of this chamber has collapsed, leaving the rest of the chamber strewn with bits of rubble. The only thing of interest in the chamber is a large oval mirror of reflective silver within a solid gold frame. The mirror stands on a pair of claw-like feet and flowing script is etched across the mirror's surface, marring its otherwise flawless appearance. A layer of dust and cobwebs coats the mirror, and it's clear that it hasn't been disturbed in quite some time.

Mirror of Physical Aptitude

Created by a particularly clumsy wizard, this large gold and silver mirror enhances one of the user's physical ability scores. Each mirror is inscribed with a unique riddle, and the mirror can only be activated when the riddle is answered. Once the correct answer to the riddle is traced upon its surface, the mirror flashes brightly and the tracing creature receives the effects of a *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, or *cat's grace* spell lasting for 10 minutes. The exact spell imbued on the creature is dependant on what its lowest physical ability score is. Thus, if Strength were the creature's lowest ability score, it would receive the benefit of a *bull's strength* spell. If the creature has two or more physical abilities that have the same value, the ability to be enhanced is chosen randomly from between the relevant choices. The mirror can be used once per day.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*; Price 4,000 gp; Weight 150 lbs.

This room served a similar function to area 1-5. The shelves that once ran along the collapsed side of this chamber have been destroyed under the ruined wall, and the only thing undamaged is a magic mirror placed here by one of the senior guild members shortly before the incident with Alasotur. The mirror is a wondrous item with the ability to enhance a creature's lowest physical ability score. Unfortunately, the wizard who created the mirror did not want just anyone using it, so he designed the mirror to activate only when the riddle inscribed on its surface was solved. Once the characters approach the mirror and read it, give them players handout A.

The answer to the riddle is "freedom." The PC who traces the answer on the mirror's surface using his finger activates its power. The mirror's abilities are described in the sidebar.

Monster: The mirror possesses an odd curse that causes it to animate whenever the wrong answer is given or it is attacked (including trying to scratch the answer onto the mirror's surface instead of just tracing the answer with a finger). Not all *mirrors of physical aptitude* are so cursed, but this one is. While it is animated, the mirror moves around on its clawed feet and batters opponents with the hard edge of its frame. Since the mirror is enchanted, and made out of silver and gold overlaying an iron frame, it has a much greater hardness than might be expected for such an object.

Tactics: The mirror attacks relentlessly until it is destroyed, or the PCs flee into an area where it cannot follow them. If the PCs flee, the mirror remains animated for one hour before reverting to an inanimate state.

Animated Magic Mirror: CR 2; Medium Construct; HD 2d10+20; hp 31; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk slam +2 melee (1d6+1); SA *doom*; SQ construct traits, dark-vision 60 ft., hardness 10, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will -5; Str 12, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SA – *Doom (Su)*: When the mirror is shattered it releases its magic to create the effects of a *doom* spell on the PC who destroyed it. Caster level 10th, Will DC 11 negates.

Area 1-7 – Laboratory (EL 3): When the PCs open the secret door, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the secret door is a dank and musty laboratory of some kind dominated by two long wooden tables cluttered with beakers, flasks, and other alchemical paraphernalia. All of the equipment is covered with dust, and dried flaky

residue and blobs of desiccated material are visible within several of the containers. The table nearest to the secret door is piled high with old tomes, scraps of paper, and rolled-up scrolls. Lying next to this table is the badly-decomposed body of a man wearing tattered green robes, while along the opposite wall is a wooden door.

This laboratory was used for a variety of purposes, and was only one of several such rooms scattered throughout the guild tower before its destruction. Shortly after the Alasotur incident, this place was abandoned, and an experiment taking place in the laboratory was left unchecked, infusing the place with uncontrolled magical energy.

The body on the floor belongs to a cultist who was scouting out this location when he decided to pick up some one of the tomes lying on the table. He got an extremely nasty shock for his troubles. PCs examining the body of the man find that it is covered with hundreds of lacerations. Because of the body's state of decomposition, a DC 20 Heal check is required to determine that the cuts are too fine to have been made with a Small or Medium-sized slashing weapon. The body's equipment was long ago taken by the other cultists.

The door on the opposite wall is unlocked. It leads to a narrow 5-foot tunnel of damp hewn stone that heads over 600 feet to the sea caves.

Paper Storm: The books, scraps of paper and scrolls in this laboratory are not what they seem, and are responsible for the cultist's death. Given a strange semblance of life by the now-wasted experiment, and powered by the spells written upon some of the scrolls, the pile of paper explodes into a furious whirling vortex whenever so much as one leaf of paper is disturbed. This storm of paper batters at anyone within the chamber, obscuring vision and causing deep paper cuts to those caught within its radius. Those caught in the storm take 1d4 points of slashing damage per round (Reflex DC 15 for half) as the paper spins about them, and find their vision reduced to a distance of 5 feet. Any PC caught in the storm must also make a DC 15 Fortitude save every round or be dazed for a round by the dizzying storm of paper.

PCs who try to attack the paper storm with weapons find that their blows do nothing. The paper storm is extremely susceptible to fire, instantly igniting in a blazing inferno if it takes 4 or more points of fire damage in a single attack. Unfortunately, this causes 1d6 points of fire damage to anyone caught in the storm at the time, and unleashes the magic contained within the magic scrolls as if a scroll mishap

had occurred. If a mishap occurs determine its nature randomly:

d6 Spell Mishap

- 1 Random PC takes 3d6 points of magical force damage (no save).
- 2 Random PC takes 1d6 points of magical force damage (no save).
- 3 Random magic item in a PC's possession is identified, as per the *identify* spell.
- 4 A permanent *minor image* of a flying tome follows a random PC wherever they go. The *minor image* can be dispelled. It disappears after 1d4 weeks.
- 5 A giant orange dunce's cap appears over a random PC's head, and falls on top of the PC (+5 touch attack) before vanishing in a puff of smoke. A PC caught beneath the falling dunce's cap suffers the effects of a *touch of idiocy* spell for 30 minutes (CL 3rd).
- 6 A neon green *lightning bolt* shaped like a jumbled stream of letters strikes a random PC. The *lightning bolt* does no damage, but any PC struck by it loses the ability to read, write, or speak for 2d10 minutes (DC 14 Reflex save to halve the duration to 1d10 minutes).

A *dispel magic* (DC 13) spell disperses the paper storm harmlessly, while an *erase* spell (DC 15) does the same trick, although this requires a successful attack roll against the storm by the caster (AC 10).

Any PC caught within the magical paper storm who makes a DC 20 Spot check each round notices that some of the pieces of paper contain glowing writing (these are the scrolls listed below). A PC can target each of these scrolls with an attack roll to destroy it, though a PC can also use the same tactic simply to grab the scroll out of the midst of the paper storm. The scrolls are AC 14, and gain a 20% concealment miss chance because of the confusing swirl of paper. Destroying or grabbing all the magical scrolls causes the paper storm to subside, the magical energy empowering the storm suspended.

Treasure: There is nothing of value left in the room except for the pile of paper, which contains various notes about spell research, information about various arcane phenomenon including the creation of golems, and four magic scrolls with the spells *identify* (CL 1st), *lightning bolt* (CL 5th), *minor image* (CL 1st), and *touch of idiocy* (CL 3rd).

The Sea Caves

Before Thelport was founded, a tribe of evil locathah lived in the region. They transformed a series of caves below where the town would be built into a shrine to their god. The locathah controlled the coastal areas for miles around, but a bronze dragon ended their reign, forcing the fish-men into deeper waters. Centuries later, humans began worshipping the locathah's strange sea god as their own. Now the False Alasotur lives in these caves, using the locathahs' ancient magic to devastate the town above.

The sea caves are a natural occurrence, and have been expanding over the years due to saltwater erosion. Both the caves and the tunnels vary in height, but most of the tunnels are 6-10 feet high, and most of the caves over 20 feet high. Many of the tunnels and caves are also filled with salty water to an average depth of 4 feet.

Unworked Stone Walls: 5 ft.; hardness 8; hp 900; Break DC 65; Climb DC 15.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Sewer Bridge (EL 3): As soon as PCs reach the end of the long passage, read or paraphrase the following:

As you walk along the tunnel, the stench of raw sewage and seawater begins to assault your nostrils. Finally, you reach the end of the tunnel, and see that it opens out into a massive stone sewer pipe through which floats a morass of murky water, branches and unidentifiable waste. A narrow ledge runs along both sides of this stream, and to one side you see that a ladder has been placed across the polluted water. You can also make out a hole that pierces the wall on the opposite ledge, a strange glimmering green light emanating from its depths.

This sewer pipe runs beneath Thelport, and is one of the major sewer pipes under the city. PCs following it all the way find that it opens out into the sea after 400 feet west, while PCs traveling east discover that it links with another sewer tunnel after 150 feet and heads back into the city. The smell coming from the sewage is unpleasant, but not overwhelming. Despite this, any PC who falls into the river of sludge has a chance of contracting filth fever if he or she is wounded. The water is at least 6 feet deep, and counts as rough water for the purpose of Swim checks.

Sewage Pipe: CR 1/2; natural; contact trigger (enter water while wounded); automatic reset; exposure to filth fever (Fort DC 11; incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con);

Search DC –; Disable Device DC –

The ledges running along the edges of the sewer pipe are about 2 feet wide, but extremely slippery, and PCs must make a DC 5 Balance check to move faster than half-speed along the ledge. Moving at normal or greater speed increases the DC by +4 per increment of half-speed.

Jumping over the water to reach the opposite ledge is difficult since the ledges are over 10 feet apart, and running jumps almost impossible. The ladder-bridge crossing the sewer stream is actually quite stable, and in good repair if a little damp. The cultists regularly use the ladder to cross to the other side of the stream.

Monster: A nasty lacedon named Gravewater lives in the sewers, feasting on anything it can catch. It has struck a deal with Alasotur to defend this area when not out hunting. Gravewater waits under the water beneath the bridge to ambush any PCs moving across it, then opens the valve of the sewer sluice. The sluice is located above the ladder on the sewer pipe's ceiling, and Gravewater holds the chain of the sewer sluice while he waits beneath the water. PCs can spot the chain with a DC 17 Spot check. This also allows them to spot the opening of the sluice if they specifically state that they are looking at what the chain is attached to.

Sewer Sluice Trap: CR 1; mechanical; manual trigger (pulling chain releases valve and causes waste to wash over the ladder); manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; creature struck must make a DC 15 Balance check or fall off ladder, and a DC 13 Fortitude save or become sickened for 2d6 rounds, and if already injured must make a DC 11 Fort save or contract filth fever (per stats of sewer pipe above); Search DC 17 (also see previous text); Disable Device DC 15 (jam valve or cut chain).

Tactics: Gravewater waits for a PC to reach the middle of the ladder before pulling the chain on the sewer sluice. The ghoul attacks anyone who falls into the water, making grapple checks if possible to hold the PC underwater. If the PC crossing the ladder does not succumb to the trap Gravewater tries to tip up the ladder, though this exposes him to attack. Treat tipping the ladder as a DC 10 Strength check; success requires PCs on the ladder to make a DC 15 Balance check or fall off the ladder. Since Gravewater is undead he does not need to breathe, and can stay submerged indefinitely. Gravewater fights to the death.

Gravewater, lacedon: CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus

paralysis); Full Atk bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis); SA ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

SA – Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease – bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

SA – Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by Gravewater's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Area 2-2 – Almost Empty Cave: Read or paraphrase the following:

The tunnel opens out into an unworked stone cave that does not look like part of the sewer system. The air is heavy with condensation, and the walls are crusted with a heavy layer of salt. The floor of the cave is wet sand, and fish skeletons litter the area. The green glow you saw previously seems to be coming from a pale crystal lodged in the cave's ceiling. Another tunnel leaves the cave up ahead.

This cave is empty, and PCs can take a moment to rest here without being disturbed. The crystal in the ceiling is a magical light source, but is automatically extinguished if removed from its setting.

PCs examining the walls of this chamber (Search DC 5) find some cave paintings that show several odd looking humanoid figures with fishy bits (locathah) praying before a massive crab, and other figures surrounding the crab transforming into fish and other sea creatures. Show the players handout B. This is a subtle hint about the curse attached to the crab statue in area 2-4.

A PC in this cave can hear the soft chanting of the cultists in area 2-3 with a DC 9 Listen check.

Area 2-3 – Cultist's Camp (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

This cave is drier than the previous cave, and contains a blazing campfire. Beside the campsite, four bedraggled humans in green robes sway and chant in time to the sloshing sounds coming from a tunnel just beyond them. The humans seem oblivious to you, and their eyes are glazed over.

This cave is where Alasotur's cultist allies live and pray when not trolling the streets for victims or eking out a living. The cave is empty aside from the cultists. The faint sloshing sound comes from the tidal pool surrounding the giant crab statue housed in area 2-4. The sand in this cave grants any creature moving through it a +2 circumstance bonus to Move Silently checks, but increases the DC of all Tumble checks by +2.

Monsters: The cultists are a mishmash of people who have succumbed to the dark lure of the sea god, and are truly mad. When the PCs arrive the cultists are in a religious fervor and take 1d6 rounds to snap out of it, unless they are attacked beforehand. If the PCs attack, the cultists are treated as being surprised.

Tactics: As soon as combat begins the adepts cast *protection from good* and attack the PCs with their clubs. The adepts resort to their other spells after a round or two, but do not really have any plan of attack. An adept reduced to less than half hit points attempts to drink his potion. The adepts fight until slain.

Human Cultists Adp1 (4): CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 1d6+5; hp 8 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk masterwork club +1 melee (1d6); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Craft or Profession (any one) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Swim +2; Combat Casting, Toughness.

Divine spells prepared (3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0-level – *ghost sound, light, touch of fatigue*; 1st-level – *command, protection from good*.

Possessions: masterwork club, green robes, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 300 gp.

Area 2-4 – Temple of the Crab (EL 4): Read or paraphrase the following:

This cave is by far the largest you have entered. Like the others, wet sand and rotting seaweed covers the uneven floor, and the walls constantly drip with water. At the other end of the cave is a large pool of seawater that sloshes gently against the subterranean beach. Resting on a small island of sand in the middle of this pool is the statue of a crab easily 10 feet in diameter. Around the crab statue are clustered hundreds of pearls. A crystal mounted on the ceiling bathes this area in soft green light, giving the entire cave the appearance of being underwater.

This is where the locathah came to pray to their

undersea god, but only the cultists now use it. As in area 2-3 the sand in this cave affects Move Silently and Tumble checks, but is solid enough not to otherwise affect movement. The green crystal is identical to the one in area 2-2, and is extinguished if removed from its setting.

The pool at the back of the cave is filled with slightly brackish seawater to a depth of 3 feet, and sloshes due to the presence of the pool's occupants. It takes 2 squares of movement to move through one square of the pool, and the DC of Tumble checks is increased by +4.

Treasure: Around the base of the crab statue are heaped 4 golden pearls (100 gp each), 3 pink pearls (150 gp each), and 40 irregular pearls (4d4 gp each).

Trap: The crab statue is constructed from some sort of soft porous black stone (hardness 7, hp 60, Break DC 30), and enchanted with a powerful curse that functions in most ways like a trap.

Cursed Crab Statue: CR 3; magic device; touch trigger (touching statue or pearls); automatic reset; spell effect (limited *baleful polymorph*, 9th-level sorcerer, DC 17 Fortitude save or be polymorphed into a fish for 10 minutes); Search DC 30; Disable Device 30 (destabilize sand bank to cause statue to topple over without directly touching it). A PC who successfully saves against the *baleful polymorph* effect cannot be affected for 24 hours.

Monsters: A swarm of vicious blue crabs inhabits the saltwater pool. The crabs guard the statue, and wait to attack until someone grabs a handful of pearls or is polymorphed into a fish.

Tactics: The crab swarm attacks PCs as described above, following PCs out of the water but not out of the cave.

Killer Crab Swarm: CR 1; Diminutive Vermin (swarm); HD 3d8+3; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp –; Atk/Full Atk swarm (1d6); Space/Reach 10 ft./0 ft.; SA distraction (DC 13); SQ darkvision 60 ft., half damage from slashing and piercing, swarm traits, vermin traits; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 12, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Swim +10

SA – Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a killer crab swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round.

Skills: The crab swarm gains a +8 racial bonus to any Climb check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can take 10 on Climb checks,

even when rushed or threatened. The crab swarm uses Dexterity instead of Strength when making Climb checks.

The crab swarm gains a +8 racial bonus to any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can take 10 on Swim checks, even when rushed or threatened. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it is moving in a straight line. The crab swarm uses Dexterity instead of Strength when making Swim checks.

Area 2-5 – Lair of the White Salamander (EL 4): Read or paraphrase the following:

At the end of the tunnel is a huge cavern filled with turbulent seawater. Narrow patches of sand surround the frothing water, but the sea inundates the rest of the cave. Rising out of the water in the center of the cave is the monstrous claw of a crab constructed from dark red coral.

Coiling around the base of the claw is a revolting white monster that looks like a cross between a lizard, eel and fish, with a huge gulping maw. The creature easily reaches 7 feet in length, and its tail thrashes around menacingly.

Suddenly the creature opens its mouth and speaks, its voice coming out in a strange gurgle. "You shall not ruin my plans again, adventuring filth. This time Alasotur shall be triumphant!"

This cave is where Alasotur spends most of his time. Connected to the rest of the sea caves by three narrow submerged tunnels, the water is kept violently in motion by the power of the *claw of shifting tides*. While the water is only about 4 feet deep, it is considered to be rough water for purposes of Swim checks (DC 15). It costs 4 squares of movement for wading characters to enter a square of churning water, and tumbling is impossible.

Monster: Alasotur was once a normal salamander until becoming the real Alasotur's familiar. The transference of part of the wizard's brain into the

amphibian transformed the salamander into an intelligent monstrosity with several magical powers. Alasotur can speak Common, Aquan, and Draconic.

Normally, Alasotur would not be able to survive down in the sewers, but the creature somehow adapted, and now is perfectly at home in its polluted environment.

Tactics: Alasotur unleashes *magic missiles* for the first few rounds of combat before swimming forward and attacking the PCs from underwater. This provides him with a +8 cover bonus to AC unless the PCs dive beneath the water to confront him. (You may wish to revisit the rules for fighting underwater. Refer to Chapter 8: Glossary, "Water Dangers," in the DMG.)

Once Alasotur is reduced to 10 hit points or less, he uses *vampiric touch*, then swims over to activate the *control water* ability of the *claw* to swamp the sea cave. The *control water* effect completely fills the cavern with water, forcing the PCs to make DC 20 Swim checks to avoid being swept against the walls of the cavern for 1d6 points of damage by the sudden influx of water. If a PC is near the exit to area 2-4 he is swept down the tunnel, and into that cave instead. Although the *control water* spell does not cause the water in other areas to rise, the water displaced by the spell fills all of the sea caves to a depth of at least 2 feet before spilling out into the city's sewer system.

The False Alasotur, Giant Mutated White Salamander: CR 4; Medium Magical Beast (augmented animal); HD 5d10+5; hp 32; Init +0; Spd 15 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +9; Atk bite +9 melee (1d6+4); Full Atk bite +9 melee (1d6+4) and 2 claws +4 melee (1d3+2); SA improved grab, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, mage armor, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7,

Claw of Shifting Tides (minor artifact)

The *claw of shifting tides* was created by powerful locathah clerics centuries ago to control the tides in the area. The claw cannot be moved from its location by any means short of a *miracle* or *wish*.

When a specific command word is given the claw can *control water* once per day. Once per week the claw can also alter the tides within a 5-mile radius, causing the tides to rise or lower at will.

In addition to the powers listed above, the claw constantly churns up all water in a 100-foot radius, making calm water rough, and rough water stormy (already stormy water is unaffected). This effect cannot be controlled.

Strong transmutation; CL 20th; Craft Wondrous Item.

Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +9, Spellcraft +11, Spot +5, Swim +16; Alertness, Blind-Fight.

SA – Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the false Alasotur must hit with his bite attack. He can then start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and inflicts automatic bite damage on the following round with a successful grapple check.

SQ – Mage Armor (Su): A light blue aura of force constantly surrounds the false Alasotur. This aura functions just like the *mage armor* spell, granting him a +4 armor bonus to AC.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day – *magic missile*; 1/day – *vampiric touch* (DC 16); Caster level 5th. The save DC's are Intelligence-based.

Skills: Alasotur gains a +4 racial bonus on Listen checks. Alasotur gains a +8 racial bonus to any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. He can take 10 on Swim checks, even when rushed or threatened. He can use the run action while swimming, provided he is moving in a straight line.

Conclusion

Once Alasotur and the cultists have been defeated, Tayanna rewards the PCs for their efforts (if she hired them). If any of the intelligent foes escaped, they may return later to cause further trouble for Thelport.

Further Adventures

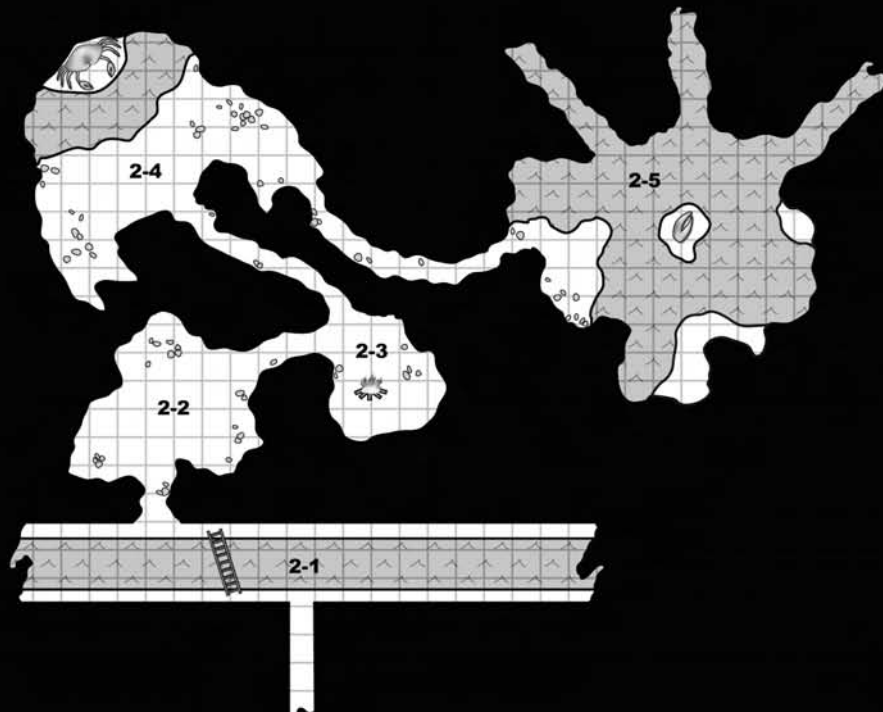
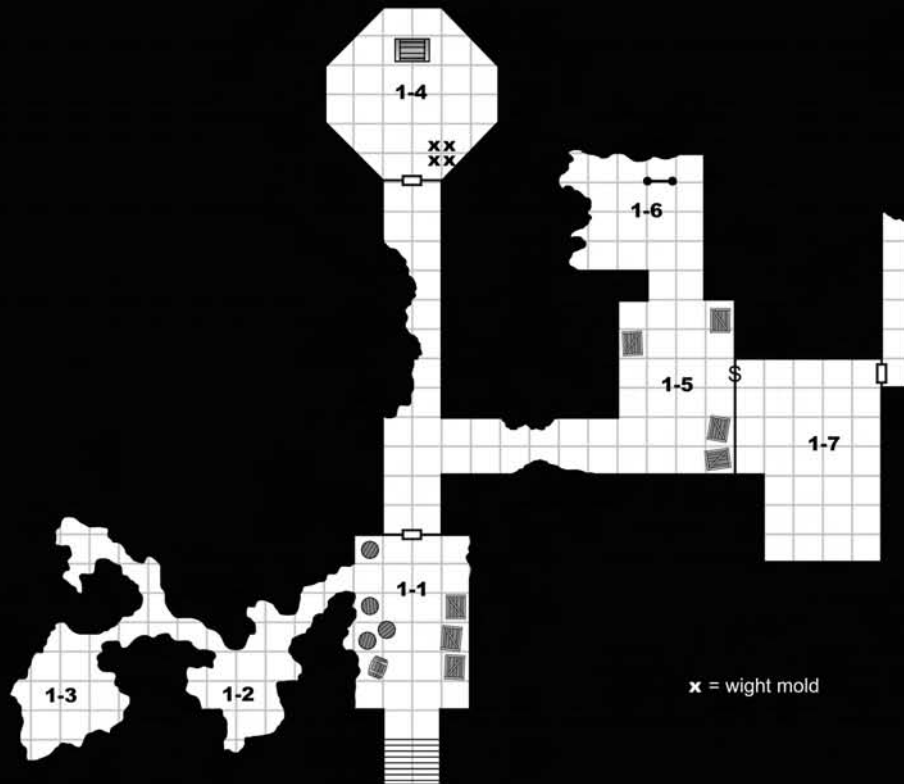
Since most of the old wizards' guild is under tons of rubble, PCs who spend the time unearthing the laboratory level could find just about anything left behind by the fleeing wizards. Of course, something in the laboratory (such as an undead wizard) could try to free itself from the rubble, requiring the PCs to stop whatever it is. Then, there is the possibility that former members of the guild could return to Thelport to seek vengeance against Tayanna, or possibly rebuild the guild. Finally, the evil locathah tribes in the area could try to reclaim the coast by attacking Thelport via the old sea caves, of which the PCs are the only ones with any real knowledge.

*If you would seek the gifts I bestow
You must answer this riddle that all scholars know:
What is sweeter than honey and worth more than gold
But can never be captured or so I've been told?
For to do so would kill it, that's what they say
All those who live it, in their own way
Tell me your answer; trace it on me
You'll be surprised by what you will see.*



Lair of the White Salamander

Level 1



Level 2

Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Golden Auroch

By Andrew Hind

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Golden Auroch is an adventure for a party of four characters of 1st level. While it is possible to “clear” the entire tomb, doing so will tax the average party to the limits and is in fact unnecessary for the successful completion of the adventure. Clever tactics, thoughtful problem solving, and good role-playing make things significantly easier.

This scenario is set in a desert with similarities to ancient Babylon. The DM can relocate it anywhere in her own campaign with little difficulty by placing the adventure in a desert environment and, if necessary, making minor alterations to the text.

Introduction

The characters arrive at the lost city of Ur, guided by a man named Nebu. After encountering a fierce, flame-hoofed bull left to stand sentinel over the site, the characters enter the cursed tomb. Nebu is soon slain by a mysterious assailant, kicking off a cat-and-mouse game between the PCs and the dust brother who guards the tomb. The climax to this deadly game ends when the characters find the Golden Auroch, a relic the construct is duty-bound to protect. It’s possible that the adventure

ends here, with the PCs returning to civilization with their prize. However, whispered voices attempt to lure the PCs further into the dungeon, where the undead queen Nicrotis hopes to dupe them into completing her half-finished task of opening a portal to the para-elemental plane of dust. Complete success is closing this magic door and destroying the blight that is the undead queen once and for all.

Game Master’s Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	42	C	Scourge of Ninurta	2
1-2	42	T	Poison needle trap	1
1-3	43	C	Dust brother	3
1-5	45	C	Animated iron maiden	2
1-7	45	C	Beetle swarm	1
1-8	46	C	Magmin	3
1-9	47	T, C	Alarm trap, skeletons (3)	2
1-10	47	C	Tiny vipers (10)	3
1-11	48	T	Fireball trap	3
1-14	49	C, P	Dust eagle, portal	1, 4
1-15	50	C	Nicrotis, undead Wiz7	4

Getting the Players Involved

The adventure assumes that the PCs are on a quest to retrieve the Golden Auroch on behalf of the prince of Akkad, who desires the relic so that he might save his dying people. Though this is the most likely and honorable motivation, there are other reasons that might spur the adventurers into undertaking the quest. Perhaps the desert-guide Nebu approaches them with a proposal to rob the Tomb of Nicrotis for personal gain, or a city-state aligned against Akkad sends the PCs to take possession of the relic to ensure their enemy remains weak on the eve of a war. Maybe the adventure is a holy quest inspired by a priest of Ninurta or even the deity himself. Or what if the PCs simply stumble upon the tomb, perhaps while lost in the desert or when seeking shelter from a fierce sandstorm?

Scaling the Adventure

The Golden Auroch is intended for four 1st-level characters. It is a difficult adventure, especially for groups that charge headfirst into their problems. In playtests, the first group to attempt to solve the dungeon in that manner met with a total party kill. On their second attempt, they approached things more thoughtfully, and survived intact. You may find that you don't need to scale the adventure to higher-level groups, if their playing style is direct and combat-oriented. If you do need to scale the adventure, consider the following:

Stronger Parties (characters of 2nd or 3rd level): Run the adventure as written but with the following changes: increase the dust brother to 6 HD; add 4 skeletal torturers to area 1-5; double the number of skeletons in area 1-9, and have the area infused with a *bane* spell; change the dust hawk in area 1-10 to a juvenile arrowhawk with the *blur* adaptation.

Even Stronger Parties (characters of 4th or 5th level): Run the adventure as written but with the following changes: the dust brother is now an 8 HD creature; add 2 levels of the wizard class to Nicrotis, and fortify her with a *rod of splendor*, a *ring of protection* +3, and a *ring of spell-storing*; the arrowhawk in area 1-10 becomes an adult with the *blur* adaptation; increase all trap CRs by 2.

Background Story

Evil has always blown upon the hot winds of Sumer, but never has there been a land as oppressive and intent on discord than Ur. For decades the people of this city-state were held prisoner by their mage-queen, Nicrotis, and neighboring lands quivered whenever her armies marched. Central to Nicrotis' power, both at home and afar, was her possession of the Golden Auroch, a statue holy to Ninurta, Lord of the Plough. This statue

ensured that fields were seas of golden grain in spite of the harsh terrain and the temperamental elements. While neighboring lands were stricken by drought and famine, Ur was an island of plenty.

But to Nicrotis' discredit, she wielded the Golden Auroch as a tool of oppression and a weapon of war. The grains were used to feed her armies on their campaigns of conquest and hoarded to ensure the allegiance of her own people. In time, Ninurta took notice and intervened, reducing the entire city of Ur to dust in a fierce sandstorm that lasted forty years. When the storm finally lifted, nothing was left of the city except for some walls. With his retribution complete, the deity turned his attention elsewhere.

But Ur was not as lifeless as it might have appeared. When the storm hit the unsuspecting city, Nicrotis and her most loyal followers retreated into the palace's dungeon. The sands buried them alive, and for years these refugees subsisted on food-stores and hope. When the rations finally ran out, the survivors slowly died: some of starvation, others madness, and some at their own hands. For good reason had the palace dungeons become known as the Tomb of Nicrotis.

Fast forward a century. The city-state of Akkad is in the midst of a drought of unimaginable length and intensity. Not a single drop of rain has fallen for three years. Wells bear no water, the rivers have been reduced to cracked gullies, the lands are drying up, and animals literally turn to dust. The only hope for salvation lies in traveling to the cursed ruins of Ur, braving the Tomb of Nicrotis located below them, and returning with the Golden Auroch.

Recovering the Golden Auroch isn't merely a matter of overcoming the ageless traps, both magical and mechanical, that typically guard ancient tombs. In fact, while the evil of Ur has been buried, it hasn't been destroyed. Nicrotis' tomb is guarded by an eternally vigilant guardian known as a dust brother, both bloodthirsty and tireless. The wicked queen still "lives" as well, now little more than a lich-like undead figure confined to her throne. With every movement, her body crumbles further into dust. But Nicrotis is not without her machinations. As her undead body began to weaken and deteriorate further with each passing decade, she realized that the eventual result was complete collapse into a pile of dust. Salvation could be found, she reasoned, if a portal could be opened to the para-elemental plane of dust. The essence of that plane, bleeding into her native one, might arrest her decay and eventually restore her vigor. Eventually, if the portal were large enough, it might pollute the lands of Sumer to such a degree that Nicrotis could be freed of her confinement and allowed to rebuild her evil empire.

It is at this point that the PCs enter the picture, as possible saviors to an entire nation...

The Tomb of Nicrotis

The Tomb of Nicrotis is dry, eerily silent, and thin-aired – the result of being closed for several centuries. Everything is covered in a layer of dust, and there is nothing to suggest the dungeon has been disturbed in recent memory, if ever.

The Guide, Nebu: The adventure text that follows assumes the PCs are guided by a local man named Nebu. It is assumed Nebu accompanies them into the dungeon. He dies in area 1-3 in order to facilitate a dramatic scene. If the PCs refuse to be accompanied by Nebu, you may need to find an alternate way to play out area 1-3.

Walls: Except where noted, the walls are made of rough brick clean and often decorated with paintings. Climbing the walls is difficult (Climb DC 15).

Doors: All doors within the tomb, except where noted within the text, are standardized as follows:

Stone Doors: 4 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28

Light: All areas are unlit, except for areas specified to be illuminated by *continual flame* braziers that cast eerie yellow light across throughout these rooms.

Ceilings: Ceilings are 20 feet high, except in a few areas specifically noted within the text.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Guardian of the Tomb (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The once-proud city of Ur has been reduced to crumbling blocks, walls, and columns. The fine, dust-like sand has drifted and the walls are completely buried in some sections. A voice from the dead city seems to sound in your heart, bidding you to turn and flee, to get away. But the sight of a grand staircase descending into the bowels of the earth, and the magnificent gold doors at their feet, cause you to put aside your fears. The tomb of Nicrotis beckons and you've come to answer the call.

Allow the characters a few seconds to get their bearings, then read the following:

The brooding silence of this awful place is suddenly shattered by a loud, angry snort coming from behind a nearby wall. The ground begins to tremble, accompanied by the sound of a massive creature on the run. A pair of massive, curved horns the color of sun-bleached bones rises over the wall. Then comes the head and body of a vicious-looking bull, its nose flaring

malicious intent and its flaming hooves leaving prints of ash in the drifting sand. The bull swings its massive head in your direction and charges.

With Ur long reduced to dust, and Nicrotis and her hateful followers dead or safely entombed, Ninurta has turned his attention from this tragic place. He has left only an auroch-like magical guardian, known as a Scourge of Ninurta, to stand sentinel over the ruins and ensure the evil of Nicrotis does not rise again.

Note that the door to area 1-2 opens automatically three rounds after the characters approach (see description for that area). The Scourge of Ninurta is much too powerful for a party of 1st-level characters, but if they are clever, they can make it into the tomb without fighting him.

Tactics: The bull charges characters and attempts to gore them to death. It does not follow targets beyond the doorway into the Tomb of Nicrotis, nor does it venture more than 300 meters from the staircase into the ruined city.

Scourge of Ninurta (unique creature; stats based on modified bull): CR 2; Large Magical Beast; HD 6d10+18; hp 51; Init +1; Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Atk/Full Atk Gore +11 melee (1d6+5 plus dehydration); SA dehydration; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, immunity to fire; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 20, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +3; Alertness, Iron Will.

Dehydration (Ex): Afflicted characters suffer 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and become exhausted. A successful DC 15 Fortitude save halves damage and reduces exhaustion to fatigue. Dehydrated characters must make an additional DC 10 Constitution check each hour to avoid 1d4 nonlethal damage until the subject drinks sufficient water to rehydrate.

Area 1-2 Ornate Doorway (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

Ornate engravings of eagles and lions and bulls adorn the heavy, gold-plated doors that tower above you. A skeleton lies at the feet at the threshold, fingers clutching at his chest.

The delicate artwork conceals the deadly poison needle trap that protects the door's lock from tampering. After three rounds, regardless of the PCs' actions during that time, the heavy doors swing

open. At that point, proceed to area 1-3.

Gold-Plated Bronze Door: 5 inches thick; Hardness 15; hp 150; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 16.

Poison Needle Trap: CR 1; Atk +4 ranged (1 plus large scorpion venom); venom (Fort DC 15, initial 1d3 Str, secondary 1d3 Str); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 14. Centuries of neglect has dried the poison and reduced its potency.

Area 1-3 – Dust Storm (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

You enter what was once clearly a guard room. The massive wooden doors you pass through could easily have been secured with the stout beam that leans against the wall, and had the doors been so secured you doubt even a company of men would have any success in breaching the barrier. Racks of spears and swords line the wall, all of high quality, all covered in a thick coat of dust. In fact, the entire room – the table and chairs that stand off to one side, the brazier that would have warded off the chill, and the stone sentinels that flank each of the exiting portals – are covered in a dense and course layer of dust.

Allow the players several moments to begin to explore the room, then read aloud the following:

Suddenly, without trace of any wind or other disturbance, the dust that lies like a thick morass across the room rises into the air. It forms a swirling grey cloud that, had you been outdoors, could easily have been mistaken for a sand-storm. The room seems to darken as your vision obscures, and ice-tipped arrows of fear shoot through you as the dust seems to bear down on you with all the sins of the ruined city. Suddenly, Nebu screams in terror, the kind of spine-chilling wail that comes from a man who knows his life is about to be taken from him.

Allow characters to make Spot checks. Those who succeed at DC 16 see the following:

You watch as Nebu is dragged – as helplessly as a goat might be taken by a lion – into the dust storm and disappears from sight. But whatever took Nebu was no lion, for its vague form was seen through the haze and it was most definitely that of a man.

All characters are flat-footed by the sudden assault, but only those who succeeded at the Spot check can even take action. For dramatic purposes it's best if Nebu is taken, as it will heighten the tension, but it's by no means mandatory. What is mandato-

ry, however, is that the nature of the dust brother remains elusive and mysterious at this point. No character should get a good look at it, nor engage it in melee combat. It should escape, preferably dragging Nebu but if necessary simply by reducing itself to dust form. In any event, Nebu dies, killed by a spear wound through the back.

Development: To build dramatic tension, Nebu's corpse should not be located until several encounters later, where it is found unceremoniously dumped in the midst of a hallway. But regardless of when and where it is found, the state of the body should confound characters. It will initially be all but unrecognizable, covered in a thick shroud of dust even though only hours or even minutes have passed. The body will also be desiccated, as if it had laid in rest for years. Finally, it will reveal the distinctive wound of a spear penetrating clear through the back and out his chest.

Dust Brother: CR 3; Medium Construct; HD 5d10+20; hp 47; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk Spear +5 melee (1d8+3); SQ Damage reduction 5/–, darkvision 60 ft., dust form, *dust cloud*, SR 15, water vulnerability, construct traits; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 10, Con–, Int –, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +10, Spot +10; –.

Dust form (Ex): Dust brothers fall into a patch of inert dust at will, and are then invulnerable to physical attack. The dust brother in dust form is indistinguishable from a normal pile of dust, except for the fact that it does not disperse, not matter how much wind strikes it. Water poured onto the dust brother in dust form converts it into an inert patch of dust. One liter of water (or wine, or other liquid) destroys a dust brother in dust form.

Water vulnerability (Ex): When dust brothers are struck by water (at least a full flask) they immediately lose their damage reduction until they have dried out, a process that takes about 1 hour under normal conditions.

Dust cloud (Su): Twice per day, a dust brother can kick up the dust to create a thick cloud that acts like *obscuring mist*, as cast by a 5th level wizard.

Area 1-4 – Dust Garden: Read or paraphrase the following:

Your necks strain upwards to scan the domed ceiling high above, which radiates warm light reminiscent of the sun's life-giving rays. At one time perhaps this large expanse might have been a verdant garden filled with scented flowers, shaded trees, and babbling fountains. Today, however, it's nothing more than an arid

Running the Dust Brother

The dust brother should serve as a dangerous foe that plagues the heroes as they delve deeper into Nicrotis' tomb. It plays a cat-and-mouse game with the PCs, striking swiftly and when they least expect it, then just as quickly retreating. Build the suspense; because the tomb has been undisturbed and its contents are coated in a thick shroud of dust, the characters could come to expect an attack at any moment. Every breeze rippling the dust might be mistaken for a sign of the creature's presence; every odd sound could be that of an enemy ready to reveal itself.

Only if the Golden Auroch is disturbed will the dust brother stand and fight to its destruction. The relic is Necrotis' most prized possession, and the construct is therefore charged with its protection above all other considerations.

When the characters finally get a close look at the dust brother, read the following:

The swirling dust coalesces into the grim figure of a soldier, armed with tower shield and spear. Its eyes burn with fiery devotion to some long forgotten ideal, and it advances upon you with resolute steps, clearly intent on performing its eternal duty by striking you down.

The dust brother first appeared in DCC #23: The Sunken Ziggurat. Refer to that module for a complete monster entry. This version of the dust brother varies slightly from that first appearance, due to effects of energies leaching through the portal from the para-elemental plane of dust.

Habitat: Dust brothers are most often found in ancient ruins and the strongholds of powerful magi. They serve primarily as guardians of tombs, temples, treasure vaults, and other important locations. Most are tied to a specific location (such as a door or hallway) and only materialize when an intruder approaches within 10 feet of this place. They are quickly reduced to dust once more when there are no longer any threats in the immediacy. Some rarer dust brothers are free-ranging and therefore able to protect their lairs with greater effectiveness. Though dust brothers can exist in almost any climate as long as they remain within an enclosed area, dry environments are typically the product of desert civilizations. As constructs they do not actively collect treasure, but their lairs might accumulate treasure left by slain intruders. This is of course above and beyond any wealth the dust brother is entrusted to protect by its creator.

Habits: Dust brothers have no habits, no society, and no behavior to speak of. They are unthinking automatons, concerned only with fulfilling their eternal duty. Since they are often found in tombs or temples, they often have a close spiritual connection to the culture that created them. Many common people mistakenly consider them spirits of the deceased, and therefore fear them. This belief is encouraged by those who crafted the constructs, as it helps deter would-be thieves and intruders.

Dust brothers who exist in pairs or larger numbers instinctively fight as a military formation, standing shoulder-to-shoulder in iron discipline. They knit their shields together, providing a +2 bonus to AC and +1 bonus to Reflex saves. Legends tell of extremely powerful magi who were able to create entire companies of these deadly constructs, capable of marching out of the tomb and onto the field of battle. Whether these legends are true or merely fanciful stories, it gives one pause for thought. The implications would be frightening indeed.

Physiology: In their natural state, dust brothers look like nothing more threatening than a thick coating of dust. When aroused by intrusion, they rise up as a living column of dust in the shape of an armored man. Their eyes are wide and blank, little more than dark sockets from which the spark of life is noticeably absent. They stare past living creatures to instead focus on some far-off point.

Dust brothers are difficult to slay. Even wind, the bane of normal dust, has no appreciable effect on their form. The one weakness of a dust brother is water or other liquids, which can reduce them to a muddy puddle or even wash them away entirely.

Life cycle: As constructs, dust brothers do not have a natural life cycle. They are created by powerful spellcasters with a single purpose in mind: to guard an important location and item. "Standard" dust brothers, those which are tied to a specific location within a tomb or stronghold, are nothing more than enchanted dust. The free-ranging varieties are made by way of an obscure ritual that sees the ground bones of a loyal and dedicated sentinel or guard mixed with dust. When enchanted, this combination creates a more cunning, more efficient guardian.

Occasionally, a powerful and crafty magi will enhance a dust brother by adding enchanted dust to the creation ritual. *Dust of disappearance* renders the construct invisible at all times, *dust of dryness* eliminates the dust brother's inherent vulnerability to water, *dust of illusion* allows the crafter to create the construct in a frightening image that causes fear in living beings as per the spell cast at 4th level of ability, and *dust of tracelessness* causes the construct to be surrounded by a swirling cloud of dust (acts as *obscuring mist*) that settles in its wake and obliterates all tracks.

waste. The vegetation is long-since dead, the fountains flow no more, and the benches are cold and empty.

There's nothing here to interest players, though it makes an ideal locale for the dust brother to make an appearance.

Area 1-5 – Prison (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

A narrow stone bridge leads across a crevasse from which noxious steam billows. The bottom of the crevasse is lost from view, obscured by the yellowish mist, though a thick chain, suspended from the ceiling and controlled by a winch located on the far side of the bridge, descends into its murky depths. Your eyes are led across the bridge, where an appalling number and variety of instruments of torture line the walls and where several infernal devices occupy the floor space. While the uses of most the contraptions are beyond your comprehension, you recognize one: an iron maiden. Withered hands grip the bars of a cage suspended from the ceiling, as if the frail corpse inside, its body still draped in the tatters of robes, continues to fight for its freedom.

The pit is 30 feet deep, though narrow vents in the ground go much deeper and may indeed connect to some fetid pool of boiling liquid in the deep below. The vapors are quite dangerous in that anyone submerged in them begins to suffer from dehydration, suffering 1d6 points of nonlethal damage each round and instantly becoming exhausted. Characters who manage to resist (DC 12 Fortitude save) take half damage and become fatigued rather than exhausted. In any case, the target is considered dehydrated and must make an additional Constitution check (DC 10, +1 per previous check) each hour to avoid a further 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. The affects of dehydration can be nullified by drinking fresh water.

While the vapor's potency weakens to the point of impotence by the time it billows out of the crevasse, it nonetheless fills the chamber with a thin mist that reduced visibility. Beyond 10 feet, there is a 20% miss chance for all creatures within the chamber.

Monster: The iron maiden, infused with the tortured spirits of those who met their fate inside the coffin-like device, is now a murderous animated object.

Tactics: The animated iron maiden aims to trap targets within its body, disgorging the victim as soon as it has been killed and then moving on to another victim. It can only hold one Medium-size character at a time, so if it already has a victim inside the construct

will defend itself by merely slamming opponents with its bulk and attempting to force them into the pit.

Treasure: The desiccated figure in the cage was once a noble diplomat from a rival city-state. Anyone who cuts him down and makes a DC 15 Search check notices that his skin and flesh have rotted away from the stomach area, revealing a *ring of protection* +1 that the unfortunate figure swallowed upon his capture.

Iron Maiden (Animated Object): CR 2; Medium Construct; HD 2d10+20; hp 35; Init +0; Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Slam +2 melee (1d6+1); SA Engulf, bladed lid; SQ Hardness 5, darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision, construct traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -5; Str 12, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Engulf (Ex): The iron maiden cannot make a slam attack in the same round it attempts to engulf. To engulf, it merely moves over opponents of Medium-size or smaller, who get an attack of opportunity or a Reflex save at DC 13 to avoid. Engulfed characters are automatically grappled and subject to the bladed lid special attack.

Bladed Lid (Ex): A character grappled by the iron maiden (considered trapped inside its lid) automatically suffers 5 points of damage each round.

Area 1-6 – Cells: Read or paraphrase the following for each of the five cells adjacent to area 1-5:

The heavy door opens to reveal a cell, barely three feet wide by five feet deep. It would have been all but impossible for a captive to find any comfort in such cramped confines. Chains and manacles dangling from the rear wall rattle slightly, as if eager for new victims to restrain.

Despite their ominous rattling, the chains are completely harmless. The PCs will never learn whether the chains' agitation is the result of restless spirits or merely natural phenomenon (wind or vibration), which likely will only make them more suspicious.

Area 1-7 – Bathhouse (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This colonnaded room is massive, and is dominated by a deep pool. The pool is completely dry now, but the large two-foot diameter pipe in its side suggests it was once fed by an underground aqueduct system. Lounges, statuary and stone tables furnish the room. Atop one of these tables lie several dust-shrouded clay urns.

Secret Door: One of the flagstones in the floor masks a trapdoor. It's not difficult to detect (Spot DC 10), since it was concealed only to preserve the

aesthetics of the chamber.

Crawlspace: The trapdoor leads into a small crawlspace that runs astride the aqueduct piping and allows for repair. At one time it ran several hundred meters under the palace, but it has collapsed after only 20 feet. Entering the crawlspace requires crunching the sheet of beetles that line the floor. Within the crawlspace is a pump-like mechanism that controls the flow of the water, allowing it to be shut off (to allow repairs, for example). To get the water flowing again, pressure needs to be built up by pumping the lever several times. It's rusting and clogged with sand, so the action requires three successive DC 10 Strength checks.

Development: Clever characters may think to get the water flowing again as a means of defeating the dust brother. Such tactics should be rewarded; defeating the dust brother in this manner deserves a 150% experience reward.

Monster: The grating sound of the lever agitates the beetles. After the third *attempt* they form into an angry swarm and attack. They are mindless and attack the nearest creature. They are also relentless in their pursuit, and will not stop until destroyed.

Treasure: The clay urns contain perfumes and soap (a mixture of oil, clay and ashes). They're well preserved and of excellent quality, so they might sell for 100 gp. In addition, one of the urns contains two doses of *dust of illusion*. Nicrotis would use this alter her male playthings' appearances to suit her tastes.

Beetle Swarm: CR 1; Diminutive Vermin (Swarm); HD 2d8+2; 13 hp; Init +3; Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -; Full Atk Swarm (1d6); SA Distraction; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., swarm traits, tremorsense 30 feet, vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 1, Dex 17, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Distraction (Ex): Anyone in same space as the swarm must make a DC 11 Fort save or be nauseated for one round.

Area 1-8 – Steam Room (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a small, circular chamber lined by stone benches. The room is bare, save for a large grill in the floor. It's faint, but you hear what sounds like scratching and wails coming from the grill.

This was once a steam room. Water came via pipe to a basin located beneath the grill, which was boiled to incredible temperatures by the heat pro-



duced by a magmin trapped in a metal vault beneath the basin. Characters making a DC 12 Listen check more clearly hear the magmin's cries, and while he may not understand the words, the character will definitely identify the sounds as the pleading of a sentient being.

Grill: Hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 15.

Metal Basin: Hardness 10; hp 90; Break DC 20; immune to fire.

Tactics: The magmin has been trapped for more than two centuries and is none too pleased about it. If the magmin is freed, it mistakes the PCs for his captors and attacks with an anger bordering on insane fury: it gains a +4 bonus to Strength, +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but takes a -2 penalty to armor class. The creature rages for three rounds, at which time he becomes fatigued (-2 penalty to Strength, -2 penalty to Dexterity, can't run or charge). The magmin fights until either his rage wears off or he is reduced to 6 hit points, at which time he attempts to flee.

Note that the stats below do *not* include the effects of the rage or the fatigue. When the magmin is raging, add +2 to his attack and damage rolls, and give him 4 extra hit points.

Magmin: CR 3; Small Elemental (fire, extra-pla-

nar); HD 2d8+2; 11 hp; Init +0; Speed 30ft. (6 squares); AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +1; Grp -1; Atk/Full Atk Burning touch +4 melee touch (1d8 fire, plus combustion) or slam +4 melee (1d3+3 plus combustion); SA Combustion, fiery aura; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 feet, elemental traits, immunity to fire, melt weapons, vulnerability to cold; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Spot +3; Great Fortitude

Combustion (Ex): DC 12 Reflex save or victims take 1d8 extra damage for 1d4+2 rounds as clothes catch fire.

Fiery Aura (Ex): Anyone within 20 feet must make a DC 12 Fort save or take 1d6 heat damage per round.

Melt Weapons (Ex): Any metal weapon that strikes the magmin must make a DC 12 Fort save or melt into slag.

Area 1-9 – Shrine (EL 2): Getting into this chamber presents its own challenges. The door to the room is made of solid stone and locked, and the space before the door is trapped. Anyone who steps in the 5-foot square before the door who doesn't speak the command phrase, "glory be Nicrotis" triggers the trap.

Stone Door: 6 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 26; Open Lock DC 15.

Alarm Trap: CR 2; proximity trigger (*alarm*); animates skeleton priests and incense braziers within the chamber; Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 16.

Once PCs have opened the door, read the following:

The thick, heavy door slides open to reveal a small temple, but the deity looming over you in cold stone is like none that you've ever witnessed before. It has a humanoid form, but is so bulbous and round that you can't easily distinguish the gender. The head is vaguely reptilian, with a toothy crocodilian jaw, and its legs end in coiled tendrils forming elephantine stumps. Even looking upon the statue is difficult, and you both hear and feel echoes of heart-piercing cries reverberating in your souls. A sacrificial altar, upon which goats are offered up to the gods, stands at the statue's feet, caked in dark blood and surrounded by the sprawling forms of three skeletons. Braziers are scattered about the chamber, both to provide illumination and to burn the incense that is such an important part of religious services. To the left, an arched doorway leads off into a side chamber.

The statue is that of some ancient deity Whose Name Shall Not Be Mentioned, an unholy entity of the darkest order. Merely being within the room causes characters of good or neutral alignment to become shaken unless a DC 16 Will save is made.

If the door *alarm* is tripped, the brazier in the room begins to burn with incense that smells similar to cinnamon. Characters that make a DC 18 Spellcraft check recognize the incense as *incense of displacement*. It rapidly fills the 30 foot chamber, and any creature breathing the incense suffers a 50% chance to miss in combat unless a DC 15 Concentration check is made.

Monsters: The shrine remains the domain of three former priests, now reduced to skeletons. In life, these evil clerics spent much of their existence ensuring the populace of Ur remained sickly and therefore unable to rebel; part of that legacy remains with them still, as wounds inflicted by their claws cause victims to become ill and susceptible to disease (thus the higher CR). The skeletons, of course, are immune to the *incense of displacement*. If the trap at the door is not triggered, the skeletons are simply inanimate piles of bones lying at the foot of the altar.

Treasure: The brazier holds a total of two more ounces of *incense of displacement*.

Human Skeletons (3): CR 1/2; Medium Undead; HD 1d12; hp 6 each; Init +5; Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk Claw +1 melee (1d4+1 plus affliction); Full Atk 2 claws +1 melee (1d4+1 plus affliction); SA Affliction; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 feet, undead traits, immunity to cold; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: -; Improved Initiative.

Affliction (Su): Creatures struck by claws must make DC 10 Fort save or become sickly, suffering a constant cough, fever, and -4 penalty to future saves vs. disease, until removed by a *heal* spell.

Area 1-10 – Altar of the Golden Auroch (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a small, square chamber dominated by a dais. Upon the dais rests a golden ox, standing about two feet at the shoulders and still gleaming magnificently despite many years of being locked away in this foul tomb. The Golden Auroch of Ninurta is even more beautiful than you had been led to believe, and you feel humbled to be in its presence. Unfortunately, any thoughts of easily claiming the prize are dashed when you realize that the

dais is literally blanketed in a roiling, hissing mass of snakes numbering in the hundreds.

Most of the snakes are completely harmless, but within the serpentine swarm are ten deadly vipers. Identifying the deadly snakes requires a DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check. Otherwise, the only way to identify them is to note that the vipers respond to attacks with their own counter-attacks, while the harmless snakes flee.

Treasure: The Golden Auroch is not a treasure in the truest sense, in that player characters should not carry it around as a prize of adventuring. Even though its powers are not exactly epic in scope, it is a relic of priceless significance nonetheless (see sidebar).

XP Reward: Recovering the Golden Auroch is worth 1,000 experience points. Double that award if the characters return it to Akkad to restore the health of the city-state.

Tiny Vipers (10): CR 1/3; Tiny Animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1 each; Init +3; Speed 15 ft. (3 squares), climb 15 ft; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -11; Atk/Full Atk Bite +5 melee (1 plus poison); SA Poison; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +5; Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fort DC 10, initial 1d6 Con, no secondary damage.

Area 1-11 – Vault of Greed (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of this circular room are blasted with smoke and soot. In the center of the chamber is a stone table atop which rest three chests. A watchful eye gazes down upon the chests from the ceiling above, unblinking and ever vigilant.

This room served as one of Nicrotis' treasure vaults. She had a sick, even perverse sense of honor and felt that any thief resourceful enough to infiltrate this far into her palace should be rewarded for his trouble... but only if he wasn't too greedy.

Trap: The stone table is an ingenious trap designed to punish those who push their luck too far. The tabletop is attuned specifically to the weight of 99 pounds (1,200 gp and three chests). If up to 66 pounds is removed, nothing happens. If, however, anything more than that is taken off the table, the table top begins to sink and a *fireball* spell is released from the eyeball painted on the ceiling above. The trap resets itself after one minute.

Fireball Trap: CR 3; 3d6 fire damage (*fireball*, CL

The Golden Auroch

The Golden Auroch is a relic treated with great reverence by all in the lands of Sumer, as it reflects the gifts given unto them by the god Ninurta. It is a three-foot-tall oxen cast entirely in gold, valued as much for its craftsmanship as for its sacred relevance.

The artifact has two principle powers, but it must be placed within a temple, shrine or other holy site for them to take effect. First, it provides a +2 saving throw bonus against the effects of thirst, heat and hunger to all residents within the community. Second, it coaxes springs of water to emerge from the ground, providing enough water to satisfy the drinking needs of the population of a small city (5,000-12,000 people) and that of their livestock, as well as irrigating their crops.

Caster level: 20th; weight: 500 pounds.

Incense of Displacement

The priests and magi of Ur used magical incense in many of their rituals and ceremonies. *Incense of displacement* was often burned to protect important figureheads from assassination or to prevent blood from being spilled on holy ground.

The magical effects extend out to a 30-foot radius from the brazier burning the incense. Anyone breathing in the incense must make a DC 15 Willpower save or suffer mild hallucinatory effects that make it difficult to strike down an enemy. Whenever the character attempts to attack another, he must make a DC 15 Concentration check or suffer a 50% miss chance. *True seeing* negates this penalty.

Incense of displacement burns for 15 minutes.

Caster level: 5th; Prerequisites: Brew Potion, *displacement*; Market Price: 700 gp/oz.

New Spell: Sand Blast

Evocation (Earth)

Level: Druid 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One ray

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex

Spell Resistance: Yes

With this spell you turn sand, either a pouch-full carried on your person or that which is naturally occurring within your five-foot space, into a deadly ray that blasts towards a single target you designate. If you successfully hit with a ranged touch attack, the gritty jet deals 2d6 points of damage, +1d6 per two caster levels as it grinds away at flesh (dealing 5d6 at 6th level, 6d6 at 8th, and so on to a maximum of 8d6 damage at 12th level). In addition, those struck by the blast must save or be knocked prone.

5th); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 13 (replace removed weight with an equal amount).

Treasure: The three chests contain 1,200 gp in total, 400 each.

Area 1-12 – Nicrotis' Library: Read or paraphrase the following:

As you push open the door, there is a sighing, like that made by a gentle breeze. Inside is an elegant library, with tablets and scrolls filling numerous shelves, and padded sofas upon which to recline and read.

This was once Nicrotis' library. It contained all of her magical works. If the PCs hunt through the stacks, a successful DC 15 Search check turns up some items of interest. Most notably, Nicrotis' personal spell tablets are there.

Treasure: Time has reduced many scrolls to such a fragile state that a mere touch causes them to crumble. Some still remain, however, and the stone tablets are undamaged by the passage of centuries. The remaining undamaged texts of note include:

- Tablets with the following wizard spells: 1st level – *endure elements*, *magic weapon*, *mount*, and *ray of enfeeblement*.
- A single surviving papyrus scroll, written in the tongue of the Pharaohs, with a lone obscure spell (*sand blast*; see sidebar on page 48).
- A map of the lost city of Ur (possibly useful for locating tombs and other subterranean structures that might lie beneath the sand and serve as future adventure opportunities).
- One accursed book that is clearly fiendish in origins. It is written in Infernal. Reading the tome causes the character to become mute, but grants her a devilish power. Any creature struck by the character in melee combat must make a DC 16 Will save or be silenced, as per the spell *silence*, for 1d4 rounds +1 for every two levels of the striking character. Multiple hits from the character reset the duration, but do not otherwise stack.
- Sundry tomes worth a combined 1,000 gp to interested parties.

Area 1-13 – Wind Tunnel: Read or paraphrase the following:

A stairway drops down into the darkness. The whistling of wind can be heard somewhere in the distance, and fresh air – warm but refreshing – lightly caresses your face. Perhaps

there's an exit to the surface somewhere up ahead.

The stairs descend about thirty feet and lead to a corridor:

A corridor stretches out before you. Some fifty feet away stands a portal, caught in a maelstrom of wind that whips your hair and clothes. The arch above the portal is decorated by a pair of stone reliefs depicting grotesque humanoid serpents. They come together above the door to jointly grip a plunging dagger. With the wind stinging your eyes it's impossible to see much beyond the door, but it is clear even from here that it doesn't lead outside.

The tunnel is buffeted by strong winds. They extinguish unprotected flames, but have no effect on creatures save those of Tiny size or smaller (see the DMG for full effects). However, because Nicrotis is only mobile while in gaseous form, she cannot traverse the tunnel and complete the process of opening the portal to the para-elemental plane of dust.

Area 1-14 – Portal (EL 1, 4): Read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a large, circular, domed chamber. Wind whips around the room like a tornado desperate for escape, stinging you with airborne particles. In the middle of the chamber, suspended in mid-air about three feet off the ground, is a pair of massive doors that would come together in a vertical zig-zag formation – doors that look as if they have massive teeth that should be clenched together. They're not together, however, at least not completely. Instead, the doors are open a few inches, and it's through this narrow gap that the buffeting winds originate. Lying on the floor at the portal's feet is a stone tablet.

Every round spent in the room exposes a character to the stinging winds, requiring a DC 10 Fortitude save to avoid suffering 1d4 points of nonlethal damage and becoming fatigued.

Characters who peer through the portal (requiring a DC 12 Spot check due to the flying dust) see nothing but swirling dust and sand, and it's clear no creature can long survive within the desiccating environment. Though they may not realize it, they're viewing the para-elemental plane of dust, a harsh pocket-dimension loosely aligned with the elemental plane of air. Only characters who succeed at a DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check or who read the tablet lying on the floor (DC 10 Spellcraft or DC 30 Decipher Script check) recognize the plane for what it is.

Those who read the tablet and succeed at the check also realize that a ritual to open a portal to the plane has been left incomplete, but tantalizingly close to its final fruition. It would be but a simple matter to complete the spell.

Opening the Portal: Finishing the ritual requires a character to cast a *knock* spell, followed by casting the spell carved into the tablet itself. This requires three uninterrupted rounds and, because of the howling winds, three consecutive Concentration checks at DC 10. If the portal is opened, the room is immediately filled by gale force winds carrying gritty dust that causes 1d6 points of abrasion damage each round. The dust storm advances through the tomb at a pace of 20 feet per round, eventually filling the whole complex and perhaps eventually spilling out into the world beyond. Not a good thing, all in all...

Closing the Portal: There are three means of closing the portal. The first is simply destroying the stone tablet, a simple enough solution but one which might only come to the players after they've read the tablet. A second option is for the characters to physically close the portal, requiring a DC 20 Strength check. Characters might also destroy the portal by inflicting significant damage (see stats below). Finally, they may opt to sacrifice the Golden Auroch for the greater good. Characters making a DC 12 Knowledge (religion) check know that Ninurta is an enemy of drought and the provider of rains, good harvests, and verdant life, so it stands to reason that his artifact would block the arid energies from creeping into our world. Depositing the relic within the portal causes it to immediately collapse upon itself.

Tablet: 3 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 15

Planar Portal: 8 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 240; Break DC 28

Monster: If the characters show any sign of attempting to close the portal, an eagle native to the para-elemental plane of dust emerges from the portal to foil their efforts. This eagle differs in some respects from the bulk of its kind because of adaptations required to survive in its unique environment, notably low-light vision (to see in the haze and swirling storms of the plane of dust) and a body wreathed in a protective aura of grit and dust (acting as a *blur* spell). If the guardian dust brother is still active, it also attempts to stop the PCs from closing the portal.

XP Reward: Closing the portal is a worthy and challenging endeavor, the equivalent of defeating a EL 4 creature.

Dust Eagle (stats based on modified eagle): CR 1; Small Outsider (Air, Extraplanar); HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +2; Speed 10 ft (2 squares), fly 80 ft. (16 squares); AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk Talon +3 melee (1d4); Full Atk 2 Talons +3 melee (1d4) and bite -2 melee (1d4); SQ Low-light vision 60 ft., dust sheath; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +14; Weapon Finesse

Dust sheath (Ex): Permanent effect, as *blur* spell. Does not take abrasive damage from swirling dust.

Area 1-15 – Throne Room (EL 4): Read or paraphrase the following:

This large chamber is exquisitely appointed with gem-inlaid statues, faded draperies, and skillfully-designed mosaics, all with a theme of power and majesty. But despite the extravagance, there is something repulsive about the chamber as well, a weight of doom and death that seems to bear down upon your spirit. A dry cough pulls your attention towards the gloom at the far end of the room, where you make out a large stone throne and the vague shape of a person resting upon it. The figure moves slowly, waving a hand lightly as a dry, croaked voice that seems to echo inside your heads: "Welcome to my palace; do come in."

The figure upon the throne is Nicrotis, queen of Ur, magi, and undead fiend. If the PCs approach close enough to get a better view, read the following:

The figure upon the throne is ghastly to behold, a bare slip of a woman whose pallid, flaking skin stretches like thin parchment across jagged bones. Her hair is white and laced with cobwebs, her finger nails cracked and yellowed. Each movement of her fragile body is clearly agonizing for the woman, and even the slightest brush of a hand or nod of her head causes skin and flesh to crumble away like dust.

While still a powerful spellcaster, Nicrotis is no longer the vile threat she was in the glory days of her evil empire. She is almost completely confined to her throne, lacks the ability to engage in direct combat, and has to be careful in expending spells because lifting the tablets to re-memorize them eats away at her fragile body by causing more and more of it to be reduced to dust.

Tactics: Nicrotis casts *globe of invulnerability* as soon as she becomes aware of the PCs' presence near or within her throne room. She then uses a

combination of her natural commanding presence and spells (notably *charm person*) to bend the PCs to her will. Her ultimate goal is to convince, intimidate, control or trick the characters into completing the ritual of opening the portal to the para-elemental plane of dust. That's the only means to restore her vigor, so she'll pull out all stops in pursuit of this goal. Because the ritual requires an individual with spellcasting ability, she focuses her efforts on wizards and sorcerers. If confronted with physical force, Nicrotis seeks to punish her assailants with a display of power – *hold person* and *magic missile* are favorites.

If she is in danger of being destroyed, Nicrotis uses *gaseous form* to escape, but only does this as a last resort – to abandon her spell tablets is to effectively doom herself.

Treasure: The tapestries have all been reduced to worthlessness by age, though one which depicts the epic battle between Gilgamesh and the Azure Asag (a huge rock-elemental/giant from Babylonian myth) is effectively a map to that creature's lair and the horde of gems said to exist within. Sold to the right collector, the tapestry might be worth 1,000 gp, though it can also be used as the impetus for future adventure. The statues, which primarily depict royal figures, are inlaid with gems worth a total of 1,500 gp if pried loose. Nicrotis' spell tablets are piled beside her throne. They contain all of the spells she typically memorizes, as well as six others that she might utilize in special circumstances (*haste*, *identify*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *spectral hand*, and *web*). Finally, there is a concealed (Search DC 15) and

locked (Open Lock DC 20) drawer in the throne that contains a small pouch made of strips of human flesh and tightly drawn with strands of human hair. Inside is a small fortune: 150 gp and an emerald worth 900 gp.

Nicrotis, Undead Human Female Wiz7: CR 4; Medium-sized Undead; HD 7d12; hp 12; Init -5; Speed – (immobile); AC 12, touch 5, flat-footed 12; Base Atk -1; Grp -1; Atk/Full Atk Touch -1 melee (1d8+5 negative energy damage, DC 15 Will save halves damage); SA Spellcasting, fear aura (Will save DC 15), paralyzing touch (Fort save DC 15 or paralysis); SQ Undead traits, turn resistance +4, damage reduction 15/bludgeoning, immunities (cold, electricity, polymorph, and mind-affecting); AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref -3, Will +8; Str 3, Dex 1, Con –, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +3, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +3, Hide +8, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +8, Search +8, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +7, Spot +8; Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Persuasive, Quicken Spell, Spell Mastery (*false life*, *globe of invulnerability*, *gaseous form*), Widen Spell.

Spells Typically Memorized (4/5/4/3/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0-level – *mage hand* (x2), *light* (x2); 1st-level – *hold portal*, *shield*, *unseen servant*, *charm person*, *magic missile*; 2nd-level – *darkness*, *false life*, *shatter*, *whispering wind*; 3rd-level – *gaseous form*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*; 4th-level – *globe of invulnerability*.

Possessions: *ring of protection* +2, *gown of allure*, jewel-inlaid wooden scepter (worth 250 gp).

Gown (or Tunic) of Allure

These magic items come in one of two forms. The first is a long, loose-fitting gown designed for hiding a woman's figure. The second is intended for men, a long-sleeved tunic that comes down to one's ankles. In both cases, they are decorated with tasseled fringes.

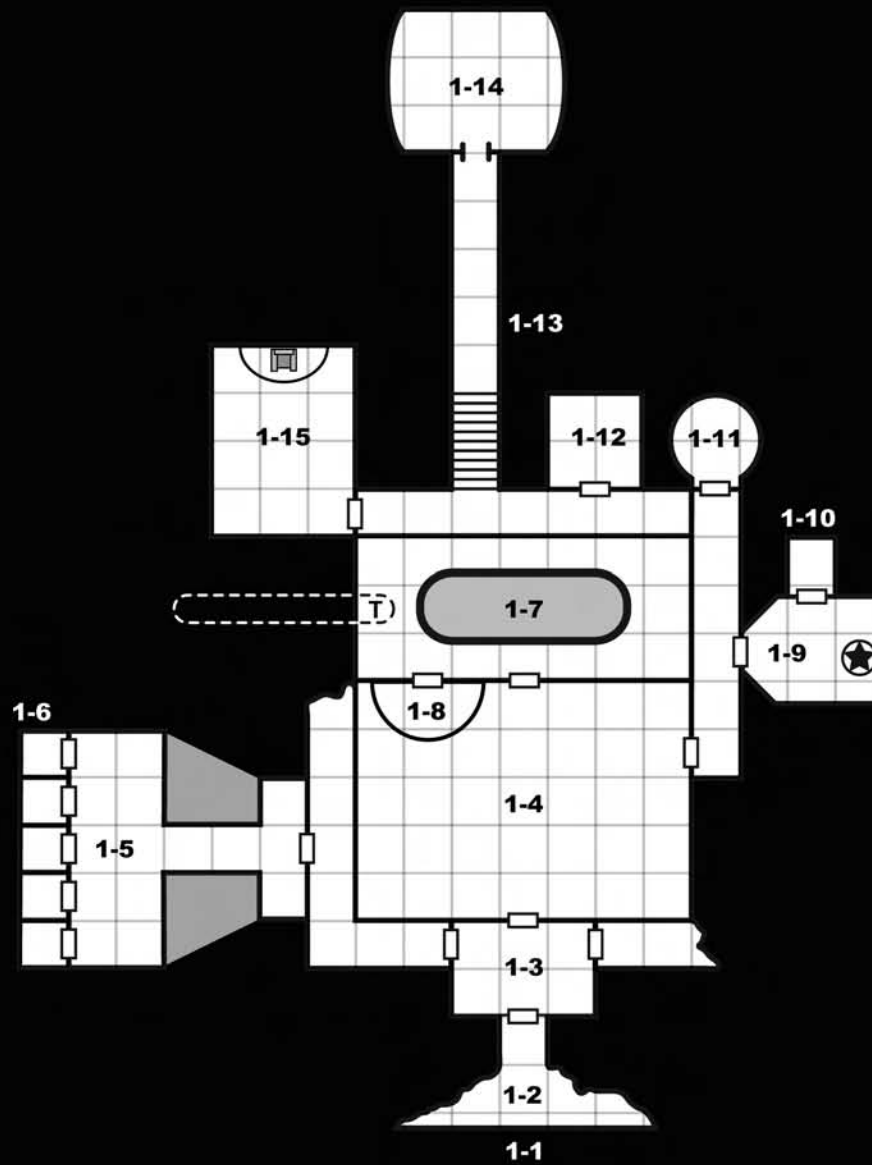
When worn by a member of the appropriate sex, this magic item provides greater charm and a more attractive image. This translates into an enhancement bonus of +2 to Charisma, adding the usual benefits to Charisma checks and Charisma-related skill checks. This bonus does not, however, provide any bonus for turning undead.

At will, the character may attempt to cause a single individual to become *fascinated* with him/her with a successful Bluff, Diplomacy, or Perform check, opposed by the subject's Will save. If she fails, she cannot attempt to *fascinate* that person again for 24 hours. If the check succeeds, the target stares attentively at her for three rounds. While *fascinated*, the subject suffers a -4 penalty to Spot and Listen checks. A potential threat, such as a character moving to flank him, allows the target to make another check to break the enchantment. An obvious threat automatically breaks the *fascination*.

The *gown of allure* also grants the wearer the ability to cast *hypnotism* once per day, effective only against members of the opposite sex. The spell is cast at 5th level of ability.

Moderate Transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, *eagle's splendor*, *daze*, *hypnotism*; Price 4,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

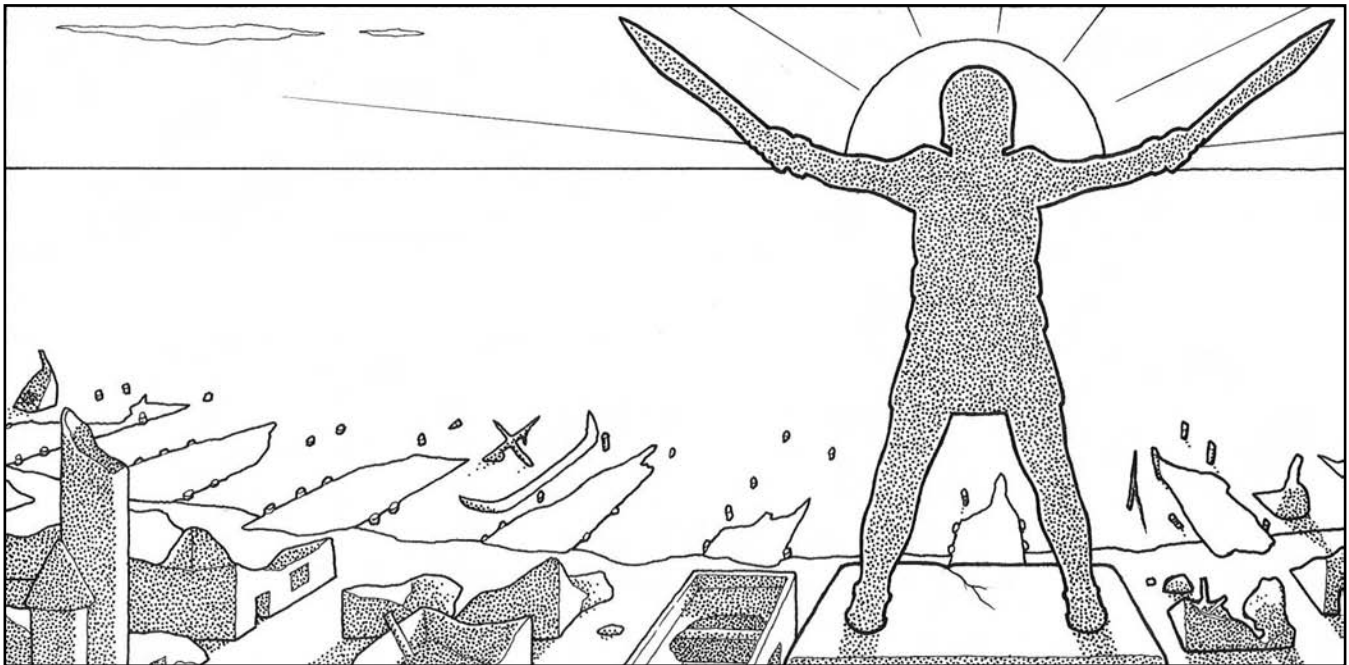
Golden Auroch



Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Forgotten Sentinel

By Michael Ferguson
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Forgotten Sentinel is designed for four to six characters of 1st level. While the characters can be of any class, at least one warrior type will probably be needed to successfully complete the adventure, and a rogue would be handy for parts of this adventure as well. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure your group's size, level, and unique style of play.

Adventure Summary

The player characters are hired to find an eccentric sage named Desiderius Mérope, who is studying an ancient document known as the Prophecy of Tremasté. Traveling to an abandoned town, the PCs discover that the sage is trapped in the catacombs located under a giant statue. These catacombs have been taken over by a small band of aquatic drow, who are led by a fearsome humanoid creature known as an abollar. The drow have also come to the catacombs seeking the Prophecy of Tremasté; it is up to the player characters to find it first...

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-2	56	C	Aquatic drow Ftr1	2
1-3	56	C	Snapdragons	1
1-6	58	C	Aquatic drow Ftr1	2
1-8	59	T	Poisoned needle trap	2
2-1	60	C	2 aquatic drow Ftr1	3
2-2	60	C	<i>Starys Malian</i> , aquatic drow Ftr2	3
2-3	61	T	<i>Gorwogjrio Gonejethis</i> , 3 abollar Ftr2	3

Scaling Information

The Forgotten Sentinel is designed for 4-6 characters of 1st level, but it can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure

using any of the following suggestions:

Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 1st level): Double the number of aquatic drow warriors in areas 1-6 and 2-1. Add 1 character level to Starys Malian in area 2-2, and add 1 character level to the abollar in area 2-3.

Getting the Players Involved

Feel free to use the following plot hooks to get the characters headed straight towards the dungeon.

- A powerful nobleman, the Marquis de Sablieur, has hired the player characters to locate the whereabouts of the elderly sage Desiderius Mérope. Several months ago, the Marquis had commissioned the eccentric sage, who normally shuns civilization and lives in the abandoned town of Cortaigne, to decipher a passage of the Prophecy of Tremasté. Several weeks have now gone by, and the Marquis de Sablieur has not heard from the sage. The player characters' mission is to find the sage and retrieve the Prophecy in case something has happened to the sage.
- A group of Criestine merchants are planning to build a new port for their ships in the ruins of Cortaigne. However, Criestine nobles will not permit these merchants to begin construction of a new port or to rebuild any of the town until they can prove that the ruins of the town are no longer cursed. The mission of the player characters is to provide evidence to the merchants – and to these nobles – that Cortaigne is no longer haunted.
- The giant statue that stands watch over the abandoned town of Cortaigne, more commonly known as the Sentinel, was originally created many centuries ago by a famous artist and inventor called Nykolus Rassylov. Most of Rassylov's artistic secrets have been lost in the many years since his death. The Comté du Javaire, a Criestine nobleman and patron of the arts, wants the player characters to explore the foundation of the statue, as he believes some of Rassylov's journals and notes may be hidden in the catacombs underneath the Sentinel.

Treasure

The treasure found beneath the Sentinel, for the most part, is fairly standard – coins, a few gemstones, and one or two magic items. However, there are a few items to be found that can each potentially be worth a small fortune (the Prophecy of Tremasté and Rassylov's journal). Should the player characters find these items and decide to sell them, they will most likely have to spend a considerable amount of time and effort to find a col-

lector or buyer willing to pay maximum value for them. If the player characters simply wish to get rid of these items as quickly as possible, they should get no more than 10% to 25% of the listed value for each item. (Also, should they try to sell the original copy of the Prophecy of Tremasté, the PCs may find themselves in trouble with the Marquis de Sablieur, its original owner...)

A Note on Preparation

Area 2-3 contains a jigsaw puzzle of sorts, the pieces to which are represented in players handout B. We suggest the GM photocopy handout B and then cut out the "shards" prior to the adventure to make this as simple as possible.

Background Story

The Sentinel of Cortaigne

Centuries ago, the port of Cortaigne was one of the most important cities in the kingdom of Crieste. Its location on the shores of Lake Shadefell made the town a center for trade, and its talented artisans made it the heart of Criestine art and culture for many, many years. The pinnacle of Cortaigne's success came with the unveiling of a statue called the Sentinel. Standing nearly two hundred feet tall, this magnificent copper warrior stood watch over the ports and docks of Cortaigne, serving as the town's champion. The Sentinel was hailed as one of the Wonders of the World, and travelers came from the far reaches of foreign kingdoms just to see a glimpse of the marvelous statue.

The Great Disappearance

The unveiling of the Sentinel also marked the dark end of Cortaigne. In the years following the Sentinel's arrival, the town's prosperity began to wane, and both famine and plague ravaged the town at one time or another. Some whispered that the Sentinel was cursed, but no one knew for sure.

Ten years to the day after the Sentinel was completed, every living soul in Cortaigne vanished. Overnight, Cortaigne literally became a ghost town. No one knows for sure what really happened to the people of Cortaigne; however, most scholars believe that a dimensional portal opened up in the center of the town, swallowing all of its mortal inhabitants and dragging them off to a place of eternal nightmares.

Although the ships, the buildings and the Sentinel remained intact, the mysterious disappearance of Cortaigne's inhabitants ensured the final death of the once-prosperous town. The Criestine government issued an edict proclaiming that no one was ever to step foot in the cursed town again, upon pain of death. So,

during the following centuries, the city fell into ruin, becoming a decayed skeleton of its former self.

Prophet and Prophecy

Several years ago, the town of Cortaigne found itself once more with an inhabitant. While exploring the ruins of the town on behalf of the Criestine crown, an eccentric scholar and prophet called Desiderius Mérope discovered that the foundation beneath the decaying Sentinel was filled with catacombs. Desiring to devote his life to his studies and to live in isolation from the rest of the world, he made these catacombs his home. He has inhabited these catacombs for years, studying the hidden meanings of various prophecies. Most recently, Desiderius Mérope had dedicated himself to the study of the Prophecy of Tremasté, at the behest of his latest patron, the Marquis de Sablieur. Mérope has not been heard from in many weeks, however, leading many to whisper that unspeakable evil may have awoken from its slumber in Cortaigne ...

The Elves of the Deep – GM's Eyes Only

Desiderius Mérope is indeed in danger, but not from unspeakable evil or ancient curses. No, the elderly sage is currently a prisoner in the catacombs beneath the Sentinel. A group of aquatic drow elves, led by a sinister creature known as an abollar, came to the catacombs in search of Mérope and his rare copy of the prophecy. Mérope managed to effectively seal himself away in a well-protected chamber, preventing the evil creatures from obtaining the Prophecy – however, the determined drow have made camp among the catacombs, and are plotting violent methods to flush out Mérope and obtain the Prophecy for their own nefarious purposes...

Player Beginning

As you pass by the ghostly ruins of Cortaigne, the silhouette of the giant statue Sentinel looms ominously in the distance, blotting out both sky and sun. Though ancient, rusted, and ravaged by the passing centuries, the Sentinel is still an impressive sight – standing almost two hundred feet tall, the twin swords of this giant metal warrior still appear ready for battle, and the face of the statue still remains proud and defiant.

As you reach the statue, you realize that it stands upon a massive base of marble. Next to one of the Sentinel's massive sandals is an open trap door. Looking at this trap door, you see a rusted metal ladder that spirals down into darkness – and possibly down towards finding the answers that you seek...

Part 1: The Catacombs of the Sentinel – Upper Level

The catacombs were originally used centuries ago by the builders of the Sentinel for storage and for temporary living quarters. A few sections of the catacombs have been refurbished and modified by Desiderius Mérope, who now lives beneath the Sentinel; however, most of the catacombs remain deserted and derelict, occasionally inhabited by wild animals that have chosen to make their lairs beneath the giant metal statue.

Unless otherwise noted, all passages are 10 feet high and 10 feet across. All walls are stone and are of superior masonry in quality; all doors are made of wood. All walls and doors, unless otherwise noted, have the following statistics:

Superior Masonry Wall: 1 ft. thick, Hardness 8, 90 hp, Break DC 35, Climb DC 20.

Good Wooden Door: 1-1/2 in. thick, Hardness 5, 15 hp, Break DC 16 (stuck), 18 (locked).

Wandering Monsters

For every half hour that the PCs explore this level, there is a 15% chance (1-3 on d20) of a random encounter. This chance increases by 5% (1-4 on d20) if the player characters are making any loud noises. If an encounter is called for, roll 1d6 and consult the following table.

1d6	Encounter
1-3	1d2 monstrous centipedes (Medium)
4-6	1d3 giant fire beetles

The following statistics blocks are provided for easy reference.

Monstrous Centipedes, Medium (1-2): CR 1/2; Medium vermin; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp –1; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d6–1 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Hide +10, Spot +4; Weapon Finesse.

SA – Poison: Bite, Fortitude DC 10, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Dex. Save DC is Constitution-based.

Giant Fire Beetles (1-3): CR 1/3; Small vermin; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +0; Grp –4; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (2d4, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Entry Foyer: Read or paraphrase the following as the characters enter the area beneath the giant statue.

As you descend down the ladder into this 40-foot square subterranean room, you notice that the faint smell of seawater fills the air, and the floor is slightly damp. A painting of an elderly man hangs from the west wall. There is a door leading east, and an open 20 foot wide corridor heading south.

The elderly man depicted in the painting is Desiderius Mérope. The painting itself is not particularly valuable (50 gp). However, a successful Spot check (DC 16) allows astute player characters to note that the likeness of Mérope in the painting is wearing an obsidian pendant in the shape of a dragon's head. Silver lines are drawn on the image of this pendant – these lines are relevant to revealing the solution to the dragon puzzle located in area 2-3.

Area 1-2 – The Workers' Rooms (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This large room is 60 feet long and 30 feet wide, and contains massive amounts of dusty tools. A few rotting cots line the northern wall. Based on the amount of dust and decay, it does not seem as though it has been used for centuries.

Crouched in the far southeast corner of the room is an elf, wearing strange purple hide armor. His skin is jet black and his hair is pure white. He whirls around as you enter the room – and with a snarl, charges towards you with his longsword drawn.

The room was once a combination storage room/worker's quarters back in the day when the Sentinel was under construction. Since the completion of the statue, it has been unused, and Mérope had not gotten around to restoring the room.

The elf is an aquatic drow, one of the minions of the abollar warrior, Gorwogijrio Gonejethis. The drow brigand was sent to this room by Gorwogijrio to locate the secret passage between this room and area 1-5, which he has not yet found. The door to the passage can be found by the player characters with a successful Search check (DC 14).

The main reason that the abollar sent the brigand to find the secret door is to create a safe pathway from the main entrance to the great hall that avoids the snapdragons in area 1-3 (he would like to keep the

snapdragons intact, so they can be used as additional guardians). However, Gorwogijrio also believes (incorrectly) that the final shard to the puzzle located in area 2-3 is located somewhere in the passage. If captured and interrogated successfully, the drow brigand will pass along this information, as well as basic information about the puzzle, his abollar master, and the whereabouts of Mérope.

Tactics: Like most of the drow serving Gorwogijrio, the brigand is cocky and overconfident. He charges the PCs with his sword, attacking whoever is closest to him, believing that they will either flee or surrender. Should he actually come to realize that he is in trouble, he attempts to make his retreat to area 1-6, hoping to find reinforcements.

Aquatic drow Ftr1: CR 1; Medium humanoid (5 ft. 5 inches tall); HD 1d10+1; hp 8; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk longsword +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d8/19-20); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, spell-like abilities (*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*); SQ: Aquatic drow traits, spell resistance 12; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Ride +4, Search +3, Spot +3, Swim +5; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Water Attack, Water Movement, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Kraken hide armor, light crossbow and 20 bolts, longsword.

Area 1-3 – The Great Hall (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This grand hallway is 20 feet wide and 80 feet long, with a ceiling that reaches 20 feet high. The walls are lined with badly rusted metal figurines and with massive amounts of ivy. At the far end of the hallway, you can see a dimly flickering light.

The figurines, which are all about three feet tall, are actually the prototype models that were used to create the final shape and pose of the Sentinel. However, centuries of rust have made them almost unrecognizable and worthless.

Hidden amongst the vines of ivy in the center of the room are a swarm of creatures called snapdragons. A successful Spot check (DC 16) reveals scorch marks on the stone floor near where the snapdragons lurk; however, apart from this possible hint of danger, the snapdragons are fairly well hidden, and gain an attack of opportunity prior to rolling initiative if the player characters do not proceed through the great hall with caution.

Aquatic Drow

Aquatic drow are oceanic nomads that are hated and feared. Legend has it that aquatic drow are the descendants of House Cadryenne, one of the noblest of the drow Houses. Centuries ago, a renegade drow wizard called Malian Cadryenne was expelled from the drow homelands for experiments thought to be unspeakable, even to other drow versed in the arcane. Undeterred by this setback, Malian led a handful of followers into the depths of the sea, where House Malian was formed, and these drow began their transformation into sea-dwelling creatures.

Aquatic drow are nomads and generally keep to themselves. However, they have been known at times to ally themselves with sahuagin, locathath, and abollar. Unlike their land-based cousins, they disdain bastard swords, preferring lighter, quicker weapons such as spears, longswords, and short swords. They also disdain mithril, preferring armor either made from giant kraken hide (armor bonus +3, weight 10 lbs.) or the shells of giant sea turtles (armor bonus +7, weight 25 lbs.). Though rare, these armors can occasionally be obtained from merchants that deal with the more unsavory undersea races (100 gp for kraken hide armor, 1,200 gp for shell armor). Some aquatic drow have been known to train and ride Medium-size sharks.

In addition to standard drow traits, aquatic drow also receive the following additional bonuses and traits.

- Aquatic drow have a swim speed of 40 ft.
- Aquatic drow receive a +5 bonus to all Swim skill checks.
- Aquatic drow have both gills and lungs, and are equally comfortable breathing either air or water. However, for each day spent entirely out of water, they temporarily lose 1 point of Constitution, until they reach zero points of Constitution and die. Constitution is restored by submerging themselves completely underwater, at a rate of 1 point for each hour spent completely submerged.
- Aquatic drow automatically receive two new bonus feats: Water Attack and Water Movement. These feats are described in detail below.

Water Attack [General]

You are well-versed at handling weapons in a watery environment, and can use your surroundings to your advantage.

Prerequisite: Aquatic subtype or Swim 10 ranks

Benefit: When you have won initiative in a combat round, you can use your weapon in a manner designed to simultaneously attack your opponent and protect yourself. When attacking an opponent in a partially-submerged area, you first draw your weapon across the surface of the water before striking your opponent, partially blinding your opponent with a spray of water. When completely submerged in water, you move your weapon in a specific motion that creates disruptive pocket of bubbles, which again partially blind your opponent and obscure yourself. During this round, you temporarily gain partial concealment (20% miss chance) against the opponent that you attempt to strike, even if your attack proves to be unsuccessful. The concealment only applies against the opponent that you attempt to strike; other opponents in the area that attempt to strike you are not affected by these obscuring tactics.

Water Movement [General]

You are able to move efficiently through natural obstacles that normally would slow your movement, both by maximizing the efficiency of your movements and by understanding your environment.

Benefit: You can move freely and without penalty through terrain where natural obstacles exist. This normally means areas that are partially submerged in water; however, this also applies to areas where similar obstacles occur (such as swamps, land areas contain underbrush, rubble, and so on). This feat does not aid movement in hazardous areas where dangers exist that do more than just slow normal movement (such as quicksand), or in area where magic effects or specific creatures are responsible for slowing your movement.



The light at the end of the hallway is the lit brazier in area 1-4.

Tactics: The swarm of snapdragons wait patiently until at least two player characters are within range of their collective breath weapon attack; at that point, they breathe fire at the PCs, then use their swarm attack.

Snapdragons: CR 1; Diminutive plant (swarm); HD 2d8+2; hp 10; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp –; Atk/Full Atk +0 melee (1d6, swarm); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immune to fire damage, tremorsense 60 ft., swarm traits; AL N; SV Fort 4, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 1, Dex 16, Con 12, Int –, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Hide +9 (+17 in plant-like environments), Listen +3, Spot +3, Alertness.

SA – Breath Weapon: 10-foot line of fire, 1d8 points of damage, Reflex DC 14 for half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Area 1-4 – Main Hall: Read or paraphrase the following:

A massive copper brazier burns brightly in the center of this room, which measures 70 feet wide and 30 feet long. Apart from some debris

scattered neat the brazier, this room is otherwise empty.

Scrounging through the debris (Search DC 14) produces a dagger of masterwork quality. If the dagger is examined carefully, a knowledgeable player character (DC 16 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check) may recognize the dagger to be of drow manufacture; an extremely knowledgeable PC (successful Knowledge (local) check of DC 24) may recognize the dagger to be the workmanship of the elusive aquatic drow.

Area 1-5 – Map Room: Read or paraphrase the following:

This brightly lit room is nearly empty. Measuring some 20 feet wide and 50 feet long, its clean, white marble walls stand in stark contrast to the other dilapidated rooms you have seen so far. Painted in great detail across the entire eastern wall of this room is a gigantic map of the kingdom of Crieste. A large globe, measuring nearly 5 feet in diameter, sits in the center of this otherwise barren room.

Inscribed above the map in the Common tongue is the following phrase: “Let the Words and Wisdom of the Crimson Dragon Provide the Answer Which You Seek.”

This room was converted from a storage room into a map room by Desiderius Mérope. The map, recently drawn by the elderly sage, is possibly the most accurate map of the Kingdom of Crieste in the world. The globe of the known world is also fairly accurate, making both of these items potentially valuable to the player characters in future adventures. Player characters may recognize the value of these items with a successful Knowledge (geography) check of DC 16.

The words above the map refer to a book that can be found in area 1-8 called “The Philosophy of the Red Dragon.” Inside this book is a red shard of glass required to complete the puzzle in area 2-3. This is also the piece of the puzzle that the aquatic drow brigand was sent to look for in area 1-3, and is the piece that the abollar Gorwogijrio so desperately wants.

A successful Search check (DC 14) reveals a hidden panel in the northern wall. Behind this panel is the secret passageway to area 1-2.

Area 1-6 – Storage Room/Guard Outpost (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This narrow, well-kept room is about 20 feet wide and nearly 50 feet long. Shelves line the

walls, filled with bolts of cloth, sacks of flour and dried food, as well as many other crates filled with mundane supplies.

A dark-skinned elf wearing strange purple armor stands near a door on the southern end of the room. He is armed with longsword and crossbow, and looks wary. There is also a door located along the northern wall; this door is unguarded.

This room was being used by Mérope as a primary storage room for food and supplies, and is currently being used by Gorwogijrio and his minions for the same reasons. It also serves as a convenient guard post, as there is no way to access to the lower levels of the Sentinel without passing through this room.

Tactics: The aquatic drow brigand, while cocky, is somewhat more sensible than his companion from area 1-2. He will also attack the player characters fearlessly, believing that victory is all but assured; however, he attacks first with his crossbow, holding his ground and letting the PCs move into melee range. Should he find himself in trouble, he attempts to exit the room through the southern door, in order to move to the lower level and warn the remaining aquatic drow brigands in areas 2-1 and 2-2.

Aquatic drow Ftr1: CR 2; Medium humanoid (5 ft. 6 inches tall); HD 1d10+1; hp 10; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk longsword +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d8/19-20); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, spell-like abilities (*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*); SQ: Aquatic drow traits, spell resistance 12; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Ride +4, Search +3, Spot +3, Swim +5; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Water Attack, Water Movement, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Kraken hide armor, light crossbow and 20 bolts, longsword.

Area 1-7 – Wine Cellar: Read or paraphrase the following:

This dark, musty room is approximately 20-foot-square and is filled with rows and rows of wine racks. The racks are completely filled with dusty bottles. Most of the bottles are unlabelled; however, a few are still wrapped in some sort of gold leaf parchment, upon which the words “Scarlet Dragon” are written.

The bottles all contain wine, although all of it has gone bad and is worthless. Any PC drinking wine from one of these bottles may become mildly sick, and may temporarily lose 1d4 Constitution points for 1d4 minutes unless a successful Fortitude save (DC 14) is made.

The “Scarlet Dragon” label really has no significance, although players may incorrectly associate it with the clue in area 1-5. A successful Knowledge (Local) check of DC 16 reveals that the “Scarlet Dragon” label signifies that the wine was bottled specifically for the royal families of Crieste. Otherwise, the room contains nothing else of any value or significance.

Area 1-8 – The Library (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

You find yourselves in a large, 20-foot square room, which is lined with massive shelves overflowing with books. Paper and books are heaped on tables and chairs in the center of the room. In the southwest corner of this room is a spiral staircase that leads downward.

This room is Desiderius Mérope’s general library. Books about the general sciences and the history of Crieste can easily be found in this room. While generally helpful, the books in this library are not worth much; should the player characters try to take and sell the books elsewhere, they would only receive 1d4 gp for each book, depending on the buyer. There are nearly 600 books in the library, though, making the contents of the library somewhat valuable, albeit cumbersome and difficult to transport.

Of note in the library is a tome called “The Philosophy of the Red Dragon.” This is the book referred to by the clue in area 1-5. This book is hollow (and trapped) – inside it is a red crystal shard, which is the final shard required to finish the puzzle in Area 2-3. Player characters that use the clue from area 1-5 to find the book should be able to locate it with relative ease (Search DC 14); finding the book without the clue, though, is significantly more difficult (Search DC 24).

The spiral staircase leads downward to area 2-1.

Poisoned Needle Trap: CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

Part 2: The Catacombs of the Sentinel – Lower Level

As with the upper level, the lower catacombs were originally used during the construction of the Sentinel. Part of this lower level serves as the main residence of Desiderius Mérope.

Water from Lake Shadefell has seeped into this area (area 2-1, area 2-2, and the tunnel that connects them). The water is approximately three feet deep in these noted areas. Player characters that are smaller than size Medium may be adversely affected by the depth of the water unless somehow held or suspended over the water. Player characters of size Medium or greater will not be affected by the water and can wade through it; however, in these areas their movement will be reduced by half.

As with the upper level of the catacombs, all passages are 10 feet high and 10 feet across. All walls are stone and are of superior masonry in quality; all doors are made of wood. All walls and doors, unless otherwise noted, have the following statistics:

Superior Masonry Wall: 1 ft. thick, Hardness 8, 90 hp, Break DC 35, Climb DC 20.

Good Wooden Door: 1-1/2 in. thick, Hardness 5, 15 hp, Break DC 16 (stuck), 18 (locked).

There are no wandering monsters or random encounters in this area of the dungeon.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – The Pit (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following as the characters climb down the spiral staircase that leads into this room.

As you descend the stairs you approach a dark, dank room that is partially filled with cold, dirty water about three feet deep. The large room is 50 feet wide and 100 feet long. It has small but significant cracks along the south wall, which is where the water appears to be coming from. A long corridor, also partially submerged, leads away from the northeast corner of the room.

The cracks in the southern wall are fissures that lead to the nearby lake. Apart from letting water seep into the lower levels, they have no real significance.

Patrolling this room on the orders of the abollar Gorwogijrio are two more aquatic drow warriors. Their location and actions in the room are entirely dependent upon the prior actions of the player characters.

Tactics: If the player characters made a significant amount of noise in area 1-8, or if any aquatic drow from the upper catacombs made it to this area to warn their comrades, the aquatic drow in this area are lurking underwater along the southern wall, behind the spiral staircase used by the PCs to enter the room. Should this be the case when the player characters enter the room, the drow gain an attack of opportunity, and use their crossbows to fire at the PCs as they rise out of the water. They then close in for melee combat. Otherwise, the drow are located near the entrance to the tunnel leading out of the room – they will still use the same method of attack (ranged combat first, then close for melee), although they will not automatically have an attack of opportunity in this case.

Aquatic drow Ftr1 (2): CR 2; Medium humanoid (5 ft. 6 inches tall); HD 1d10+1; hp 7, 10; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, spell-like abilities (*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*); SQ: Aquatic drow traits, spell resistance 12; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Ride +4, Search +3, Spot +3, Swim +5; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Water Attack, Water Movement, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Kraken hide armor, light crossbow and 20 bolts, longsword.

Area 2-2 – The Foundation (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

This room is 60 feet wide, 50 feet long, and also partially submerged in water. A dozen stone pillars, each 5 feet in diameter, are evenly spaced throughout the room and reach up out of the water covering the floor to the ceiling.

At the far end of the room is a ledge, high and dry out of the water. A few cots are visible on this ledge, as well as some chests, crates, and other supplies. Also on the ledge stands a female elven warrior with dark skin and snow white hair. She wears strange, shiny green armor and wields a longsword.

“Move no further,” she says as she notices you. “Surrender now and I may let you live.”

This room contains some of the main support foundations that keep the Sentinel standing. It also serves as the temporary encampment for Gorwogijrio and his drow minions. The only drow currently present in the room is Starys Malian, second in command to Gorwogijrio.

Scattered amongst the belongings of the drow minions are 300 gp, 400 sp, and 12 gemstones worth 30 gp each.

Tactics: Starys is extremely resentful of Gorwogijrio and cannot stand her superior. As such, she will do whatever she can to defeat the player characters, trying to capture them if possible, in an effort to make herself look better to the other drow that serve the abollar. She attacks the PCs by first using missile attacks. She then leaps into the water, moving from pillar to pillar to provide cover for herself, before engaging in melee combat. Where possible, she tries to use her superior movement rate to her advantage. If in trouble, she may try to retreat to area 2-1, but *not* area 2-3 – she refuses to rely on assistance from Gorwogijrio, even if it means her own death.

Starys Malian, aquatic drow Ftr2: CR 3; Medium humanoid (5 ft. 2 inches tall); HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk longsword +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20) or light crossbow +6 ranged (1d8/19-20); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, spell-like abilities (*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*); SQ: Aquatic drow traits, spell resistance 12; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Intimidate +3, Listen +3, Search +3, Spot +3, Swim +8; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Water Attack, Water Movement, Weapon Focus: longsword.

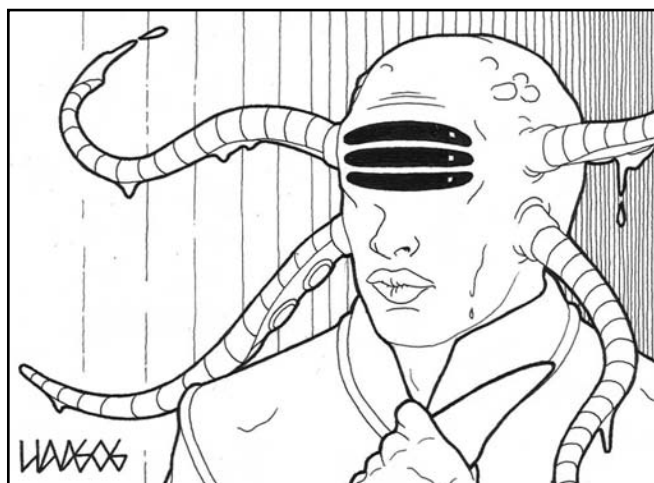
Possessions: Shell armor, steel light crossbow and 20 bolts, longsword.

Area 2-3 – The Antechamber (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

This small, circular chamber has a diameter of 25 feet and is fairly dark. The walls are made of shiny black bricks; only a few flickering torches provide light to this ominous room.

At the other end of the room stands a bizarre-looking creature. Oblivious to your presence, the creature vaguely resembles a bald man wearing purple hide armor, except its flesh is pure white and drips with clear slime. It appears to be holding some sort of glass shard in its hands. The creature is staring intently at a locked door, which glows faintly. Inscribed upon this door is a symbol of a dragon's head.

At this point, give the players handout A. This is the symbol that is inscribed upon the door. It is also identical in shape to the pendant shown on the painting in area 1-1.



If the players managed to find the shard hidden in the book in area 1-8, they recognize that the shard in their possession is identical to the ones held by the creature. These shards need to be placed onto the dragon's head in the proper order, filling in the head like a mosaic, in order to open this door and to enter area 2-4. The creature has all the pieces except for the one from area 1-8. Should the players defeat the creature and obtain the shards, give the players handout B, which represents the shards. (Note to the GM: it is easiest to photocopy handout B and then cut out the "shards" prior to the adventure to make this as simple as possible. Also, if the PCs did not get the shard from area 1-8, do not give them the shaded "shard" until they find this piece.)

The creature is an abollar – half-man, half aboleth. Called Gorwogijrio Gonejethis, the abollar is a conceited creature with an extremely high opinion of itself. It is also extremely frustrated, as it knows that the Prophecy that his drow and aboleth masters have sent him to find lies just beyond the door... and he cannot solve the puzzle required to open the door. He is so wrapped up in the puzzle that should the player characters remain relatively quiet (GM's discretion), they gain a surprise attack against the abollar. If the PCs attempt to parley with the arrogant creature instead of attacking him immediately, he will only respond with steel instead of words, drawing his bastard sword and engaging in combat.

The door to area 2-4 cannot be opened until the puzzle is solved by using all of the shards. However, at the GM's discretion, the puzzle can be "solved" with a successful Intelligence check (DC 18) rather than having the players actually assemble the "shards" correctly. It is enchanted and cannot easily be battered open by physical force.

Magically Treated Stone Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 16; 120 hp, Break DC 28.

Tactics: Gorwogijiro was sent to the Sentinel by his drow masters to recover the Prophecy. He knows that he cannot fail in his mission. He also knows that the presence of the player characters in this room probably means that the rest of his minions have either been defeated or killed. As such, he fights with great ferocity, engaging the player characters in melee immediately, and fights to the death without hesitation. His melee tactics involve using his slime attack on an opponent before finishing off that opponent with his bastard sword.

Gorwogijrio Gonejethis, abollar Ftr2: CR 3; Medium aberration (6 ft. tall); HD 2d10+4; hp 21; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flatfooted 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk masterwork bastard sword +8 melee (1d10+4/19-20); Full Atk masterwork bastard sword +7 melee (1d10+4/19-20) or 2 tentacles +6 melee (1d6 plus slime); SA Slime; SQ Abollar traits; LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +2, Intimidate +2, Ride +3, Swim +5; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

Possessions: Kraken hide armor, masterwork bastard sword.

Slime (Ex): Fort DC 14 or 1d4 damage and -1 natural armor per round for 1d4 rounds.

Area 2-4 – Mérope’s Study: Read or paraphrase the following:

This 40-foot square room is cluttered with parchment, books, and other literary works of knowledge. A small cot is tucked in the corner of the room, surrounded by the clutter. An elderly human lies in the bed, unmoving. Clutched in his hands is a crumpled piece of paper. He does not appear to be breathing.

The elderly man is Desiderius Mérope. Although he managed to escape the wrath of Gorwogijrio and his drow minions, the stress of hiding from his adversaries proved too much for him, and he passed away in his sleep. Around his neck is a silver pendant of half a dragon’s head, worth 100 gp. The pendant is apparently half of the shape in the painting in area 1-1. (See “Further Adventures” for ideas on where the second half might be...)

The parchment that Mérope holds in his hands is the section of the Prophecy of Tremasté that he had been studying. At this point, give the players hand-out C. Although it does not have any particular significance for the adventure (apart from concluding it), please refer to the “Further Adventures” section for ideas on how the Prophecy can be used to create adventure hooks for later gaming sessions.

Also hidden in the cluttered room are valuable books – the journals of Nykolus Rassylov, which can be found with a successful Search check (DC 18). These journals hold many alchemic and scientific secrets, and are potentially worth up to 2,000 gp in the hands of a collector, wizard, or sage. Again, while the journals do not directly impact the adventure, they can be used for creating adventure hooks for further gaming sessions.

Rewards

Reward experience normally for combat and traps in adventure. In addition, you may elect to award bonus XP to the party for exceptional action and heroic accomplishments. Use the list below as a guideline for awarding bonus experience points.

Action	XP Bonus
Capturing aquatic drow alive	50 XP each
Capturing Staryse Malian alive	200 XP
Solving the door puzzle in area 2-3	200 XP
Capturing Gorwogijrio Gonejethis alive	300 XP
Recovering the Prophecy of Tremasté	300 XP
Recovering the Rassylov journals	300 XP

Further Adventures

Based upon the details provided in the encounters above, here are some additional ideas for further adventures:

The Prophecy of Tremasté: Prophecies are great ways of connecting adventures and creating adventure hooks. Because they are cryptic, they also tend to be vague enough to relate to just about any adventure idea. Take a look at the different lines in the Prophecy of Tremasté. The first line – “When warriors of the deep...” can be used to refer to this adventure. Other lines can be used to plan for further adventures of your making – for example, the “dark dragon” can refer to an adventure featuring a troubled young black dragon, while “when the dead dream” can be made to fit just about any adventure featuring undead. Also, take note of how the players interpret the Prophecy – many times, they will see a connection between a line of a prophecy and the seed for an adventure idea that you (the GM) may not have noticed.

Other adventure hook ideas based on the Prophecy might include:

When angels fly from the devils’ eye – an order of paladins that makes its home in a secluded desert (known to some as the Eye of the Devil) has gone rogue, attacking the towns it once protected. The player characters are sent to find out why this has happened.

When giants wake from eternal sleep – a series of vol-

canoes commonly called “the giants” have become active once more. Rumor has it that hobgoblin shamans have summoned a powerful creature from another dimension, and this creature is linked to the volcanoes. The player characters must find and destroy the creature to avert disaster.

The Journals of Rassylov: Like the Prophecy, the Journals can be used to create adventure seeds. Their contents should be vague and cryptic, enough so the players can understand the potential of what they hold without being specific. Again, the GM should try to make the contents fit whatever he or she has in mind for the campaign – if the player characters begin a quest for a magic item, then the Journals might contain some clues as to how to find that artifact. If the player characters face an adventure where they need to travel long distances quickly, the Journals may reference a magical flying contraption designed and built by Rassylov that they might find and use.

Other adventure hook ideas based on the Journals might include:

Secrets of Life: In the Journals is the tale of an immortality potion. The player characters go to investigate one of Rassylov’s abandoned laboratories where they find a horrible Frankenstein-like monster – the result of one of his pupils actually drinking the potion...

Ships of the Deep: The Journals mention a ship that can “travel like sharks, underwater, to the deepest depths...” The player characters indeed discover a submarine-type ship of Rassylov’s creation, but the ship has a mind of its own, and takes the characters to places they may not necessarily want to go...

The Abollar and Drow: Don’t forget the abollar and the drow. Thwarted by the player characters in their quest to obtain the Prophecy, the player characters may have just found themselves with a whole set of recurring foes. This would not just be aquatic drow and abollar, either, but sahuagin, locathath, and other evil creatures from the deep.

Secrets of the Sentinel: The Sentinel itself may contain further adventures as well. At the GM’s discretion, other doors can be placed in the various areas underneath the Sentinel that can only be opened with the complete dragon’s head pendant (half of which was worn around Mérope’s neck; the other half could easily be placed in one of the other adventures contained in this book). The upper levels of the Sentinel could contain the answers to why the town of Cortaigne disappeared. Or an ancient artifact made by the aquatic drow. Or a magic portal that leads to strange new lands halfway around the world. Or anything else that fits your campaign – after all it’s up to you...



Players' Handout A

Players' Handout C

When warriors of the deep sit at the sentinels' feet

Marks the first return of forgotten crews.

When the dark dragon's fire ignites funeral pyres

Marks the second return of unwanted thrones.

When giants wake from eternal sleep

Marks the third return of golden thrones.

When the dead dream and when statues weep

Marks the fourth return of deadly stones.

When angels fly from the devil's eye

Marks the final return of broken swords.

Know the five, as they signify

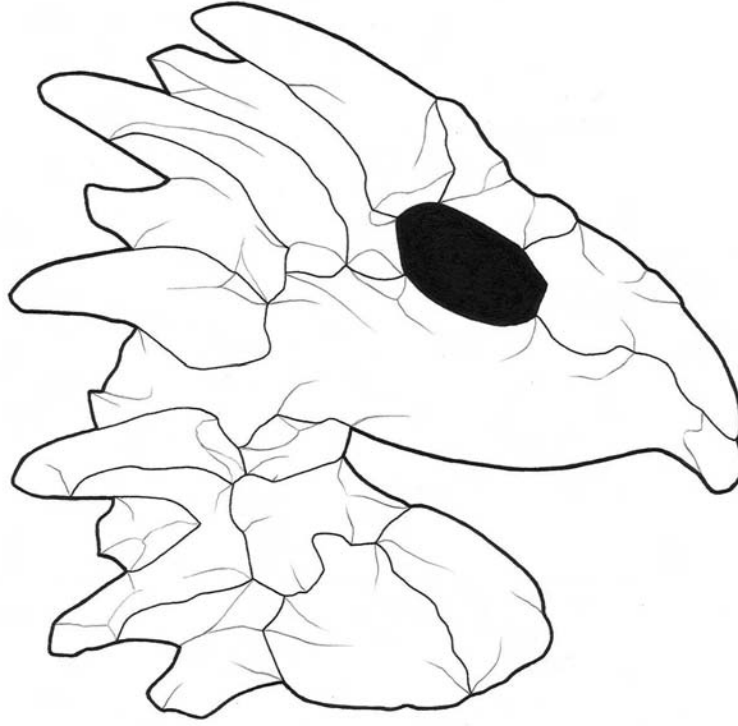
The return of forgotten kings.

Know the five, for they shall lie

In secrets, stones, and rings.

When blood shall rain, the reign of blood will begin.

Players' Handout B

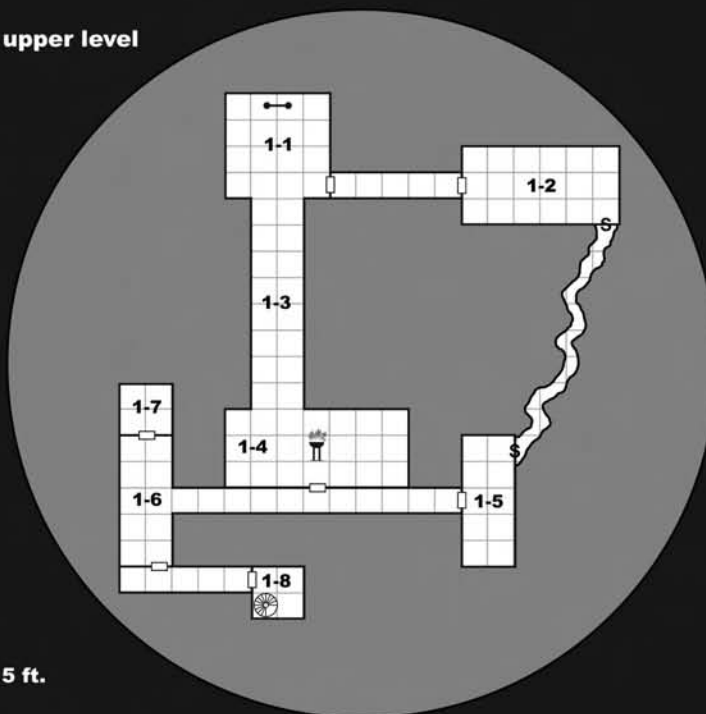


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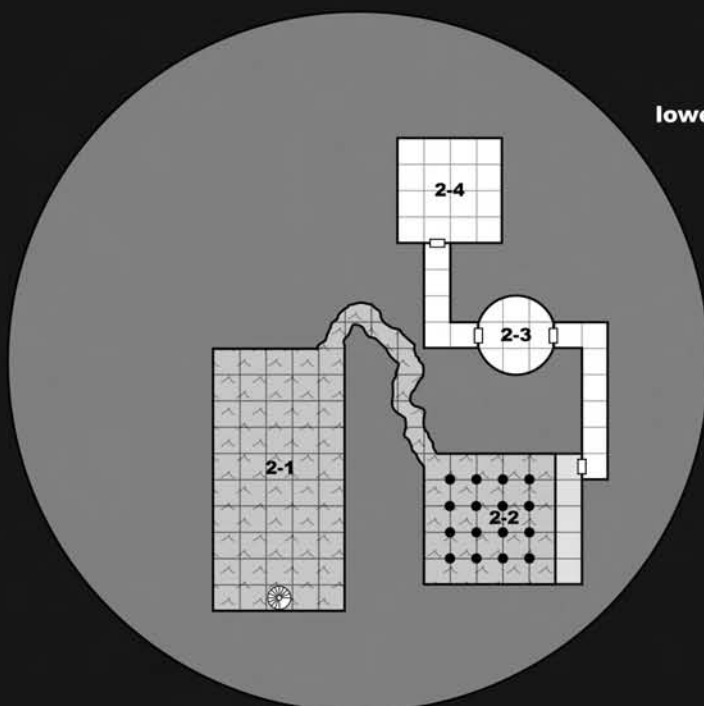
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The Forgotten Sentinel

upper level



lower level



Key

- spiral staircase
- water
- brazier
- ladder
- pillar

Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Well of the Worm

By Harley Stroh

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Well of the Worm is designed for four to six characters of 1st through 2nd level. Characters can be of any class, although a well-rounded party will have the best odds of survival. Clerics will find their special abilities in high demand when faced with Solom Quor's wicked army. Parties lacking clerics or strong warriors in their place will be at a disadvantage.

Adventure Summary

At the request of a village elder, or on their own initiative, the characters find themselves before an abandoned well. Once the plains were home to fertile farms, but years of succeeding wars have poisoned the well and reduced the surrounding fields to a barren wasteland. Giant worms, with the tortured faces of fallen warriors, have been emerging from the well to terrorize the nearby villages.

The PCs descend into the well, discovering the lair of Solom Quor, a dwarf driven mad by his service in the wars. Solom has been raising war-worms and using them to build zombie minions. The characters must defeat the war-worm zombies, face down Solom Quor's horrors, and finally drive the mad dwarf to ground.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	69	T	Falling war-worms	1
1-2	69	C	3 war-worm zombies	3
1-3	70	T	Camouflaged pit trap	1
1-4	70	C/T	War-worm, bugbear Portcullis trap	2 1
1-5	71	C	2 war-worm zombies 30 war-worms	2
1-6A	72	C/T	Solom Quor, Clr2/Rog1 2 war-worm zombies Collapsing tunnel trap	3 2 2
1-7	72	C	6 feral elves	2
1-7A	73	C	Cave snake	2
1-8	73	C	Mother	2
1-8A	74	C	War-worm zombie, ogre	2

Scaling Information

The Well of the Worm is an adventure designed for 4-6 characters of 1st-2nd levels. You can adapt the scenario to higher level parties with a few simple modifications.

Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 2nd level): Add 2 war-worm zombies to every zombie encounter, giving each an additional hit die. Increase Solom Quor's cleric levels by 2. Advance Mother (area 1-8) to an appropriate HD war-worm queen. Allow the ogre zombie in area 1-8A to make normal attacks that are neither slowed nor random.

Getting the Players Involved

Use the following plot hooks to get the characters directly into the dungeon.

- Village elders call for volunteers from the surrounding dales – brave souls are needed to battle a plague of worms. Late at night the hideous monsters rise from the earth, draining the blood of peasants as they sleep. Worse, their victims rise as zombies shortly after, host to large worms with the faces of tormented men. The village wise woman has determined the source of the monsters: an abandoned well outside of town.
- Sleeping in an inn, the PCs are awakened by shouts! A prominent family has been found murdered in their beds. All are drained of blood. The sole survivor is a terrified young girl who claims that her family was killed by worms that fled towards an abandoned well outside of town.
- Returning to their childhood home, the PCs discover that their village is a ghost town. The sole remaining occupant is an aging warrior, too bitter to leave his home. He tells the PCs that their families were driven out by a horde of man-worms that rise from the earth late at night. The warrior is too weak to fight the worms himself, but he has tracked them back to their source: an abandoned well outside of town.

Background Story

The plains of Barrowdown have always known war. Every spring and summer, armies of the barons converge on the long fields, clashing in battle, destroying the fields of crops, and soaking the earth in blood. Farmers tending the land have learned to survive in lean times by looting the bodies of the dead and selling the arms and armor to young adventurers.

Twenty years ago, a company of dwarf warriors known as the Breakers tried to break the cycle, defending the

farmer's fields from a pair of opposing armies. The armies fell upon the company like wolves, slaughtering the dwarves before facing off on the blood-soaked fields.

A single dwarf survived the massacre. After the armies had left the field, Solom Quor swore his soul to revenge. Digging graves for his company of brothers, Solom discovered a curious worm with the twisted, tormented face of a human. The plains, drenched in blood and the anguished souls of the dead, had given rise to a new horror: the war-worm.

Solom Quor

Once a healer and priest of the Breakers, Solom Quor was driven insane by the anguish of seeing his brothers slaughtered. In the years since, that madness has crept into every part of his being.

Solom has spent the last twenty years hidden underground, raising broods of war-worms. The priest has renounced his racial deities and taken up worshipping the worm mother. Solom believes that the worms will purge the sins of the war-torn world by devouring the sinful. His goal is nothing less than the utter destruction of every army, mercenary company, and band of adventurers – good or evil – that lives by the sword.

Solom Quor is a terrifying sight. His skin is black from soot, grease and oil, and his eyes seem to burn with an unnatural light. His dark beard is matted and tangled into soiled knots, but his scalp is shaved clean. Solom mumbles to himself aloud in a constant stream of incoherent thoughts. While the dwarf is plagued by insanity, it does not make him any less cunning or dangerous. Solom Quor will take pains to engage intruders on his own terms, fleeing to fight another day.

Player Beginning

Start the adventure by reading or paraphrasing the following:

Desolate fields stretch as far as the eye can see. Once fertile and green, nothing grows here now. The soil itself is dead, salted by the blood of the dead. Torn standards, broken lances and spears, rusting bits of armor, and the pale skeletons of warriors litter the plain.

A cold wind picks up, stirring the banners and kicking up the evil soil. If ever the ghosts of the dead rose to stalk the living, this would be such a place. Ahead of you lies your goal: the foul well rumored to be the source of the terror that haunts these forsaken plains.

The Well of the Worm

The well was dug centuries ago, when humans first settled the fertile plains. Submerged caves provided a constant source of water, and the settlers came to rely upon the well. It took centuries of drought to lower the aquifer, draining the reservoir caves.

The caves are natural, smoothed by the flow of water. A sticky, wet slime covers much of the walls, ceiling, and floor – mucus excreted by the war-worms. The slime glistens in torch and lamplight, casting deceptive reflections. PCs examining the slime will see their own faces reflected in the surface, as if they were trapped in the walls. In certain areas (1-2 and 1-4) this is actually the case.

When Solom Quor adopted the caves as his lair, he spent a good deal of time enlarging them to make them passable for medium-sized creatures. The tunnels are dwarf sized, and creatures over 5-1/2 ft. tall will be forced to crouch or bend over as they explore the caves. Adventurers are accustomed to fighting in adverse conditions, so the tight confines have no affect on armor class or initiative, but large slashing and bludgeoning weapons are -1 to attack and -1 to damage, due to the lack of room needed to properly swing the weapons.

The tone of the module depends on the GM's ability to make the PCs feel threatened by their environment at all times. The confining, mucus-laden walls should always seem ready to either greedily consume the characters, or disgorge armies of worm-infested zombies. The Well is home to secrets both alien and ancient, and the forces of good have no place here.

Unworked Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick (at least); hardness 6; hp 500 (per 5 ft. thickness); Break DC 40; Climb DC 15.

Wandering Monsters

Check for wandering monsters once every half hour, or whenever the characters make a significant amount of sustained noise. Roll d12; an encounter occurs on a 1. If an encounter is called for, roll 1d6 to determine the encounter.

d6	Result
1	1d2 war-worm zombies
2-3	1d3 dire rats
3-4	1d4 monstrous spiders, Tiny
5	Snake, Medium viper
6	1-4 war-worms

War-Worm Zombie, Human: CR 1/2; Medium Undead; HD 2d10+3; hp 13; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Slam+2 melee (1d6+1); SA Acid gout; SQ Single actions only,

damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Acid Gout (Ex): Three times per day a war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target. This is a ranged touch attack.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

Dire Rats: CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease); SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse

Disease (Ex): Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Monstrous Spider, tiny: CR 1/4; Tiny Vermin; HD 1/2 d8; hp 2; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.; Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk Bite +5 melee (1d3-4 plus poison); SA Poison, web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 3, Dex 17, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +15, Jump +6, Spot +12; Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): A monstrous spider has a poisonous bite. The save DCs are Constitution-based. Fort DC 10, 1d2 Str initial and secondary.

Snake, Medium viper: CR 1; Medium Animal; HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4-1 plus poison); SA Poison; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +12, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +7; Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): A viper snake has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Con, Fort DC 11. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

War-Worm: CR 1/4; Small Aberration; HD 1/2 d8+1; hp 3; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk Bite +1 melee (1d6-2/x2); SA blood drain, infest; SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 0, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Move Silently +6.

Blood Drain (Ex): A war-worm can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of temporary Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained.

Infest (Ex): A creature slain by a war-worm's blood drain rises as a war-worm zombie (see above) 1d4 days after death. The zombie is a host to 2d12 larval war-worms that slowly consume the corpse. After 3d20 days the zombie collapses, devoured from the inside, and the mature war-worms go in search of living prey.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Well of the Worm (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

A sour, rotting stench wafts up from below, stinging your lungs. The dark well and its crude rock wall are both stained a vile shade of olive green. You have heard tales of armies poisoning wells with corpses and worse. Peering down into the silent darkness, those tales seem very real.

The well is 90 feet deep, the last 20 feet submerged in water. On the wall, 10 feet above the water line, is a narrow fissure. This muddy hole can be enlarged to permit passage by pulling free loose stones and mortar; three rounds of digging and a DC 15 Strength check makes the hole large enough for Medium-sized creatures to pass.

Descending into the well alerts a nest of war-worms burrowed into the mortar near the top of the well. On the third round after the PCs enter the well, the worms break free of the wall and drop down onto the PCs.

Each PC in the well is attacked by 1d4 worms. As it drops, each worm makes a +10 ranged attack inflicting 1 point of damage. Any PC struck by a worm must succeed in a DC 10 Reflex save or be knocked off the rope.

If PCs fall, the water-filled well is forgiving. The first 20 feet of falling do no damage; the next 20 feet do non-lethal damage (1d3 per 10-foot increment); beyond 40 feet, falling does lethal damage (1d6 per additional 10-foot increment). See the DMG, Chapter 8: Glossary, *Falling*, for additional information on falling.

PCs falling into the water may dive to avoid taking any falling damage by making either a DC 15 Swim check or a DC 15 Tumble check. The DC for diving increases by 5 for every 50 feet of the dive.

Falling worms that strike PCs or hit the water die instantly. Anyone investigating the nest discovers a

simple, muddy hole filled with the bones of dead soldiers and 13 loose silver pieces.

The water in the well is mildly poisonous. Ingesting the foul-smelling liquid immediately causes 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage, and another 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage 30 minutes later.

Treasure: Buried in the mud at the base of the well is the source of the pollution, a *dagger of venom*. The dagger can be found with a DC 20 Search check. Its serrated blade is marked with the dagger's name and command word: *Vermys*. A DC 15 Bardic Knowledge or Knowledge (nobility) check will recall that this blade once belonged to the feared assassin Qa'zin, and is responsible for the death of at least three matriarchs.

War-Worm: CR 1/4; Small Aberration; HD 1/2 d8+1; hp 3; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk Bite +1 melee (1d6-2/x2); SA blood drain, infest; SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 0, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Move Silently +6.

Blood Drain (Ex): A war-worm can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of temporary Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained.

Infest (Ex): A creature slain by a war-worm's blood drain rises as a war-worm zombie (see below) 1d4 days after death. The zombie is a host to 2d12 larval war-worms that slowly consume the corpse. After 3d20 days the zombie collapses, devoured from the inside, and the mature war-worms go in search of living prey.

Area 1-2 – Holding Chamber (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The narrow corridor opens into a wide, muddy cave notched with small alcoves. The walls of the cave glisten wetly in the dim light, and the smell of rotting meat is very strong here. A pair of rusty hook-beaked pikes rest on the muddy floor.

Close inspection of the walls reveals that they are covered in a wet film of sticky mucus. Trapped in the muddy walls, covered in mucus, are the corpses of seven villagers, their faces frozen in screams of terror. Once the players discover this, show them handout A. The villagers were kidnapped, hurled into the well, then fished from the water with the pikes before they were plastered into the walls with war-worm mucus.

Three of these corpses are war-worm zombies. The zombies wait until two or more PCs enter the chamber, then burst from the walls. The zombies seek to overwhelm a single opponent, and press the target face-first into the walls to suffocate and die (grapple check to force a PC into a wall). PCs trapped in the mucous walls begin to suffocate. (A normal character can hold his breath for one round per point of Constitution.) They must make a DC 15 Strength check to break free.

The trap door exit to area 1-3 is concealed by a thick film of mucus. It can be found on a DC 15 Search check, or discovered by accident by PCs searching the alcoves. Those accidentally falling through to area 1-3 vanish with a sucking sound, taking 1d4-1 points of falling damage; they can check their fall with a DC 15 Reflex save.

Treasure: One of the corpses was once the village moneylender. In his belt pouch are 23 sp, 11 gp, and a single small sapphire worth 15 gp. The pikes are normal, rusty ranseurs, but can be sold for 2 gp each.

War-Worm Zombie, Human: CR 1/2; Medium Undead; HD 2d10+3; hp 13; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Slam+2 melee (1d6+1); SA Acid gout; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slaying, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Acid Gout (Ex): Three times per day a war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target. This is a ranged touch attack.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

Area 1-3 – Hall of the Fallen (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

A trickle of muddy water runs down the center of the narrow cave. Rusted weapons and bits of armor are buried in the walls, casting wicked shadows down the corridor. Their jagged, sharpened edges claw and scratch at you as you pass, snagging on armor and tearing at cloaks and robes.

The weapons and armor are plastered into the wall with mucus, and are too dull and rusted to pose any threat to PCs. These armor and weapons are all that's left of the Breakers; those taking the time to investigate (Search DC 15) will discover a tattered

banner bearing the Breaker's crest: crossed axes above a cracked ogre skull. The origins of the standard and the Breaker's demise can be determined with a DC 15 bardic knowledge or Knowledge (history) check.

Either a DC 15 Craft (weaponsmithing) or Craft (armorsmithing) check identifies the weapons and armor as dwarven in make and size.

Forty feet down the corridor, the cave passes over a war-worm breeding pit (see area 1-5). The war-worms have weakened the floor of the cave to the point where it will collapse with the slightest weight. Those passing over and failing a DC 20 Reflex save crash through the floor into the worm pits (area 1-7).

Camouflaged Pit Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 10 ft. deep (1d6, fall); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC –.

Area 1-4 – Storeroom (EL 2, 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The muddy chamber is filled with rotting crates, barrels and open casks. Dark mold covers nearly all the wood in the room, making the chamber seem much darker than it should. A slow stream of mucus drips from the ceiling, pooling on the floor.

This room is used to store Solom's supplies. The crates hold three months' worth of trail rations, though mold has rendered the rations nearly inedible. The casks contain water collected from area 1-7, and the barrels hold wine that has spoiled into vinegar.

A crude portcullis trap is hidden in the ceiling of the doorway. Entering the room without first pulling on a hidden lever drops the portcullis. The bypass lever can be found on a DC 17 Spot check.

When the portcullis drops, the chain mechanism releases the shackles trapping a war-worm zombie in the wall. The zombie bursts into the room, lumbering after anyone trapped inside the chamber.

The crates, barrels and casks are all branded with the sign of the Breakers: a pair of crossed axes above cracked ogre skull. The sign can be recognized with a successful DC 15 bardic knowledge or knowledge (history) check.

War-Worm Zombie, Bugbear: CR 2; Medium Undead; HD 6d10+3; hp 39; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk/Full Atk slam +6 melee (1d6+3); SA Acid gout; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slaying, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.



Skills and Feats: Toughness

Acid Gout (Ex): Three times per day a war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

Portcullis Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee (3d6); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. Note: Damage applies only to those underneath the portcullis. Portcullis blocks passageway.

Rusted Portcullis: Thickness 2 in.; Hardness 8; 30 hp; Break DC 18.

Area 1-5 – Worm Pits (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

A moldy, wooden ladder descends to a narrow stone catwalk that skirts three dark pits. The air is thick with the stink of stale blood and a droning chatter.

A pair of war-worm zombies walk the catwalks above the pits, stirring the worms with 10 foot long poles. As soon as the zombies notice the PCs they close to attack, trying to knock the PCs into the pits, pinning them down with the poles.

Anyone struck by a melee attack combat must succeed in a DC 13 Balance check or be knocked into the worm pits. Ranged weapons don't have enough mass to knock targets into the pits.

The pits are 10 feet deep and filled 3 feet high with war-worms. The worms are feeding on corpses; the chattering drone is the sound of their tiny maws ripping off chunks of rotten flesh.

The worms swarm anyone falling into the pit. Victims falling into the pits are attacked by 1d6 worms each round. Each pit holds 10 worms. The

worms won't attack the zombies.

War-Worm Zombies, Human (2): CR 1/2; Medium Undead; HD 2d10+3; hp 13 each; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Slam+2 melee (1d6+1); SA Acid gout; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slash-ing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Acid Gout (Ex): Three times per day a war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target. This is a ranged touch attack.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

War-Worms (30): CR 1/4; Small Aberration; HD 1/2 d8+1; hp 3 each; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk Bite +1 melee (1d6-2/x2); SA blood drain, infest; SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 0, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Move Silently +6.

Blood Drain (Ex): A war-worm can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of temporary Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained.

Infest (Ex): A creature slain by a war-worm's blood drain rises as a war-worm zombie (see below) 1d4 days after death. The zombie is a host to 2d12 larval war-worms that slowly consume the corpse. After 3d20 days the zombie collapses, devoured from the inside, and the mature war-worms go in search of living prey.

Area 1-6 – Shrine of the Mother: Read or paraphrase the following:

A horrifying bas-relief dominates this room, nearly covering the eastern wall. The image depicts a horned, demonic visage, frozen in a scream, its curling tongue thrust out into the room. The mouth is an open hole, the tongue a chute. As you watch a tiny worm falls from the devil-maw and wriggles its way down the chute. The chute feeds into a pool of thick, congealing liquid the color of rust.

You know immediately the pool is filled with blood. Dozens of tiny worms float drunkenly in the pool.

A pile of treasure is collected on a dais before the demon wall, and you realize to your horror that this must be a temple dedicated to the worms.

Show the players handout B. This room is where Solom worships Mother, and where he collects her tiny progeny. Mother is hidden behind the devil facade, in area 1-8. If attacked, she can squirt acid mucus through the devil maw (see area 1-8 for more information). Mother births one worm every five minutes, so long as she is fed a constant staple of bodies. The tiny war-worms are nursed in the pool of blood until they grow large enough to be moved to the pits (area 1-5).

Solom and two war-worm zombies watch over this room from area 1-6A, and launch an ambush as soon as PCs enter Solom's line of sight. See area 1-6A for more information and Solom's combat statistics.

A boulder in the southeast conceals a passage to area 1-7. On a DC 10 Spot check PCs notice ruts in the muddy floor, signs that the boulder has been moved recently; a DC 15 Search check reveals that the boulder conceals a tunnel. (On the map, the boulder is offset from the tunnel to show the entrance.)

Treasure: Solom's madness is so great that he worships Mother as a devil-goddess. A small collection of treasures, stolen from Mother's victims, are collected on the steps before the devil wall: 47 cp, 89 gp, 203 sp, a silver longsword, and three *potions of cure light wounds*.

Area 1-6A – Ambush! (EL 4): Solom and two war-worm zombies lurk in the shadows atop the ledge. Solom makes a sneak attack with his crossbow from the shadows, then commands the zombies to attack. While the zombies occupy the PCs, Solom flees to area 1-8.

The ceiling of the tunnel between areas 1-6 and 1-8 has been intentionally weakened by Solom; a few simple beams are all that supports several tons of mud and rock. Solom knocks the beams loose in his flight. PCs following close on Solom's heels must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid being trapped beneath the rubble. Once collapsed, the rubble fills the tunnel, making passage impossible.

Solom Quor, male dwarf Clr2/Rog1: CR 3; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8+1d6+9; hp 27; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Atk heavy pick +2 melee (1d6+1/x4) or light crossbow +0 ranged (1d8+1/19-20); SQ dwarf traits, turn and rebuke undead, sneak attack +1d6, trapfinding; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 9, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +5, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcana) +0, Knowledge (religion) +0,

Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Profession +2, Spot +2; Alertness, Stealthy.

Possessions: Leather armor, light crossbow, pick (heavy).

Spells Prepared (4/3+1; base DC = 11 + spell level): 0 – *cure minor wounds, guidance, light, resistance*; 1st-level – *bane**, *cause fear, divine favor, shield of faith*. *Domain spell.

War-Worm Zombies, Human (2): CR 1/2; Medium Undead; HD 2d10+3; hp 13 each; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Slam+2 melee (1d6+1); SA Acid gout; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slash-ing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Acid Gout (Ex): Three times per day a war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target. This is a ranged touch attack.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

Collapsing Tunnel Trap: CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; stone rubble (4d6, DC 15 Reflex save avoids); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 15.

Area 1-7 – Stockade of the Feral (EL 2): The western entrance to the stockade is concealed by a massive boulder. On a DC 10 Spot check PCs notice ruts in the muddy floor, signs that the boulder has been moved recently; a DC 15 Search check reveals that the boulder conceals a tunnel.

Solom uses a team of war-worm zombies to move the boulder, but PCs can move the boulder with a DC 25 Strength check. Up to three PCs can work together at once, five if they use ropes or poles.

If PCs succeed in moving the boulder, read or paraphrase the following:

The boulder groans as it shifts aside, revealing a small, dark tunnel. Savage, lupine forms leap from the darkness, snarling with feral fury!

The shaggy beasts are feral wood elves, the remnants of a tribe captured by Solom Quor and kept to feed the mother worm. They have been locked in the stockade for several months, and are all utterly insane. The madness has reduced them to feral, animalistic states: their hair is knotted into muddy tangles, their skin is soiled and dirty, their nails are broken and bloody.

The elves attack with unchecked fury, desperately trying to fight their way to freedom. If driven back, they retreat into the shadows, and bide their time until they can ambush the PCs.

Feral Elf (6): CR 1/4; Medium Humanoid (Elf); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Unarmed +1 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal); SA -; SQ elven traits; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1*; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +1, Listen +2, Search +3, Spot +2; Weapon Focus (longbow)

Area 1-7A – Lost Lake (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

An ebon pool fills the dark reaches of this cavern. Stalagmites glisten in the dim light, casting long shadows on the still water. The faint rhythm of dripping water can be heard in the distance. The shore is littered with fish bones, and schools of silver flash and dart in the dark waters.

The lake is home to a school of blind cave fish and a vicious cave snake. The pale cave snake lurks in the water, waiting for PCs to investigate the pool, then lunges out, attempting to drag its victim underwater.

The water is 15 feet deep at the pool's deepest, with sharply sloped sides. The water is fresh and clean.

Treasure: The snake has no treasure, but a DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) check will identify the snake as a rare species, highly valued by wizards for its skin and glands. Sold to a wizard, the snake will fetch between 50 gp and 200 gp, depending on how badly the body was hurt and how far it was allowed to decompose.

Cave Snake: CR 2; Medium Animal (Constrictor Snake); HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk Bite +5 melee (1d3+4); SA Constrict 1d3+4, improved grab; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +14, Hide +10, Listen +7, Spot +7, Swim +11; Alertness, Toughness.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a constrictor snake deals the indicated damage.

Area 1-7B – Cage Doors: Read or paraphrase the following:

A rusty iron gate bars the way. It is bolted into the ceiling and floor. Each bar is as thick as a human's wrist. Despite the rust, the massive

lock seems in good repair. Matted, rotting straw is piled in wet mounds on the south side of the bars.

Close inspection of the gate (Search DC 15) will reveal that while the gate is strong, the bolts holding it in place are nearly worthless. The gate can be torn free with a DC 15 Strength check. Otherwise the bars can be bent with a DC 25 Strength check, or the lock can be picked with a DC 20 Open Lock check.

Area 1-8 – Lair of the Worm (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

This long chamber hides many nooks and crannies, making it difficult to tell the chamber's true size. Shelves are cut into the rocky walls; all are cluttered with cobwebbed skulls, musty scrolls, and dusty jars filled with pale, preserved worms. Ragged tapestries and banners stripped from war standards cover the walls, and a matted bed of woven reeds rests on the floor.

The southeast corner of the room is home to a rusty gate, bolted to the bare rock.

To the southwest is a massive gray shape the size of a great swine, ribbed like a worm, but with a sharp snout, and a pale tongue that flicks and probes at the corpse of an elf hanging from meat hooks.

Flickering oil lamps light the room, casting the gate and worm-thing in a macabre red light. Sensing you, the worm turns and moans in hunger. The wet, loathsome sound is as familiar as it is alien, like the mournful calling of the autumn stars.

This cavernous laboratory is where Solom Quor raised Mother. The queen war-worm is unaccustomed to being threatened – she will squeal wetly in confusion and pain before turning herself to attack the PCs with her acid spray.

If the battle goes poorly for Solom Quor and Mother, the dwarf runs to area 1-8A and releases the war-worm zombie. The leg-less worm zombie will fumble through the room, lashing out in blind fury, doing as much damage to the laboratory, Solom and Mother as the PCs. In the chaos that follows, Solom will attempt to flee, taking the coffer of queen eggs with him. See area 1-8A for information on the tormented war-worm zombie.

Treasure: Solom's treasure is scattered about the room, hidden on dusty shelves and in dark corners.

A small, iron coffer holds three oblong eggs, nestled in a bed of straw. If placed in a warm environment, these eggs will hatch larval queen war-worms.

An oiled leather pouch resting on a forgotten shelf contains 71 sp and a gold figurine of a drunken dwarf, the patron saint of grogslayers, an obscure sect of dwarves that fights while intoxicated. The statue is worth 50 gp for its material, or 100 gp to a dwarf or collector.

In a barrel, hidden behind one of the banners, stand 15 short spears and 33 bolts. The shafts are all moldy and rotten, rendering the weapons useless, but 3 of the spear tips and 7 of the bolt heads are masterwork silvered heads.

Mother, war-worm queen: CR 2; Large Aberration; HD 2d8+8; hp 18; Init -2; Spd 10 ft.; AC 14, touch 7, flat-footed 16; Base Atk -2; Grp -; Atk/Full Atk -2 ranged touch (1d6, acid spray); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Acid spray; SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 6, Con 19, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: –

Acid Spray (Ex): One per round a worm queen can launch an acid spray with a range of 20 feet. The spray is a grenadelike attack, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target and 1d4 points of splash damage to all creatures within 5 feet of the target.

Area 1-8A – Blind Fury (EI 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

Behind the curtain is the massive corpse of what can only be a terrible ogre. The beast's legs are cut to short stumps, and it looks as if the rest of it has been sewn together with cat-gut after having been cut into parts. The ogre is resting against the wall, its arms secured with manacles. Its muscles bunch and tear at each other, but the head lolls weakly to one side, drooling a thick mucus that pools on the floor.

A long lever protrudes from the floor, its handle wrapped in leather.

The corpse of this enormous ogre was found by Solom Quor and his zombies on one of their hunts. Solom quartered the beast and had it brought into his lair, in order to experiment with the creation of monstrous war-worm zombies.

The experiment was only a partial success. The ogre was too large for Solom to reassemble, and the rapidly decomposing flesh has proven to be poor fodder for the worms. The result is a blind war-worm zombie of massive proportions, able to crawl and lash out in pain and anger, but little else.

Tactics: If the beast is released from its bonds, it strikes out at random until slain. Each round roll 1d8 to determine which direction the ogre strikes; 1 = north, 2 = northwest, 3 = west, 4 = southwest, 5 =

south, 6 = southeast, 7 = east, 8 = northeast.

These blows are destructive, but extremely slow; any PC succeeding in a DC 15 Intelligence check, or possessing the Dodge feat, adds a +4 circumstance bonus to her armor class for the round. Characters succeeding in the Intelligence check *and* possessing the Dodge feat add +6 to their armor class for the round.

Treasure: Before the ogre died it ate an elf wizard. If the ogre is opened up and the contents of its stomach are searched, the PCs discover the chewed, half-decomposed body of the elf and her surviving equipment: a signet ring of twined oak leaves (a +1 *ring of protection*), a pouch containing 23 gp and 3 emeralds (worth 150 gp each), and a spellbook containing the following arcane spells: *color spray*, *flaming sphere*, *hold portal*, *mirror image*, *protection from energy*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*, *summon monster I*, *summon monster III*, *summon swarm*.

Elf and half-elf PCs will recognize the signet ring as belonging to one of the Seven Elf Lords. (The lord gave it to his doomed mistress before she was eaten by the ogre.) If the ring is returned, the elf lord will grant the PCs a single boon or favor.

War-Worm Zombie, Ogre: CR 2; Large Undead; HD 8d10+3; hp 45; Init -2; Spd 10 ft.; AC 15, touch 7, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +14; Atk/Full Atk Slam +9 melee (1d8+9); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Acid gout; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +6; Str 23, Dex 6, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

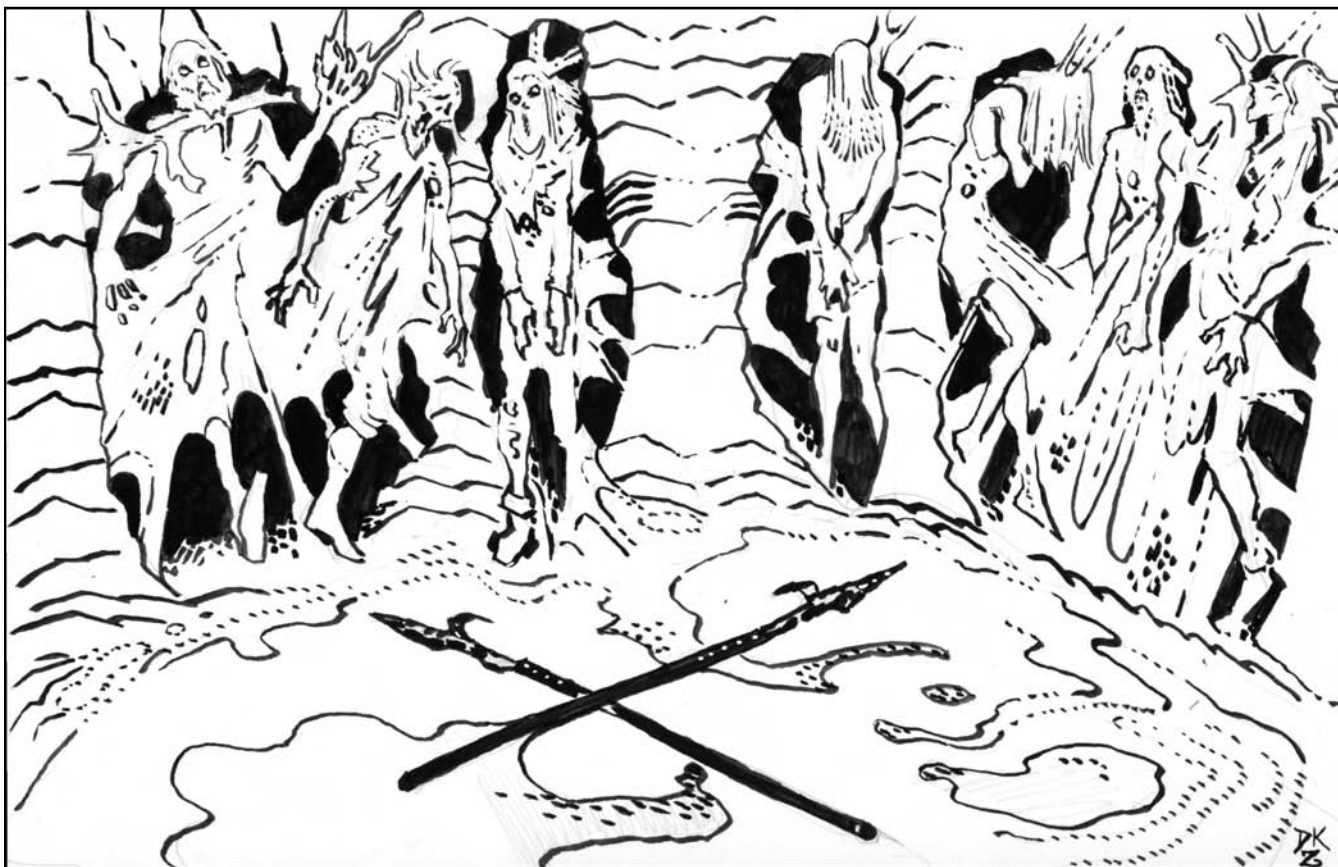
Acid Gout (Ex): Three times per day a war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target. This is a ranged touch attack.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. The leg-less zombie cannot attempt a charge.

Further Adventures

Having vanquished Solom Quor and his host of war-worms, PCs may find themselves uncovering an alien horror from time immemorial. Amid Solom's research, characters can find a map describing an ancient temple dedicated to the war-worms. Discovering the temple will require crossing forbidding mountain ranges and delving into thick jungles. There PCs discover a lost city ruled by war-worms; depending on the GM's judgment, the city's ancient, wicked inhabitants might live...

Players' Handout A



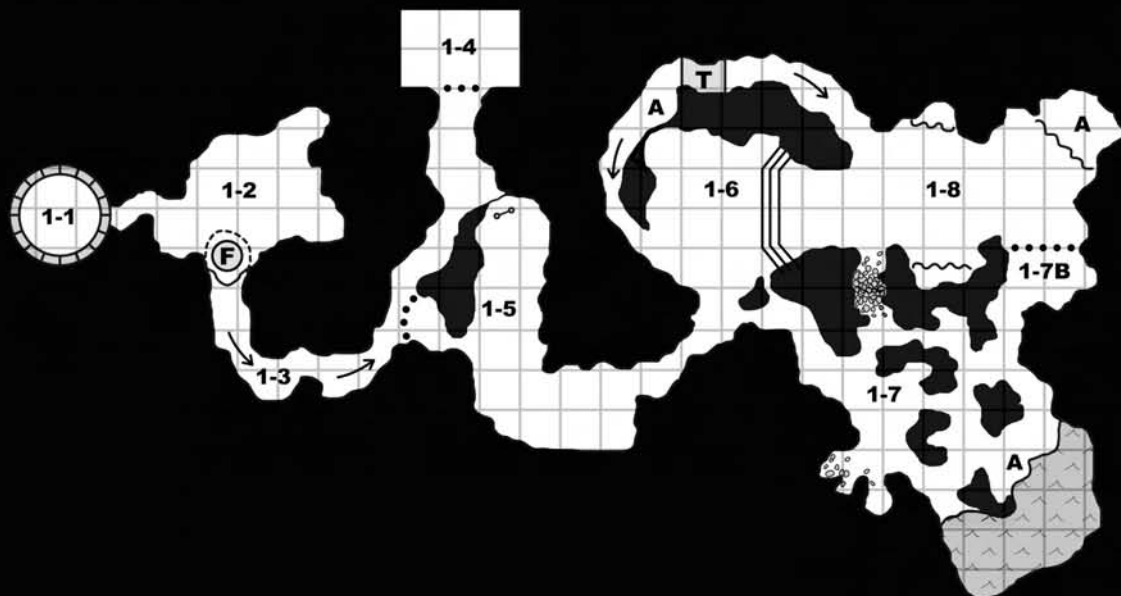
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Players' Handout B



Well of the Worm

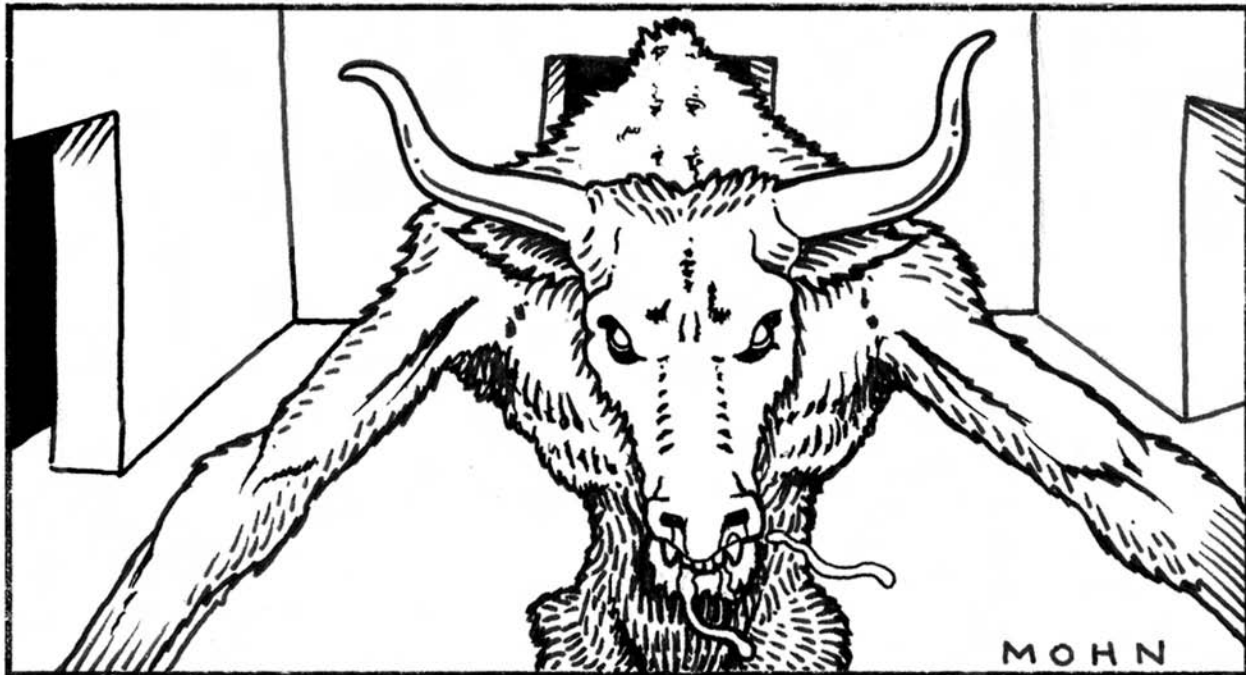


Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Plague Wight's Revenge

By Dieter Zimmerman

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Plague Wight's Revenge is designed for four to six players of 1st or 2nd level. We recommend 5-6 total character levels among the party members. At least one warrior is necessary. A cleric with healing abilities and a rogue will both be very helpful.

Adventure Summary

The characters encounter a stream that is carrying deadly diseases into civilized lands. It is obviously not a natural phenomenon. The characters follow the stream to a cave where they encounter a clan of diseased orcs. Deeper inside the cave, they find a trapped maze inhabited by minotaurs strangely altered by a magical plague. The climax of the adventure is finding the vengeful undead spirit that is the cause of the dread pestilence.

The ever-present threat of contracting a deadly disease and creatures normally too tough for 1st-level PCs should put some fear into the players. In the end, the characters will likely be infected with diseases they have no immediate way of removing, leading to further adventures.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	79	C	Cave bear	2
1-3	80	C	2 diseased orcs	1
1-4	81	C	Dying orc	1/2
1-5	81	C	Orc shaman	2
1-6	82	C	3 sickly orcs	2
1-9	82	C	2 chieftain's wives	1
2-1	83	T	Portcullis trap	1
2-2	83	C	Infected minotaur	2
2-3	83	C	Infected minotaur	2
2-4	84	T	Acid spray trap	1
2-5	84	C	2 infected minotaurs	4
2-6	84	T	Axe trap	1
2-7	84	C	Infected minotaur	2
2-8	85	C	Lessian Thrivolt, plague wight Rog1	4

Scaling Information

This adventure is designed for 4-6 characters of 1st level, but can be adapted for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider changing the adventure as follows:

Stronger parties (higher than 2nd level, or more than 6 characters): Add a couple fighter levels to the orcs in areas 1-3 and 1-6. Give the shaman in area 1-5 a couple more cleric levels. Increase the number of wives in area 1-9. In the labyrinth, double the number of minotaurs in each location, and increase the damage of the traps to 1d8 or 1d10. Give Lessian 2-3 more rogue levels.

Getting the Players Involved

This adventure relies on the characters finding and exploring the cave that is the source of the plague. The best hooks assume that the characters are good aligned and desire to find and stop the plague out of a willingness to help people, but there are also ways of getting more materialistic characters involved. Once the characters are in the cave and have contracted a few diseases, simple self-preservation should make them want to see it through to the end. The following hooks can be used to get the characters to seek out the cave:

- People in the characters' hometown (or the town they happen to be traveling through) are becoming seriously ill at an alarming rate. The town elders have determined that the stream that provides the town's drinking water is the source, and they ask the characters to investigate further.
- If the party has a druid, ranger, or other nature-oriented character, the group may simply come across the stream in their travels and recognize by the diseased wildlife that the stream is carrying plague. Presumably such a character would then want to investigate and help the animals.
- The party is hired by Jumar Starshine, one of Lessian Thrivolt's old companions, to retrieve Lessian's corpse and bring it to the city for burial in a proper cemetery. They are given directions to the burial site, but they find the grave long dug up. It is a simple leap of logic to assume that the grave was looted by the creatures living under Redhorn Hill.

About Disease

This adventure makes heavy use of disease as a threat to the characters' lives. The diseases listed in the DMG can be used in conjunction with or instead of the diseases presented in this adventure, and of course the GM is free to create new ones as well. A character who is already infected with a particular disease cannot contract that same disease again until he recovers from it,

so the more diseases you have access to the more you can use. Part of the fun of using diseases is that the players do not know they have been diseased until the characters start feeling the effects. For the best impact, make note of each character's Fortitude save and make all disease saving throws for them in secret, keeping note of which diseases each character contracts.

Infected Creatures

Several monsters in this adventure are affected by the new infected template, described on page 249. They have been infected by the plague wight in area 2-8. Familiarize yourself with the infected template before running this adventure.

Background Story

Six decades ago, a wealthy merchant by the name of Moddar Vich lay on his deathbed, determined that no one would lay a finger on his riches after he passed into the next life. He hired a number of dwarves to carve a labyrinth into a rocky hill north of town called Redhorn Hill, paid a rogue to trap it well, and convinced a family of minotaurs to move in. In this labyrinth Moddar hid his treasure, and it lay unmolested. It was not long after that a small tribe of orcs found the cave and moved in. They know of the minotaurs and the labyrinth, but they mostly mind their own business. The two groups have worked out an arrangement where the orcs provide food for the minotaurs, and the minotaurs don't kill the orcs.

Several months ago a group of young adventurers found the *plague chalice*, an unholy artifact sacred to an obscure deity of pestilence. Not realizing that the chalice had magical properties, the adventurers transported it back to the city to sell. On the way home, however, the rogue Lessian Thrivolt became seriously ill, burning with fever and shaking violently. The group's cleric Jumar Starshine attempted to heal him, but failed. After three days in agony, Lessian died. His companions buried him atop a hill still a week's travel from the city and continued on.

Of course, Lessian's story does not end there. His great anger at Jumar for letting him die and the magical powers of the *plague chalice* provided Lessian with the means to continue his existence. He survived as a plague wight, a vengeful undead being with the ability to inflict terrible diseases. The undead rogue escaped his grave by digging downward into a secret chamber in the minotaurs' labyrinth, where he remains hidden, slowly turning the minotaurs into his disease-carrying guardians.

Lessian is now a chaotic evil undead creature whose goal is make as many people as he can suffer and die

in the same manner he did. Since he finds himself amply hidden and protected, he has infected the stream that runs through cave and provides drinking water for several villages.

Player Beginning

For whatever reason, the characters arrive at Redhorn Hill. They have most likely arrived by following the stream, but if they have arrived by another route the stream and cave are fairly obvious. If they have been sent by Jumar Starshine to recover Lessian's remains, the characters find the grave empty.

Read the following as the characters make their way to the cave:

The stream runs out of a cave entrance at the base of the hill. The round opening in the hill is completely natural, and roughly ten feet in diameter. A clear stream about a foot deep flows from the opening, making a pleasant burbling noise as it travels across the landscape.

The Orc Lair

The first four areas of the cave are natural unworked stone, and the rest of the area is natural cave that has been flattened and smoothed by stoneworkers. In most cases the tunnels are between 5 and 10 feet wide, and between 6 and 7 feet high.

Semi-worked Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick (at least); hardness 8; hp 900 (per 5 ft. thickness); Break DC 65; Climb DC 15.

In this part of the adventure, if a character eats or drinks anything he finds (including the stream), he may contract a random disease. Likewise, if a character searches or otherwise touches a corpse, he may be subject to whatever diseases the creature had.

Wandering Monsters

There is a 10% chance (1-2 on a d20) per half hour that the characters encounter a wandering monster. This chance increases to 20% (1-4 on a d20) if the characters make excessive noise. If an encounter is called for, roll 1d6 and consult the following table.

Roll (1d6)	Encounter
1	1 sickly orc (EL 1/2)
4-5	10 rats (EL 1)
6	2 sickly orcs (EL 1)

The following statistics blocks are provided for easy reference for the GM.

Sickly Orc: CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10;

Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk shortsword +4 melee (1d6+4); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -2; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness

Possessions: Short sword, 1d4 gp

Rat: CR 1/8; Tiny Animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1; Init +2; Spd 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk bite +4 melee (1d3-4); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Inside the Cave (EL 2): The first area is home to a sick cave bear that has been trained by the orcs. Characters who have good ears (Listen DC 15) may hear the bear's wheezing before they enter the cave. When the characters enter the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

This cave has a relatively flat floor for being a natural formation, but the ceiling varies in height between 5 and 10 feet. A stream runs out of a passageway on the far side of the cave, forms a small pool along the eastern wall, and then runs through the cave mouth to the outside world. An opening in the western wall leads to another cave. Sitting next to the pool of water is a gray bear, breathing heavy rasping breaths. When it notices you it rises to its feet and growls menacingly.

The bear is infected with white fever and in its delirium it attacks anything that moves. Once the bear has been dealt with, the characters are free to explore their surroundings, which do not contain much of interest. The pool of water, while it appears clean and fresh, is tainted with disease. Anyone drinking from it has the chance of being infected with a random disease.

Coming within five feet of the cave bear exposes a character to white fever from its disease-laden breath.

Cave Bear: CR 2; Medium Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk claw +6 melee (1d4+4); Full Atk 2 claws +6 melee (1d4+4) and bite +1 melee (1d6+2); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +4; Endurance, Run

Area 1-2 – Bear’s Lair: Read or paraphrase the following:

This cave is smaller than the adjoining one, and more cozy. A pile of bones litters the floor near the entrance, and four small gray lumps of fur are huddled together against the far wall.

This is where the bear normally sleeps. The four cubs are recently dead, having succumbed to the same white fever their mother was infected with. Any character examining the corpses closely must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or be infected with the white fever themselves. The bones are mostly ani-

mal bones, but some humanoid bones can be identified. A search of the bones (DC 14) reveals a well-crafted leather belt embossed with floral designs worth 15 gp.

Area 1-3 – Drinking Pool (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

A large pool of clear water fills most of this cave. The water runs out of a large hole in the north wall, forms the pool, and continues on its way out the southern passageway. Another passage slopes upward to the west. Standing by the

New Diseases

This adventure features a wide range of new diseases. Their stats are below. Refer back to this table as the diseases are encountered in the adventure.

Disease	Infection	DC	Incubation	Damage
Black fog	Inhaled	14	1-3 days	1d4 Wis
Blood mist	Contact	15	1 day	1d4 Con
Boiling skin	Contact	12	1 day	1d3 Con, 1 Cha
Brain itch	Ingested	12	1 day	1 Int
Corpse rot	Injury	14	1 day	1d2 Str, 1d4 Cha
Dread twitch	Ingested	13	1-3 days	1d6 Dex
Milk eyes	Contact	15	1-3 days	1d4 Wis, 1d4 Con
Stiffening	Injury	16	1 day	1 Dex
White fever	Inhaled	16	1-3 days	1d4 Int
Withering	Injury	14	1-3 days	1d4 Str

Black Fog: While a character is afflicted with this disease, his thought becomes hazy and it is difficult to make decisions. In the advanced stages, one’s vision begins to go black.

Blood Mist: The character afflicted with this disease has a painful hacking cough. It is not long before the character begins coughing up blood in a thin spray, giving the disease its name.

Boiling Skin: The symptoms of this disease include skin that is hot to the touch and the formation of ugly boils on the skin.

Brain Itch: The character has an annoying unscratchable itch inside his head which makes it hard to think. Whenever a character afflicted with this disease rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll or skill check, the itching becomes so bad that he can do nothing the following round without making a DC15 concentration check.

Corpse Rot: The victim’s flesh begins to rot even though he is still alive.

Dread Twitch: The victim’s muscles spasm uncontrollably and painfully.

Milk Eyes: The victim’s eyes turn white and he suffers an overabundance of phlegm.

Stiffening: The victim’s joints become stiff and painful. If the Fortitude save is failed by more than 10, the ability loss is permanent.

White Fever: The victim becomes very pale and delirious with fever.

Withering: The victim’s body begins to wither away, leaving him weak.

sloping passage are two humanoids with gray skin and pig-like faces. One of the beings has several spots of flesh that appear to be rotting.

The creatures are easily identified as orcs. One orc is infected with the stiffening, and the other is a victim of corpse rot. They know they are already dying, so will not hesitate to fight recklessly and to the death, hoping for a cleaner death than their diseases will give them.

The hole in the north wall, where the water runs out of, is large enough for characters to fit through. It is about 3-1/2 feet high, so Small characters have no problem traversing it, but Medium-size characters have to go on hand and knees. The water is less than a foot deep in the tunnel, but wading through it exposes the characters to infection by a randomly determined disease.

As the characters go up the passageway toward area 1-6 they detect the smell of decaying corpses.

Stiffened Orc: CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init -2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 8, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk shortsword +4 melee (1d6+4 plus disease (stiffening)); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref -2, Will -2; Str 17, Dex 6, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness

Possessions: Short sword, studded leather armor, 1d4 gp

Rotting Orc: CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk shortsword +2 melee (1d6+2 plus disease (corpse rot)); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -2; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 2

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness

Possessions: Short sword, studded leather armor, 1d4 gp

Area 1-4 – Secret Hideout (EL 1/2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stream gushes forth from a hole near the ceiling on the north wall of this small cave, and flows out through a larger hole on the south wall. Lying on the ground beside the stream is an orc, clutching something to his chest. As you enter he looks at you with milky-white eyes and says something in Orcish, coughing up blood as he does.

If any of the characters speak Orcish, they know he said, "You have come at last! Please grant me mercy!" This orc was the assistant to the shaman in

area 1-5. When he realized his death was imminent, he stole the idol of the orcs' god and fled to a place where he could pray in peace. That was several days ago, and his prayers have not been answered. In his fevered head, he believes the characters have been sent by his god to take him to the underworld. He begs for the characters to put him out of his misery, but he only speaks Orcish. If the characters do not kill him, or do not understand him, he grows more and more agitated until he finally attacks them. He has been infected with both the blood mist and milk eyes.

Dying Orc: CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d8-2; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk shortsword +2 melee (1d6+2); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -2; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 6, Int 8, Wis 3, Cha 3.

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness

Possessions: Short sword, stone idol with ruby eyes worth 100 gp

Area 1-5 – Shaman's Lair (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The animal hides part to reveal a room that is obviously living quarters for a couple of orcs. Two crude cots occupy the floor against the far wall, and the west wall is lined with shelves containing bones of various types, feathers, stones, and other such objects. Kneeling before a small shrine on the east wall is an orc wearing leather robes covered in Orcish symbols. He turns toward you as you enter, grabs a wooden cudgel from the ground in front of him, and gives a loud shriek.

The shaman's deity has so far protected him from the plague, and the shaman has not been infected by any disease. Unless the characters are being particularly noisy, he will be startled by their arrival. He screams for help and tries to get past the characters if it seems possible. The three orcs in area 1-6 hear his cry and come to his aid, but due to their sickened state it takes them 1d4+3 rounds to get there. The shelves contain only natural materials that the shaman uses in his rituals.

Orc Shaman Clr2: CR 2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk club +3 melee (1d6+2); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, spells; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness, Great Fortitude

Spells prepared (4/2; save DC 10 + spell level):
0 – Detect magic, inflict minor wounds (x2), resistance; 1st-level – command, doom



Possessions: Knobby club, leather robes, silver holy symbol (25 gp), *potion of cure light wounds* (CL 2nd), 1d6 gp

Area 1-6 – The Common Room (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stench of death permeates this chamber, and it is easy to see why. More than two dozen orcs lie dead of disease on the floor. Some corpses have been moved to the edges of the room, but many have obviously been left where they fell. Piles of hides are scattered around, presumably for sleeping in, and a large wooden table with six chairs sits in the southern part of the room. Leather hides adorn the walls, painted with crude pictures of hunts and battles. Passageways leave the room to the east and to the west, and a smaller room adjoins this one to the southeast.

Most of the orcs who died have been left here, in many cases in the very spot they died. The remaining orcs have been too sick themselves to dispose of the corpses. There are only three orcs left alive here, and if they have not already fought the characters by coming to the aid of the shaman in area 1-5, they will attack the characters as they enter the chamber. The number of orcish bodies lying in the room makes movement a little difficult; this area qualifies as rough terrain for the purposes of movement and combat. If the corpses of the previously dead orcs are looted, 4d6 gp can be found. Searching corpses exposes the characters to 1d6 randomly determined diseases.

Sickly Orcs (3): CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk shortsword +4 melee (1d6+4 plus random disease); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will –2; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness

Possessions: Short sword, studded leather armor, 1d4 gp

Area 1-7 – Storage: Read or paraphrase the following:

The room is bare except for a few piles of hides, a dozen wooden crates, and two barrels.

The storage area contains little of interest. Everything stored here is contaminated with disease. The two barrels are half-full of orcish ale, and the crates are full of dried meat, dried fruits, and bread.

Area 1-8 – Entry to the Labyrinth: Read or paraphrase the following:

This room looks much like the other rooms in the orcish caves with one glaring difference: a huge stone door with a frame elaborately carved in a knot work of bones occupies the far wall. An animal hide hanging next to the door has a crude depiction of a bull-like creature painted on it. A wooden table and two chairs occupy a corner of the room.

Normally there are two orc guards stationed here in case the minotaurs from the labyrinth decide to pester the orcs, but they have been dead for several days and their bodies dumped in area 1-6. The door opens easily enough, and beyond it is a stairway that leads up to area 2-1.

Area 1-9 – The Chieftain's Room (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of this room are decorated with painted animal hides and artwork made of animal bones. A table and a wooden chest occupy the eastern part of the room. A large bed of furs is to the west, and it is being used by a burly orc male and two females. Upon your entrance, the females screech and leap to their feet. The male does not move at all.

The chieftain himself is already dead, but his two remaining wives defend his corpse ferociously. The chest is not locked or trapped, and contains a collection of rather ordinary knives and 10 gp. The only other thing of value to be found in the room is a carved bone hunting horn worth 30 gp.

Searching the room exposes the characters to blood mist disease.

Chieftain's wives (2): CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk dagger +3 melee (1d4+2); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will –2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness

Possessions: dagger, piece of cheap jewelry worth 5 gp

The Labyrinth

The walls, floor, and ceiling of the labyrinth are covered in fitted stone tiles 2-1/2 feet by 2-1/2 feet, and 6 inches thick. Beyond the stone tiles is packed earth. The passages are uniformly 10 feet wide and 10 feet high. Area 2-8 is the only exception; it is a natural cave such as those found in the first part of the adventure.

Stone Tiles: 6 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 75; Break DC 35; Climb DC 15.

In this part of the adventure, if a character eats or drinks anything he finds (including the stream), he may contract a random disease. Likewise, if a character searches or otherwise touches a corpse, he may be subject to whatever diseases the creature had.

Wandering Monsters

The labyrinth area is completely free of wandering monsters. The minotaurs make sure no other creatures live in the maze, and the minotaurs themselves rarely wander the labyrinth since becoming infected. The minotaurs know where all the traps are and how to avoid them, if they do feel the need to travel the passageways.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Entrance to the Labyrinth (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This hallway is very different in design from the halls of the orc lair. The walls, ceiling, and floor are tiled in plain grey stones about 2-1/2 feet by 2-1/2 feet. A raised iron portcullis further marks the boundary between the two styles of construction. Carved into the stone walls just in front of the portcullis on either side are bull-headed humanoid creatures that stand the full height of the ten-foot ceiling.

A row of pressure plates under the portcullis cause it to drop on whoever triggers the trap. Once the portcullis has dropped, a DC 20 Strength check is required to lift it again, which also resets the trap. The creatures carved into the walls are minotaurs.

Portcullis Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Reflex save avoids (DC 14); catches multiple targets walking abreast; 1d6 piercing damage; Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 15 (jam portcullis or otherwise prevent it from dropping).

Area 2-2 – First Guard Post (EL 2): If the characters set off the portcullis trap in area 2-1, the minotaur will be ready for them. As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

The passageway enters into a large square room about 30 feet on each side, tiled with the same stones as the hallway. Hallways leave the room to the north, south, and east. Between you and the other hallways stands a huge humanoid creature covered in shaggy brown hair with the head of a bull. Its eyes are a sickly yellow color, and mucous runs from its nostrils. Even in its sickly, emaciated state it has a threatening presence. It lowers its head and charges the moment you enter the room.

The creature is a minotaur that has been infected by Lessian the plague wight. It attacks on sight. The room is otherwise bare. The minotaurs normally live in area 2-5, but they were instructed by the dead merchant Moddar Vich to regularly occupy the three guard rooms as well.

Infected Minotaur: CR 2; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 3d8; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk gore +3 melee (1d8 plus disease); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Infection; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., natural cunning, scent, immune to disease; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will –2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +2, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +7

SA – Infection: Any creature standing within five feet of an infected creature has a chance of contracting a randomly determined non-magical disease. A character damaged by an infected creature in melee combat will similarly contract a random disease (in addition to the one possibly contracted for simply being next to the infected creature).

Area 2-3 – Second Guard Post (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

This is a large room, 30 feet on each side. Every surface is covered in plain stone tiles, and the room is empty save for a large bull-headed monster. The creature's hair is falling out in many places, and you can hear a bubbling noise as it breathes its heavy breaths. Hallways leave the room to the east, west, and south.

The minotaur attacks on sight.

Infected Minotaur: CR 2; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 3d8; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk gore +3 melee (1d8 plus disease); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Infection; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., natural cunning, scent, immune to disease; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will –2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +2, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +7

SA – Infection: Any creature standing within five feet of an infected creature has a chance of contracting a randomly determined non-magical disease. A character damaged by an infected creature in melee combat will similarly contract a random disease (in addition to the one possibly contracted for simply being next to the infected creature).

Area 2-4 – Acid Spray Trap (EL 1): A rogue searching the area for traps will notice numerous tiny holes in the ceiling and pressure plates stretching across the hall with a width of 2-1/2 feet. When a pressure plate is activated, acid sprays from the holes. The trap contains enough acid to be activated three times. Although the trap is difficult to disable, it is easy to avoid the pressure plates once their presence is known (DC 10 Jump or Tumble check).

Acid Spray Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; catches multiple targets walking abreast; 1d4 acid damage + 1d2 acid damage the following round; Reflex DC 13 for half damage; Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 25 (remove stone tiles and disable pressure plates).

Area 2-5 – Minotaur Lair (EL 4): The minotaurs live here when they are not occupying the guard rooms. If the characters activated the acid trap in area 2-4, the minotaurs will be aware of their approach and attempt to ambush them as they enter the area. They try to block the entrance to the room with their bulk and keep the characters in the hallway to cramp them. Once the characters enter the room, read or paraphrase the following:

The floor of this large room is covered in animal furs and hides. The room is about 60 feet by 30 feet, with a 12 foot high ceiling covered in stone tiles. Five great axes lean against the walls in various places. The walls themselves are smeared with filth.

There are two infected minotaurs currently inhabiting this area. The axes are typical great axes which the minotaurs are no longer able to effectively wield due to their weakness. The hides and furs on the floor are of a much higher quality than those found with the orcs, and if a DC 12 Search check is made the characters can find three furs in good enough shape to resell for 10 gp each. If the characters end up fighting in the room, the hides on the floor qualify as rough terrain.

The secret door can be located with a DC 18 Search check.

Infected Minotaurs (2): CR 2; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 3d8; hp 14 each; Init +0; Spd 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk gore +3 melee (1d8 plus disease);

Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Infection; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., natural cunning, scent, immune to disease; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will –2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +2, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +7

SA – Infection: Any creature standing within five feet of an infected creature has a chance of contracting a randomly determined non-magical disease. A character damaged by an infected creature in melee combat will similarly contract a random disease (in addition to the one possibly contracted for simply being next to the infected creature).

Area 2-6 – Axe Trap (EL 1): This section of the hallway contains a number of pressure plates which activate an axe trap. When the trap is activated, a great axe swings down from a hidden compartment in the ceiling and hits the first person in line. If two people are in front walking abreast, determine the trap's target randomly. If the target avoids the axe, anyone standing directly behind must then also make a Reflex save.

Axe Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Reflex save avoids (DC 14); catches one target; 1d8 slashing damage; Search DC 13; Disable Device DC 13 (jam the axe in the ceiling or otherwise prevent it from dropping).

Area 2-7 – Third Guard Post (EL 2): If the characters set off the axe trap in area 2-6, the minotaur will be ready for them. As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

The passageway enters into a large square room about 30 feet on each side, tiled with the same stones as the hallway. Hallways leave the room to the south and west. In the room stands a huge humanoid creature covered in shaggy brown hair with the head of a bull. The stench of decay fills the room, and it appears that the creature's flesh is rotting from its bones in several spots. Blood drips from open sores on its face. It snarls and charges as you enter the room.

The minotaur attacks immediately.

There is a secret door on the eastern wall that leads to area 2-8. The door is composed of the same tiles that make up the wall, so blends in perfectly. Although visually difficult to spot, it is relatively easy to detect in other ways such as tapping on walls. It can be found with a DC 12 Search check.

Infected Minotaur: CR 2; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 3d8; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk gore +3 melee (1d8 plus disease); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Infection; SQ

Darkvision 60 ft., natural cunning, scent, immune to disease; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +2, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +7

SA – Infection: Any creature standing within five feet of an infected creature has a chance of contracting a randomly determined non-magical disease. A character damaged by an infected creature in melee combat will similarly contract a random disease (in addition to the one possibly contracted for simply being next to the infected creature).

Area 2-8 – Treasure Room (EL 4): If the characters fought the minotaur in area 2-7, Lessian will be aware of their presence. He waits on the side of the secret door, and if the characters find it he attacks the first one through, attempting to surprise the group and get his sneak attack bonus. Note that characters immediately to the other side of door from Lessian are within five feet and therefore subject to his infection ability. Once the characters are able to examine their surroundings, read or paraphrase the following:

This is a natural cave, very different from the constructed halls and rooms of the labyrinth. Water cascades pleasantly down the north wall of the cave, collecting in a clear pool before running through a small hole to the south. At the bottom of the pool a number of gold coins glimmer around a small chest.

If the characters managed to defeat the minotaur in area 2-7 without alerting Lessian, he will be found sitting in the pool fingering pieces of gold. This is the room he found himself in after digging himself out of his grave, and an examination of the room reveals the spot he entered through, although the tunnel filled in behind him and is no longer usable. The plague wight's presence here has infected the minotaurs of the labyrinth and the waters of the stream. The hole the stream leaves the cave from is too small to enter, but the stream exits the rock again in area 1-4. Once Lessian is defeated, the water returns to normal in a few days.

225 gold pieces are scattered at the bottom of the pool in addition to the small chest. The chest is locked (Open Lock DC 14) but not trapped, and inside the characters find four gems (worth 100 gp, 50 gp, 30 gp, and 25 gp), a silver ring with a small sapphire (actually a +1 *ring of protection*), a masterwork dagger with Moddar Vich's personal symbol on the blade, and a gold necklace (worth 75 gp).

A DC 15 Knowledge (local) or bardic lore check identifies Moddar Vich's personal symbol and recalls the legend of his buried treasure.



Lessian Thrivolt, Plague Wight Rog1: CR 4; Medium Undead; HD 4d12+1d6; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk slam +4 melee (1d4+1 plus disease); SA Infection, sneak attack +1d6; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 12, Con , Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +7; Combat Reflexes, Improved Unarmed Combat

SA – Infection: Any creature standing within five feet of a plague wight has a chance of contracting a randomly determined non-magical disease. A character damaged by a plague wight in melee combat will similarly contract a random disease (in addition to the one possibly contracted for simply being next to the plague wight).

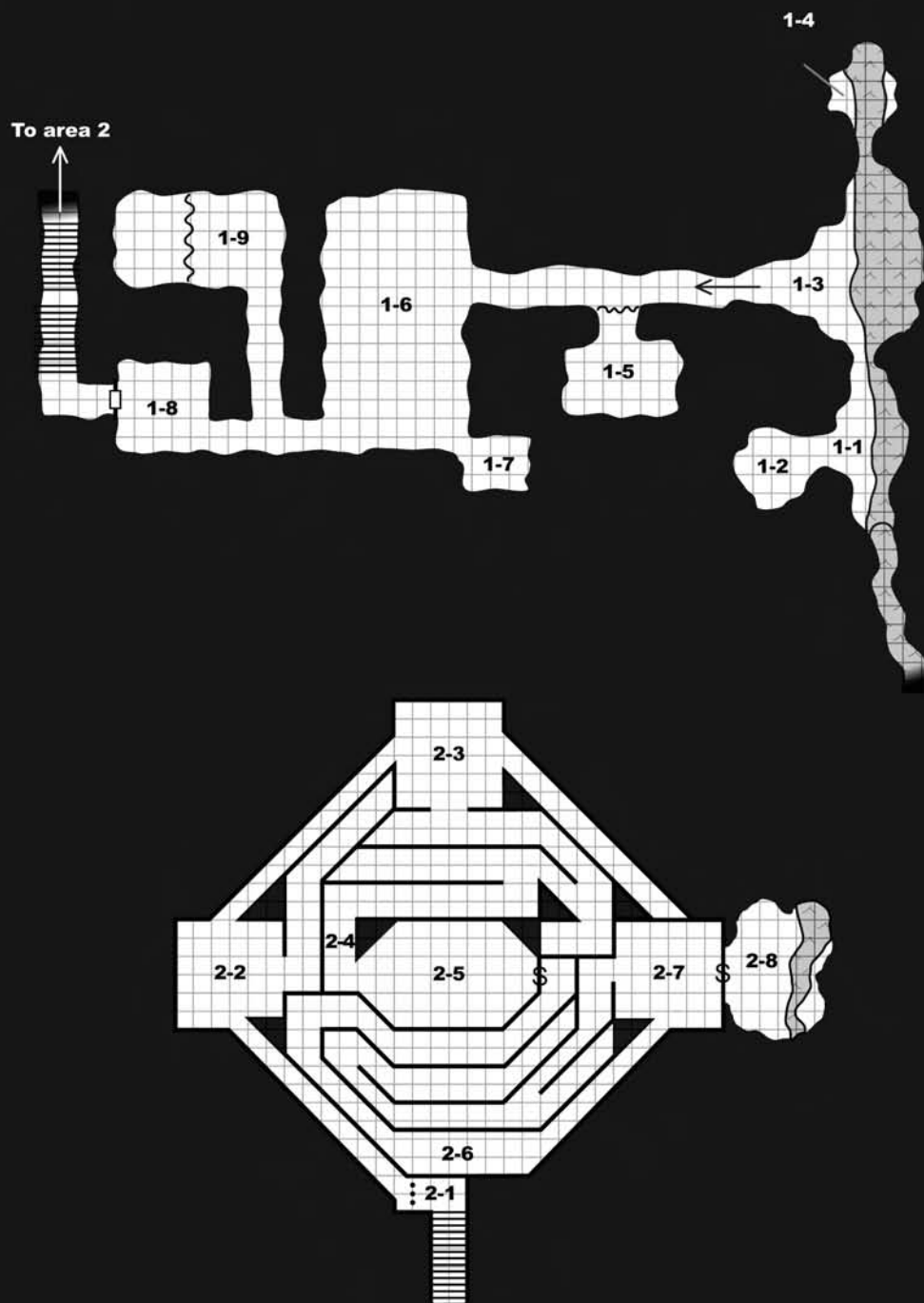
Rewards

Award the characters experience points as normal for the encounters. Award each character a bonus of 25 XP for each disease they became infected with over the course of the adventure. Feel free to also award a role playing bonus of 100 to 200 XP to players who portrayed their characters well and/or contributed to the game in other ways.

Further Adventures

Once the characters have completed the adventure, their first concern will probably be finding a way to cure the various diseases they've been infected with. This could be done by having the characters go on unconnected adventures as payment to a cleric or church for curing their diseases, or you could decide that the characters must actually track down the *plague chalice* to cure their afflictions. If the players are good-aligned, they may also desire to help cure the villages that get their drinking water from the contaminated stream. If a character ends up using Moddar Vich's dagger on a regular basis, they may attract the attention of the thieves' guild and Moddar's other old enemies who desire his treasure.

The Plague Wight's Revenge



Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Stench of Death

By Andrew Hind

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

Stench of Death is an adventure for four 1st level characters set in a northern coastal community that subsists largely on hunting seals. Characters with an ability to swim or thrive in water should prove especially helpful in surviving the trials of this adventure.

Stench of Death can be placed into any campaign setting that includes a cold, maritime region analogous to the North Atlantic. The main villain of this piece, a monstrous killer named Blubberbank, is a tough opponent for 1st level characters but he does have weaknesses and can be overcome with tactics, planning, and stealth. Parties that favor a heads-on approach may find themselves Blubberbank's latest victims.

Adventure Summary

The PCs are braving the darkness of Cold Harbour's dockside district when they happen to stumble upon a bloody trail, evidence of a recent murder. Motivated by heroism, self-preservation, or greed, the PCs follow the blood into a warehouse that serves as the killer's lair.

An investigation of the warehouse leads the PCs to conclude that the crew of the *Narwhal* is to be targeted that same evening, and reveals the crimes that the sealers committed. But before the information can be acted upon, the PCs are caught in a deadly trap – the only escape from which lies in entering the foreboding sewers of Cold Harbour. After making their way past various subterranean dangers, the PCs must board the *Narwhal* and deal with both unsavory sealers and a cold-hearted killer.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-2	89	T	Flood trap	3
1-3	90	C	Ghoul	1
1-4	91	C	Monstrous spider	1
1-5	91	C	Injured sea cat	3
2-1	93	C	Sealers (2)	1
2-4	94	C	<i>Captain Hempstrong</i> <i>Darby Blist</i>	2
2-5	95	C	Sealers (6)	3
2-8	96	C	Water scorpion	1/2
TBD	93	C	Blubberbank	2

Scaling Information

Stench of Death is designed for 4-6 characters of 1st-2nd levels. You can adapt the scenario to higher level parties with a few simple modifications.

Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 2nd level): Increase the speed of the flood trap so it fills the room faster. Advance the ghoul (area 1-3) and monstrous spider (area 1-4) by 2 HD each. Give each sealer (areas 2-1 and 2-5) two more levels as warriors or experts. Make Captain Hempstrong an Ari4, and make Darby Blist a Brd3. Most importantly, increase the power of Blubberbank. Consider increasing his Hit Dice by 4, and making his gaff and seal-skin armor magical. He could have limited divine spellcasting abilities granted by Ilquot (perhaps even cleric levels).

Getting the Players Involved

Stench of Death begins as the PCs witness the brutal assault upon a sealer along the wharfs of Cold Harbour. Their reasons for being present in the village at this time are best left up to individual GMs and are left vague to allow the adventure to be slipped effortlessly into existing campaigns. Their presence in Cold Harbour might be entirely coincidental (they might be waiting out a storm during a sea passage, for example, or in town to restock supplies), but for dramatic purposes it's best if they've come to the port for a reason somewhat related to the plot. Below are a few suggestions:

- Cold Harbour has offered a 200 gp reward for the apprehension – dead or alive – of the murderer stalking its wharves. The PCs may be tempted by the money to take up Blubberbank's trail.
- Captain Grimhook hasn't a crew to man his boat (when asked why, he'll simply shrug and stare emotionlessly at his questioners), and has consequently put out a call for willing hands. His promise for good pay has drawn the PCs to Cold Harbour in search of employment. Unfortunately, by signing up for the seal hunt, the PCs inadvertently place themselves in danger as potential targets of Blubberbank.
- The ship the PCs have booked passage on was damaged in a storm and has put in at Cold Harbour for much-needed repairs. They arrive to find a port gripped by fear. With the wharfs being stalked by some unknown killer, finding shipwrights willing to work upon the damaged vessel is problematic. Consequently, little work has been done to make the ship seaworthy again. Unless the PCs wish to make their stay an extended one, the killer must be brought to justice.

Background Story

There's trouble brewing in the coastal village of Cold Harbour. Several sealers have gone missing. In several cases, the bodies have turned up in the bay, bloated, partially eaten by fish, and most horrible of all, skinned. Other times, no sign of the missing mariner is found, and he's simply presumed dead. In total now, four men have been claimed by an unknown assailant. The village is gripped in fear. Seal pelts are the community's sole export of note, but as it becomes clear that only those engaged in the trade are at risk, fewer men are willing to sign up for hunt. If the fear gripping Cold Harbour is not assuaged, the community may not make enough on the harvest to survive the season.

The story behind Cold Harbour's troubles is even more sinister than the townsfolk suspect. The seal hunt has always been at the blessing of Ilquot, a deity of the northern "savages" which the people of Cold Harbour have come to both fear and respect. Long ago, they began offering prayers and sacrifices to this often-brutal entity, and accepted him as an aspect of their God of the Sea. As long as Ilquot's blessings were not abused, the people were free to harvest the seals as his native followers have for centuries. To ensure that this vital industry remained sustainable and Ilquot was never angered, local priests and village council combined to strictly regulate the hunt. Quotas were fixed and rigidly enforced.

Recently, a flagrant abuse of the system did occur. Tor Barnabas was a member of a sealing crew that took far more than its allotted share. While hardly a pillar of society, Barnabas was nonetheless wracked by guilt and fearful of divine retribution. Eventually, the secret became too much to bear, and Barnabas resolved to report the crime to the church. He didn't live long enough to ease his conscience. Learning of his intended betrayal, his crewmates got to him before the crime could be reported, silencing him permanently. They clubbed him senseless just as they would a seal, and then the murderous band dumped Barnabas' body into the blubberbank, a stinking cesspool where the detritus of the sealing harvest is deposited.

Though the beating had been thorough, Barnabas did not truly die. Ilquot had taken notice of the crew's disregard for his divine wishes, and indeed had detected a subtle but definite shift in the willingness among Cold Harbour's inhabitants to turn a blind eye towards such previously unimaginable slights. Ilquot decided that the community needed to be reminded of his power, and that the crew of the poaching vessel required punishment. To that end, he raised Barnabas from his stinking grave as an undead avenger. Wearing a blood-soaked slicker and a horrific body-suit made of crudely stitched

seal pelts, with a vicious club and sealer's gaff in either hand, Barnabas became an unrelenting, remorseless killer known only as Blubberbank.

Cold Harbour (village): Conventional; AL NG; Population 420; 200 gp limit; Assets 4,200 gp; Mixed (human 80%, half-orc 8%, dwarf 5%, minotaur 3%, halfling 2%, half-elf 1%, other 1%).

Authority Figures: Soloman Black, merchant and chairman of town council (NG male human Exp4); Ikammanen, cleric and council member (LG male human Clr5); Edith Lough, sail-maker and councilmember (LG female half-elf Exp2).

Important Characters: Grendel Knossos, freebooter and captain of the *Forsaken* (N male minotaur Wiz5)

Player Beginning

Read or paraphrase the following:

You stand within the maze of dark streets behind the docks, cloaks pulled up tight against the cold. The roadway you stand in is a narrow, cobbled place, the bricks glistening with the residue of recently fallen rain and crumbling with damp. A public house stands just down the street, its yellow gleam drawing you in like moths. But what stops you is the streak of red – blood you surmise – stretching along the cobblestones and into a nearby warehouse. A shudder runs through it. Could another person have fallen prey to the mysterious dockside killer? Perhaps the answers lie within that darkened warehouse.

The Streets of Cold Harbour

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – The Warehouse: Read or paraphrase the following:

The warehouse is dark and musty, clearly unused to any great extent for a number of years. But there's something else hanging in the air, the heady scent of blood and something far worse, something that smells vaguely of rotting fish. The blood trail simply stops in the middle of the warehouse; there's no body, however, nor are there remnants to suggest the body was devoured on the spot.

The warehouse is almost completely empty, save for the odd rat and a few empty barrels. Characters making a DC 12 Search check locate the trap door located directly below where the blood trail stops. When the door is opened, characters see a ladder descending into darkness, the rungs of which are splattered with flecks of blood (Spot DC 12).

Area 1-2 – Blubberbank's Lair (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The ladder delves deep below the warehouse and the cobbled streets above, finally ending in a small, square chamber. A bloody figure lies at the foot of a dais, atop which looms the statue of a menacing walrus-headed figure. While the statue is carved from wood, the tusks look to be of genuine ivory. Illumination is provided by a pair of oil-filled human skulls that act as lamps and which flank the statue. There is a fetid odor here, and a palpable chill emanates from the wet dripping walls.

Characters making a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check recognize the statue as representing Ilquot, a savage-races deity common in the far northern reaches. He's a god of the frigid oceans, but also symbolizes retribution and war.

Though concussed by a vicious blow to the head and suffering several gaff wounds, the figure lying atop the dais is still clinging to life (-8 hp). He is Jonah Skutle, a member of the Narwhal's crew.

Through teeth clenched by pain and eyes dazed by nausea, Skutle warns the PCs that his assailant vowed that "before the moon is high his mates would suffer the same fate as he. And may the Gods help me, I recognized those eyes." Skutle can be stabilized with a DC 15 Heal check or a healing spell, and if so may be convinced (with a DC 12 Diplomacy check) to relate how and why he and his fellows "killed" Barnabas. The conversation should make it clear that the mysterious killer intends to target the rest of Skutle's crew from the Narwhal, and that the crew is likely to be found on board their ship.

It is important that the PCs speak with Skutle. They must discover that the Narwhal is the probable target of the killer so they head to the ship after escaping the sewers.

Treasure: Characters making a DC 12 Search check find a hidden compartment set into the dais in which Blubberbank keeps his ritual skinning knife and valuables taken from his victims: 75 sp, 10 gp, and a scrimshaw necklace worth 20 gp.

Ilquot's tusks are indeed real ivory, clearly harvested from a very old and large walrus. Each one is

worth 60 gp. There is a risk, as characters standing upon the dais may step upon a pressure plate and trigger a deadly trap

Trap: As soon as the trap is triggered, a wooden panel swings over the trap door, sealing the PCs in at the same time that concealed drains in the wall open. Water begins pouring into the room, rising at a rate of one foot every round. The ceiling is 7 feet high, so in 7 rounds the entire chamber will be flooded. Once the room begins flooding, a successful DC 24 Disable Device check is required to close the drain.

The only two exits are through the trap door which now is sealed by a bronze-reinforced panel, or through the locked door leading into the sewers. The latter is the easier option of the two. Characters trying to force their way through the trap door must stand on the ladder in order to do so, and therefore lack balance and leverage. Damage rolls and Strength checks are made at a -2 penalty. The door leading into the sewers, however, is far easier to break down despite being locked.

Development: If the PCs don't trigger the trap themselves, Blubberbank does so himself from the warehouse above. As the water begins pouring in, the PCs hear something moving on the wooden planks above. A patch of moonlight is suddenly blotched out by a passing shadow of a lumbering shape that crosses overhead. Then, the mysterious figure is gone, leaving the PCs to their fate.

Flood Trap: CR 3; mechanical device, touch trigger, automatic reset; multiple targets (all targets in this room); liquid (water fills room); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 24

Trap Door, Barred and Reinforced with Bronze: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 18; Break DC 25.

Door, Locked and Rotting: 2 in. thick, Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 17; Open Locks DC 15.

Drain System

The Cold Harbour drain system was designed about a century ago and consists of a small network of pipes and brick-lined tunnels that criss-cross beneath the town. Old smuggler tunnels occasionally intersect them, leading off to various warehouses located along the waterfront. The larger tunnels are shaped like inverted eggs, allowing rat-catchers and workers to walk through. There is no form of illumination. The smell is strong but not overwhelming, and after a while one can grow accustomed to it. However, it permanently soils clothing and imposes a -2 penalty to Charisma checks until a bath is taken.

Area 1-3 – Ghoul Lair (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The tunnel terminates in a small room with crumbling walls, the ceiling of which is wood with holes rotted away in places to permit some moonlight to filter through. One corner is filled by a pile of rags rising several feet off the ground, measuring about 8 feet long and 4 feet wide, with a hole in the top of the mound about a foot in diameter. The entire mound glistens with a sickly yellow substance.

Characters making a DC 12 Spot check notice that the floor is stained with dried blood. This room is the lair of a ghoul; the mound of rags is its nest. The yellowy substance is bile, which ghouls use to soften their meals to make them more palatable. While it isn't harmful in any way, characters who get bile on themselves must make a DC 8 Willpower save or be so repulsed they suffer a -1 penalty to all actions for that round and the next.

Monster: The ghoul has maintained a low profile in Cold Harbour for almost a decade, because its appetite is nowhere near as ravenous as is that of most of its kind. It subsists largely on rats and other sewer vermin, and needs a substantial meal only a few times per year. Mostly it limits itself to unearthly fresh bodies from the cemetery, only rarely taking a live victim.

Tactics: If the ghoul hears the PCs' approach, it climbs the brick wall and clings to the ceiling immediately above the tunnel entrance. A stealthy, cunning foe, it only attacks if discovered or if suitable victims – a lone individual, or an obviously weakened party – becomes available. Because of its roost, characters engaged in melee with the ghoul must lift their heads to attack, thereby exposing their vulnerable necks. The ghoul, recognizing this, will attempt to direct its claw strikes at this area (melee attack at -3 attack penalty). Any blow the ghoul lands in such a manner is considered a critical hit.

If the ghoul is in danger of being slain, it flees through one of two possible means: either the main tunnel or a one-foot-wide hole in the ceiling (requiring a DC 15 Escape Artist check and opening itself up to attacks of opportunity).

Treasure: Inside the nest are trophies taken from various victims, most of which are mundane. They include a wooden spoon with a puffin carved into the handle (1 sp), a candle in a clay jar engraved with flowers (5 sp), a shoe, a half-empty bottle of whiskey, a clay vial containing two cat's tongues, a dagger, and a hand mirror with a bronze frame with personalized engravings on the reverse (worth 40 gp).

Characters making a DC 12 Search check discover a concealed compartment behind several loose bricks about seven feet off the ground. Removing the loose bricks reveals a cupboard-sized niche containing various indescribable chunks of meat that serve as a food source should hunting be slim, as well as the creature's most valued treasures – 50 gp and a gem worth 50 gp.

Ghoul: CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk Bit +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis); Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack

Area 1-4 – Spider Webs (EL 1): If the PCs have a light source, they will probably see that the tunnel is covered in webs gleaming with some foul, sticky residue. Otherwise, characters run the risk of walking into the webs and becoming entangled.

Webs: The sheets of sticky webbing can be seen with a DC 13 Spot check. Characters failing this check stumble into its embrace and are trapped as though by a successful web attack. These webs are slimy and do not burn easily or quickly.

Webs: hp 12, Break DC 22; Escape Artist DC 16; Spot DC 13; SQ Damage reduction 5/fire, fire resistance 10.

Monster: The webs were made by a monstrous spider that hides down a small drain pipe nearby. It only emerges to attack if a creature becomes enmeshed in its webs.

Note: There is an easy means of bypassing this obstacle. The sewer is filled with about one foot of water. The webbing extends no lower than the waterline, so characters can simply swim under it. The webs cover an area about five feet in width, however, so characters should make a DC 8 Swim check to prevent from surfacing in the midst of the webs.

Monstrous Spider: CR 1; Small Vermin; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft, swim 20 ft; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0, Grp –6, Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4-2 plus poison); SA Poison (injury; Fort DC 10; initial 1d3 Str, secondary 1d3 Str), web (10 ft. range, effective against Tiny creatures only); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense (water only) 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 7, Dex 17, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Jump –2, Spot +4; Weapon Finesse.

Area 1-5 – Tidal Pools (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The tunnel opens up below the wharves. Ahead is the cold, crashing surf. Your way is blocked by a tidal pool that stretches across almost the entirety of the tunnel mouth. The water in the pool roils with activity, stirred by the relentless crashing of the waves against the rocks lining it. Only a narrow rocky ledge along the right side of the pool seems to offer safe passage.

The ledge along the wall is about two feet wide, normally more than wide enough for a character to pass over without undo challenge. However, the rocks are slick with seaweed, water, and mollusks. Navigating this walkway therefore requires a DC 12 Balance check. Failure indicates the character falls into the tidal pool.

Alternatively, characters could attempt to swim the pool, jump its span, or climb the walls (DC 15 Climb).

Once every three rounds, the pool is buffeted by another wave, causing the water to surge violently. Characters in the pool at that time take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage (DC 12 Reflex save for half) and must make a DC 15 Swim check to prevent being sucked under the surface.

Monster: The pool is the sanctuary of an immature sea cat. Too young to be completely on its own, the sea cat has been forced to find its way by the premature death of its mother. An encounter with a killer whale cost the sea cat one of its limbs (as a result, it cannot rend) and left it extremely wary. Now the sea cat hunts only beneath the wharves and shallows of Cold Harbour's sheltered bay. It will attack anyone entering the tidal pool, but otherwise will only attempt to snatch easy prey – Small-sized characters if they should come within reach of the water.

Injured Immature Sea Cat: CR 3; Medium Magical Beast; HD 3d10+9; hp 25 hp; Init +1; Spd 10 ft. (2 squares), swim 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +12; Attack Claw +7 melee (1d6+2); Full Atk Claw +7 melee (1d6+2) and bite +2 melee (1d8+2); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., hold breath, low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +7, Swim +12; Alertness, Endurance, Iron Will

The Narwhal

After emerging from the sewers, the PCs are free to make their way to the Narwhal. There they can catch the killer that stalks Cold Harbour, and bring seal poachers to justice.

Boarding the Narwhal

The Narwhal lies moored at the end of a dock along Cold Harbour's wharf. Two sealers stand on deck alongside the boarding plank that has been extended from the ship to the docks. They are alert and on guard, wary of having their captain's delicate negotiations interrupted. Both carry crossbows. Because the dock is free of obstructions of any kind, characters have very little cover and it is difficult to approach unobserved.

If the party attempts a direct approach and are spotted, they will be brusquely ordered to leave on threat of pain. If the PCs outnumber the guards and show signs of resistance, the guards call for assistance from their mates. PCs who attempt to bluff their way aboard have a difficult time (+2 difficulty modifier) because of the wariness of the guards on this particular evening. A reasonably convincing story, such as that the PCs are excisemen making a surprise inspection, may succeed under the right circumstances, but clearly implausible ones will be seen for what they are immediately.

Approaching the ship from the water side is theoretically easier, as the guards are not watching that side of the vessel. However, PCs must make Swim checks to do so, or steal a rowboat. In unskilled hands, a rowboat can be quite noisy – oars dipping into the water, the squeaking of oar-locks, waves lapping against the hull. The oarsman must make a Dexterity check or a Move Silently check. Those with maritime experience (ranks in Profession (sailor), for example) gain a +1 synergy bonus for every rank in an applicable skill, while characters should also gain a +1 circumstance bonus for every reasonable precaution taken (muffling the oars, greasing oar-locks, etc.).

Even if their approach is undetected, characters must still get aboard. Since the Narwhal is moored, not anchored, there is no anchor chain to climb. The most likely option therefore is to Climb the hull (DC 13). Halflings and gnomes can crawl through the portholes with little effort, but larger races require a DC 15 Escape Artist check.

The Narwhal on Alert

The response of the crew to an alert will be confused and erratic. PCs may wonder why the entire crew doesn't search them out and descend on them. The answer lies in the presence of Blubberbank aboard the

Narwhal; between him and the PCs, the crew are never really sure where their enemies are, what strength they have, and what their intentions are. As a result, they spread themselves hopelessly thin.

The sailors located in the crews' quarters form into three two-man patrols. One pair patrols below decks aft, another forward, and the third guards the valuable hold. All other crew – including Captain Hempstrong – remain at their posts, and therefore most area descriptions remain unchanged even should the alarm be raised.

It should also be noted that the crew are unlikely to form an alliance with the PCs against Blubberbank. The situation is chaotic and they have no way of knowing who the real enemy is and where they lie. As far as the crew of the Narwhal are concerned, all boarders are unwelcome and will be treated as such. They'll fight first, sort out the bodies later.

Hunters Hunted: Running Blubberbank

Blubberbank's location is not defined in the map key. He is a schemer and a planner, and doesn't leave survival to chance. He will be in motion throughout the course of the adventure, hunting the PCs and the sailors, attacking and retreating constantly. Stage combats with Blubberbank in a manner as exciting and memorable as possible, and use a unique tactic for each encounter. For example:

- In one ambush set on the main deck, Blubberbank bull-rushes a PC and attempts to force him overboard, where he will make easy prey.
- Using his gaff, from underneath a set of stairs he hooks the leg of a descending PC, causing him to cartwheel down the stairs (1d4 damage, Reflex save DC 12 for half damage) and depositing him in a helpless pile below.
- He sneaks up behind the party and attempts to club the character bringing up the rear into submission. If successful, he quickly retreats with his victim.
- A large fishing net is dropped on the PCs from above (either through the cargo hold hatch or perhaps from the ship's rigging), then Blubberbank makes a quick strike on the netted PCs before retreating.

Blubberbank always attacks from a position of strength and leaves an escape route open for himself. He prefers to pick off targets singly if possible, but if forced to fight a larger group he will engage in hit-and-run tactics.

tics, attacking viciously from ambush for a few rounds then retreating just as suddenly. That said, he's also confident of his abilities and relentless in his devotion to duty, so he won't abort his mission to punish the crew of the Narwhal until he'd reduced to less than 5 hp.

The final battle should be staged at the GM's discretion (though of course the actions of PCs upset the best-laid plans). Ideally, it takes place after the PCs have explored most of the Narwhal, dealt with Captain Hempstrong, and suffered from a couple of Blubberbank's assaults already.

Blubberbank, male human undead Com2: Medium Undead (cold); CR 2; HD 2d4+2d12; hp 18; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Atk/Full Atk club +5 melee (1d6+3) or gaff +3 melee (1d6+3); SQ Undead traits, darkvision 60 ft., turn resistance +2, cold subtype (cold immunity; double damage from fire except on successful save), iron lungs (can hold his breath for 60 rounds), low-light vision; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con –, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Hide +3, Jump +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Search +3, Spot +5, Swim +11, Survival +2; Weapon Focus.

Possessions: Blood-caked rain slicker, seal-skin leather armor, sealing club, gaff.

Description: Once a man, Tor Barnabas is now anything but. As Blubberbank, he is still humanoid in shape, but mean and misshapen. He wears a grotesque bodysuit stitched together from an amalgam of seal hides and human skins, beneath which his eyes glow with an evil so base that it couldn't possibly survive within a human. Blubberbank stinks of the sea and rotting fish, wears a blood-stained slicker, and wields both a club and a gaff in his swollen hands. He's a single-minded killer, but displays cunning and patience in his dastardly work.

Gaff

A gaff is a large metal hook with a crossbar at the base of its handle. Sometimes, they are mounted on poles 2-3 feet in length. Gaffs are typically used to hook fish or lift seal carcasses. Because the hook can wrap around an enemy's leg, a gaff can be used to make trip attempts. When using a gaff, you get a +1 bonus on your opposed attack roll when trying to disarm an opponent.

Cost 2 gp; damage 1d6; critical x3; weight 3lbs; type slashing.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Main Deck (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The vessel is about average sized for a fishing or sealing boat, though much smaller than a merchant vessel. The deck is quite small, measuring about 50 feet in length, and is littered with netting, ropes, and viscera from skinned seals. A central mast with dangling rigging stands amidst this mess, and beneath its shadow is an open hatchway presumably leading to the hold. To the fore and aft, below the upper decks, are doors.

A flash of red, a lit match, casts an eerie glow over the hardened faces of a pair of crewmen leaning wearily against the railing. They flank the plank running from the ship to the deck, guarding the only obvious means of boarding her. The match is cast into the water, allowing the darkness to flow back over the scene. Only the faint glowing embers of a pipe mark the position of the crewmen.

The ropes, netting, and viscera make moving across the deck something of a chore. Move Silently checks suffer a -2 circumstance penalty, and anyone attempting to fight on deck must make a Reflex save each round (DC 10) or stumble over the debris (losing Dexterity bonus to AC and taking a -2 penalty to attack rolls for that round).

Characters making a DC 12 Search check may notice wet footprints leading from the seaward railings through the door in the aft part of the vessel. Characters with the Track feat may follow the trail, which grows fainter as the boarder dries, down into the bogie (area 2-3) where it ends.

Monsters: The sentries are typical sealers in every respect.

Tactics: The sentries seek to bar entrance to the ship, through force if necessary. If they are outnumbered or their opponents put up an unusually brisk struggle, the sentries cry out an alarm to their mates.

Sealer, Male human Com1: CR 1/2; Medium-sized Humanoid (human); HD 1d4+4; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk Club +1 melee (1d6+1) or unarmed +1 melee (1d3+1); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Move Silently +3, Swim +3, Survival +2

Possessions: Club, 8 sp



Area 2-2 – Stores: Read or paraphrase the following:

You have obviously entered the boat's stores. Five wooden casks stand against a wall, alongside several sacks and six lengths of wood planking and a large coil of rope. From a wooden rack set into the wall hang tools, including hammers, saws, gaffs, and an adze. A staircase leads to a lower level. A pile of furs and blankets lie in a haphazard heap on the floor. Rats scurry for the shadows, chattering insolently at the interruption to their foray.

This small room contains standard stores that the crew might use while on a sealing expedition. The rope measures 100 feet in length, while the sacks contain flour and dried beans. The contents of the casks are as follows: two of fresh water, one of ale, one with tar, and one of nails. The furs are of marginal quality and have little resale value.

Area 2-3 – Bogie: Read or paraphrase the following:

The boat's galley is cramped, with a sturdy chest and small wooden table that has been bolted to the floor surrounding a small pot-bellied stove. It has a metal chimney that can be angled outside when the porthole is open. Beside the stove is a wooden bin with sticks of wood and chunks of coal to be used as fuel. A

stack of stools stands in the corner and is secured to the wall with ropes.

But it's not the furnishings that cause your stomach to revolt, but rather the grisly scene of a corpse, stretched out on the table, large gaffs impaling his limbs to the wood below. The corpse has been painstakingly and expertly skinned. He may have been alive during the torturous process. Why else would the mouth be sewn shut with sturdy fishing wire?

The body is that of one of the sealers, whom Blubberbank killed about an hour before.

Beyond the corpse, there's very little of significance within the bogie, which is maritime parlance for a galley. The chest holds an assortment of pots and pans, cooking knives and cutlery, and wooden plates. If the stove is lit without the chimney first being angled through the porthole, the room quickly fills with smoke. Within four rounds, the smoke provides one-quarter concealment, rising to half concealment in 10 rounds.

Area 2-4 – Captain's Cabin (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The cabin is small but private, clearly occupied by only a single individual. On a ship as small as this, that can only mean it belongs to the captain. It's relatively spartan, nonetheless, with only a bunk, a desk and chair, a large sea chest, and a chart rack as furnishings. The room is cast in dim light by an ornately decorated hooded lantern that hangs from the ceiling.

Unless an alert has been sounded, Captain Hempstrong will be in this cabin finalizing a transaction for poached seal pelts with Darby Blist, an unscrupulous halfling trader who masquerades as a traveling story-teller. They'll be standing over the desk, discussing numbers and toasting their deal with tumblers of sherry. On the other hand, if they are made aware of intruders, both Hempstrong and Blist will be pressed against the bulkhead on either side of the door, prepared to ambush anyone who enters the cabin.

Treasure: The desk has two drawers, neither of which is locked. One contains a small knife, an inkpot and quill, a small pouch containing 10 sp, and several loose sheets of parchment paper. A second deeper drawer contains ship's logs and a transaction book with bills and receipts for seal skins sold and maritime supplies purchased. Looking over these books demonstrates a history of poaching and is enough to prove Captain Hempstrong's guilt.

The chest is locked. It contains a half-bottle of sher-

ry and a wineskin of whiskey, a sack with 25 gp and 42 sp, items of clothing, and a well-polished masterwork short-sword engraved with a heraldic device (characters making a DC 12 Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check identify this as an officer's sword of the Porthmeor Navy). The sword is worth 25% more than normal if sold to collectors of militaria.

Locked Chest: Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 25.

Captain Esterman Hempstrong, male human Ari2: CR 1; Medium-sized Humanoid (human); HD 2d8+2; hp 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Longsword +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20) or unarmed +2 melee (1d3+1); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 10; Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +2, Balance +1, Climb +2, Intimidate +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +1, Swim +3, Survival +2; Skill Focus (Intimidate).

Languages: Common, Elven

Possessions: Gold ring (worth 25 gp)

Description: Esterman Hempstrong, formerly an officer of the Porthmeor Navy and now at sixty the captain and owner of the Narwhal, is a proud but unscrupulous man – one reason, perhaps, why he never advanced beyond junior grade in his naval career. The light accentuates the lines carved in his face by years of standing a quarterdeck, and his hair, tied back in a queue, is as white as if it were powdered. Though already well past prime, his taciturn manner and granite expression makes him appear even older. His crew, both aboard the naval vessels in his youth and those hired onto his sealing vessel, are often unnerved by his frequent silences. He is not one to rashly take action; careful consideration leads to good decision making, he reasons, and that in turn will keep him alive and prosperous. Unfortunately, he was forced into taking hasty action when he learned of Barnabas' intended treason. He may soon come to regret it...

Darby Blist, Male Halfling Brd1: CR 1; Small Humanoid (halfling); HD 1d6; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk/Full Atk Dagger -1 melee (1d4-1/19-20) or dagger +1 ranged (1d4-1/19-20); SQ Bardic knowledge, bardic music; AL CN; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 9, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +7, Hide +4, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +6, Perform (act) +6, Perform (oratory) +6, Search +6, Sense Motive +7; Alertness, Skill Focus (Appraise).

Languages: Common, Halfling

Spells Prepared (2; base DC 14 + spell level):

0-level – *dancing lights, prestidigitation.*

Possessions: 2 daggers, lantern, money belt with 100 gp (DC 12 Search to find).

Description: Darby is a plump and jolly halfling whose ruddy skin stands in stark contrast to his silver-white hair. Most know him as a storyteller who travels from town to town, collecting, cataloguing, preserving, and reciting folktales. In truth, Darby uses this innocent guise as a mask for his real profession, that of a merchant selling illicit goods. While he radiates an amiable appearance, he can go from sweet to sour in the blink of an eye if profits are threatened.

Area 2-5 – Crew's Quarters (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The unpleasant odors of close and confined habitation assail you as soon as the door is opened. Six double bunks fill the entirety of this little cabin. The only other furnishing is a foul-smelling chamber pot laying on one of the beds.

The crew quarters are actually not large enough to accommodate the boat's crew in its entirety, so sailors "hot-bunk" it (two sailors share a bunk; when one wakes the other is free to use the bed). Personal belongings are stored in a six inch space beneath the mattresses, and consist almost exclusively of changes of clothing and a few insignificant creature comforts.

Monsters: There are six sealers sleeping here unless the alert has been sounding, in which case the men will rouse themselves from their slumber and begin patrolling the ship as detailed in the section The Narwhal on Alert, above. For stats, refer to area 2-1.

Tactics: The sealers are a rough and ready bunch, but are not trained combatants. They'll fight bravely, but if reduced to half their number they lose their bravado and begin to look for ways to either flee or surrender.

Area 2-6 – Hold: Read or paraphrase the following:

An overwhelming, nauseating stench billows from the ship's hold. The stench is that of fish mixed with dried blood and rotting flesh. Inside, you see dozens of seal carcasses dangling from meat-hooks affixed to the ceiling. There's also a neatly stacked pile of seal-pelts that stands to the height of your waist.

The stench is so overwhelming that characters entering the hold must make a DC 11 Fortitude save or spend the next 1d4 minutes retching, suffering a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls, checks,



and saves during this time. Characters making a DC 16 appraise check determine that the pelts, as witnessed in this hold alone, are worth about 500 gp. They also represent a full quota for a vessel of this size (DC 15 Knowledge (local) check).

The decking is slick with moisture and blood. Characters engaging in combat within the hold must make a DC 10 Reflex save each round or suffer -2 to attack rolls and lose Dexterity bonuses to armor class.

Area 2-7 – Secret Hold: This door consists of planking set into the wall, matched almost perfectly to avoid detection without a DC 15 Search check. When opened, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the door is a small chamber, little larger than a closet actually. It is full of seal-pelts, cured and ready for sale.

The pelts in the secret hold take Captain Hempstrong and his crew well past their allotted quota. Their value (250 gp in total; DC 16 Appraise check to evaluate) makes the risk of being caught, slim as it is, an insignificant deterrent to poaching.

Area 2-8 – Bilge: Read or paraphrase the following:

You look down from the hatchway into the ship's bilge, which runs the full length and width

of the vessel. The bottom of the boat, two feet below, is covered in wet sand which acts as the ballast. A scuttling noise comes from the front of the boat, but it seems to elude the light cast by your light source.

As noted, the bilge is only two feet in height, so characters larger than size Tiny who choose to enter must crawl or stoop heavily; even halflings must double over. As a result, Small characters who enter the bilge suffer -2 to attack rolls, AC, and Reflex saves. The penalty for Medium-sized characters is -4, while those of Large size simply cannot fit into the bilge.

Monster: This dank, festering compartment is the home and hunting ground of a small monstrous water scorpion. Resembling a desert scorpion in many ways, the creature is nonetheless distinguished by its moist, leathery hide which allows it to survive sub-zero temperature waters. While the vermin normally feeds upon rats, it is not above taking other suitable prey that stumble into its midst (such as halflings), and will violently defend itself if attacked. Note that the scorpion does not suffer any negatives to attacks, armor class, or saves within the bilge because it stands only stands about a foot in height.

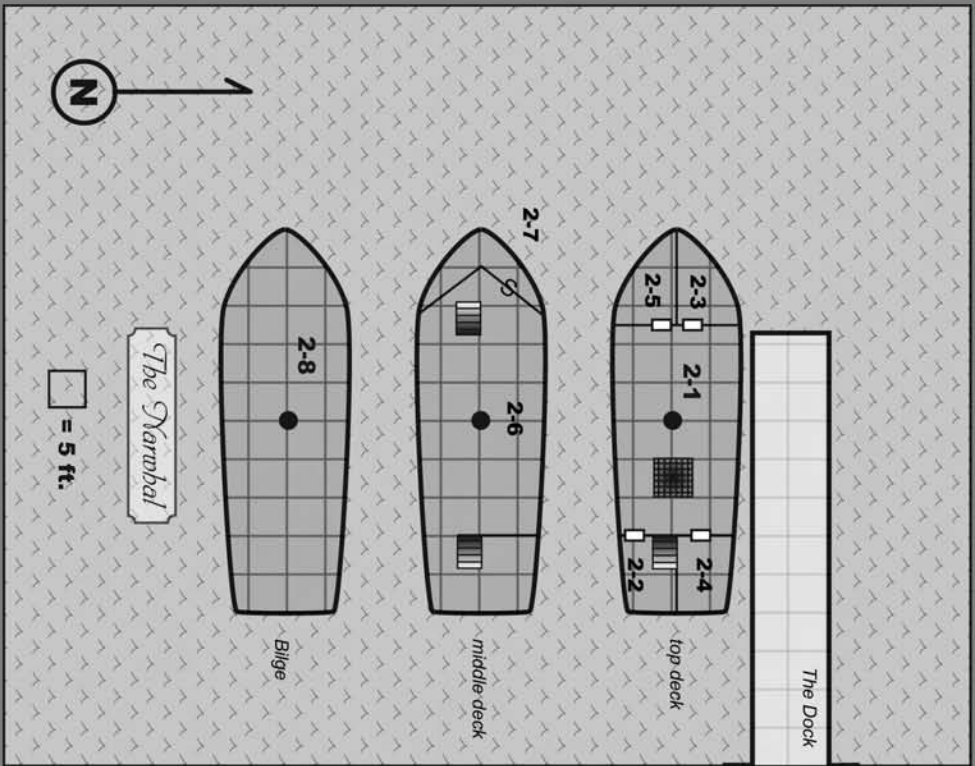
Water Scorpion: CR 1/2; Small Vermin; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Atk Claw +1 melee (1d3-1); Full Atk 2 claws +1 melee (1d3-1) and sting -4 melee (1d3-1 and poison); SA Improved grab, squeeze (if it gets hold on a creature of its size or smaller, automatically deals damage with both claws), poison (injury, Fort DC 11, initial 1d3 Str, secondary 1d3 Str); SQ Vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 14, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Hide +12, Spot +7; Weapon Finesse.

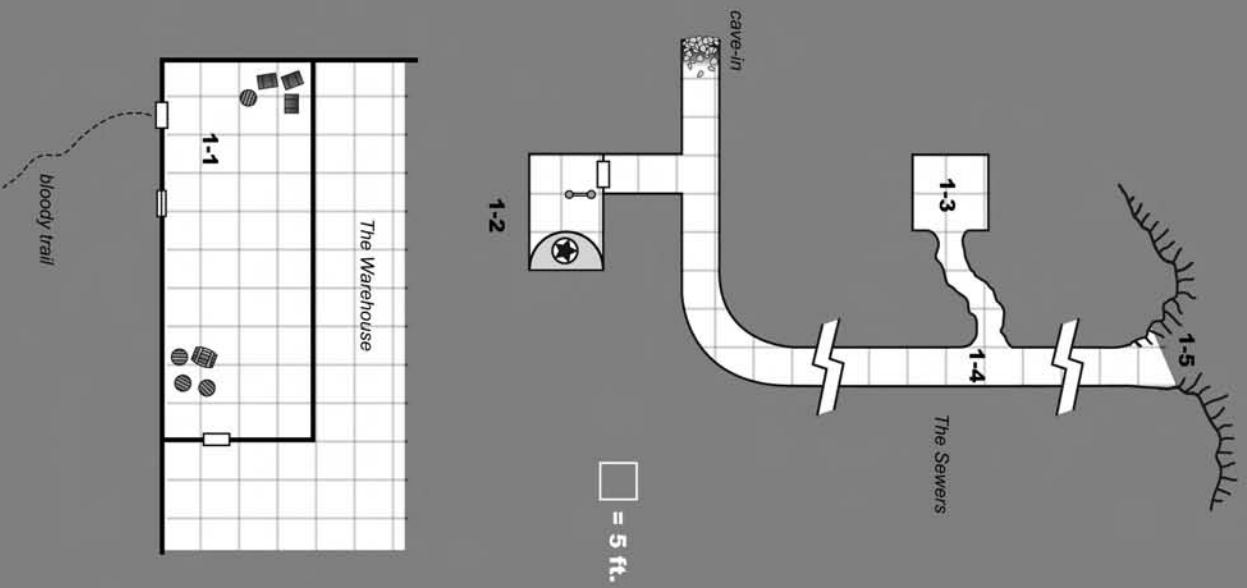
Further Adventures

With the defeat of Blubberbank and the revelation of Captain Hempstrong's misdeeds, the PCs are hailed as heroes. In addition to the 200 gp reward for ending the spree of murder, the Cold Harbour town council grants the characters a monetary reward for uncovering the crimes of the Narwhal's crew, to the effect of 25 gp each. If Hempstrong survives, he'll be fined for his illicit activities and have his sealing license revoked. The PCs will have made an enemy.

Finally, even if he is slain during the course of the adventure, Blubberbank might survive. He is, after all, his deity's undead avenging spirit. Will he return at some later date... and if so, will he remember how the PCs foiled his plans?



Stench of Death



Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Fate of the *Vigilant*

By Adrian Pommier
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Fate of the *Vigilant* is designed for four to five players of 1st level. While the characters can be of any basic character class, the presence of a dedicated healer would not be unwelcome. Some doors and chests will require the attention of a character with the Open Lock skill. This adventure takes place aboard a ship, so having Balance and Swim may come in handy. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's unique style of play.

Adventure Summary

A fishing ship comes to port in the sleepy coastal village of Lower Innis, several miles south of Fair Haven. The crew tells the tale of a royal frigate that ran aground on a spit of rock a ways up the coast. The PCs are sent in a fishing vessel to investigate and possibly render aid. They run afoul of the pirates who have overtaken the frigate, and have until dusk to defeat them before the rest of the fishing fleet arrives to evacuate the "royal marines."

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	100	C	<i>Jornal</i> , Bbn2/Corsair1	2
1-5	103	T	Poisoned needle	1
2-2	104	C	Goblin pirates, Corsair2	1
2-3	105	C	<i>Teeth-taker</i> , gnoll Corsair2*	1
2-4	106	C	Jessa Smiles, half-elf Exp2	1
2-5	106	C	<i>Lórethel</i> , Drd3/Corsair3 or <i>Lórethel</i> and 3 Corsair2*	3 5

* Depending on the actions of the PCs, *Teeth-taker* may join the fight in room 2-2. Similarly, the three human corsairs may be encountered in area 2-1 or area 1-1. If encountered in area 2-1, the pirates EL 2.

Scaling Information

The Fate of the *Vigilant* is a short adventure designed for 4-5 characters of 1st level. You can adapt the scenario for stronger parties with a few simple modifications. The simplest method would be to add levels of corsair to all the pirates. Giving *Teeth-taker* an actual

weapon and swapping his Improved Unarmed Strike feat for something more appropriate increases his difficulty, as would removing his drunken status. Finally, Lórethel can have already summoned his animal companion, something suitable for the environment like a coastal bird of prey.

Getting the Players Involved

The background of the adventure assumes the PCs were in Lower Innis for some reason. They could be locals looking to prove themselves, or perhaps they are passers-by, staying for the night at an inn and drawn into the troubles of this pleasant fishing village. Lower Innis being a very small town, it could be that the PCs are the only kind of capable young men or women available. In any case, the village elders have hired them for a sum of 50 gp apiece to investigate the *Vigilant* and render aid to any survivors.

Background Story

For those living on the coast of the Lirean Sea, from Fair Haven to Nullsport, the mention of the pirate fleet of the dreaded Captain Jakob the Leper sends people scurrying for cover. One of the ships of his vile fleet, the *Ashes of Arovarel*, has terrorized the northern coast for years. Captained by the renegade elven druid Lórethel, the *Ashes* has been the bane of goodly merchantmen.

Lórethel once lived in the beautiful elven city of Arovarel, but when it was taken by Chalychia the Devil-Lich, he lost all hope and his heart grew dark. He fled as far as the western coast, and there pledged his life to the Leper, who gave him command of his own ship. Over time, Lórethel embraced the fury of the storm and the rage of the sea, and became a twisted druid.

Lórethel has been a mighty scourge, but he met his match when the royal frigate *Vigilant* was dispatched to deal with him. After a fierce battle, the *Ashes of Arovarel* sank and several pirates were captured, including Lórethel himself. The good-hearted skipper of the *Vigilant*, Capt. Balthew, also found a slave girl that had been kept prisoner aboard the pirate ship, and took her aboard.

Unfortunately, the slave girl was actually Lórethel's lover, Jessa Smiles. Over the course of a few days, she seduced one of the officers, a man named Bogris, into freeing the captive pirates. Striking quickly, the pirates were able to surprise the unsuspecting crew. When he realized he was going to lose his ship, Capt. Balthew ordered the lifeboats destroyed and the sails burnt before they were overwhelmed and put to the sword.

The traitor Bogris was put in chains, and (as the PCs will discover) is eventually killed by Jessa before the PCs can save him.

Trapped aboard a dead ship, Lórethel used all his power and sea-craft to guide the *Vigilant* toward the shore. Unfortunately, the frigate has run aground on a spit of rock over two miles from shore, and a mere half-mile up the coast from Lower Innis. A fishing vessel saw the incident and hailed the frigate. Thinking quickly, Lórethel called out that they needed help. The pirates plan to seize the rescue boats when they come and raid the town for supplies.

When the PCs arrive, most pirates are busy trying to repair damage caused by the last battle and by running aground. Lórethel has withdrawn to call forth a new animal companion, so discipline has eroded among the crew, leading to violence between the human and goblin pirates.

Swimming and Drowning Reviewed

It is possible that a PC may try to make it to shore by swimming. With the water only slightly rough, the Swim DC is 12. As is stated earlier, it is just over two miles to shore. This means that a character with a base move of 30' swims at 1.5 miles/hour, while a character with a base move of 40' travels 2 miles/hour. Each would therefore be swimming for a full hour, and incur a DC 20 Swim check or take 1d6 nonlethal damage.

PCs knocked in the water may drown. Characters can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to their Constitution score as long as they take only move or free actions. If they take standard or full-round actions, halve the time they hold their breath. After that period of time, they must make Constitution checks every round. The DC starts at 10 and goes up by 1 every subsequent round. If the check fails, the victim begins to drown.

The first round of drowning, the victim falls to 0 hp and is unconscious. The following round, the victim falls to -1 hp and is dying. The third round, the victim dies. Note that drowning cannot actually heal a character.

Decks Askew

When the *Vigilant* ran aground on the rocky islet, the ship took on water in the bilge hold. Every deck on board is slanted to the starboard (to the south) to a slight degree. While this isn't enough for casual movement, it becomes important in certain situations, like combat. Anyone with less than 5 ranks in Balance who is struck in combat must make a DC 8 Balance check or fall prone. Also, anyone with less than 5 ranks in Balance who wishes to run or charge must make a DC 10 Balance check or fall prone. Among the NPCs and creatures, only Jessa and Lórethel's summoned rat have less than 5 ranks in Balance.

Waiting for Help

If the PCs decide to remain topside and never explore the *Vigilant*, not only do they miss out on the entire adventure, they will give the pirates time to organize and rush them. Eventually, Lórethel will order the pirates topside, in the following order: first the goblins, then Teeth-taker (who will be sober by this time), then the human pirates, and finally Lórethel himself. Jessa will not join the fray.

The pirates kill as many PCs as it takes for them to surrender.

Player Beginning

Read or paraphrase the following, and give the players handout A:

Last night, a fishing vessel came into the little coastal village of Lower Innis carrying a strange tale from the sea. They saw a battle-scarred royal navy frigate run aground on an islet a few miles up the coast. The frigate was hailed, and the fishing boat was asked to go get help. The town fathers of Lower Innis are trying to organize a flotilla of fishing craft to go evacuate the survivors and tow the ship off the islet, but they know that will take time.

To save as many lives as they can, they have decided to send some help right away. You and your companions were selected to carry healing supplies to the beached vessel, for which you expect to receive a reward of 50 gp apiece and the gratitude of the royal navy.

You have been dropped off on the tiny island by a friendly fishing boat captain, who said he expects to return at dusk with more ships to pick up the crew and your party.

According to the lettering on the back, this is the "Vigilant." On the approach, the noonday sun showed that the masts have been severely damaged by fire and the sails are destroyed. All lifeboats look to have been released. The vessels lists to the starboard side.

On closer inspection, you see that the "Vigilant" was recently in some kind of battle, but has been partially repaired. New planks cover where holes were once in the sides, and even from below you can see that the gunwales bear the marks of grappling hooks. A rope ladder hangs down the side, leading up to the weatherdeck.

The leaders of Lower Innis have given you a full healer's kit and two potions of cure light wounds donated by the local temple of Pelagia. You were told these supplies were to go to any survivors.

If the PCs call out, no one answers. There is barely enough room on the spit of rock for them all to stand, and they can clearly see that the vessel has run aground. If the PCs bother to listen, they will plainly hear the sounds of hammering coming from inside the ship.

The tide is currently receding, and will be at full ebb in three hours.

The Vigilant: Overview

Below are the standard statistics for the *Vigilant*. All topside doors open toward the masts, and all belowdeck doors open toward the staircase. Unless otherwise noted, all rooms have adequate lighting from daylight coming in from the portholes. Unless otherwise noted, all doors have the following statistics:

Simple Wooden Door: 1 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 10; break DC 13.

Unless otherwise noted, all ceilings are 6 feet high. All walls and floors have the following statistics:

Wooden Bulkhead or Floor: 1 foot thick; hardness 5; hp 120; break DC 28.

The hull of the *Vigilant* has the following statistics:

Reinforced Wooden Hull: 1.5 feet thick; hardness 5; hp 180; break DC 30.

Unless otherwise noted, all NPCs and creatures have tattooed somewhere in plain sight on their body the insignia of the Leper. The first time the PCs fight any pirate give them handout B. A DC 14 Knowledge (local), Knowledge (history), or bardic knowledge check identifies the tattoo.

The Vigilant: Topside

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Topside, Weatherdeck (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

Clambering up the side of the ship, you have your first view of the frigate's deck. You are standing amidships on the starboard side. Two structures, the forecastle and sterncastle, rise from either end of the weatherdeck. The "Vigilant" has a beam of 30 feet and is 95 feet long from stem to stern. The deck is marred by scars from combat, and here and there some of the planking is damaged or even burned. The hatch that covers the stairs belowdecks is closed. Bits of frayed or burnt rope hang limply from the sides or down the masts. At the sterncastle, you see two sets of stairs leading up

and, next to them, two doors. The forecandle has a single set of stairs and a single door. That door looks like it was burst down, and barely hangs on its hinges. You can see that both masts are blackened by fire. You hear from below the muffled sounds of hammering.

The location of the Jacob's ladder is marked "L" on the map. The longest bit of hemp rope is only 7 feet long, and all the rope is tied down in some fashion.

The first mate of the *Ashes of Arovarel*, Jornal, is doing in the sterncastle. As the PCs move around on the weather deck, he has a chance to hear them. Have the PCs make Move Silently checks without using their skill ranks (unless they are actually actively trying to Move Silently). Since he's only half-asleep, Jornal suffers only a -5 to Listen checks (as opposed the -10 for actually being asleep). Have the PCs make the check as they move, and give Jornal a +2 bonus if the PCs make any loud noises. Regardless, Jornal will awaken if the PCs open the hatch to belowdecks. Jornal's starting location is marked "J" on the map.

When Jornal appears, read or paraphrase the below text:

An immense, sun-bronzed, barrel-chested man stands calmly, the noon sun glinting off his chain shirt and buckler. A handaxe is tucked into his belt, but he makes no move toward it. His bald head is ringed by thinning blonde hair, and a ridiculous, thick blonde mustache frames his smiling mouth. He bears a large tattoo on each forearm: a severed, rotting arm lies pierced by a cutlass.

"Ho, ho! I see little sparrows have lighted on my deck. Begone, ravens! Or I'll feed you to fish!"

Give the players handout C.

Jornal was ordered by Lórethel to let the PCs on board so they can be captured and tortured for information, but he laid down for a nap after dropping the Jacob's ladder. The PCs climbing the side of the boat made him half-awake.

Tactics: Jornal only speaks to the PCs as long as he is amused by it, and then he suddenly attacks, even if they are actually leaving. He calls them by a variety of bird names as he talks. If the PCs mention that they are here to save him or mention the royal navy, he mentions that there's only one left to save, but he does not know where. Jornal asks about the rescue ships, and hints at a dark fate for Lower Innis should the pirates reach there.

As long as Jornal rages, he tries to bull rush the PCs off the weatherdeck of the ship, mostly

because he thinks it's funny. He's a little cracked. When a PC is about to be pushed off the deck, Jornal needs to beat their opposed attack roll by 7 (instead of 5) because of the gunwales.

If a PC is bull rushed off the ship adjacent to the rocky shallows upon which the *Vigilant* is beached (as marked on the map), they fall 12 feet to the rocks and take 1d6 damage. If they land in any other space, they land in the water for no damage. They must swim to the rocks to get out of the water, requiring DC 12 Swim checks.

If Jornal is cornered on the sterncastle, he will jump to the weatherdeck, using the Jump skill to prevent getting hurt (DC 15).

If his rage ends, or if all PCs are knocked off the boat, he uses his handaxe. Every time Jornal is hit, he gives out a guffaw and taunts the PC who struck him, something like, "Come little woodpecker, peck harder than that!"

Jornal will climb down the Jacob's ladder to fight PCs on the small island, and will chase them if they flee. If they flee belowdecks, he will use his handaxe.

Reinforcements: If the pirates from area 2-5 have already moved to area 2-1, there is a chance they hear any PCs moving around on the weatherdeck. To hear the PCs, have all the PCs on the weatherdeck make Move Silently checks (without using their skill ranks unless they are actually actively trying to Move Silently). The pirates have +4 to their Listen checks (giving them a total of +5) because of how the sound echoes belowdecks. If the pirates detect the PCs, they move topside.

Jornal the First Mate, Human Bbn2/Corsair1: HD 2d12+1d6+3; hp 23; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk handaxe +5 melee (1d6+3/x3); SA bull rush; SQ rage, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +8, Jump +8, Listen +7, Swim +8; Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: masterwork chain shirt, buckler, handaxe.

Bull Rush: Jornal will charge into or otherwise enter the square of a foe, provoking no attack of opportunity due to his feat. His feat grants an extra +4 to the opposed attack roll for the feat, and an extra +2 if he charged. If he beats the PC, Jornal moves him back 5 feet, plus an extra 5 feet for every five points by which he beat the PCs opposed attack roll. If Jornal fails, he moves 5 feet straight

back. When moving during a bull rush, Jornal and the PC provoke attacks of opportunity from those they pass by.

Rage (Ex): Jornal will rage as soon as he decides to attack. He gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, +2 to Will saves, and –2 to AC. Jornal can rage for six rounds. After Jornal rages, he suffers fatigue: –2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run.

Area 1-1 – Topside, Forecastle: Read or paraphrase the following:

A single light catapult occupies the platform atop the forecastle some ten feet above the weatherdeck and a full twenty-two feet above the waterline. The catapult is mounted on a rotating frame of strange design so that it can rotate 90 degrees in the forward arc. A length of rope is tied to the bowsprit and hangs down the front of the ship. The deck is less damaged here, and the catapult is intact.

There is no ammunition on the deck for this catapult. It has a range increment of 150 feet and fires a minimum distance of 100 feet. For reference, it is more than 10,560 feet to shore.

The rope hanging from the bowsprit is tied to the body of the unfortunate Brother Vinetto (see area 2-1). A DC 16 Strength check is required to haul the body out of the water. Luckily, it wasn't crushed when the *Vigilant* ran aground... perhaps Pelagia was watching over him. If he's pulled out, read or paraphrase the following:

The waters of the Lirean Sea have surrendered to you the body of human male, perhaps 45 years old, dressed in the green-and-gold livery of the royal marines. He is long dead, and looks as if he's been in the water a few days. His throat was cut.

A DC 10 Search check will discover that the ropes around his torso pinned a silver chain necklace in place. The necklace has a small pearl and a key attached to it. The pearl is carved to depict a whale and the key unlocks the chest in area 1-5. A DC 13 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes this as a holy symbol of Pelagia (see area 2-1).

Anyone making a DC 12 Heal check will be able to determine that the death blow came after the man was restrained because of the steady hand of the cut and because the man's head was pulled back when it was done.

If the PCs bury the body at sea with the holy symbol, they will attract the favor of Pelagia. They will hear a whale's call, and then feel a sense of

New NPC Class: Corsair

The corsair excels at handling himself on the open sea and on a tilting deck. More combat-oriented than an expert and more skilled than a warrior, corsairs populate the waterfronts and seedy taverns of coastal towns and river ports. Drawn to waterborne travel by the lure of adventure, the mystique of the ocean, or the temptation of piracy...that is the corsair.

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills: The corsair's class skills and the key abilities for each are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Profession (Wis), Swim (Str), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier

Base Attack and Saves: The corsair has a cleric's attack progression and good Reflex saves.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The corsair is proficient with all simple weapons and the boat hook, hand axe, rapier, scimitar, and trident, and with light armor and bucklers.

Starting Gear: 2d4 x 10 gp worth of equipment.

Level	Base Atk	Fort	Ref	Will
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+2
9th	+6/+1	+3	+6	+3
10th	+7/+2	+3	+7	+3
11th	+8/+3	+3	+7	+3
12th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4
13th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4
14th	+10/+5	+4	+9	+4
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+5
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+6
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+6
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+6

Pelagia's outrage at what has been done to her servant. They receive a +1 morale bonus to damage rolls for the duration of the adventure.

Should they decide to keep the necklace and pearl, a DC 13 Appraise check will determine that it is worth 250 gp.

Area 1-1 – Topside, Sterncastle: Read or paraphrase the following:

Two heavily-damaged light catapults share the bridge with the wheel, some ten feet above the weather deck. When they functioned, the catapults had a clever device – probably gnomish in origin – that allowed them to be rotated in position 90 degrees, giving them a field of fire covering the entire quartering sea. This deck is greatly damaged, and part of it looks melted as if by acid. It looks like the fighting was thickest here.

A DC 10 Craft (alchemy) check or a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check would determine that the acid damage came from an alchemical creation and not from a creature. There is no ammunition for the catapults.

Area 1-2 – Captain's Cabin: Read or paraphrase the following:

This 20 foot square room was apparently the captain's cabin at one time. It is now wrecked: the bed, desk, mirror, and table normally nailed to the floor have been torn apart and sacked. There is even a faint smell of urine lingering in here. It seems that the bed has been hacked apart deliberately, and parts of it are assembled into a pile of scrap wood.

Although the pirates were very thorough in their destruction of this room, they missed a secret compartment in a table leg. A vial of antitoxin is hidden there (Search DC 12). Bogris told Jessa about it, but she hasn't looted it yet.

Area 1-3 – Weapon Storage: Read or paraphrase the following:

This 10 foot by 20 foot storage area features empty weapon racks, a few crates, grappling hooks, and several coils of rope. There is also what looks like the dead body of a very dingy human clad in torn, mismatched clothing lying against the bulkhead. The front of his shirt is stained with blood.

The pirate was killed less than an hour before the PCs arrived, stuck by one of the goblins, and his body stuffed in an unused room. A DC 11 Heal check determines the cause of death.

The room contains three lengths of 50' hemp rope, two grappling hooks, two hooded lanterns full of oil, a block and tackle, some saws, hammers, and nails. A DC 14 Search finds among the ropes a clay pitcher of foul-tasting but potent brandy (hidden by the crew of the *Vigilant* for recreational use).

Area 1-4 – Officers' Cabin: Read or paraphrase the following:

*Behind the ruined door you find a cozy cabin, complete with two bunk beds, a small table nailed to the floor, and a small mirror nailed to the hull. An intact door stands in the forward bulkhead. This likely once housed the officers of the *Vigilant*. Regardless of whose cabin this was, you have little doubt about their fate: three of the four mattresses are crimson-stained.*

The pirates managed to catch the three officers unaware and murdered them in their sleep. The fourth officer was Bogris.

The door to area 1-5 is locked (Open Lock DC 20). The key is hidden under one of the bloodstained mattresses (Search DC10). Hidden behind a loose plank (Search DC 20) are two vials of alchemical acid. Bogris gave some vials to Jessa, who gave them to Lórethel, who used them to take the sterncastle (see area 1-1).

Acid: splash weapon; ranged touch attack; 10' range increment; direct hit causes 1d6 damage; all creatures within 5' of where acid hits take 1 point acid damage.

Area 1-5 – Chart Room (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

*This room looks to have escaped violence and plunder for the time being. A small triangular table sits in the middle of the room, and the portside wall is a network of cubbyholes filled with rolled-up parchment. Along the starboard hull a simple but sturdy-looking chest rests on the deck. A nautical chart is open on the table, showing the passage of the "*Vigilant*" from home port in Crownsgate, north to near Fair*

Pelagia

Pelagia is a neutral minor goddess of the sea, music, and travel. She is known as the Singing Sea, and is the patron of bards, fisherman, and folk who ply the sea for their livelihood. Her worshipers consider whalesong a good omen, and use pearls to decorate religious devices and for donation. Her domains are Protection, Travel, and Water. Pelagia's favored weapon is the rapier.

Haven, and then back along the coast. Scribbled on the chart just before they set course back is the comment, "Overtook the 'Ashes' and sunk her!" That is dated a week ago. The last entry on this chart is dated three days ago.

Hidden in the cubbyholes among the ship inventories, manifests, reports, crew rosters, and nautical charts is a scroll of *bless* and a divine scroll of *obscuring mist*. They are in separate 5-foot squares and require separate DC 14 Search checks to find. One of the charts, this one in a red scroll case, marks the location of a "mysterious tower." The comments on the side read, "Mysterious tower. Unable to find means of entry. Highly irregular."

The chest is trapped and locked. It contains a wand made of white wood and tipped with a pearl (a *wand of cure light wounds* with 6 charges left), 120 silver pieces, an astrolabe, and a spyglass. The key to this chest is on Brother Vinetto (see areas 1-1), and the divine goods belonged to him.

Sea Chest: hardness 5; 15 hp; burst DC 23; Open Lock DC 25.

Poison Needle (CR 1): mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 ranged (1 plus spitefish oil poison); Search DC 22; Disable DC 20.

Spitefish Oil: Injury DC 11; paralysis 1d3 minutes/1d3 Dexterity damage; 130 gp.

The Vigilant: Belowdecks

Anyone using a two-handed slashing or bludgeoning weapon belowdecks suffers a –1 to their attack rolls as the ceilings are so low.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Hold (EL 2 or 0): Read or paraphrase the following:

Sunlight filters down into this room, which seems quite stuffy and cramped. This hold is where the crew would gather for meals or to meet. Two long tables are nailed to the floor, making an "L" shape along the starboard hull. Small stools are scattered about, most of them are broken. You can see that this room recently saw a lot of fighting, so marked are the walls and floor by stray cutlass swipes and thrusts.

The hammering noise you've heard is quite loud here, and seems to be coming from the forward compartments.

Give the players handout D.

This room also doubled as a chapel, and a DC 12 Search check reveals a damaged prayer book and a three pieces of a broken wooden disc under the tables. Inside the front cover of the book is a rough picture of the wand from area 1-5 and the phrase, "verily, the blessing of Pelagia mends the stricken." Anyone who re-assembles the three pieces of the wooden shrine will incur the favor of Pelagia, who counts Protection among her domains. That character will hear a sound like a whale's call, and receive a +1 deflection bonus to AC for the duration of the adventure. When assembled, the shrine depicts a large whale, strangely graceful and serene, apparently leading a fishing vessel to home port.

A DC 13 Knowledge (religion) or bardic knowledge check recognizes the symbol of the whale or the chants in the prayer book as significant to the worship of Pelagia, a minor goddess of sea, travel, and music.

The cleric of Pelagia, Brother Vinetto, was opposed to Captain Balthew taking the "slave girl" Jessa Smiles aboard ship, so when the pirates were freed, Jessa had Lórethel kill him. The twisted elf took it a bit further, and hung his body over the front of the ship in mockery of his faith's practice of burial at sea.

If the pirates in area 2-5 are alerted by the actions of the PCs, they move to here (making this area EL 2). Once here, if they hear the PCs moving around on the weatherdeck, they will move to there (see area 1-1). Otherwise, they remain here; they do not like the goblins and will not move to assist them.

The door to area 2-4 is locked and requires a DC 30 Open Lock check. Teeth-taker (area 2-3) has a copy of the key, as do the human pirates in area 2-5.

Area 2-2 – Crew Quarters (EL 1): The goblins have taken up this area as their sleeping quarters. This room is completely dark; the portholes have been boarded up. Adjust the read-aloud text based on what the PCs can actually see:

This 15 by 30 foot room is the crew quarters. There are several hammocks hanging almost haphazardly throughout the room. A pile of smashed footlockers lies against the forward bulkhead. Two goblins clad in torn pantaloons and padded armor curse at each other as they nail fresh planks in place to replace some battle damage on the portside hull.

If the northern door is opened, the goblins (who are standing nearby) will notice. If the southern door is opened and light comes into the room (sunlight from area 2-1 or a PC's light source), the goblins are allowed a DC 10 Spot check. They receive a +4 to the check, making their total modifier +3. The starting location of the goblins is marked "G" on the map.



Tactics: If the goblins become aware of the PCs but somehow the PCs can't see the goblins, they Hide and attack from surprise. Once combat begins, the goblins fight until one falls. Then the other tries to make a break for area 2-3 to get Teeth-taker. If the PCs flee, the goblins go get Teeth-taker to chase them.

These pirates speak Common and Goblin. They will mostly only speak in Goblin.

Goblin Pirates (2), Corsair2: HD 2d6+2; hp 8 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk small dagger +1 melee (1d3); AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +5, Craft (ship repair) +5, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Profession (sailor) +7, Swim +5, Use Rope +7; Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)).

Possessions: padded armor, dagger, 1d6 cp.

Area 2-3 – Galley (EL 1): Similar to area 2-2, there is no light in this room and the portholes are boarded over. Read or paraphrase to the players what they are able to see (they automatically smell what's described in the first sentence):

An odor like wet, rank fur permeates this room. This was once a functional galley, but now it looks like a storm has passed through. Opened casks, kegs, cartons, and crates spill their contents into an awful-looking mixture on the floor. The stove seems to have been uprooted from the floor, and a large stewpot is crumpled against the door.

If the goblins didn't warn Teeth-taker, he will be in this room, which he has taken to be his quarters. When he makes his appearance, read or paraphrase the text below:

Grunting blearily, a hyena-faced monstrosity lumbers toward you. Large ears with well over a dozen earrings flare out from his canine head, and its reddish-furred body would stand over seven feet tall if it weren't for the low ceiling. The creature's lantern eyes reflect a sickly green. With a snarling bark, it raises clenched fists, each the size of a small ham.

A DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check determines that Teeth-taker is a gnoll. Give the players handout E.

Tactics: When sober, Teeth-taker is a dangerous opponent. Fortunately, he's not sober. Teeth-taker will always attack the nearest PC, or randomly determine whom he attacks if he has more than one valid target. He will always choose to deal lethal damage with his unarmed strikes. If the PCs flee, he will pursue anywhere but topside. He will not go topside until he sobers up.

Teeth-taker speaks Common, Gnoll, and Goblin. He always speaks in Gnoll unless addressing a member of the pirate crew. If captured, he will only speak in Gnoll.

Treasure: Teeth-taker has the insignia of the Leper tattooed on his back. He dropped his copy of the key to areas 2-4 and 2-5 in this room. A Search DC 14 will find it in the crumpled stewpot.

Teeth-taker, Gnoll Corsair2: HD 2d8+2d6+8; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk punch +4 melee (1d3+2); SQ darkvision 60 ft., blind stinking drunk; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Profession (sailor) +3; Combat Reflexes, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Blind Stinking Drunk: Teeth-taker is both hung over and drunk on some nasty stuff, and it affects him similar to a *confusion* spell. At the beginning of each of his rounds, roll d%. On a 01-50 he acts normally, on a 51-70 he does nothing but roar and complain about the noise, and on a 71-00 he is blind for the round. When he is blind, Teeth-taker will attack into a random square to which he is adjacent.

Possessions: studded leather armor, crude pliers for extracting teeth, small pouch filled with teeth, twenty earrings worth a total of 154 gold.

Area 2-4 – Brig (EL 1): There are no portholes in the brig. Give the players handout F.

This narrow, 10 foot wide cabin runs the entire beam of the ship, and smells strongly of stale sweat and bodily waste. Manacles set into the walls at 5-foot intervals confirm that you have found the brig. This room is lit by a small oil lamp hanging in the middle of the room. Its faint light shows a man hanging limp against the far wall, his naval uniform torn and bloody, his face beaten and his body bruised. It's hard to tell if he's still breathing. Standing near him is an attractive woman with slightly pointed ears. Her strawberry blonde hair and creamy, pale skin make her quite an oddity among the rough crowd you've seen so far. Seeing you, she raises her delicate hands and offers an abashed smile. "Well, you got me. No need for sword-play, I'm one against many, and I know when the tides shift."

Jessa has just killed Bogris, who was the only person who could reveal the depth of her capacity for deceit and treachery. He is the only person she's directly killed since the sinking of the *Ashes of Arovarel* (although her actions have led to the deaths of many), and if she's confronted about it she will dismiss him as a traitor (which is true) and ask the PCs how many they've killed today.

Her poisoned dagger and the brig key are hidden on her person. Each of the dagger and the key requires a DC 15 Search check to find on her body; anyone physically handling her gains a +4 to this check. If someone tries to take 20 on this Search roll, she will twist, giggle, and squirm, ruining their attempt. Jessa is an attractive woman, and will use her sex appeal to her advantage.

Jessa does not have the tattoo marking her as a pirate in service to the Leper.

The door to area 2-5 is locked; it requires an Open Lock DC 30. The same key that unlocks this room, however, also unlocks area 2-5.

Tactics: Jessa will surrender to the PCs initially, knowing she can't fight them all off at once. Jessa will never fight to the death, and will always try to surrender. She will use the antitoxin in area 1-2 or the flasks of acid in area 1-4 as bargaining chips. If truly convinced that she is about to die, she will say that the *Ashes of Arovarel* did not go down with all hands nor all its treasure, and she knows where quite a lot of it is buried.

If questioned, Jessa will give the salient points of the Background Story, although she will claim that

she was captured and Teeth-taker freed the pirates. She does not know where Lórethel is, and hasn't seen him since yesterday. She will state that Jornal (whom she hates) was told to go topside.

If the PCs get into battle with her in tow, she will not participate for either side. As she said, she knows when the tides shift. If she is left manacled to the wall and she retains the brig key, she will escape, possibly to return another day.

Jessa speaks Common, Elven, and Halfling.

Jessa Smiles, Half-elf Exp2: HD 2d6; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk poisoned dagger +0 melee (1d4-1 plus mimic slobber poison); SQ low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Disguise +7, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +9, Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +3; Alertness.

Possessions: leather armor, hidden poisoned dagger, 2 doses of mimic slobber, hidden key to brig manacles.

Mimic slobber: Injury; DC 12; sickened 1 minute/nauseated 1d2 minutes; 75 gp.

Area 2-5 – Lazaretto (EL 5 or 3): There are normally three human pirates in here tearing apart the crates and barrels to make scrap wood used for repairing the damage to the ship. If there is combat in area 2-2, there is a 20% chance per round that Lórethel will hear and send them to investigate. If so, the three pirates move to area 2-1. The text for this room changes depending on if the pirates are present or not. Give the players handout G.

This room is the lazaretto, or aft storage area, of the Vigilant. Through the light sifting through the portholes, you see that it has been turned into a living quarters for the pirates. Although a few crates and barrels still stand along the starboard hull, you see crude pallets made of blankets and stolen bedding scattered around the large, clear area in the middle. A large pile of scrap wood stands in the northwest corner of this room.

An elven man stands next to an open porthole, gazing intently out to sea as if concentrating on something. His long blonde hair is tied back, and his clothing is a picture of ruined finery. He holds a lightly-glowing cutlass in his right hand, and his brows furrow slightly with irritation at your presence. The severed arm-and-cutlass sign you have seen tattooed on other pirates is branded into this elven man's forehead.

If the pirates are still in this room, it is EL 5. Read or paraphrase the following:

Standing next to him are three human pirates, two with bucklers and cutlasses and the third with a boat hook. Without looking at you, the elf dispassionately says, "At them, men."

If they are not, it is EL 3. Read or paraphrase the following:

"So, you have come for Lórethel at last..." he says without looking at you, perhaps not really addressing you. Then, turning to face you, he speaks in a language not all of you understand, although you recognize it as Elven.

He finishes with, "...let it begin so it may end."

Tactics: The pirates have fought together before. The two with bucklers and scimitars try to block for the one with the boat hook. They fear Lórethel and fight to the death. If captured and questioned, they will be uncooperative but will mention Lórethel's name and won't reveal his location (assuming he's not in the same room). If the PCs flee, the pirates give chase. The pirates speak Common.

Lórethel casts *warp wood* on the biggest weapon he sees that he knows he can affect. If things go poorly for him he casts *obscuring mist*, using the concealment to heal himself and swapping *speak with animals* for *summon nature's ally I* to summon a dire rat. Lórethel trusts in his Blind-Fight feat to carry him through the rest of the fight.

The dire rat attacks whichever PC is nearest. Randomly roll if there are multiple targets. It will use scent to locate PCs in the *obscuring mist*. The dire rat will only be present for three rounds

Lórethel is tired of living, and although he is ready to die he wants to take many with him. During battle he rants about "lost Arovarel" and the weight of years since then.

If the PCs flee, Lórethel follows... this is to be his last fight. Lórethel speaks Common and Elven.

Treasure: One of the barrels contains the amassed

treasure taken by the pirates from the *Vigilant*: 143 silver pieces, 351 copper pieces, and 98 gold pieces. There are also two +1 *daggers of distance* and a *ring of swimming* (the former possessions of the late Captain Balthew). Finding that barrel requires a DC 13 Search check.

Human Pirates with Bucklers and Scimitars (2), Corsair2: HD 2d6; hp 10 hp each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk cutlass (scimitar) +1 melee (1d6 /18-20) or dagger +1 melee (1d4); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Profession (sailor) +8, Swim +5, Use Rope +6; Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)), Combat Reflexes.

Possessions: leather armor, 1d6+3 cp, dagger, buckler, dagger, scimitar or boat hook, brass key to areas 2-4 and 2-5.

Human Pirate with Boat Hook, Corsair2: As above, but: AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Space/Reach 5 ft./10 ft. (if using boat hook), Atk/Full Atk boat hook +1 melee (1d8/x3) or dagger +1 melee (1d4); otherwise identical to above.

Lórethel, Elven Drd3/Corsair3: HD 3d8+3d6; hp 29; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk/Full Atk scimitar +7 melee (1d6+4/18-20) or thrown dart +6 melee (1d4+2); SA spells, spontaneous casting; SQ low-light vision, immune to sleep, +2 save vs. enchantments; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Concentration +9, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Profession (sailor) +8, Swim +7; Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Leadership.

Possessions: masterwork studded leather armor, +1 *scimitar*, darts x4.

Spells Cast (time remaining): 0 – *purify food and water* (x2), *detect magic* (all used); 1st-level – *cure light wounds*, *longstrider* (20 minutes); 2nd-level – *wood shape*.

Spells Prepared (save DC 13 + spell level): 0 – *purify food and drink*; 1st-level – *speak with ani-*

New Weapon: Boat Hook

	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Weight	Type
Boat hook	3gp	1d6	1d8	x3	10 lbs.	Piercing

Actually a tool used to retrieve lines, many sailors have found boat hooks to be useful to fend off attackers. Like the guisarme it closely resembles, a boat hook has a ten foot reach, cannot be used to attack adjacent targets, and may be used to make trip attempts. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you may drop the boat hook to avoid being tripped. Inferior to the guisarme in almost every way, the one advantage of a boat hook is its affordability. A boat hook is an exotic, two-handed weapon.

mals, obscuring mist, cure light wounds; 2nd-level – warp wood.

Animal Companion: As the pirates repaired the ship, Lórethel has been trying to call an animal companion to replace the one he lost when the *Ashes of Arovarel* sank, but not enough time has passed.

Dire Rat: HD 1d8+1 ; hp 6; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk bite +4 melee (1d4+disease); SA disease; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever – bite, Fortitude save DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dexterity and 1d3 Constitution.

Conclusion

With the twisted elf Lórethel defeated and the remaining pirates killed or captured, you have saved the simple village of Lower Innis and earned your reward from the city fathers. The final fate of the “Vigilant” remains in your hands, however. The ship is still serviceable, although neither you nor any in Lower Innis have the ability or equipment to make such extensive repairs. It

is technically a frigate of the royal navy, and the powers-that-be may take issue should you decide to salvage the vessel for your own.

The possibilities are wide open, like the sea itself.

Future Adventures

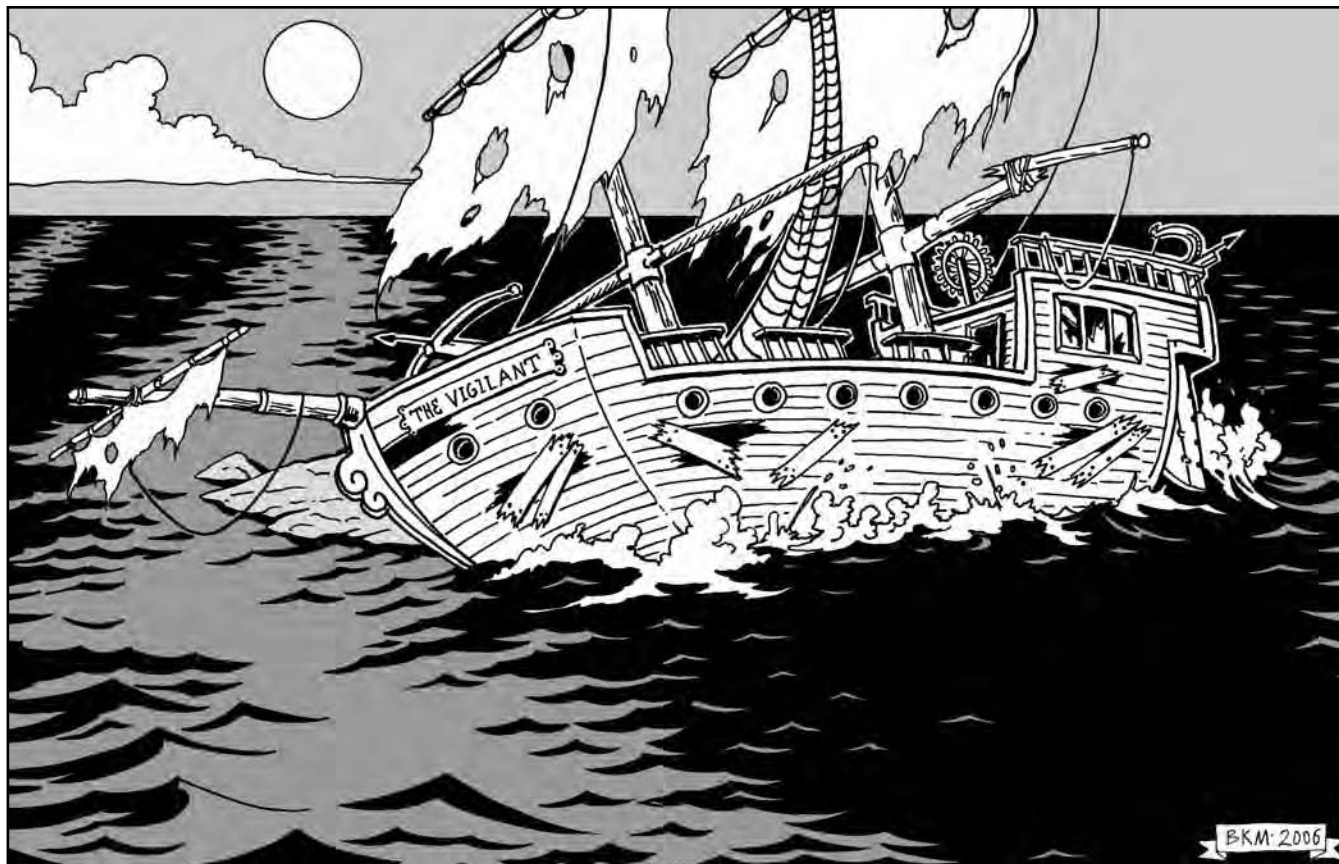
Captain Jakob the Leper will not be pleased that his pet elfen cleric is dead, and will seek revenge both on shore and at sea, which sets the stage for a recurring villain.

In area 1-5, the mysterious tower noted on the chart could be the site for another adventure. (One possible option is described in *Dungeon Crawl Classics #3: The Mysterious Tower*.)

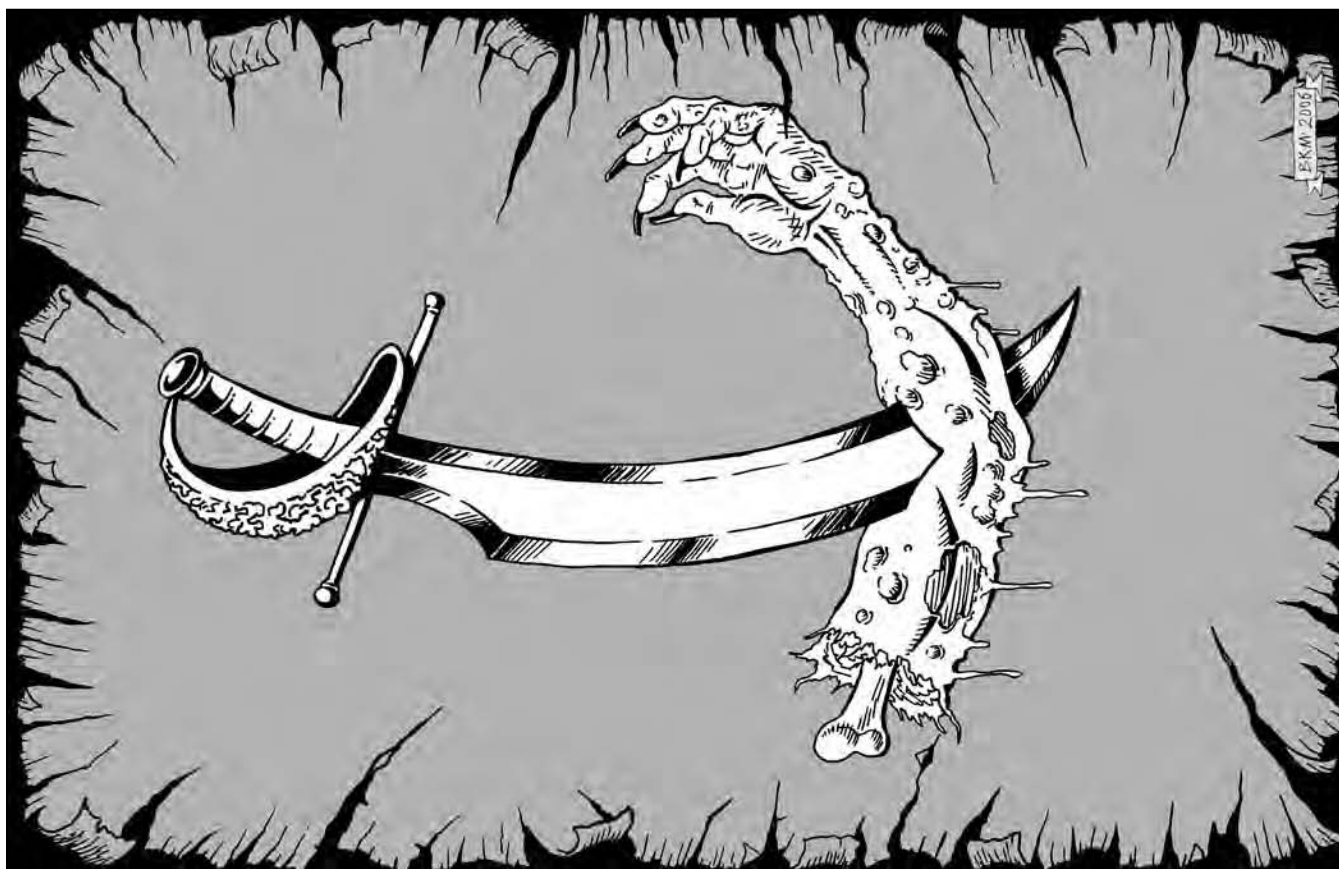
If Jessa Smiles survives, she probably told the PCs that she knows where to find the ill-gotten gains of the *Ashes of Arovarel*. If not, she can approach them later and ask for their help in recovering it.

If the PCs drew the attention of Pelagia in areas 1-1 or 2-1, they can become marked as champions of her causes on the Lirean Sea.

If the PCs decide to keep the *Vigilant* as their own, they will run afoul of the authorities. If they try to inform the authorities (located in the capital of Crowngate), that leads to adventure on the road.



Players' Handout B

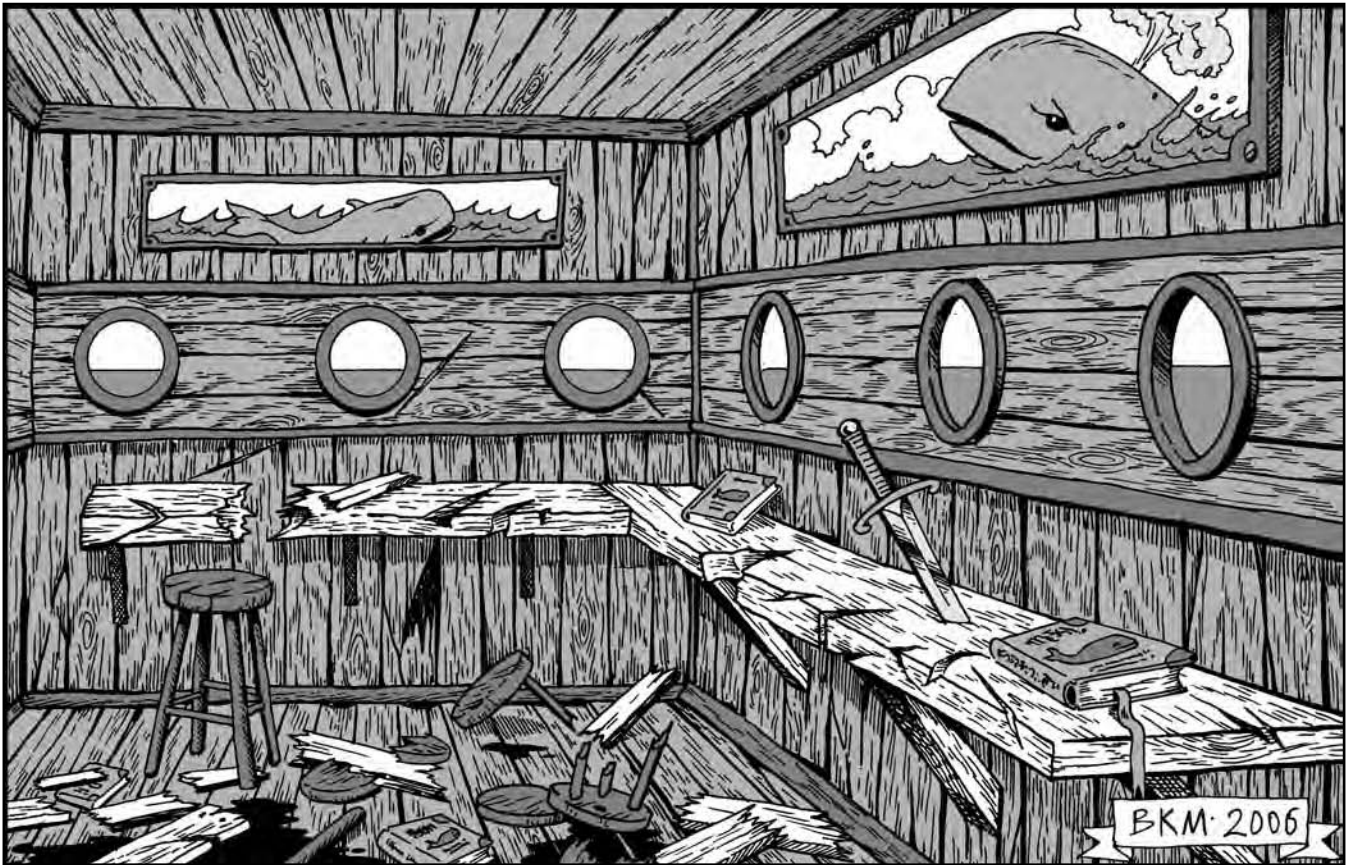


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Players' Handout C





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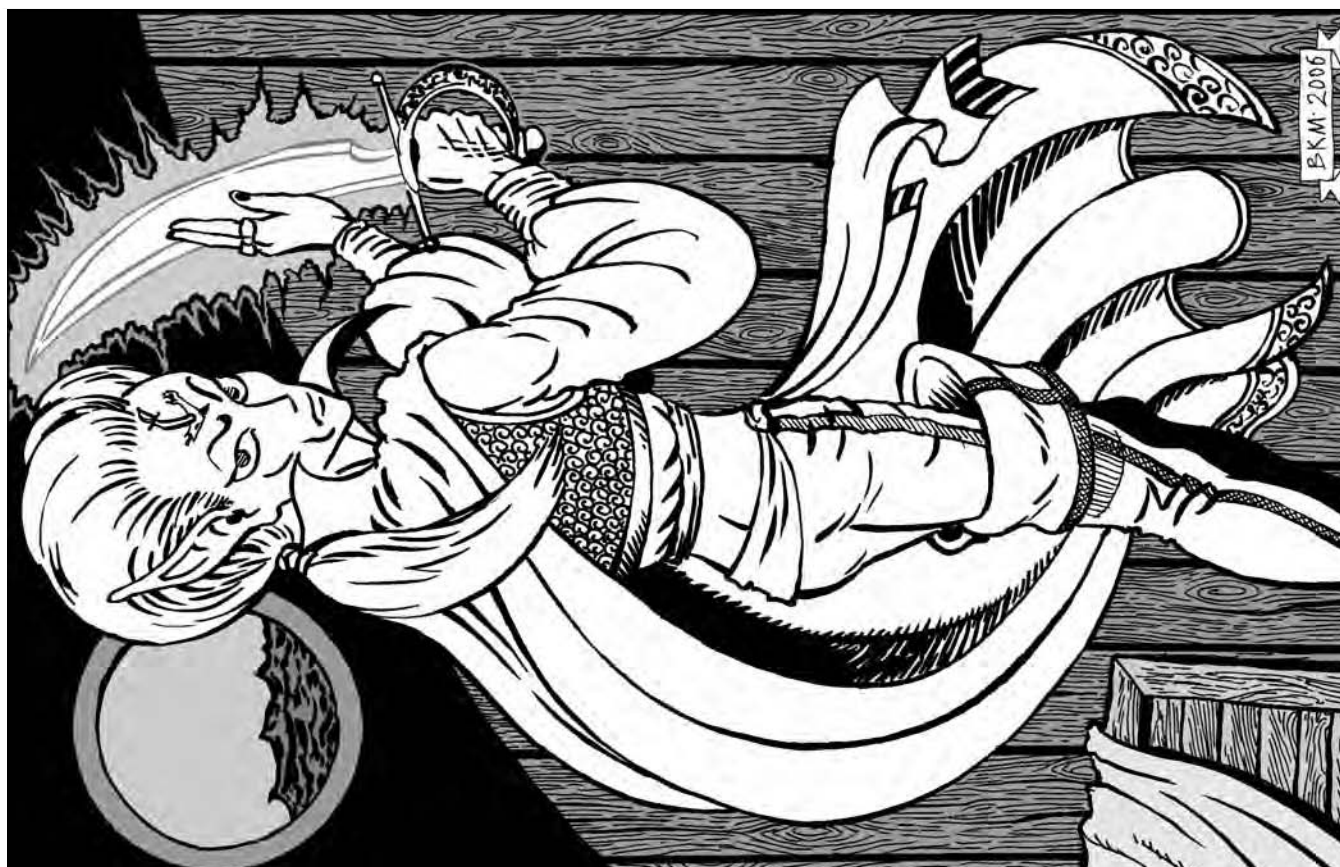
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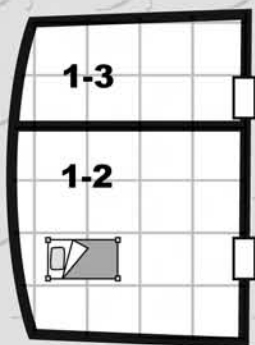
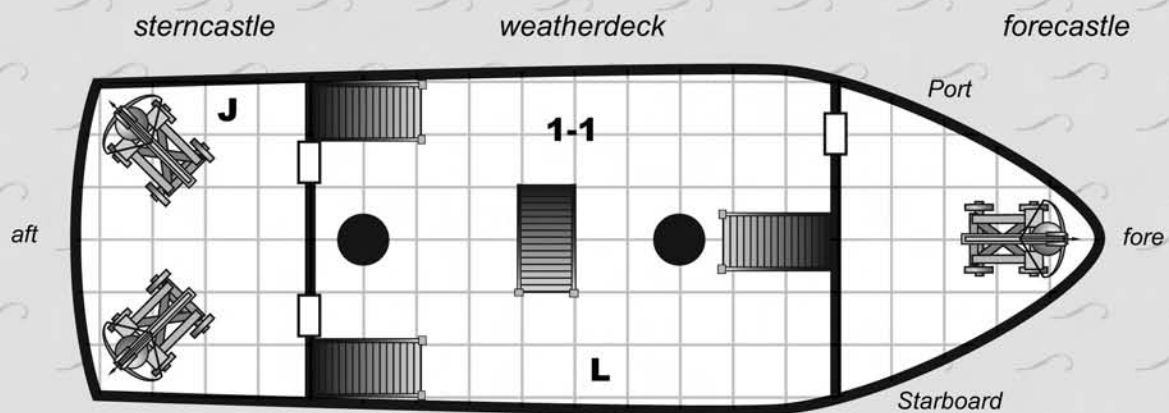


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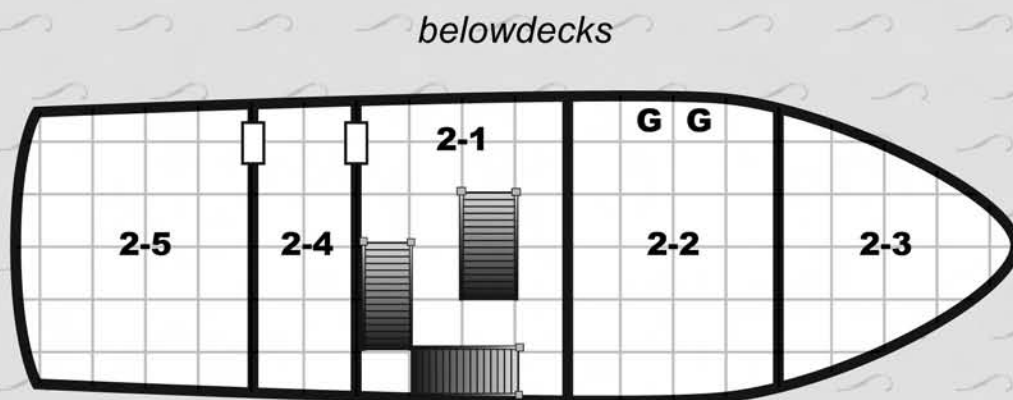
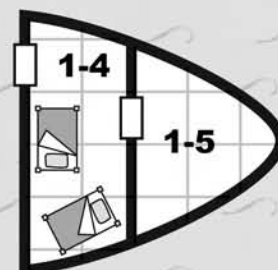
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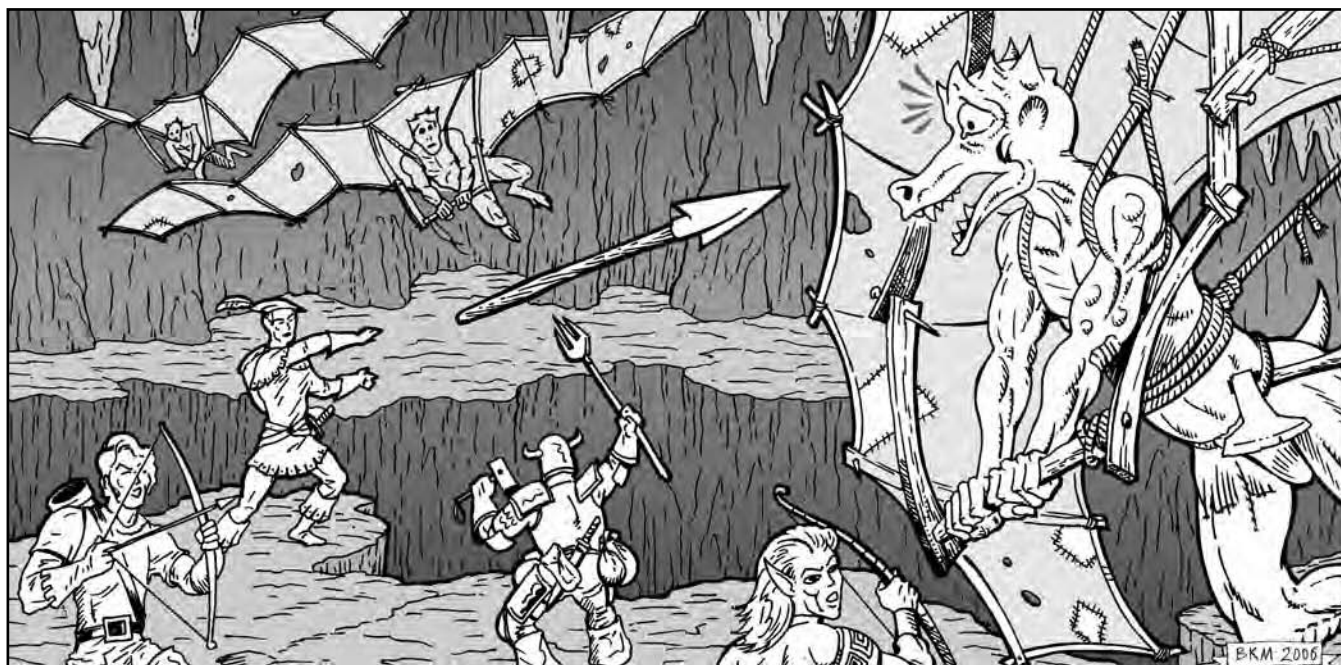
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the Vigilant

Dungeon Crawl Classics When Kobolds Fly

By **Brendan LaSalle**
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

When Kobolds Fly is an adventure for a party of 4-5 civic-minded 1st level characters. It is trick and trap intensive, so a highly skilled rogue or two is an absolute must. In many places the Track feat would be extremely useful, so a ranger could find his talents in high demand here.

Adventure Summary

War! Or at least the closing of a major embassy and a full ban on imported spirits.

Elmot Kinfeld, renowned inventing genius and experimental engineer, disappeared during a visit to the player characters' home kingdom. Rangers discovered the gutted remains of the caravan he traveled with a week after he was reported missing. There was no sign of the inventor and he was feared dead or carried off.

Kinfeld's home kingdom believes that this was no random act of savagery; they accuse the PCs' home kingdom of kidnapping him and forcing him to create new weapons of war – weapons that could be used in an

aggressive campaign of expansion. They demand his immediate return, and promise swift retaliation if he is not. This is unfortunate as the land's best trackers and wizards have yet to find any trace of him.

And then the characters discover a man who claims to have been robbed by a squad of flying kobolds...

Here's what really happened: Kinfeld was traveling by caravan when he and his companions were waylaid by a gang of kobolds under the leadership of the hobgoblin Crooknek. Crooknek wasn't going to leave any prisoners until he saw Kinfeld's extensive plans for several intriguing inventions, including a personal glider. Crooknek took Kinfeld and his guide back to his lair where he forced the scientist to work on a number of projects to improve their hideout's defenses and facilitate raids against their enemies. The hobgoblin has no idea that Kinfeld's disappearance is the center of a brewing diplomatic situation, and he wouldn't likely care if he knew.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
2-1	115	T	Alarm trap	1
2-3	116	T	Flint shards hazard	1/2
2-4	116	C	4 kobolds	1
2-5	117	C	5 dire rats	2
2-7	117	T	Sledgehammer trap	1
2-8	117	C	2 kobolds	1
2-9	118	T	Bat spray trap	1/2
2-10	119	C	6 kobolds	2
2-11	119	C	1 dretch	2
2-12	119	C	1 bat swarm	2
2-13	120	C	5 kobolds	1
2-14	120	C	2 kobolds	1
2-15	120	C	2 kobolds	1
2-16	121	T	Pit trap	1
2-17	121	C	Crooknek and guards	2
2-19	122	C	3 ghouls	3

Scaling Information

This is a fine start for a new campaign for experienced players with new characters. It is tricky, and RPG newbies might get frustrated at the pace of the adventure as there are plenty of traps to slow the party down.

For stronger parties (character levels 3-4): Place additional kobold guards in each of the following areas: 2-4, 2-8, 2-10, 2-13, 2-15 and 2-17. Give Crooknek levels of fighter as appropriate, and both of his bodyguards levels of rogue. Consider adding a wight or two to area 2-5. Increase the DC of all traps to a challenging level. Make the hammer damage for the door trap in area 2-7 2d8 or 3d8 and increase its chance to hit. If it's personal, give rabies to a few of the bats in 2-12.

For weaker parties (character levels 0): And, if you insist, for lower level characters – trade all the kobolds out for unruly children, make all the gold into Chanukah gelt, make the dretch a wacky neighbor and change Crooknek into the gruff but lovable comic relief.

Getting the Characters Involved

The characters are on the road when they encounter a merchant hanging from a tree, a victim of Crooknek's pack. His story likely reminds the characters of the biggest controversy in the kingdom, the missing inventor (Knowledge (local) check DC 11 for familiarity with this story). They will no doubt realize that finding Kinefield could forestall war with a usually peaceful neighboring kingdom – and earn a huge reward to boot!

Rumors

A successful Knowledge (local) check means that the characters know one or more of the following rumors regarding Kinfeld's disappearance (DC 13 for 1 rumor, DC 16 for two, DC 20 for three):

- Elmont Kinfeld was indeed kidnapped by unscrupulous elements within the kingdom. Apparently a greedy lord has discovered the inventor's secret – Kinfeld has finally discovered the much-sought alchemical process for turning base metals to gold. (False)
- Oswald and Hubert Reichfort, two merchants whose caravan went missing weeks ago, are somehow tied in with Kinfeld's disappearance. (True)
- Kinfeld was abducted by a fell necromancer to enlist his aid in some diabolic scheme. (False)
- Elmont Kinfeld was taken captive in order to stop his work on a massive doomsday weapon with enough power to destroy an entire kingdom. (False)
- Somehow the evil wizard Joseph Badman is responsible – he plans to destroy the kingdom and build Kobold Kondos, sub-gentrifying the countryside. (False...who writes this stuff?)

Rewards

If the characters return Kinfeld unharmed to the authorities, there will be much rejoicing. Kinfeld relates his story to all, and the King of the inventor's homeland politely withdraws from the quarrel. The local magistrates laud the characters' actions, and reward each one with 100 gp. The characters' home city throws them a banquet in their honor, where the characters might make interesting contacts (DM's discretion).

The Reichfort family pays the heroes a 250 gp reward for the return of Oswald and Hubert...sort of. Whenever the characters come to collect, the weasely family patriarch claims to have all his money tied up in inventory. He offers to pay them 250 gp worth of equipment – it's basically his final offer unless the characters get rough, at which point he instantly caves and coughs up the money.

And of course, the characters will be semi-famous, and well on their way to becoming mighty heroes of the realm!

Encounter Area 1: A Hanging Man On The Road

There is no map for this encounter – it can take place anywhere in your campaign world where you would like it.

The characters are traveling along a road alongside a steep drop into a wide gorge. Their path winds alongside the ravine and, after what looks like many miles of precarious travel, doubles back. The ravine is windy, with high updrafts that threaten to blow the hats off their heads. The path is narrow and the ravine is steep. Stepping too close to the edge causes small rockslides. The characters can navigate it with no difficulty as long as they are careful.

As you make your way down the path, you hear the hoarse cries of what sounds like an elderly man speaking the common tongue. "Is anyone there? Someone please help!" The voice seems to come from up around the next bend in the road.

As the characters round the bend, read them the following.

A lone spruce tree grows upward from the ravine side of the path. There is an older gentleman dangling by his ankle from a rope attached to a stout tree limb. He has been stripped to the waist and appears to be in a great deal of pain and discomfort. He twists in the cold wind, shouting for help.

This man is Erik Frause, a herald of a local aristocratic family. He is injured (4 remaining hit points out of 13) and suffering from exposure. He was riding along with a

sealed letter for a local magistrate when his horse was spooked by a tremendous bang. He was thrown to the ground and surrounded by a group of vicious kobolds, who took turns hitting him with their fists. They hung him from the tree, took his possessions and taunted him.

The message was an invitation to an upcoming private ball.

Then the herald's story gets strange. He says that the kobolds went around the corner and retrieved some bizarre instruments that looked like a wall from some great green tent. They attached themselves to these strange things and then leapt into the ravine. Frause was of course upside down and in considerable pain during all of this so his memories of the details are fuzzy. But he believes that he actually saw one of the tiny cretins sprout wings and soar across the ravine and into a cave, like some strange bird.

Once released, Frause wants for medical attention, some food and something to wear. The herald thanks the characters for their aid, and heads off to the next city in order to get a word to his masters. He can point out the cave that the kobolds flew into – it is on the far side of the ravine. The path goes ahead for many, many more miles before it doubles back, making the cave about a half-day's ride from where the party finds the hanging man.

It is an extremely long and difficult climb into the ravine – the path is the only choice.

Encounter Area 2: The Caverns of the Kobolds

The rest of the adventure takes place inside the kobolds' cave. The walls are considered unworked stone.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Entry Cave (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This unlit cave has a thirty-foot wide mouth, but the roof is barely six feet high. It narrows sharply into darkness as far as you can see.

If the characters search for tracks they may find dozens of sets of small, booted prints coming into and out of this cave (Survival DC 15 for characters with the Track feat). An exceptional attempt (DC 20) will find a number of odd tracks – a deep heel trench followed by many small steps, like heavy

birds leave when they land.

Thirty feet into cave is a tripwire cord four inches off the ground (Search/Disable DC 13). If the characters cross the area without noticing and either avoiding or disarming the tripwire, a subtle *alarm* whistle goes off (audible only within 30 feet of the entry to area 2-4). The tripwire breaks very easily, and characters who pass through it may not even notice that they did so (Spot DC 15 for the character who broke the wire to notice that they did, Spot DC 18 for other party members). See area 2-4 for the consequences of springing this trap.

Alarm trap: CR 1; mechanical/magical; location trigger; automatic reset (one minute); spell effect (*alarm*, audible in area 2-4); Search DC 13; Disable Device DC 13.

Area 2-2 – Great Entry Cave: Read or paraphrase the following:

The cavern widens and the ceiling vaults. The cave is dark and musty. Water drips from the ceiling in several places. Strangely, air moves past you in a slight underground breeze that seems to come from someplace up ahead.

Characters who successfully use their tracking skills in this area (Survival DC 15) will note that all of the many tracks stick to the east wall, never venturing into the center of the cavern. Crooknek's troops know to stick to the wall – they have dug the rest of the floor into a shallow basin and filled it with natural tar, on the recommendation of Kinfeld. The tar is now semi-hardened, but if one treads upon it for a bit it gets stickier and stickier as boots pick up more and more tar. It is extremely difficult to notice the tar, which is covered in a layer of dust (Spot check DC 20).

Characters who walk into the tar find themselves in a bit of a predicament. They should make a Spot check every 5 feet (consecutive DC's of 16, 14 and finally 12) to notice that they're walking in tar. They can turn around and walk out, but their boots leave sticky footprints. Barefoot characters automatically notice within five feet.

If they walk in the tar for more than three rounds they automatically notice what is going on, and their boots stick fast from picking up more and more of the foul stuff. They can leave their shoes and run for it, but if they dawdle and remain for more than three rounds they are forced to make a Strength check (DC 14 for Medium characters, 10 for Small characters) to move five feet in the tar.

Boots are ruined by the tar – the characters' feet will leave smudges for days before it wears off. It takes several hours of scrubbing with soap and brushes to take tar off bare feet.

Kobold sentries are constantly on the lookout for tar footprints – if they find any they immediately raise an alarm.

Area 2-3 – Cave Corridor (EL 1/2): The floor throughout this hallway is covered in jagged bits of flint that the kobolds have been mining from the caves and smashing with hammers. Barefoot characters walking through this passage take 0-1 points of slashing damage for every five feet traveled (maximum twenty feet). Booted adventurers don't have any problems. Characters who fall in this area take 1-3 points of slashing damage. It would take hours to sweep all of the smashed flint out with brooms.

Flint Shards Hazard: CR 1/2; hazard; location trig-

ger; automatic reset; slashing damage (0-1 for barefoot characters).

Area 2-4 – Precipice (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

You come to a steep precipice. You are looking at a sixty-foot sheer drop into a natural cavern bed, full of sharp rock outcroppings. The ceiling soars to fifty feet above the edge of the cliff. A slight breeze comes from the cavern.

If the characters avoided or disarmed the tripwire in area 2-1, read the following.

There are two contraptions of poles and canvas leaning against the wall of the cave to the east of the door. They are vaguely shaped like a pair of wide wings attached to some sort of harness. There are four kobolds in strange grey armor here.

If the characters tripped the alarm, the four kobolds have taken the gliders across the chasm and gone to alert the others. Going forward, the dungeon should be considered on alert.

If the kobolds are surprised, they attempt to hold the characters off long enough for them to make their escape. They then attempt to run off to the rest of the group.

At the far east side of the cliff is a five foot drop to a small landing at the top of a narrow stair down to the bottom of the cliff, then back up to a five feet landing beneath the far ledge.

If the gliders are still there, Small characters may attempt to get themselves into a harness and sail across the chasm in one of the gliders. Medium characters won't fit. Characters must make an Intelligence check (DC 13) to get into the harness correctly. It takes a full ten rounds to get into the harness, half that if one has assistance. Jumping across successfully requires a Balance check, DC 21 to go across (this DC takes into account the characters' complete lack of experience with gliding). There is a -2 penalty to this roll if the character's harness is not on correctly.

It should be obvious to the characters that Medium or Large characters will not be able to use the glider. If they attempt to do so, they fail and fall whatever distance they were trying to jump across.

Kobolds (4): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 5, 5, 4, 3; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +3 ranged (1d3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE: SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13,

Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +10, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (bandit) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: thunderstones (2), tanglefoot bag, spear, sling knife, camouflage tunic, leather armor.

Camouflage Tunic: The kobolds have a specially made camouflage tunic over their armor that gives them a +4 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in a natural cave.

Area 2-5 – The Chasm (EL 2): Read the following if the characters venture down into the chasm.

The floor is extremely uneven here. Water drips from the ceiling into one of many standing pools. You hear a scampering sound off in the darkness.

There are five dire rats here that survive on whatever carrion they can find. They typically ignore the kobolds and like threats, but if an injured character ventures here, the smell of blood incites them to attack. They creep up on their prey and attempt to attack from surprise. The uneven floor gives them a +2 circumstance bonus on Hide checks.

The breeze that the characters felt earlier comes from small natural vents in the ceiling in this place leading to the outside. They do not allow any light through.

Dire Rats (5): CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 6, 5, 5, 4, 3; Init +3; Spd 40 ft; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease); SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Area 2-6 – The Far Ledge: Read or paraphrase the following:

This ledge narrows into a passageway heading north. The breeze is reduced here but you can still feel it at your back.

If the characters tripped the alarm in area 2-1 then the two gliders are hidden here in a corner by wall, covered in the same material used in the kobold's camouflage tunics. A successful Search check (DC 15) allows characters to discover the two gliders hidden in the corner.

Area 2-7 – Trapped Door (EL 1): There is a small door (only 5 feet tall and 1-1/2 feet wide) here at the end of the passage. The door is both locked (Open Lock DC 17) and trapped (Search DC 16). If it is opened or bashed down before the characters successfully disarm the trap, a long-handled sledgehammer swings down from its ready spot on the ceiling over the door, slamming whomever passes through first.

Sledgehammer Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +6 melee (1d6, sledgehammer); Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 14.

Area 2-8 – Armory (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This is a large dry cavern with a fairly even floor. The ceiling is nearly twenty feet high and equally as even. You see dozens of small spears leaning on the wall across from you and other stacks of weapons and equipment around the room.

A dwarf in this area gets an automatic DC 13 Search check (DC 13) to recognize the stonework in this room as being superior to that in the rest of the area. Hundreds of years ago the original denizens of this cave tunneled into an ancient tomb and now the kobolds use it as their armory.

“Hang gliders! We’re rich!”

Not really. While the hang glider is a nifty invention, it is far from perfected. It allows a small creature to fly very swiftly, but at great peril.

If a character properly gets into the harness and leaps off a cliff, he glides down and away from his starting point at an average of 60 feet per round. The GM can raise or lower this due to weather conditions – high winds can add up to 15 feet per round, updrafts can lower maximum air speed as much as 15 feet per round. In extreme weather, such as hurricanes or near vortexes, the GM may rule that the device doesn't work at all.

The hang glider has a hardness of 3 and 8 hit points. Professor Kinfeld has not found a way to baffle its vibrations yet, so the glider takes 0-2 (1d3-1) points of damage *per normal flight* as it slowly shakes itself apart. A *mending* spell heals 1 point of damage to the rig. Professor Kinfeld is the only one who can manually repair a hang glider, but after his ordeal with Crooknek he refuses to, citing a new passion for refuting the creation of weapons of war.



There are two kobolds on guard in a 6x4x4 foot alcove built right above the door. The kobolds have an old coffin full of dirt, rocks and bones. If an intruder enters the room they tip the coffin over on them. The recipient must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid taking 1-3 points of bludgeoning damage from rocks, and must make a DC 13 Fortitude save to avoid being stunned for one round from the shower of dirt. The kobolds attack with their nets then close for melee. If they see an opportunity, they may attempt to manacle the characters and run for aid.

This chamber is stocked with the following items:

18 small spears

10 small war clubs

5 shortswords

100 poor quality arrows (-1 to attack rolls)

12 masterwork arrows in a beautifully designed dwarvish leather quiver (60 gp value)

2 sacks. One has three days' provisions, several changes of stylish human-sized clothes, a small silver mirror, a holy symbol, and a *potion of cure light wounds*. The other has 58 gp, 35 sp, and a bone scroll case containing the following scrolls: *bless*, *sanctuary* and *cure light wounds*.

Kobolds (2): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 5, 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +3 ranged (1d3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft, light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (mining) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (bandit) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Spear, medium net, two thunderstones, alchemist's fire, tanglefoot bag, knife, leather armor. The two kobolds also have a foot ladder, a set of masterwork manacles (Crooknek has the keys to these manacles), and a rickety eight foot ladder they use to climb down from their guard station.

Area 2-9 – Bat Spray Trap (EL 1/2): The ceiling in this entire corridor is seven feet high. There is a tripwire 6 inches off the ground in this hallway (DC 15 Spot check if the characters state they are searching). If the trap is sprung the party is sprayed from above with a foul spraying oily concoction that coats any characters within 10 feet. The characters are coated and smell yucky but there are no other ill effects. It will take an hour with hot soap and water to get the scent out of the hair, clothes and equipment. A sharp outdoorsman might recognize the smell and deduce that the compound is made from jellied

cave moths, a favorite of the most common species of bats in the area (DC 18 Knowledge (nature) check).

Bat Spray Trap: CR 1/2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; oily spray (automatic); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 12.

Area 2-10 – Guard Cave (EL 2): If the dungeon is not on alert read the following:

This is a small dark cave. There are several piles of filthy straw along the walls. You spot six kobolds here lounging about.

If the alert has been sounded, they are hiding around the corners waiting to attack intruders, three on either side. They leap out and attack the party, and if possible one of their numbers disengages to run for help.

Kobolds (6): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 5, 5, 4, 4, 3, 2; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear +2 melee (1d6/x3) or sling +3 ranged (1d3); SQ Darkvision 60 feet, light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (respectively: fletcher, fire-building, weaponsmith, trapmaking, stonemasonry and brewing) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (bandits) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Spear, sling, leather armor.

Area 2-11 – Hidden Chamber (EL 2): The kobolds are aware that there is a secret passage here but they avoid it for fear of what lurks within. The secret door (Search DC 18) looks like a smooth patch in the wall. As the characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This small chamber smells musty and dank, as if it has not seen fresh air for many ages. A fully intact skeleton sits up against a wall, clothed in a robe of mottled blue that must have once been magnificent. Off in the darkness you hear a shifting about, then a small creature roars and charges you from the darkness. It is short, stooped and encased in layers of fat. The horrible creature bares a mouth full of fangs as it rushes forward.

The creature is a dretch demon that was summoned ages ago to protect a fledgling necromancer from attack. The necromancer died but the dretch was never able to leave, a side effect of the long-forgotten artifact used to summon it. The stupid thing attacks the characters relentlessly, trying to keep them away from the skeletal remains of his master.

The skeleton has a *ring of protection +1*, a *wand of magic missiles* (11 charges), a small leather pouch with a dozen common emeralds (50 gp each), and 3 *potions of cure light wounds*.

Dretch: CR 2; Small Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil); HD 2d8+4; hp 18; Init +0; Spd 20 ft; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp -1; Atk claw +4 melee (1d6+1); Full Atk 2 claws +4 melee (1d6+1) and bite +2 melee (1d4); SA spell-like abilities; summon demon; SQ Damage reduction 5/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 feet, immunity to electricity and poison, resistance 10 to acid, cold and fire 10, telepathy; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5, Search +2, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks); Multiattack.

Spell-like abilities: 1/day – *scare* (DC 12), *stinking cloud* (DC 13).

Area 2-12 – Bat Cavern (EL 2): If the characters enter the room quietly read them the following:

This chamber is forty feet wide with vaulted ceilings. The floor is covered in white, splotchy goo – it's everywhere you look on the floor. Rough hewn timbers make up the rafters over your heads. There are two doors leading from this place, one to the east and one to the west.

A character who makes a successful DC 18 Knowledge (nature) check recognizes the stuff as bat guano. Anyone entering this place who makes a DC 17 Spot check sees that there is a swarm of bats hanging from the ceiling above the timbers. Parties who dim their light sources and pass quietly can go out through one of the doors without incident. If the party has lights or makes noise here, the bats start shrieking. The noise may attract the kobolds in area 2-13 if they make a successful DC 20 Listen check.

If the party happened to trip the trap in area 2-9, the bats swarm and attack anyone who was hit with the bat spray. They attack until destroyed or are somehow driven off.

Bat Swarm: CR 2; Diminutive Animal (swarm); HD 3d8; hp 17; Init +2; Spd 5 ft, fly 40 ft (good); AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp –; Atk/Full Atk swarm (1d6); Space/Reach 10 ft/0 ft.; SA Distraction, wounding; SQ Blindsight 20 ft, half damage from slashing and piercing, low-light vision, swarm traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Listen +11, Spot +11; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes.

Area 2-13 – Sleeping Chamber (EL 1): The door to this area is unlocked. If the kobolds hear the bats in area 2-12 screeching (Listen DC 20), they charge in to attack once it sounds like their domesticated bats were slain or run off.

This is a large communal living area. There are dozens of straw mats, three fire pits, and other piles of assorted bones, camp gear and filth.

There are five male kobolds, 11 female kobolds and 3 young, which may or may not be present depending on the outcome of area 2-12. If the characters set off the alarm in area 2-1, the four kobolds from area 2-4 will be here as well. The male kobolds attack and fight to the death to protect the others. The females and young are non combatants – they will escape if possible, cower and hide if not.

There are eight spears in the nook by the south wall. One of them is medium-sized and of a much more sophisticated degree of workmanship – a masterwork spear.

If the area is searched, the characters find a total of 79 cp and 24 sp hidden throughout the lair. Finding it all takes a minimum of ten minutes. None of the food is edible for humans.

Kobolds (5): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 6, 6, 5, 4, 3; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear +2 melee (1d6/x3) or sling +3 ranged (1d3); SQ Darkvision 60 feet, light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (anti-adventurer specialists) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (anti-adventurer specialist) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Spear, sling, leather armor, two thunderstones, alchemists' fire.

Area 2-14 – Guard Post (EL 1): There are two kobolds standing sentry outside of the door. They have stood post overlong and are weary (-2 to Spot and Listen checks). Careful characters might find a way to dispatch them without alerting the other denizens of the caves. Once they spot intruders, the kobolds attack while calling out for help.

Kobolds (2): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 6, 6; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear +2 melee (1d6/x3) or sling +3 ranged (1d3); SQ Darkvision 60 feet, light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide

+6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (bandit) +2, Search +2, Spot +2.

Possessions: Spear (x3), sling, leather armor.

Area 2-15 – Workshop (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

A dozen strange smells assail you as you enter this place – some acidic, some antiseptic, some natural and many otherwise. This large cavern has been transformed into an improvised workshop. Two long ramshackle tables along the south wall are covered in expensive-looking glass tubes, small fires, basins of chemicals and boxes.

A frazzled-looking human stands amongst the clutter. He is chained by the ankle to a decrepit but stout armchair that he apparently must drag about with him when he moves. His robes are filthy and stained, and his face and arms are bruised. There are two kobolds standing guard near him.

This is Elmont Kinfeld, the kidnapped inventor. He is extremely intelligent but is injured, hungry and exhausted (current hit points 7 out of 38 plus fatigued until he is able to get a full two days of rest and meals). Forced for weeks to watch his ideas made into weapons, he has vowed to escape and never make weapons of war again – going forward, he intends to turn all his creative power to agrarian uses.

The two kobolds try to prevent the party from reaching Kinfeld, but if pressed will escape and try to get help at the earliest opportunity. One of them has a shrill whistle on a chain around his neck, and will blow on it if attacked, hoping for help from area 2-17 (which may arrive; Listen DC 20).

Kinfeld's current experiment is a time waster – he has convinced Crooknek that he believes he can turn cave lichen into poison gas with a bit of experimentation. It's not true but he has found a way to make it not only edible but delicious.

Kobolds (2): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 5, 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Attack shortsword +1 (1d6-1/19-20) or sling +3 (1d3); SQ Darkvision 60 feet, light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (bandit) +2, Search +2, Spot +2.

Possessions: Shortsword, sling, buckler, leather armor, two knives.

Area 2-16 – Pit Trap (EL 1): There is a pressure plate trigger on the floor here, difficult to spot on the dusty floor (Search/Disable DC 17). If it isn't detected and either disarmed or avoided, each character walking past it has a 1 in 6 chance of stepping on it. If it is stepped on, a section of floor slides back into the wall to reveal an 8-foot deep pit, the floor of which is covered in tiny bits of flint (falling damage 1d6+1d3 piercing from flint shards). The pit remains open until reset, and actually has handholds cut into the southern edge of the deadfall so that the workmen could climb out (Climb DC 10).

The edges of the pit are 5 feet ahead of and 5 feet behind the triggering point. Characters on this section when it opens can attempt a Reflex save (DC 13) to leap either forward or back before the section slides out from under them. If a character misses his save by exactly one point (i.e., rolls a 12), he is hanging by his fingertips somewhere along the edge of the pit.

Further, the pit is designed to make a distinctive *boiiiiing!* sound when triggered. This alerts Crooknek and his cronies in area 2-17. If they hear the sound they come out prepared for battle.

Camouflaged Pit Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 10 Reflex save avoids; *boiiiiing!* sound upon triggering; 10 feet deep with flint-lined bottom (1d6 falling damage plus 1d3 piercing damage); Search DC 17; Disable Device DC 17.

Area 2-17 – Crooknek's Den (EL 2): Characters who arrive here without being detected see light from the crack in the door and hear laughter and the clinking of glass from within.

This room is bizarrely well appointed, considering it is located in a den of kobold bandits. A dozen fine tapestries of elvish make serve as a sort of pile carpet along the north wall. What appears to be a sleeping nest made of silk sweaters is in the center of it. There is what appears to be a half-full crate of wine bottles in the center of the room. Two magical torches are stuck into the floor, shedding arcane light everywhere. There is also a high-quality bookcase here with three books on it and a row of silver candle holders.

There is a humanoid here, taller than the rest and wearing high-quality armor and a cloak of the finest quality, like that of a gentleman soldier. He sits on a crate with a wine bottle in his hand. A huge sword hangs in a scabbard over his back. There are two kobold guards standing near him holding spears.

Crooknek was kicked out of his tribe during a dispute between factions. After barely escaping with his life, he fled to the mountains and finally discovered this cave. The hideous goblinoid took over leadership of the kobold band and has been robbing caravans and raiding villages ever since.

If intruders attempt to parley, he demands they drop their weapons and leave, or else be sold into slavery. He attacks and orders his guards to attack but if death seems imminent he surrenders and begs for his life.

The tapestries were once extremely fine, but have been excessively soiled and trod upon (worth 20 gp each to a dealer). Underneath one is a shallow pit filled with Crooknek's hoard: 3,051 gp, 4,024 sp, a jeweled anklet with diamonds (worth 550 gp) and a treasure map (real or false, at GM's discretion).

Crooknek, hobgoblin leader: CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid; HD 1; hp 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +1 *merciful longsword* +4 melee (1d8+3); SQ Darkvision 60 feet; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will -2; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 7, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: +1 *merciful longsword*, cloak of Charisma +2, masterwork breastplate armor, 2 masterwork daggers, a concealed knife, wineskin. Crooknek also has the keys to the door in area 2-7, the manacles in area 2-8, and the manacles in area 2-18.

Kobolds (2): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 7, 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk scimitar +2 melee (18-20/x2) or masterwork sling +4 ranged (1d3); SQ Darkvision 60 feet, light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (thug) +2, Search +2, Spot +2.

Possessions: Small scimitar, masterwork sling, 20 sling bullets, a thunderstone, alchemist's fire, leather armor.

Area 2-18 – The Prisoners: Read or paraphrase the following:

The passage is dusty and smells of stale air and fear. It dead-ends in a masonry wall, where two middle-aged men huddle in tattered rags. They cringe away from you as you approach. Each one is chained by the ankle to what appears to be a heavy piece of granite.



The two men are Oswald and Hubert Reichfort, two merchant brothers who used to run a caravan. The two were taking a load of wine and foodstuffs to market when they were waylaid by the kobolds, who beat them, blindfolded them and brought them here. Their family has posted a 250 gp reward for their safe return, and if they are brought to safety they are happy to pay. They would like to aid the characters but have no combat skills to speak of.

The Reichfort brothers have been imprisoned here for better than two weeks. They tell the characters that they have, on numerous occasions, heard something loud moving behind the masonry wall but they do not know what it is.

The chains have a simple lock (Open Lock DC 14).

There is a secret door in the north wall that not even the kobolds know about (Search DC 20). It is opened by pushing in a slightly discolored brick. The door swings into another part of the ancient tomb that shares the mountain with the caverns of the kobolds.

Area 2-19 – Viewing Chamber (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The secret door opens onto a wide chamber. Once this was likely a majestic burial place for some ancient clan. Now it is a ruin of decay and

rot. There are inset half-pillars along the walls, small niches (likely for candles or flowers) carved into the wall, and the smashed remains of what may have once been a marble statue. Two dozen sarcophagi stand along the edges of the walls, and a row of six more lie in sets of two head-to-foot down the middle of the room. Each one has been smashed and broken into – the floor is strewn with smashed rocks, dust and bones.

You hear a quickening rush of feet.

Three ghouls have been ransacking this tomb for weeks. They charge from the western side of the room as soon as they see a light. If the characters manage to sneak in the ghouls can be caught unaware, fighting as they are over some obscene object.

Characters who successfully Search through the debris (DC 18) find the following: 60 silver pieces (each carved with an X – the ghouls took them from the corpses' eyes) and 6 gold rings (five worth 50 gp, one worth 150 gp).

The room has two secret doors, including the one the characters entered through. Each is behind a spot in the wall between two sarcophagi (Search DC 18).

Ghouls (3): CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 7, 7, 7; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis); Full Atk bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis); SA Paralysis (Fort DC 12), ghoul fever; SQ Darkvision 60 ft, undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack

Area 2-20 – Stairwell: Read or paraphrase the following:

This stairway is narrow and steep. The air feels warmer here, somehow, than the rest of this dank place. You come to a long landing. Mysterious runes are carved into the north and south walls.

The runes are in an ancient dialect, now only known to students of antiquity. Students of ancient languages may be able to discern them (DC 20 Decipher Script check) and realize that these runes are a warning of a terrible fate awaiting grave robbers and unclean spirits who violate the tomb of the Tellakerry Clan. Characters who are familiar with the local kingdom (DC 15 Knowledge (local) check)

recognize that ancient name – there is both a Tellakerry Street and a Tellakerry bridge in a nearby city.

The stairway leads to a stepladder that leads to a sealed trap door in the ceiling. It is possible to muscle it open (DC 18 Strength check) and proceed into the passage above.

Area 2-21 – The Mausoleum: Read or paraphrase the following:

You can tell from the air that you are no longer underground. This chamber is cramped from the many ruined sarcophagi here.

There is nothing of value in this room. The door on the east wall is hedged in by roots on the other side. A DC 20 Strength check allows the characters to push pass a scrim of roots and briars into the cool night air. Once outside, they find themselves higher up on the mountain than the pass that brought them to the cave of the kobolds. This mausoleum is so old it was completely covered with grass, roots and vines and could barely be distinguished from the rest of the mountain.

Area 2-22 – Rubble-Strewn Corridor: Read or paraphrase the following:

This narrow passage is filled with rubble – it looks like a section of the ceiling fell in. The air is dusty and the ceiling is full of crumbling cracks. Dust falls in trickles in places.

Dwarves note that this is an unsafe hallway – a loud noise or explosion could bring the roof down. If a character does make a loud noise or some kind of impact or explosion (a thunderstone, alchemists' fire, etc.) roll 1d20 – on a 12 or higher the roof starts to crumble. The characters have two rounds to exit the corridor. After that the ceiling comes down and crushes them, or traps them in area 2-23.

If the characters get trapped in area 2-23, it takes 45 man-hours for characters without proper tools to dig themselves out through the fallen rubble.

Area 2-23 – Clan Chieftain's Burial Chamber: Read or paraphrase the following:

This place is an ancient ruin of what was once an austere and kingly tomb. In the center of the chamber is a massive sarcophagus, with a majestic figure carved here in relief. Though the casket is chipped and rent in a thousand places, you can see that this was once a life-like carving of a handsome nobleman. There are pedestals supported by short pillars throughout the room – once they might have displayed treasures; now they are fractured and

covered in dust. There are ancient runes along the base of the tomb, some of which seem to have been purposely marred.

Along the walls of this room there are a dozen smaller stone coffins, each carved like a different animal.

This is the final resting place of the original head of the Tellakerry Clan. The chief presided over a vast kingdom and was revered for uniting a diverse people. It is said that he wrestled out of the very sky a great bird that was terrorizing the countryside (DC 15 Knowledge (local) check to have heard this oft-repeated story).

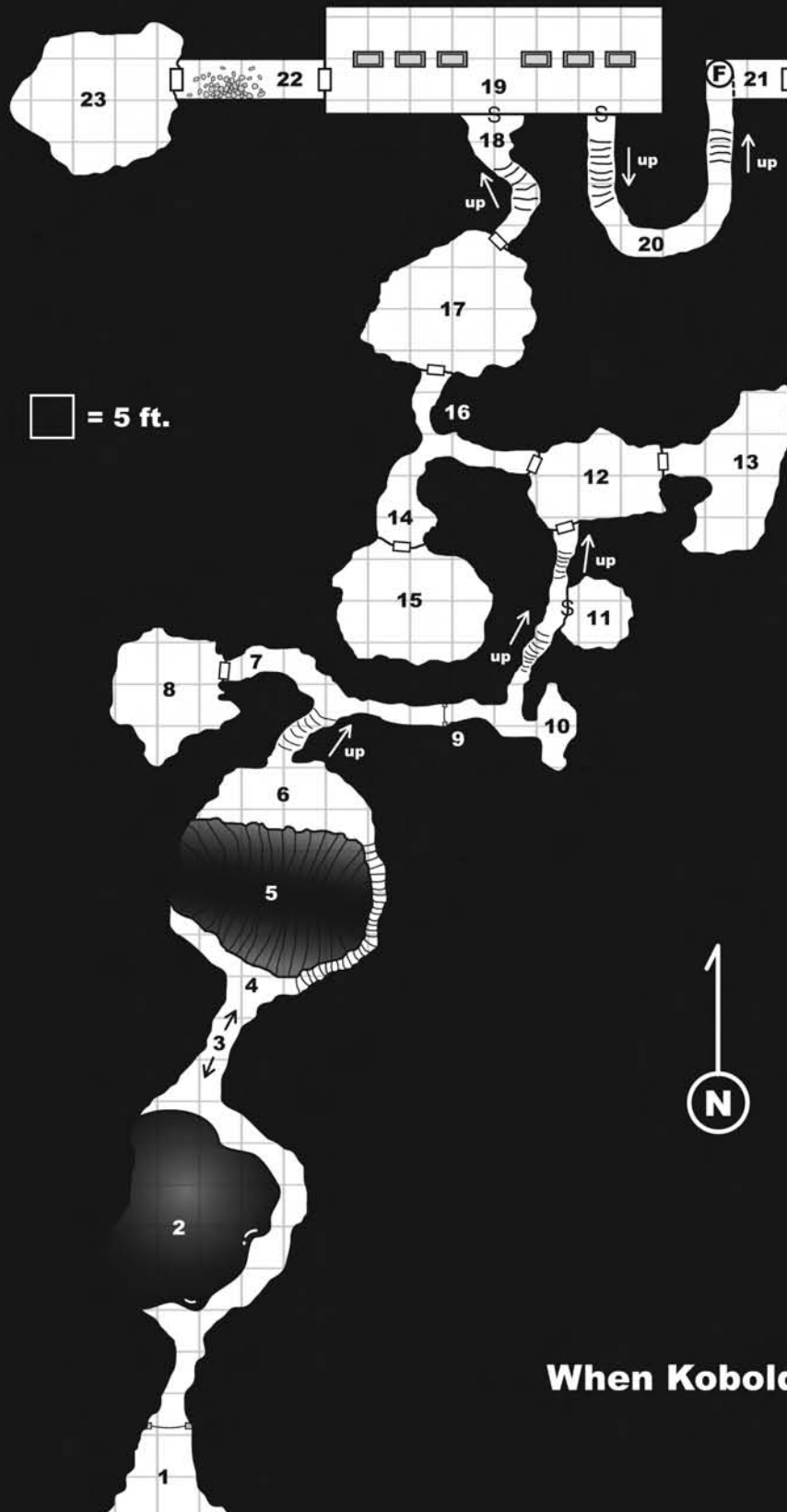
The remaining legible runes can be roughly translated (DC 20 Decipher Script) as:

"Here lies Marko Tellakerry, chief of all chieftains. Woe to (destroyed portion) and be buried (destroyed portion)."

The small sarcophagi around the room contain the cremated remains of Tellakerry's favorite pets. Starting at the northernmost post and going around the room clockwise they are: dog, cat, a songbird, a hawk, a horse and a hippogriff. A rogue or dwarf who examines them will note that each one seems to trigger some unknown massive trap (Search DC 18, Disable Device DC 20; failing by more than 5 on either check automatically triggers the trap). However, the trigger on the songbird coffer is false. Any attempt to disarm it seems to work.

Opening the lid of the other tiny coffins sets off the trap, unless they are disarmed: the ceiling begins to cave in. Dozens of cracks appear almost at once and sand and dust begin to fill the air. The characters have three rounds to run to safety before the roof caves in. They need to get at least as far as area 2-18 or 2-20 to survive the cave-in. Otherwise, they are crushed beneath several tons of rubble.

If they open the lid on the songbird sarcophagus they find a small wooden box. Inside is a gold signet ring, damaged but still worth 1000 gp to a collector; a ceremonial +1 dagger in an ornately jeweled sheath worth 100 gp; and an arcane scroll of identify.



Dungeon Crawl Classics

Chilled to the Bone

By Jason Little

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

Chilled to the Bone is an adventure for a party of 4-6 first level characters. All classes will find this adventure challenging, but characters with nature and outdoor skills such as barbarians, druids and rangers will fit particularly well. Given the inherent dangers of early level encounters, a character that can provide magic healing will be very useful.

Adventure Summary

The farmers of Open Hearth begin to grow concerned as the unusually harsh winter has yet to yield to spring. Fields lie frozen when crops should be planted, and a deadly chill preys on the farmers nearest the Weeping Forest. Some say the farmers have angered the guardian spirit living deep in the Weeping Forest, but no one dares set foot in the Guardian's domain. The adventurers are hired to save the farmers of Open Hearth and find out why winter refuses to release its icy clutch on the land.

The guardian spirit of the forest – and by extension the surrounding farmlands – is an avoral, a mysterious bird-like creature from another plane. The spirit is distraught.

She recently laid a clutch of crystal eggs, but the eggs were stolen. A gang of greedy men from Open Hearth plan to make an easy profit from their ill-gotten eggs. The men had gone their separate ways in the forest, looking for a break in the forsaken winter before heading off to sell their stolen goods.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	128	C	Starving dire wolf	3
1-2	129	C	Ice mephits	4
1-3	130	C	Krenshar (4)	3
1-5	132	C	Ice mephit	3
1-6	133	C	Avoral guardian spirit	7
1-8A	136	T	Small net trap	1
1-8B	136	T	Spiked floor trap	1
1-8C	136	T	Breakaway floor trap	1
1-8D	136	C	<i>Denin Crob</i> , Rog2	2

Scaling Information

GMs can quickly adjust the difficulty of the scenario to accommodate slightly more experienced groups. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

For stronger parties (characters above 1st level, or for more than 6 total character levels): Increase the save DCs for the cold weather by +2. Remove the fatigued condition from the dire wolf in area 1-1. Add another ice mephit to areas 1-2 and 1-5. Add one or two krenshar to area 1-3. Increase the depth of the crevasse bearing the frozen river in area 1-4 to 40 feet. Remove the sickened condition from the avoral in area 1-6. Add 1 or 2 rogue levels to Denin Crob in area 1-8.

The Outdoor “Dungeon”

This adventure takes place out of doors, but the unusual circumstances still provide for a dungeon setting. The harsh, bitter winter holds the forest in its frozen embrace. Sheets of ice, frozen branches, and numbing cold form the “walls” of the forest. Characters seeking to leave the relative safety of the paths should be forced to contend with slick, uneven footing, razor sharp ice, and nonlethal damage from cold. Your players will learn quickly not to strike out on their own.

Adventuring in the Cold

The frozen forest is dangerously cold, hovering near 0° F. Cold and exposure deal nonlethal damage to exposed victims. This nonlethal damage cannot be recovered until the character gets out of the cold and warms up again. If a character is rendered unconscious through the accumulation of nonlethal damage, the cold and exposure begin to deal lethal damage at the same rate.

In the wintry conditions of the Weeping Forest, an unprotected character must make a Fortitude save once every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check), taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage on each failed save. A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (see the skill description). Characters wearing sturdy winter clothing only need check once every half hour for cold and exposure damage.

A character who takes any nonlethal damage from cold or exposure is beset by frostbite or hypothermia (treat as fatigued). These penalties end when the character recovers the nonlethal damage she took from the cold and exposure.

Further, some of the descriptions in the adventure indicate that an area is icy or slick. Characters must spend two squares of movement to enter a square covered by ice, and the DC for Balance and Tumble checks increases by +5.

The Magic Eggs

The avoral's four precious eggs are hidden throughout the forest. One of the eggs, the Egg of Winter, has already been broken, triggering the horribly cold environment. So what would happen if the characters crack open the other eggs?

That's completely up to the GM, but some possibilities are listed below. Each egg should be thematically appropriate to its season. However, keep in mind that these eggs have a radical impact on the local weather conditions. Without the avoral tempering the energies while the eggs hatch, the surrounding land may never recover.

Egg of Spring: Cold subsides at once. All creatures within 100 feet recover from fatigue and are healed 1d8+1 hit points (as if the recipient of a *cure light wounds* spell). Plants become lush and start sprouting. Within an hour, everything within two miles is affected by a *plant growth* spell. Frequent rains and flooding are also likely.

Egg of Summer: Cold subsides at once. Within an hour, temperatures soar above 100 degrees, and characters within two miles must soon contend with hot environmental effects. After two hours, all characters are subject to a *heat metal* spell. A drought is very likely.

Egg of Autumn: Cold lessens dramatically. Within an hour, all vegetation starts to bow and warp, and all eligible targets within two miles are affected as if by *warp wood*. Crops will never take seed and wither almost as soon as they start to grow.

GM Tip

To make it easier to remember to track Fortitude saves due to the cold, simply ask for a save the first time the party enters a new location. This snowflake symbol ❄ and a reminder have been included at the beginning of each encounter for convenience.

Background Story

The village of Open Hearth lies in a verdant, fertile valley near the Weeping Forest. Thanks to the generally mild weather, farmers in Open Hearth earn a respectable living working the land. As the harvest passed and people started preparing for winter, four disgruntled farmhands from Open Hearth decided to look for a more immediate claim to wealth and comfort.

These four men looked to the Weeping Forest itself, having heard tales from lifelong residents of Open Hearth that a beautiful winged bird lived in the heart of the forest, protecting the great wood and the surrounding farmlands. One night, the head conspirator, a greedy man named Denin Crob, overheard a woodsman returning from the forest talking to the village elders. The woodsman told them that the winter would surely be mild and a rich and prosperous spring lay ahead, for the guardian spirit had laid a clutch of four peerless crystal eggs, each larger than a man's fist – a great omen of prosperity for the farming community.

Denin took the news back to his friends, and they quickly agreed that these eggs provided the means to achieve their dreams of wealth. In the dark of night, the four stole into the Weeping Forest and surprised the woodsman in his shack. The four thieves tortured the poor woodsman, forcing him to reveal the whereabouts of the winged guardian before killing him. Then the treacherous lot crept to the small clearing where the guardian made her nest, and stole her precious eggs while she was sleeping.

The guardian spirit woke shortly after the men left the clearing, and wailed fiercely when she discovered her

eggs missing. Her sorrowful keening could be heard throughout the wood and surrounding valley. Shripping winds, as bitter as her grief, swept through the forest. Dark creatures of the forest stirred from their torpor, no longer held at bay by the guardian spirit's protection.

Denin Crob and his lot grew fearful, and divided the eggs among them – one egg to a man. They split up at an intersection not far from the guardian spirit's nest, each looking to make his way out of the forest and sell off his precious egg. But none ever made it back out of the forest.

Once clear of the other two thieves, Denin attacked his traveling companion while crossing a small bridge. Denin sought to steal the other man's egg for his own. During the struggle, the men broke through the railing and fell off the bridge. During the ensuing fight in the shallow pond, the Egg of Winter crashed into a boulder. Everything immediately started to flash freeze outward from that point – and the wicked winter set in deep.

The winter has pressed on through spring, and fields still lie frozen when new seed should be sown. The village elders grow fearful, and don't know where else to turn. They beseech the adventurers to travel into the forest. The heroes must learn what fate has befallen their guardian spirit and find a means to end the unyielding winter.

There are four eggs total – each corresponding to one of the seasons. The eggs “hatch” at the start of a new season. Unfortunately, the Winter Egg was cracked and broken before its time, unleashing the early winter. And without her other eggs, the guardian spirit lacks the ability – or desire – to set things right.

Player Beginning

The village elders of Open Hearth have little to offer other than encouragement and sturdy sets of cold weather gear. They're running low on provisions, and what little aid the elders have at their disposal has been used to tend to the sick, elderly and young. They grow ever more fearful that should this winter last much longer, many of their villagers will not live to see the spring.

Armos Plowman, the voice of the elders, has told you what he's been able to piece together. The only events the elders can tie to the onset of the sudden winter are several disappearances. Thedric Branch, the village woodsman, never returned from his last foray to gather firewood. Several farmhands, including the ill-liked Denin Crob, never showed up to work the day the winter set in. Armos believes these disappearances may be related.

Armos has also told you of a guardian spirit lying within

the Weeping Forest. He describes the spirit as a colorful, majestic bird the size of an ox, with gossamer wings and a song so beautiful it brings the most hardened man to tears – which is how the Weeping Forest got its name. But the song she now sings is one of pain, anger and bitter, bitter cold. Few of the other villagers share Armos' belief in the guardian spirit, but they do point out that Thedric Branch, the woodsman, was a firm believer.

Armos' tale ends as the party arrives at the very edge of the forest. The trees are rimed with thick layers of ice. A stiff wind blows from within, blustering along the slick, frozen trail which heads into the heart of the forest. As the wind catches the stiff branches and icicles, it sounds like a long, mournful cry. Armos bundles up as tightly as he can within his heavy cloak and thick furs, then turns to head back to Open Hearth, where he will anxiously await your return.

Chilled to the Bone

The frozen walls and forest paths create the corridors and passages of this “dungeon,” and there are no standard, default doors or walls.

Frozen Conditions

If the heroes press into the thick of the frozen forest, have them make increasingly difficult Fortitude saves against cold.

Frozen Forest Walls: 5 ft. thick; hardness 10; hp 150; Break DC 40; Climb DC 25.

Wandering Monsters

There are no wandering monsters in this adventure, per se. However, whenever characters try to stray too far from the path, they should hear the baying of krenshar from within the woods. If they ignore this warning, they have a 50% chance of encountering 1d2 krenshar.

Krenshar (2): CR 1; Medium Magical Beast; HD 2d10; hp 10 each; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6); Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d4); SA Scare (as per *scare* spell at 3rd level, Will DC 13); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13; Skills and Feats: Hide +4, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +6; Multiattack, Track

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – The Woodsman’s Tower (EL 3): Once the party enters the first clearing, read the following aloud:

A small clearing has been hewn from the forest. The clearing stretches roughly 60 feet to the north, and 50 feet from west to east.

A stout wooden log cabin sits on thick wooden stilts on the western edge of the clearing. Split log steps lead up to the cabin’s only door, which lies partially open. The southwest corner of the cabin has a square watchtower built into the walls. The log tower extends 40 feet into the air, canopied by a thin roof of woven branches. This must be Thedric Branch’s watchtower that Armos Plowman told you about.

A wide trail leads to the northwest, behind the cabin and tower, while narrower trails cut into the frozen forest to the north and east.

❄ **Cold weather check!** Don’t forget to have the party make Fortitude saves for the cold weather.

The cabin lies abandoned, save for some of Thedric Branch’s remains frozen within the tower.

A lone, starved dire wolf has found shelter beneath the cabin’s stilts, using the cabin as a refuge from the dreadful wind. The cabin contains the first clues as to what transpired in the forest.

Tactics: The dire wolf is starving and is therefore considered fatigued. The modifiers to its Strength and Dexterity have already been factored into the stat box below. The dire wolf lies in wait, and then attacks the first character headed toward the stairs into the cabin. To notice the dire wolf, a character must be within 10 feet of the cabin and make a Spot check opposed by the dire wolf’s +6 Hide check. The dire wolf fights to the death.

Aftermath: The remains of several small forest animals are in the crawlspace below the cabin. A DC 10 Search beneath the cabin also reveals a severed, gnawed human arm – all that remains now of Thedric Branch. The fingers on the arm show severe signs of frost bite.

The Cabin: The cabin is wide and drafty. Gaps in the wall let in a fair amount of wind, which whistles as it passes through the logs. A small cot and several wolf pelts lie scattered about, as well as a handaxe and two whetstones. A small wooden chest is next to the cot. It is locked (DC 10 Open Lock or DC 20 Strength check to break open). Inside the chest are 4 tindertwigs, a waterskin filled with strong brandy, a small silver charm necklace (10 gp) and a first aid kit.

A ladder in the southwest corner leads to a swinging trap door in the ceiling. With the trap door open, the ladder continues up a narrow square tower for 20 feet then opens to the small platform on top of the tower itself.

The Tower: On the tower platform there is a large pool of frozen blood, and several mangled fingers. A DC 10 Heal check reveals that the fingers come from a strong adult male, and were probably severed while the man was still alive.

Nearby, a hollowed ram’s horn with a silver mouthpiece dangles on a frozen thong of leather from a small peg. The horn must be carefully removed from the ice to avoid damaging it. A DC 15 Sleight of Hand check or a cautious plan removes the horn, which is worth 25 gp.

Thedric was killed here by Denin Crob’s men when they first entered the forest. The woodsman had

noticed them lurking near the watch tower. When he confronted them, Denin and his men chased Thedric back to the cabin. Thedric was trying to reach the tower to blow his hunting horn to alert the villagers, but was slain before he could do so. After they killed Thedric Branch, Denin pushed the body over the lip of the tower, where the dire wolf eventually found it and dragged it below the cabin.

A DC 12 Spot check made from the watch tower shows that the wide path leading off to the northwest opens up into a smaller clearing less than 100 feet from the cabin. The top of the tower is just below the tree line, but from this height, a character can tell that the wind is blowing from the northeast.

Starving Dire Wolf: CR 3; Large Animal; HD 6d8+18; hp 42; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +14; Atk Bite +10 melee (1d8+9); Full Atk Bite +10 melee (1d8+9); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Fatigued, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 25 (23), Dex 15 (13), Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +2 (+6 in white background), Listen +7, Move Silently +4, Spot +7, Survival +2 (+6 by scent); Alertness, Run, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)

Trip (Ex): A dire wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent (+11 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the dire wolf.

Fatigued: A fatigued creature can neither run nor charge and takes a –2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity.

Area 1-2 – A Makeshift Tent (EL 4): When the party enters the clearing, read the following aloud:

The wide path flares open into another clearing, slightly smaller than the one housing the log watchtower. The clearing stands 40 feet wide and 50 feet north-to-south. There is a slight opening in the otherwise icily sealed tree line, where you can see wind and snow flurrying overhead.

Snow and ice have drifted deep along the western edge of the clearing. In the northwest corner, a few small wooden sticks and a glimpse of canvas peek out from the depths of the snow drift.

❄ Cold weather check! Don't forget to have the party make Fortitude saves for the cold weather.

One of Denin Crob's men set up a tent here to gather his wits and wait out what he assumed was just a mild storm. He was attacked in his tent by two ice mephits. The ice mephits still linger, trying to crack open the crystal egg they took from the body.

Clues in the Clearing: A DC 12 Listen check reveals a soft "tap tap tap" noise, sounding like stone on stone, coming from somewhere within the clearing. On a roll of 15 or higher, the listener pinpoints the location to the tent.

A DC 10 Survival check reveals human sized tracks throughout the clearing, from Denin Crob's man. These are mostly around the area of the drift, where the tent lies partially buried. If the character rolled 15 or higher, he also notes a handful of very small prints, which at first glance seem to be animal tracks, but only appear in a few places too far away from each other to be walking tracks. A DC 12 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies these as mephit tracks, where the impish creatures landed briefly while flying.

Characters sneaking up on the tent may surprise the mephits, which are otherwise occupied with the egg. The mephits suffer a –5 circumstance penalty to their Spot and Listen checks due to distraction. If a character sneaks up next to the tent, he hears the mephits chattering inside in Auran. A DC 15 Listen check by someone fluent in Auran allows him to make out the conversation, which has to do with arguing over how best to "break open the crystal clutch."

Tactics: The ice mephits are preoccupied inside the tent, so the party has an excellent chance to catch them unawares. They've already used up *magic missile* for the hour trying to crack open the egg, but to no avail. They cannot fly well within the confines of the small canvas tent. Once attacked, they forget about the egg and get outside the tent to take advantage of their mobility as quickly as possible.

The mephits use their breath weapon to target as many characters as possible. They target those afflicted by the cold effects, but shift attention to any

A Difficult Encounter

A 1st level group facing two CR 3 creatures with damage reduction – like they encounter in area 1-2 – could quickly turn disastrous. A loud, careless group will attract the mephits' attention and allow them to clear the tent and take flight. However, a clever party will take advantage of the mephit's preoccupation inside the tent and possibly ambush them. Reward clever thinking and planning by the PCs with a surprise round.

character wielding a weapon capable of bypassing their damage reduction. Once a mephitis has been reduced to 5 hp or fewer, he withdraws and attempts to summon another mephitis from a safe distance. The mephitis fight to the death.

Aftermath: Once the mephitis are dispatched, the group has access to the tent. The body of one of Denin Crob's thieves is frozen solid and covered with a heavy rime of frost and ice. The body is in a fetal position, with its arms pulled up in front of him as if he were embracing something. A handaxe, dagger, bedroll and frozen waterskin lie on the floor, along with several rocks of various sizes (which the mephitis were using to try to crack open the egg). A DC 12 Search check of the body also reveals a small leather pouch frozen under his heavy clothing. Inside the pouch are 23 cp and a simple brass ring (5 sp).

The guardian spirit's crystal egg lies among the ruins of the tent. The crystal egg is the size of an ostrich egg and completely smooth. Its clear surface is warm to the touch. The egg is translucent, but the numerous facets inside the egg make it impossible to see through it clearly. It appears as though a large, perfect topaz is nestled in the very center of the crystal egg. This is the Egg of Summer.

A DC 12 Appraise check values the crystal egg somewhere near 250 gp. However, a DC 18 Knowledge (the planes) or bardic knowledge check reveals that this is not an ordinary gem or jewel – but instead a magical artifice from another plane. A character gets a +1 circumstance bonus to this check for each other egg discovered so far.

Egg of Summer: 6 inches thick; hardness 5; hp 25; Break DC 25.

Ice Mephitis (2): CR 3; Small Outsider (Air, Cold, Extraplanar); HD 3d8; hp 13, 16; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -1; Atk Claw +4 melee (1d3 plus 1d4 cold); Full Atk 2 claws +4 melee (1d3 plus 1d4 cold); SA Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, *summon mephitis*; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, dark-vision 60 ft., fast healing 2 (32°F or below), immunity to cold, vulnerability to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Escape Artist +9, Hide +13, Listen +6, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Use Rope +3 (+5 with bindings); Dodge, Improved Initiative

Breath Weapon (Su): 10-foot cone of ice shards, damage 1d4 cold, Reflex DC 12 half. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by

frostbitten skin and frozen eyes unless they have immunity to cold or are otherwise protected. This effect imposes a –4 penalty to AC and a –2 penalty on attack rolls for 3 rounds.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/hour – *magic missile* (caster level 3rd); 1/day – *chill metal* (DC 14, caster level 6th).

Summon Mephitis (Sp): Once per day, a mephitis can attempt to summon another mephitis of the same variety, much as though casting a *summon monster* spell, but with only a 25% chance of success. Roll d%: On a failure, no creature answers the summons that day. A mephitis that has just been summoned cannot use its own summon ability for 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Area 1-3 – An Abrupt Dead End (EL 3): Another of Denin Crob's men tried fleeing along this trail, but the trail ended suddenly in a tangle of snapped limbs frozen together, blocking off further passage. Once crossing the sharp curve, he was ambushed by the krenshar lurking just behind the frozen trees. The Egg of Autumn is still clutched in his frozen arms, beneath his heavy cloak and furs.

When the party starts down this path, a character can pick up footprints on the icy path with a DC 12 Survival check. These are the tracks left behind by one of Denin Crob's men. Once they reach the blocked area along the path, a DC 12 Survival check reveals several sets of animal tracks that emerge from the frozen trees and also lead in the same direction as the footprints. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals them as krenshar tracks.

When the party rounds the final corner on this long path, read the following aloud:

The long, slick trail follows a slow curve westward, and then veers sharply to the northeast. The path narrows to barely more than 5 feet wide, then flares open suddenly against a sheer wall of tangled trees thick with ice. A large pile of snow has drifted along the base of the wall of frozen trees. The bottom of the snow pile is compressed into pinkish ice.

Suddenly, the clacking of claws on the icy ground behind you catches your attention. You turn to see a small pack of large canine creatures rounding the curve, stalking toward you!

❄ Cold weather check! Don't forget to have the party make Fortitude saves for the cold weather.

Cornered! All characters must attempt a Listen check opposed by the Move Silently check of the krenshar. Characters failing the check are flat-foot-

ed during a surprise round of combat. If the characters are especially wary or discovered the krenshar's tracks, they receive a +2 circumstance bonus to this Listen check.

The narrow confines of the bottleneck in the trail require the group to carefully plan how they deal with the krenshar.

Tactics: The krenshar cut the characters off at the bottleneck. They fight where the trail tapers to the point that two krenshar can attack a single person moving forward to engage in melee. If the group moves back into the small clearing, the krenshar rush in to fill the void. Krenshar blocked from engaging in melee shriek and use their scare ability to intimidate the party. The krenshar are hungry and fight to the death.

Aftermath: Digging out the snow and ice reveals the body of one of Denin Crob's men, partially eaten by the krenshar. His clothes are shredded, and the body is turned face down on the ground. Turning the body over, or making a DC 10 Search check of the corpse, reveals a large crystal egg hidden beneath, still clutched tightly to the corpse's body with its right arm. The body also has a silvered dagger in a knife sheath tied to its leg, and 3 sp in one of its pockets.

The crystal egg is the size of an ostrich egg and completely smooth. Its clear surface is warm to the touch. The egg is translucent, but the numerous facets inside the egg make it impossible to see through it clearly. It appears as though a large, perfect brick red carnelian is nestled in the very center of the crystal egg. This is the Egg of Autumn.

A DC 12 Appraise check values the crystal egg somewhere near 250 gp. However, a DC 18 Knowledge (the planes) or bardic knowledge check reveals that this is not an ordinary gem or jewel – but a magical artifice from another plane. A character gets a +1 circumstance bonus to this check for each other egg discovered so far.

Egg of Autumn: 6 inches thick; hardness 5; hp 25; Break DC 25.

Krenshar (4): CR 1; Medium Magical Beast; HD 2d10; hp 10, 11, 11, 13; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6); Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d4); SA Scare (as per scare spell at 3rd level, Will DC 13); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13; Skills and Feats: Hide +4, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +6; Multiattack, Track

Area 1-4 – The Bloody Crossing: Once the party is in visual range of the intersection, read the following aloud:

The trees thin out ever so slightly as you come across a wedge-shaped clearing, little more than an intersection between three trails. The muddy ground was churned before it froze. The dark brown ice is slick and uneven.

One trail winds northward, spanning a deep crevasse bridged by several logs lashed together with rope. The other trail curves to the south and east, until the curve disappears further eastward. Some staggered footprints have frozen along the southeast trail.

✱ Cold weather check! Don't forget to have the party make Fortitude saves for the cold weather.

There are no creatures in the clearing. Denin Crob's men split up here after stealing the crystal eggs from the guardian spirit. Two men went back west, while Denin and another man took the southeast trail. The horrid winter has frozen both the stream and made the simple bridge slick and dangerous.

The Log Bridge: The bridge is nothing more than two long logs spanning the crevasse along the path, bound together at each end with several lengths of mildewed rope. The bridge is unstable; the frozen ropes are ready to snap and the logs rest on slick, icy ground.

A small stream, barely 10 feet across, lies frozen at the bottom of a steep 20 foot deep crevasse. The sides of the crevasse are slick with ice, and cut at a steep angle. While the surface of the stream is frozen solid, a character falling onto the ice risks breaking through into the chilly water below.

Crossing the bridge requires a DC 15 Balance check for characters under 100 pounds. Increase the DC by +1 for each additional 50 pounds. Failure by 5 or more indicates falling to the frozen stream below and suffering 2d6 damage. There is a base 25% chance of breaking the ice when falling from the bridge, plus 5% for each point of damage suffered from the fall (reflecting incident of impact). For example, a character suffering 5 points of damage from the fall has a 50% chance of breaking the ice – the 25% base chance + (5 damage x 5%).

Icy Water: A character breaking through the ice must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or suffer 1d6 nonlethal damage from cold and become fatigued. A character breaking through the ice into the freezing water suffers -4 on all future Fortitude saves against the cold until he can change or dry his clothes, or other suitable precautions have been made.



Traveling Along the Stream: Characters may wish to travel along the frozen stream. There is a 25% chance per minute of travel that a character weighing over 100 pounds breaks through the ice. Traveling to the northwest leads characters along the frozen stream for several hundred feet while the sheer edges of the crevasse become steeper and higher. Eventually, the northwest stream trail becomes impassable with fallen trees blocking the surface. Travel to the southeast is possible, and could lead characters directly to area 1-7. Once they reach the other bridge near area 1-7, there is no longer any risk of the ice breaking, as it is solidly frozen there.

A DC 15 Spot check while traveling along the stream to the southeast reveals a small hidden cache of supplies dug into the wall of the crevasse by poachers. Inside the cache are three *potions of cure light wounds*, a *potion of endure elements*, a leather quiver with 10 masterwork arrows, a hand axe, four days hard tack trail rations, flint and steel, and two torches. The potions are currently frozen, and must be thawed before they can be used. All these items are bundled inside a sturdy wool winter blanket, and the blanket is wrapped in a 5 foot square patch of oiled canvas.

Area 1-5 – The Wall of Snow (EL 3): Once the party has traveled halfway along the trail, read the following aloud:

The wind picks up considerably, and snow dances and swirls in the air. The sound of the wind through the trees sounds melancholy, somehow. As you strain to listen, however, there is something else riding on the wind.

A DC 15 Listen check picks up a high, keening wail blended with the sound of the wind. The avoral is grief-stricken and mourning the loss of her clutch of eggs. The sound is so unsettling that anyone hearing the avoral's cries must make a DC 15 Will save or become shaken with fear until they leave the path and return to area 1-4 or return the crystal eggs to the avoral.

Once the party presses onward and turns the corner, read the following aloud:

The trail finally curves toward the east after stretching northward over 100 feet. As you round the corner, the wind lashes even more fiercely here, swirling snow and rustling ice-laden branches along the path. A massive wall of snow and ice blocks your progress eastward. A small winged creature, seemingly fashioned from snow and ice itself, is vainly trying to fly over the icy wall. Once it flies above the lip of the wall, the fierce winds buffet its small frame and send it fluttering back.

❄ Cold weather check! Don't forget to have the party make Fortitude saves for the cold weather.

When the avoral first learned that her precious eggs were missing, she panicked. When she felt the Egg of Winter crack and release its power, she screamed, emitting a powerful *gust of wind*. The wind pushed the gathering snow from her nest, sheathing her clearing and the trail's entrance with a thick bank of frozen snow. The wall of snow is roughly 15 feet high.

An ice mephitis is trying to enter area 1-6 to investigate the keening noise. The loud wail of the wind gives the mephitis a -4 penalty to his Listen check to hear the party approaching. The wind is strong enough that small creatures are effectively checked when trying to fly higher than 15 feet.

Hard-packed Ice Wall: 24 inches thick; hardness 1; hp 96; Break DC 25.

Tactics: The ice mephitis stays airborne for increased mobility, but cannot fly higher than 15 feet due to the wind. It targets obvious spellcasters with its *magic missile*, and then uses its freezing breath to affect as many targets as possible. It tar-

gets characters impaired by its breath weapons for claw attacks. The ice mephitis fight to the death.

Aftermath: The ice mephitis has no treasure. To access area 1-6, the characters can either scale the ice wall (DC 16 Climb check) or break it down. The rime of ice is thick enough around area 1-6 that the party cannot skirt around the wall to enter the clearing.

A DC 15 Listen check identifies the sound of crying on the wind more distinctly – the keening is definitely coming from someone, not just something. Further, characters fluent in Celestial hear the voice mournfully repeating “*Why, oh why? What have you done with my children? Why, oh why? Where are my children?*”

Ice Mephitis (1): CR 3; Small Outsider (Air, Cold, Extraplanar); HD 3d8; hp 18; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -1; Atk Claw +4 melee (1d3 plus 1d4 cold); Full Atk 2 claws +4 melee (1d3 plus 1d4 cold); SA Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, *summon mephitis*; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, dark-vision 60 ft., fast healing 2 (32°F or below), immunity to cold, vulnerability to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Escape Artist +9, Hide +13, Listen +6, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Use Rope +3 (+5 with bindings); Dodge, Improved Initiative

Breath Weapon (Su): 10-foot cone of ice shards, damage 1d4 cold, Reflex DC 12 half. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by frostbitten skin and frozen eyes unless they have immunity to cold or are otherwise protected. This effect imposes a –4 penalty to AC and a –2 penalty on attack rolls for 3 rounds.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/hour – *magic missile* (caster level 3rd); 1/day – *chill metal* (DC 14, caster level 6th).

Area 1-6 – The Guardian’s Nest (EL 7): Once the party crosses the wall of snow, read the following aloud:

A large, circular clearing lies beyond the wall of ice and snow. The tree line surrounding the clearing is slick with hard packed snow and ice; the formidable wall continues around the perimeter of the clearing.

In the center of the clearing lies a large raised structure of frozen branches and limbs. The structure is roughly circular, and is at least 10 feet high. As you get a slightly better perspective, you realize it is an enormous nest of some sort!

The high pitched keening is definitely coming from within the nest. So too are the freezing winds buffeting your face and chilling you to the bone. You can just make out a pair of large, feathery wings from some creature inside the nest.

❄ Cold weather check! Don’t forget to have the party make Fortitude saves for the cold weather.

This is the home of the guardian spirit, an avoral that protects the forest. During pleasant weather, the path is open and accessible, but few in the forest tread this far. Those who would enter the clearing worship the avoral as a minor nature deity, while unsavory visitors are handled with the avoral’s *command* and *hold person* spell-like abilities, her innate ability to speak with animals, or her fearsome presence.

After Denin Crob and his lot snuck into the clearing and stole her clutch of eggs, the avoral became too grief-stricken and depressed to leave her clearing or prevent the more aggressive creatures from running amok. The avoral is exhausted from her ordeal, and sickened from grief. While this would technically make it a bit easier for an aggressive or greedy party to deal with her, the avoral is still a powerful opponent for first level characters. They’d be best served to treat her as a puzzle or riddle to solve, rather than a combatant.

A Mother in Mourning: If any character enters the clearing bearing one of the eggs, the avoral will raise her tear-streaked face from the nest, saying the following:

“What have you done with my child? My poor, poor child! Bring my children back to me! Have I not protected your precious fields and forests? Is this how I am repaid for my kindness?”

The avoral is blinded by her sorrow and assumes that anyone with her egg is among those who stole them in the first place. A DC 12 Diplomacy check (with appropriate circumstance bonuses for good role playing) is needed to convince the avoral that the PCs are not the ones responsible for the loss of her children.

The avoral will demand the return of her children. If the characters refuse to return any eggs they have found so far, the avoral will flap her wings, create a *gust of wind*, and then follow that up by using her *fear* aura (should the party be within range of its effect) to intimidate the party.

If the party surrenders any eggs they have found or does not currently have any of the eggs, the avoral will plead with them to help her. In this case, read

the following:

"My children cry for me! The ice and snow, the tears of my first born. Curses upon those who would steal my children from my tender love! But you – you will help me, won't you? Find my children! Bring them to me, my poor, precious children. They are lost and cannot find their way..."

Special Combat Conditions: The constantly swirling winds and snow in the clearing provide partial concealment (20% miss chance) to any ranged attack made farther than 20 feet from its target. Further, all missile and thrown attacks have their range increments halved.

Climbing the side of the nest to reach the avoral requires a DC 10 Climb check, but keep in mind that characters are flat-footed while climbing.

Tactics: Should combat ensue, the avoral does not move from the safety of her nest. The nest provides her with partial cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex saves versus effects centered outside the nest). The avoral casts *hold person* against melee combatants to take them out of the battle, and unleashes *magic missiles* and *lightning bolts* on spell casters. She casts *magic circle against evil* if appropriate. The avoral launches full attacks with claws or wings against anyone making it into the nest.

If the avoral is reduced to 15 or fewer hit points, she will simply stop fighting, and weep, telling the characters she would rather die than live without her children.

Aftermath: If the party fights the avoral and wins, a DC 15 Search of the nest recovers the bits and pieces to a dozen crystal egg shells (worth 300 gp total) – the remains of her precious eggs from several previous seasons. A DC 25 Spellcraft check or the use of *detect magic* reveals that 1d4+1 of the avoral's feathers glimmer with moderate conjuration magic. Each of these magic feathers functions as a *feather token (bird)*.

Refer to page 137 to resolve what happens if the party agrees to aid the avoral and returns with her eggs.

Stat block note: The avoral is both exhausted and sickened. The effects of these conditions have already been factored into her stat block.

Avoral Guardian Spirit (1): CR 7; Medium Outsider (Extraplanar, Good); HD 7d8+35; hp 72; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., fly 45 ft. (good); AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +6; Atk Claw +8 melee (2d6-3) or wing +8 melee (2d8-3); Full Atk 2

claws +8 melee (2d6-3) or 2 wings +8 melee (2d8-3); SA Spell-like abilities, fear aura; SQ DR 10/evil or silver, darkvision 60 ft., immunity (electricity, petrification), lay on hands (72 hp/day), low-light vision, resistance (cold 10, sonic 10), speak with animals, SR 25, true seeing; AL NG; SV Fort +8 (+12 against poison), Ref +6, Will +6; Str 9, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Handle Animal +11, Hide +11, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Ride +6, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +10, Spot +19; Empower Spell-Like Ability (magic missile), Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse.

Exhausted: The avoral moves at half speed and takes a –6 penalty to Strength and Dexterity.

Sickened: The avoral takes a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will – *aid*, *blur* (self only), *command* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *gust of wind* (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 16), *light*, *magic circle against evil* (self only), *magic missile*, *see invisibility*; 3/day – *lightning bolt* (DC 16). Caster level 8th.

Fear Aura (Su): Once per day an avoral can create an aura of *fear* in a 20-foot radius. It is otherwise identical to *fear* from an 8th-level caster (save DC 17).

True Seeing (Su): This ability is identical with *true seeing* (caster level 14th), except that it has personal range and the avoral must concentrate for 1 full round before it takes effect. Thereafter the ability remains in effect as long as the avoral concentrates on it.

Area 1-7 – Blood in the Ice: Once the players reach the frozen bridge nearby, or approach the pond via the frozen stream near area 1-4, read the following aloud:

A sturdy wooden bridge spans a wide stream leading from a large pond to the southeast. The pond and stream lie frozen. The forest trail leads right to the edge of the pond, and from this distance you can see the frozen stream follows a course roughly northwest, flowing through a crevasse that deepens steadily as it heads away from the pond.

Simple wood and rope struts provide handholds on the sides of the small bridge, but one of the wooden struts on the southern edge is broken, the rope dangling frozen over the side.

❄ Cold weather check! Don't forget to have the party make Fortitude saves for the cold weather.

After Denin Crob and the band of thieves stole the avoral's eggs, they split up and headed in opposite directions at the intersection in area 1-4. This is where Denin Crob assaulted the thief he was traveling with. The Egg of Winter broke in the ensuing struggle, and is now the epicenter of the fierce winter. The poor thief Denin attacked was frozen along with the water, forever trapped in a pose with his arms in front of his face, trying to protect himself from Denin Crob's attack. The broken halves of the Egg of Winter are suspended in the frozen pond.

The Frozen Pond: A DC 10 Spot check from the bridge shows the surface of the pond is frozen in an odd manner – that peaks of water splashing and ripples were frozen in midair. Snow has drifted to obscure the frozen bandit, but there's obviously something large frozen in the ice.

The pond is frozen solid, and poses no risk for falling through. However, the surface is slick and requires a DC 12 Balance check to safely navigate. The GM should award circumstance bonuses for clever planning or teamwork to traverse the pond. Due to the uneven surface of the rock-hard ice, anyone falling prone on the lake suffers 1 point of damage.

Once on the pond, it's obvious that something large is frozen in the middle of the pond. The poor thief is frozen stiff, submerged halfway into the frozen surface. A DC 14 Spot or Survival check reveals that there are odd ripples frozen near the body. If the snow has been sufficiently cleared away around the body, add a +4 circumstance bonus to the check.

A foot below the surface of the pond, the shimmering halves of the broken Egg of Winter rest against a boulder. The halves froze solid at the point of impact where the egg shattered. Recovering the egg will take time, energy and careful planning. If the party sets to the pond with picks, axes or physical labor to extract the egg, have the participating characters attempt DC 12 Fortitude saves. Characters failing the save become fatigued from the exertion.

Frozen Pond: 12 inches thick; hardness 1; hp 48; Break DC 24.

Aftermath: Amidst the broken halves of the Egg of Winter, the characters find a peerless sapphire. Examining the sapphire reveals a small birdlike embryo suspended in the middle, much like within a piece of amber. A DC 15 Appraise check estimates that the odd sapphire would be worth about 400 gp. If the PCs have already recovered any of the other eggs, a brief examination confirms that the gems resting in each egg contain similar creatures.

Groups thorough or curious enough to uncover the body of the frozen thief will be well rewarded. A masterwork shortsword and dagger can be recovered, frozen as they fell from his hands before reaching the bottom of the pond. There is a coin purse on his belt containing 23 sp, 18 gp, three pieces of jasper (10 gp each), a small garnet worth 30 gp and, ironically, a ring of swimming. The extra time taken to work the ice around the frozen thief warrants another DC 12 Fortitude save to avoid becoming fatigued.

Area 1-8 – A Hunter's Home (EL 2, 1, 1, 1): Once the party enters the clearing, read the following aloud:

A wide, square clearing has been cut from the forest here, not far from the frozen pond. The clearing stands roughly 40 feet to a side. A large, squat log cabin occupies the northeast corner of the clearing, 30 feet wide and 20 feet deep. The roof and eastern side of the cabin butting up against the tree line are nearly completely covered with a thick rime of snow and ice.

Wide, flat stairs lead up to the cabin's only door on the left of the cabin's southern wall. Rickety wood frame and leather shutters lie frozen across the two windows on the south face. Two large, frozen lumps lie on either side of the frozen stairs, possibly the size of a wolf or large dog. The shapes are crusted over with ice. Several sharp spikes rise from each shape, and several dark red streaks stain the snow.

❄ Cold weather check! Don't forget to have the party make Fortitude saves for the cold weather.

After tussling with the other thief on the bridge near area 1-7, Denin Crob made his way to this hunter's cabin. Before sneaking in to steal the avoral's eggs, Denin had visited the cabin and slain its owner, planning to use the cabin as a hideout all along. Denin Crob has had to hole up here much longer than expected, however. He has been effectively trapped here ever since the hellish winter started.

The lumps outside the cabin are the bodies of the dead hunter and a krenshar Denin killed. The sharp spikes sticking out of the bodies are crossbow bolts. The hunter's body is doubled over face down, with two crossbow bolts sticking out of his back. Two bolts stick out of the krenshar's shoulder, a third from its neck. Denin placed the bodies to frighten people away and discourage curiosity about the cabin.

There are no hazards or other dangers in the clearing itself.

Exploring the Cabin: Denin is a crafty thief, and has rigged traps along three of the four possible entrances into the cabin, as well as a pit trap inside the cabin. The door and both windows on the south face are trapped. Only the window on the western side of the cabin is safe for entry, and the safe route through the cabin that Denin Crob takes is indicated on the map. There is no light inside the cabin.

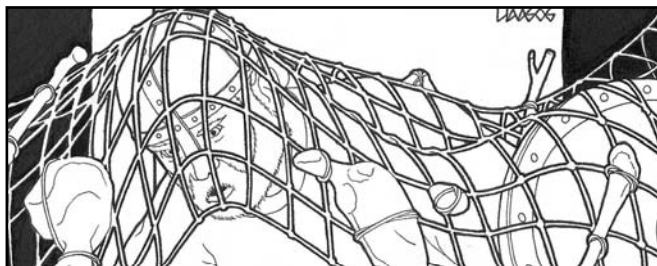
A DC 18 Survival check of the clearing around the cabin reveals a variety of animal tracks (krenshar and wolf), as well as two sets of humanoid tracks. One set belongs to the hunter, and shows repeated traffic through the clearing. The other set belongs to Denin Crob, and clearly leads to the western window.

Area 1-8A: The wide front door opens easily, despite the freezing weather. Denin has suspended a small net of bones, stone and scraps of wood immediately inside the cabin above the door. The first person to enter the cabin by the front door trips the trap, sending the net tumbling down on him.

Small Net Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +6 melee (1d4 plus special); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 16 (secure net or cut trigger line). Special: Character in target square is grappled by net (Str 16) if they fail a DC 14 Reflex save.

Area 1-8B: All three leather-and-branch covered windows have been sealed by ice, but can easily be pried open by dealing 10 points of damage from a bludgeoning or slashing weapon, or by succeeding at a DC 12 Strength check. A DC 12 Climb check is required to amble through the window into the cabin. However, the floor immediately below the windows along the front of the cabin has been covered with rusted metal, broken glass and crudely hewn wooden caltrops.

Spiked Floor: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; DC 15 Reflex save avoids; (1d4, disease plus special); Filth fever (DC 12 Fortitude negates, 1d3 days incubation, 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 12 (carefully remove caltrops). Special: Any target that takes damage from this trap must also succeed on a second Reflex save or suffer injuries to its feet and legs



that slow its land speed by one-half until the target benefits from a DC 15 Heal check or cure spell.

Area 1-8C: A large, musty bear pelt rug is spread across the floor in the northwest corner of the cabin. Denin weakened the floorboards here, and spread the bear pelt out to conceal his makeshift pit trap. While the fall is not very deep, the target will be pinned by broken floorboards, making escape from the shallow pit more difficult.

Breakaway Floor Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; DC 18 Reflex save avoids; 5 ft. deep (1d4, fall and special); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20 (reinforce floorboards). Special: A character falling in the shallow pit must succeed at a DC 15 Climb check to safely exit the pit. Failing the check by 5 or more indicates no progress and inflicts 1d2 damage from the splintered floorboards.

Area 1-8D: The lone room in the small cabin bears a simple wooden door with a plain handle. The door is not locked, and opens easily into a small sleeping area. What's left of a table and chair lie scattered in the southwest corner of the room, hacked to pieces to create caltrops and debris for Denin's traps.

Denin is huddled in a large pile of blankets and bedrolls in the southeast corner of the room. He is hiding with his crossbow loaded, ready to fire at anything and anyone that enters the room. Denin had sufficient time to take 20 on his Hide check within the blankets, giving him a total Hide result of 28.

Tactics: Denin has a readied action to fire at the first target that enters the room, allowing him a deadly sneak attack. Once he's fired the crossbow, Denin switches to his dagger and charges forward to limit the number of people that can face him at a time inside the room. Denin Crob uses Improved Feint to catch his targets off guard and improve his chances of landing a sneak attack.

During battle, Denin hollers and bellows in rage:

You'll ne'er take it from me! It's Crob's, now – I stole it fairs and squares! No more days breakin' me back in them fields, or suppin' on turnip soup! Denin Crob'll die afore he let you steal it!

And die he will. Denin Crob fights to the death.

Aftermath: A DC 10 Search of Denin Crob's body uncovers a small pocket sewn into the inside of his armor. Inside the pocket are 12 gp, a slender silver bracelet (10 gp), and a small iron key.

A DC 12 Search of the pile of blankets uncovers a

sturdy lacquered wooden chest, two feet wide, and a foot wide and deep. The chest is reinforced with slender copper bands, and is locked. The key found on Denin Crob opens the lock; otherwise a DC 15 Open Lock check or DC 24 Strength test is required to open the box. A large crystal egg lies nestled in the chest, wrapped in strips of fabric torn from the blankets. The chest also contains 32 cp, 18 sp and two small pieces of quartz (5 gp each).

The crystal egg is the size of an ostrich egg and completely smooth. Its clear surface is warm to the touch. The egg is translucent, but the numerous facets inside the egg make it impossible to see through it clearly. It appears as though a large, perfect bright green emerald is nestled in the very center of the crystal egg. This is the Egg of Spring.

A DC 12 Appraise check values the crystal egg somewhere near 250 gp. However, a DC 18 Knowledge (the planes) or bardic knowledge check reveals that this is not an ordinary gem or jewel – but a magical artifice from another plane. A character gets a +1 circumstance bonus to this check for each other egg discovered so far.

Egg of Spring: 6 inches thick; hardness 5; hp 25; Break DC 25.

Denin Crob, male Rog2: CR 2; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 2d6+2; hp 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk heavy crossbow +4 ranged (1d10, 19-20/x2) or masterwork dagger +3 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2); SA Sneak attack (+1d6); SQ Evasion, trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Bluff +9, Climb +6, Craft (trapmaking) +6, Hide +8, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Search +6 Spot +4; Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Skill Focus (Bluff).

Equipment: 2 masterwork daggers, heavy crossbow w/15 bolts, studded leather armor, *potion of cure light wounds*, key to chest.

Wrapping Up

The final resolution depends on what the characters do with any eggs they've found. A GM should feel free to adjust the rewards based on the party's motivations and interaction with the avoral or Open Hearth's villagers.

Eggs Returned to Avoral

The avoral will be elated to have her precious eggs returned to her. Once characters bearing any of her eggs enter area 1-6, she begs them to return the eggs to her at once. If they comply, she is most grateful.

Should they refuse, refer to the avoral's stats in area 1-6 – the avoral will fight to reclaim her children if need be.

All Four Eggs Returned: The avoral is overcome with joy, and sheds tears of purest silver – one per member of the party. Each silver tear is worth 300 gp. The avoral offers each character a magic pinion feather, which functions as a *feather token (bird)*. The avoral's joy has a calming and soothing effect on the area, and all characters in area 1-6 will recover 1d8+3 hp and have fatigue levels reduced one step. The avoral will then gently place the eggs in her nest and roost there, assuring the party that spring will arrive soon. Within a day, the winter fades.

Three Eggs Returned: The avoral is grateful and thanks the group. The avoral offers each character a magic pinion feather, which functions as a *feather token (bird)*. The avoral's joy has a calming and soothing effect on the area, and all characters in area 1-6 will recover 1d8+1 hp. If the Egg of Spring is among those recovered, she assures the party that spring will arrive soon. Within a day, the winter fades.

One or Two Eggs Returned: The avoral is grateful, but still somewhat distraught. If the Egg of Spring is among those recovered, she assures the party that spring will arrive soon. Within a day, the winter fades.

Returning to Open Hearth

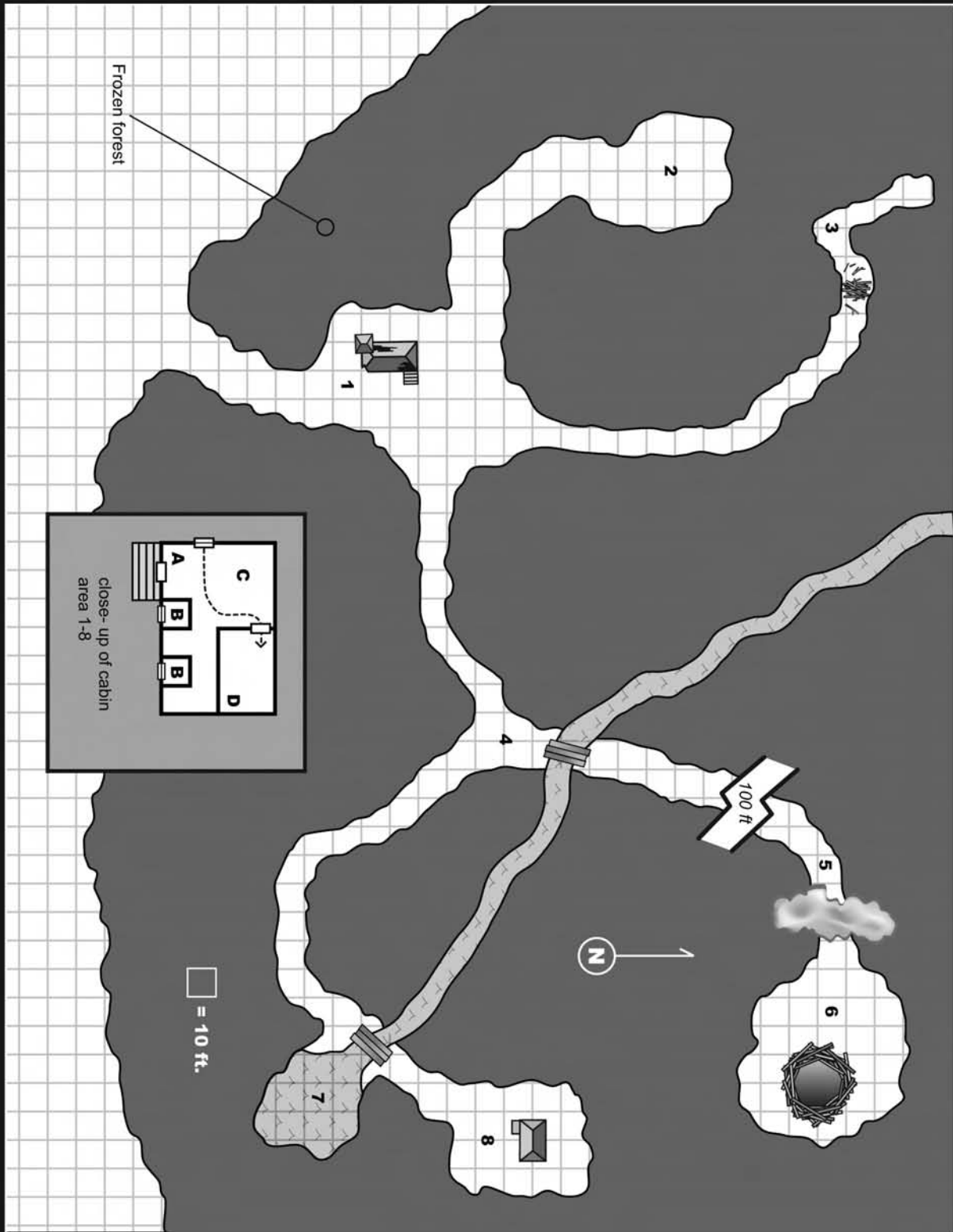
The villagers of Open Hearth greet the party warmly. Armos Plowman rewards them for their efforts. If the group brings the eggs to Armos Plowman instead of taking them to the avoral, Armos pays the party 50 gp for each egg recovered, then starts forming a small party of faithful, trustworthy villagers to seek out the guardian spirit and return her eggs.

If the characters have already returned the eggs and spring has already started to arrive, Armos is most pleased. He offers 100 gp and a *potion of cure light wounds* to each character – all the money the small village could scrape together. He also gifts the group with two items from his adventuring days – a silver and purple cloak, which is a *cloak of resistance +1*, and a +1 *falchion*.

Eggs Stolen

The eggs can be stolen and sold for roughly 250 gp each. However, an avid collector or mage aware of the innate magical properties would be willing to spend up to 400 gp per egg. Should the party decide to pursue this route, the village of Open Hearth will be doomed to eternal winter. Once the party has taken the eggs more than five miles from the forest, they cease to radiate magic as the embryos within the eggs die.

Chilled to the Bone



Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Isle of Fury

By Greg Oppedisano
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Isle of Fury is designed for 4-6 characters of 1st or 2nd level. While the characters can be of any character class, a good mix is helpful. The module has a number of outdoor encounters, so a druid or ranger would be of much use. The strong warrior type, the sneaky dungeon rogue, and the articulate mage also have their place. Note the module is designed with the heroic adventurer in mind; a party of four adventures equipped to role-play and not roll-play may find the encounters life-threatening at first level. In that case, the DM might suggest a couple of NPC fighters tagging along, or wait until the party is second level before attempting the Isle of Fury.

Adventure Summary

The party is hired by the elderly druid Hróaldr to travel to the runic circle on the Isle of Faroe. He asks them to gather rubbings on large sheets of parchment from the towering rune stones of the Scandi tribesmen that once inhabited the isle. Upon arriving at the island, the party discovers a half-sunken longship in the Bay of Many Sorrows inhabited by a pair of locathah. The search for the Scandi rune stones leads to several encounters,

including duergar clerics of Loki and the kobolds of the Copper Caves. The adventure culminates with an encounter at the old Scandi barrows on the north end of the island, where duergar clerics are desperately attempting to reawaken their dragon-ogre leader Grimmur from his stupor to lead them once more.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
A-1	142	C	2 locathah	1
B-1	143	C	1 kobold Bbn1 6 kobolds Monitor lizard	3
C-1	143	C	1 duergar Drd1 6 kobolds	3
D-1	145	C	Kobold Bbn1 4 kobolds Viper	2
D-2	146	C	Ethereal filcher	3

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
D-3	146	C	2 manta rays	2
D-4	147	C	Phantom fungus	3
D-5	147	C	Duergar Clr2	2
D-6	148	T	Fusillade of darts trap	1
D-7	148	C	2 spider swarms	2
D-8	148	C	8 kobolds	2
D-9	149	T	Spear trap	1
D-10	149	T	Deeper pit trap	1
D-11	149	C	1 kobold Bbn1 4 kobolds	2
D-12	150	C/P	Duergar Clr3/Bbn1 Monitor lizard	5
D-13	151	T	8 kobolds	2
D-14	151	C	Thoqqua	2
D-15	152	C	Black bear	2
E-1	152	C	8 kobold zombies	2
E-3	152	C	2 kobold Bbn1 1 duergar Clr2	3
E-4	153	C	2 ghouls	2
E-5	154	C	<i>Grimmur</i> , ogre Bbn2	5

Scaling Information

The Isle of Fury is designed for 4-6 first level characters of 1st or 2nd level. It is designed to be a difficult adventure. Your characters will repeatedly face battles that test their limits, and rest between encounters may be necessary.

If you are playing with a party of different sizes or levels, consider adjusting the adventure as follows:

Stronger Parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 2nd level): Increase the number of locathah in area A-1 by 2. In areas B-1, C-1, D-1, D-5, D-8, D-11, and E-3 add either 4 kobolds, 1 kobold Bbn1 or a kobold Clr1. Add a second thoqqua in area D-14, a Medium monstrous spider to area D-7, replace the manta rays in area D-3 with two Large sharks, replace the black bear in area D-15 with a wight, and add a shadow to the encounter at E-4. Give *Grimmur* another level of Bbn in area E-5. Increase the EL of each of the traps by 1 (refer to the DMG for ideas).

Getting the Players Involved

The characters can be drawn into this adventure in a number of ways.

The jump to the action method: The characters are traveling aboard an ocean-going vessel and see the Isle of Faroe. The wrecked longship in the Bay of Many Sorrows may act as a draw to cause them to investigate the island further. They may learn of the strange goings-on from talking to the locathah in area A-1. If the party is disinclined to land on the island, have a kobold or two appear on the bay and flee up the path to area B – a party that won't chase a couple of kobolds has no business claiming to be adventurers!

The characters are hired to gather rune stone rubbings: The party is hired by the old druid Hróaldr to travel to the runic circle on the Isle of Faroe. He hires them to gather rubbings on large sheets of parchment from the towering rune stones of the Scandi tribesmen that once inhabited the isle. The party is given a map to the island, plenty of charcoal and parchment, and transportation. They are promised a reward of 300 gp if they can return with the charcoal parchment rubbings. It is up to the GM to determine why Hróaldr wants the runes. They could be of huge mythological importance, as described below, or be simple historical curiosities, or they may have magical properties.

Background Story

In the songs and poems of the ancient Scandi bards, Odin whispered the secrets of creation, strength, and wisdom to his followers amongst the Æsir and Vanir (the two tribes of the Scandi people). The secrets survived for generations and were passed from father to son in kennings told before bonfires on the eve of battle. But Loki, eager to make mischief, and desiring to spread the secrets of Odin among the lesser races, hatched a plot to steal the secrets. Knowing that the Æsir and Vanir held the secrets close, Loki taught the most famous bards among them the secret of rune making. Knowing that the ego of man would run its course, Loki waited until Eyjólfr, a young and naïve bard, committed the secrets to rune stone.

Loki then traveled to the cold, dark underground realm called Niflheim, and whispered to the dark creatures that live there that the Æsir and Vanir had committed Odin's secrets to stone. Across the North battle raged as the vulgar minions of Niflheim tried to steal Eyjólfr's rune stones.

The Æsir and Vanir, unable to destroy that which Odin wrote, took the rune stones and hid them on the tiny Isle of Faroe. After years of conflict, Loki lost interest, the minions of Niflheim forgot why they were fighting, and the Æsir and Vanir told no one of the existence of the rune stones. They passed into legend.

Ages passed and the druids responsible for the maintenance and protection of the *rune stones of Odin* failed

The Rune Stones of Odin

Eyjólf, a naïve bard who committed the secrets of creation, strength, and wisdom to writing, thus imperiling the loss of this information to all who could read the runes, carved the *rune stones of Odin*. This carving, and the meddling of Loki, triggered a great war in the north, as man and his enemies fought for possession of the stones. Each of the rune stones is 8 feet tall, 3 feet across, 10 inches thick, and made of solid granite. Each weighs about 2,000 pounds.

A *read magic* or *comprehend languages* spell, or DC 20 Decipher Script check, is required to read the runes on the stones, unlock their magical properties, and understand the tales carved upon them. It takes 5 minutes to read a stone in its entirety and gain the magical benefits associated therewith. The stone itself must be read – a copy will have no magical effect.

The Rune Stone of Creation (Blessing): Upon the *rune stone of creation* the past is revealed, the true story of the beginning of existence. The planting of Yggdrasil, the world-tree, is described and upon its branches are placed Asgard (the realm of the gods), Niflheim (the underground realm of the vulgar humanoid and the dead), Jotunheim (land of the giants), Svartálfaheim (home of the dark elf), Álfheim (home of the light elf), and Midgard (home to man). The carvings tell how the world was created, and how the years are numbered. The secret origins of the dwarfs are revealed, as is the creation of the first man and woman. Reading the stone has two possible effects; the characters can choose the effect they wish after reading the runes. The first effect is the divine spell *bless* (5th level caster). The spell may be triggered, as a free action, any time within 24 hours of reading the rune stone. The second possible effect is the ability to take the cleric class when the character achieves the next level; this effect can be ignored if the character so chooses.

Rune Stone of Fury (Strength): Upon the *rune stone of strength* is carved the secrets of the berserker: the rage brought on by battle, a gift from Thor, the ultimate weapon of Northmen, of Æsir and Vanir against their many foes. The runes recall the events that led to the first war, what occurred in the struggle between the Æsir and Vanir, and the peace that was wrought from the bloody conflict. Reading the stone has two possible effects; the characters can choose the effect they wish after reading the runes. The first effect is rage, as a barbarian of first level. The effect may be triggered, as a free action, any time within 24 hours of reading the rune stone. The second possible effect is the ability to take the barbarian class when the character achieves the next level; this effect can be ignored if the character so chooses.

Rune Stone of Wisdom (Vision): This *rune stone* reveals what Odin sacrificed of himself in the pursuit of knowledge. The stone speaks of Odin's eye, which was plucked out in exchange for inner sight. It tells the story of how Odin willingly impaled himself upon his own spear and was hung from the branches of Yggdrasil until he saw the secret of the original rune stones. The stone reveals that only through pain and loss was knowledge gained. Reading the stone has two possible effects; the character can choose the effect they wish after reading the runes. The first effect is the divine spell *owl's wisdom* (5th level caster). The spell may be triggered, as a free action, any time within 24 hours of reading the rune stone. The second possible effect is the ability to take the druid class when the character achieves the next level; this effect can be ignored if the character so chooses.

Rune Stone of Baldr (Sorrow): This stone is cut with runes that detail the slaying of Baldr, best and most beautiful of the gods. It speaks of prophecy of the final destruction of the gods, the heavens and earth overwhelmed with fire, flood, and death, as the gods take their final revenge on all of their enemies. The enmity of Loki, and the foolishness and ignorance of others, triggers this final destruction. It begins with a summons to battle, as god battles god, brother battles brother, father battles child; it describes in detail the tragic ending of the pantheon of the gods. All this is foretold, in the "fate of the gods," known as the ragna rök. All is wrought and wasted, and the reign of the endless night will begin. Reading the stone has only one possible effect on the reader: the divine spell *bestow curse* (5th level caster, can be resisted with a DC 18 Will save). The curse chosen is always the curse of "each turn the target has a 50% chance to act normally, otherwise it takes no action." An added element of the curse is the cursed being's inability to leave sight of the rune stone of Baldr. The effect is permanent unless the rune stone of rebirth is read, or the spell *remove curse* is cast.

Rune Stone of Rebirth (Hope): The *rune stone* of rebirth reveals a story of hope. It speaks of the day when a sliver of golden light will shatter the endless gloom of night. Out from the ashes of the destruction of the gods, a beautiful world will rise. The breath of life will once again fill the lungs of the fair Baldr. Baldr reborn will travel the new world and everywhere his foot touches ground, abundance will sprout without the sowing of seeds. Reading the stone has only one possible effect on the reader: the divine spell *remove curse* (5th level caster). The effect will undo the effect of the rune stone of Baldr, or any other form of *bestow curse* spell.

to maintain their vigil. Recently, Loki has once again turned his meddlesome eye to the secrets of Odin. To this effort he has awakened his worship in the duergar, the dark dwarves of Niflheim, who with their kobold allies have located the rune stones of Odin and have begun plumbing their secrets. They have already unlocked the secrets of the *rune stone of fury*. This has made them confident and reckless.

But their leader Grimmur, a dragon-ogre born deep into soulless caves of Niflheim, took and read one rune stone. That which he read there was so filled with tragedy and woe that he fell into a deep stupor. Guðmundr, a cautious and nasty cleric of Loki, is left to unlock the remaining secrets of the rune stones of Odin, and solve the mystery of Grimmur's stupor.

Hróaldr, an ancient druid steeped in the lore of the North, has heard whispers from the beaks of ravens, of that which was once only legend. Fearful, but still disbelieving, Hróaldr decided to dispatch a party of adventures to the Isle of Faroe, to discover the truth of what he'd heard upon the wind.

The Isle of Faroe

The Isle of Faroe is divided into five main encounter areas, labeled A through E. The larger island map shows their relative positions; the smaller area maps can be used for dungeon crawls through these areas.

For the most part, the island is covered in dense forest. The rune stones at area C are atop a hill and could possibly be seen above the forest line. The trails leading through the forest make the encounters easy to locate.

Area A-1 – The Bay of Many Sorrows (EL 1)

Read or paraphrase the following to the party upon their arrival at the Isle of Faroe:

Rounding the headland on the west side of the Isle of Faroe, you see before you the Bay of Many Sorrows. A partially submerged, badly-broken longship lies wrecked upon the reef that shelters the little bay. Beyond the reef past the cold green-blue water of the bay is a rocky-shored beech with a trailhead leading up into thick dark forest.

Two locathah inhabit this reef and the wreck.

The Wreck: The party can choose to investigate the wreck by walking out to it along the top of the reef, or by swimming to it from their ship. Walking along the reef requires a DC 8 Balance check to avoid falling into the deeper water on either side of the reef. Standing on the reef or the submerged upper parts of the long ship is the equivalent of standing in a deep pool. These squares have at least four

feet of standing water. It costs Medium or larger creatures four squares of movement to move, or characters can swim if they wish. Small or smaller creatures must swim to move through a square on top of the reef. Tumbling is impossible in a deep pool. The water imposes a –2 circumstance penalty on Move Silently checks.

While a character is on the reef, the water provides cover for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 bonus to AC, +4 bonus on Reflex saves). Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain this improved cover. Creatures with this improved cover take a –10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't also underwater.

Development: The party can choose to speak with the locathah who live here. If they are polite and non-threatening they can make a Gather Information or Diplomacy check to learn the following:

Check	Result
DC 15	The island has recently become home to cruel rat-tailed little folk who did not arrive by boat, and are living in the caves on the southeast side of the island, where there are four cave entrances.
DC 18	The rat-tailed ones have been attempting to move the large rune stones from one end of the island to the other. The barrows on the north end of the island are dangerous and should be avoided if at all possible.

Tactics: The locathah are not particularly aggressive but will defend their home (the longship) from intruders. They begin the battle by attempting to entangle their prey in the nets. If successful they attempt an opposed grapple check to pull them under the water and let them drown, while moving to attack the rest of the party with their long spears.

Treasure: The wreck's original contents have long since washed away. In a neat pile in the submerged hull of the long ship is the gathered treasure of the two locathah. A DC 10 Search check is required to find it: 570 sp; 13 gp; a golden armband worth 25 gp; *potion of cure light wounds*; *potion of haste*. The locathah do not know what the potions are and will not use them in the combat.

Locathah (2): CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid (Aquatic); HD 2d8; hp 9 each; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk longspear +1 melee or ranged (1d8) or net +2 ranged (special); AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +3, Swim +8; Alertness.

Possessions: Longspear, net

Area B-1 – The Valley of Four Trails (EL 3)

Read or paraphrase the following:

The dark and foreboding forest trail descends into a valley. At both ends of the valley, the trail splits into two paths. Struggling to drag a large stone across splintered green logs is a group of small humanoids with scaly hide, rat-like tails and dog-shaped horned heads. A large lizard is at the front of the large stone, strapped to it with a leather rigging and being urged forward by a particularly large and nasty-looking rat-tailed creature with a great axe.

The kobold work crew is struggling to drag the rune stone of creation to area E. Dorkell, a kobold who has read the *rune stone of strength* and unlocked the secrets of the berserker, leads them. Upon seeing the adventuring party, the kobolds will organize themselves and attack.

Tactics: The six regular kobolds take out their slings and attempt to engage the party while Dorkell removes the harness from the lizard. The monitor lizard knows three tricks: “work,” “come,” and “attack.” All require a DC 10 Handle Animal check from Dorkell.

Remember that the lizard is harnessed to the stone. In order to remove the harness from the lizard, Dorkell must succeed at a DC 10 Handle Animal check for the command “come,” which takes a full round action. Then he must take a full round to remove the harness. After this is complete Dorkell must succeed at a DC 10 Handle Animal check for the command “attack” in order for the lizard to engage the party (unless they’ve been foolish enough to fire upon the lizard already). At this point Dorkell attacks the party with his alchemist’s fire. If successful, he throws pints of oil at any characters that are aflame, before getting mad and wading in with his great axe. The kobolds flee to area C if the battle goes badly.

Development: The kobold work crew is dragging the *rune stone of creation* to area E in an attempt to cure their leader Grimmur of his stupor. A DC 5 Track check allows a character to follow the work crew’s trail back to area C. A DC 12 Track check reveals that trails are most frequently traveled between areas C and areas D. See page 141 for full details on the *rune stone of creation*.

Note: The encounter is written with the assumption the characters are exploring the island during the day. If this is the case, remember that in daylight the kobolds’ light sensitivity dazzles them, giving them a -1 penalty on attack rolls, Spot checks, and Search checks.

Dorkell, Male Kobold Bbn1: CR 1; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1d12; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17,

touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3, Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk greataxe +3 melee (1d10+1) or alchemist’s fire +4 ranged (1d4) or sling +4 ranged (1d3+1); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft., fast movement, illiteracy, rage 1/day; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Craft (trapmaking) +0, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5, Intimidate +0, Jump +5, Listen +3, Profession (miner) +1, Ride +3, Search +2, Survival +0, Swim +0; Toughness.

Possessions: Alchemist’s fire, oil pint (3), bullets (10), sling, greataxe, studded leather, 14 gp, 6 sp.

Kobolds (6): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1/2d8-1; hp 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk -1, Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear -1 melee (1d6-1) or sling +2 ranged (1d3); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +0, Hide +5, Listen +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Leather armor, spear, sling, 10 sp.

Monitor Lizard: CR 2; Medium Animal; HD 3d8+9; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5, Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk bite +5 melee (1d8+4); SQ Low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Hide +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Great Fortitude.

Area C-1 – The Rune Stones of Faroe (EL 3)

Read or paraphrase the following:

The dense forest trail widens dramatically. A steep slope leads up toward what must be a large hilltop clearing. Visible over the ridge are the tops of several large standing stones.

At this point the characters will probably have to fight the kobolds, described below. Once that is resolved, read or paraphrase the following once the characters are atop the hill and in sight of the rune stone circle:

Atop the hill is a large clearing, and the center of which is a raised altar. The altar is made of pocked granite well worn by the weather of the ages and deeply stained with old and new sacrificial blood. Surrounding the altar are five stone columns, plain and smooth in appearance except for the effects of aging. Surrounding the columns were once five large rune stones. Two of them have been excavated and removed. The remaining three stand proudly where they have presumably stood for

generations. The rune stones are 8 feet tall, 3 feet wide and 10 inches thick. Each is carved from base to top with runes of the ancient Scandi people.

The clearing atop the hill is an ancient standing stone circle created by the druidic keepers of the *rune stones of Odin*. See page 141 for full details on the rune stones present on the hilltop. It is obvious that two of the *rune stones of Odin* are missing. A DC 8 Spot check reveals that one was taken very recently, the other a long time ago. The rune stones that are still embedded include the *rune stone of fury*, the *rune stone of wisdom*, and the *rune stone of rebirth*. The *rune stone of Baldr* is at area E and the *rune stone of creation* is at area B.

At present Grettir, a duergar druid, and his kobold followers inhabit the hilltop. Grettir is hard at work excavating the large rune stones that will be taken to the Old Skandi Barrows. Two of the rune stones have already been removed. The *rune stone of Baldr* was removed by the ancient Scandi druids and buried in the burial mound of Auðun Egillsdottir (area E-5), where Grimmur later discovered it. The rune stone of creation is in the process of being moved to the Old Skaldi Barrows by Dorkell (area B-1). Grettir always has two of his kobolds and his wolf Eyvindr on the lookout while the other six are working.

Tactics: If the party approaches the hilltop and remains on the trail, begin making opposed Spot checks at the bottom of the slope (50 feet). Once the kobolds have spotted the party they raise the alarm and begin attacking with their slings; after attacking they lie down and gain a +4 AC bonus for being prone. When faced with charging party members, they toss caltrops on the ground to slow them down. Grettir casts *entangle* on the steep slope to slow down the party, then *magic fang* on Eyvindr, then *magic stone* providing ammunition for three kobolds. Finally he casts *enlarge* on himself, then *shillelagh*, before wading into combat. Grettir makes himself *invisible* at the first sign of trouble or if his life is in peril.

Note on steep slopes: There is a 50 foot steep slope that leads from the forest trail to the top of the hill. Characters moving uphill (to an adjacent square of higher elevation) must spend two squares of movement to enter each square of a steep slope. Characters running or charging downhill (moving to an adjacent square of lower elevation) must succeed on a DC 10 Balance check upon entering the first steep slope square. Mounted characters make a DC 10 Ride check instead. Characters who fail this check stumble and must end their movement 1d2x5 feet later. Characters who fail this check by 5 or more fall prone in the square where they end their movement. A steep slope increases the DC of Tumble checks by 2. For the purpose of line of sight to the top of the hill, assume that the party can see 60 feet

up the slope as they climb up. For example, if a character moves 20 feet up the slope they can see the first 30 feet past the ridge of the slope on the top of the hill.

Grettir, Male Dwarf, Duergar Drd1: CR 1; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 10; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk spear +0 melee (1d8) or dart -1 ranged (1d4); SA Spell-like abilities; SQ animal companion (Eyvindr), light sensitivity, duergar traits; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Handle Animal +3, Heal +4, Listen +8, Move Silently +2, Spellcraft +2, Spot +8, Survival +7; Scribe Scroll.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – *enlarge person*, *invisibility* (caster level 3).

Spells Prepared (3/2): 0-level – *cure minor wounds*, *resistance*, *virtue*; 1st-level – *cure light wounds*, *entangle*.

Possessions: Dart (6), spear, studded leather armor, 8 gp, wooden holy symbol, caltrops; *scroll of magic fang*, *magic stone*, and *shillelagh*.

Eyvindr the Wolf: CR 1; Medium Animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Bite +3 melee (1d6+1); SA Trip; SQ Scent, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3; Track, Weapon Focus (bite).

Kobolds (6): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1/2d8-1; hp 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk -1, Grp -4; Atk spear -1 melee (1d6-1) or sling +2 ranged (1d3); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +0, Hide +5, Listen +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, spear, sling, bullets (10), caltrops, 5 sp.

Area D – The Copper Caves

The forest path leads to the entrance at area D-1. A quick search of the surrounding hillside (Spot or Search DC 10) reveals the other three entrances (D-15, D-9, D-11). Unless otherwise noted the copper caves dungeon has the following features:

Natural Stone Floors: The floor of a natural cave is as uneven as the walls. Caves rarely have flat surfaces of any great size. Rather, their floors have many levels. Some adjacent floor surfaces might vary in elevation by only a foot, so that moving from one to the other is no more difficult than negotiating a stair step, but in other places the floor might suddenly drop off or rise up several feet or more, requiring Climb checks to get from

one surface to the other. Unless a path has been worn and well marked in the floor of a natural cave, it takes two squares of movement to enter a square with a natural stone floor, and the DC of Balance and Tumble checks increases by 5. Running and charging are impossible, except along paths.

Unworked Stone Walls: These surfaces are uneven and rarely flat. They are smooth to the touch but filled with tiny holes, hidden alcoves, and ledges at various heights. They're also usually wet or at least damp, since it's water that most frequently creates natural caves. When such a wall has an "other side," the wall is usually at least five feet thick. It takes a DC 15 Climb check to climb along an unworked stone wall.

Unworked Stone Walls: 5 ft. thick; hardness 8; 900 hp; Break DC 65; Climb DC 15.

Gradual Stairs: Stairs that rise less than five feet for every five feet of horizontal distance they cover don't affect movement, but characters who attack a foe below them gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls from being on higher ground. The tunnels between caves are all gradually declining towards sea level, so any combat on "stair" hallways will be modified by the +1 bonus to attack.

Secret Doors: All of the secret doors in the copper caves can be found with a DC 15 Search check, are unlocked, and are made of stone (see below).

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; hardness 8; 60 hp.

Light: There is no light source in the caves unless otherwise noted.

Note on Kobold Tactics: Kobolds are notoriously cowardly, and prefer to fight only when they have tactical advantage or greater numbers. The kobolds prefer to shoot first, run second, and stand and fight only as a last resort.

When retreating, the kobolds use their knowledge of the secret doors spread throughout the cavern to their advantage. They all carry stones, sticks, or other small noisemaking devices, which they will toss in the direction of dangerous rooms (areas D-2, D-3, D-4, D-7, D-14) hoping to trigger a Listen check that will draw the cave's other occupants into dangerous conflict with the invading adventurers. The kobolds also carry caltrops that they scatter in hallways to slow down pursuit. Kobolds who escape an incursion will go to D-5 and get Einaar, then gather the eight kobolds at area D-13 and begin searching for the party. At no point will the kobolds bother Guðmundr in area D-12.

Remember there is no light source in the caves; if the party has a light source the kobolds will attempt to snuff it.

Area D-1 – The Rubble-Filled Entrance (EL 2): read or paraphrase the following:

The cave entrance descends quickly into darkness. Fifteen feet from the entrance, the floor is covered with a dense-packed debris that makes further movement difficult.

This room is a guardroom. The kobolds sit here quietly, in the dark, listening for the approach of intruders through the dense rubble-filled corridor that leads to the outside world.

Tactics: If Hallrbjörn or his fellow kobold guards hear or spot the party approaching, they muster a defense. The kobolds use their slings to make the party's life difficult. Hallrbjörn carries a bag containing a poisonous copperhead snake; he unties the bag and flings the snake into the party's midst. One of the kobolds will run to area D-5 and bring the duergar cleric Einaar to bolster the defenses, before going to area D-13 to rouse the resting kobolds in the common room.

Note on Dense Rubble: The ground is covered with debris of all sizes. It costs two squares of movement to enter a square with dense rubble. Dense rubble adds five to the DC of Balance and Tumble checks, and it adds 2 to the DC of Move Silently checks.

Hallrbjörn, Male Kobold Bbn1: CR 1; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1d12; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3, Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk greataxe +3 melee (1d10+1) or copperhead viper +4 ranged (10 ft. range increment; damage per copperhead bite; see below) or sling +4 ranged (1d3+1); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft., fast movement, illiteracy, rage 1/day; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Craft (trapmaking) +0, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5, Intimidate +0, Jump +5, Listen +3, Profession (miner) +1, Ride +3, Search +2, Survival +0, Swim +0; Toughness.

Possessions: Copperhead viper in a bag (see below), bullets (10), sling, greataxe, studded leather, 14 gp, 6 sp.

Kobolds (4): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1/2d8-1; hp 2, 3, 3, 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk -1, Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear -1 melee (1d6-1) or sling +2 ranged (1d3); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +0, Hide +5, Listen +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.



Possessions: Studded leather armor, spear, sling, bullets (10), caltrops, noise makers (see tactics section at start of area D)

Copperhead Viper: CR 1/3; Tiny Animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 2; Init +3; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -11; Atk/Full Atk bite +5 melee (1 plus poison); SA Poison; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +5; Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fort save (DC 11); initial and secondary damage 1d6 temporary Constitution.

Area D-2 – The Cavern that is Avoided (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor widens into a roughhewn cavern 15 feet long and bulging to 15 feet wide in the middle. The cavern is strewn with debris and an eclectic collection of bizarre belongings. Pocket knives, handkerchiefs, assorted knick-knacks, a small pile of cutlery and broken pottery, a candle, flint and steel, and a rusty old grappling hook cover the floor.

The ethereal filcher that occasionally makes its res-

idence here has left this odd assortment of discarded belongings in the room. The kobolds that live in the copper caves have learned to avoid this room for fear of having their belongings filched. The filcher, disgusted with the poor haul, has moved on to greener pastures but still looks into this room on occasion out of habit. Whenever the characters move through this room there is a 50% chance the filcher attempts to steal a shiny bauble from them.

Tactics: An ethereal filcher lurks on the Ethereal Plane waiting for a likely mark. Upon locating one, it shifts to the Material Plane, attempting to catch its victim unawares. The creature attempts to snatch an item, then retreats quickly back to the Ethereal. It is not above delivering a bite to distract its target. Once it secures a trinket, it scurries back to its lair to admire its prize. When badly wounded, the filcher escapes rather than continue the fight.

Ethereal Filcher: CR 3; Medium Aberration; HD 5d8; hp 22; Init +8; Spd 40; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk bite +3 melee (1d4); SQ Ethereal jaunt, detect magic, dark-vision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Jump +4, Listen +5, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +5; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Ethereal Jaunt (Su): An ethereal filcher can shift from the Ethereal to the Material Plane as part of any move action, and shift back again as a free action. It can remain on the Ethereal Plane for 1 round before returning to the Material. The ability is otherwise identical with *ethereal jaunt* cast by a 15th-level sorcerer.

Detect Magic (Su): Ethereal filchers continuously *detect magic* as the spell cast by a 5th-level sorcerer. A filcher can suppress or restart the ability once per round as a free action.

Area D-3 – The Ocean Pool (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

As the tunnel continues deep into the earth, the air is laden with moisture; you can smell ocean brine and rotting fish, and hear the sound of lapping waves. Finally the source of the moisture is revealed: a large cavern 50 feet long by 30 feet wide, half-filled with a deep saltwater pool. Along the shore of the pool are several broken spears, an old fishing pole with tangled fishing line, a new net and the remains of dozens of fish.

The water in the room is ocean water that is seeping in to the dungeon. The entire water-filled area is considered a deep pool. The deep pool is home to a number of species of harmless fish. There are worthless dissolved minerals on the bottom of the

deep pool. A light source in the room reveals these shiny areas in the water with a DC 12 Spot check – easily confused for gold on the bottom of the pool.

The pool is also home to a couple of manta rays that have been tormented by kobolds. This has changed their normally non-aggressive behavior pattern, so they will attack any who enter the pool. A DC 15 Search check of the water reveals a half-dozen clam shells which when opened contain small ocean pearls.

The pool of water counts as difficult terrain. When navigating the pool, characters are subject to the same rules as when navigating the wreck at area A-1.

Treasure: The fishing pole is actually a *staff of size alteration* (10 charges).

Manta Ray: CR 1; Large Animal (Aquatic); HD 4d8; hp 18; Init +0; Spd swim 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +9; Atk/Full Atk ram -1 melee (1d6+1); SQ Low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +6, Swim +10; Alertness, Endurance.

Area D-4 – The Spiral Pit into the Unknown (EL 3): read or paraphrase the following:

The floor in this large circular room spirals downward into darkness. A five-foot-wide path is easily walked to the bottom of the dark bowl-like depression.

This room is accessible from three directions. The hallways from area D-5, area D-11 and area D-3 are all accessible by skirting the top of the spiral pit. The map indicates a door at the bottom of the spiral pit. At the DM's discretion this doorway may or may not exist; it has been placed here so that you may decide to continue your adventures in the underdark on the Isle of Faroe. It also explains how the kobolds and duergar arrived without a ship. You may also decide to just have a locked door here; locked doors drive adventurers crazy, and you may enjoy the frustration caused by the assumption that the door must be able to be opened somehow.

Whatever you decide, there is a phantom fungus inhabiting the bottom of the spiral pit. There is only a five-foot square before the doorway, so it is obvious to the adventurer who is attacked by the fungus where it is. The square that the fungus is in, at the bottom of the spiral, can be struck at by up to three characters from the five-foot path above it. The phantom fungus is one of the last of the copper cave's original inhabitants; it has yet to be cleared out by the duergar and their kobold allies. It will

attack any who enter its territory.

Phantom Fungus: CR 3; Medium Plant; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Atk/Full Atk bite +3 melee (1d6+3); SQ low-light vision, plant traits, greater invisibility; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4; Alertness.

Greater Invisibility (Su): This ability is constant, allowing the phantom fungus to remain *invisible* even when attacking. This works just like *greater invisibility* cast by a 12th-level sorcerer, and lasts as long as the phantom fungus is alive. This ability is not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell. Once killed, a phantom fungus becomes visible after 1 minute.

Treasure: On two kobold skeletons at the bottom of the spiral are the following: 15 sling bullets, 2 slings, a spear, a Small masterwork greataxe, studded leather armor, leather armor, a *potion of cure light wounds*, 24 gp, 68 sp.

Area D-5 – The Duergar Shrine to Loki (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of this 30-foot by 40-foot room are more finished than the rest of the tunnels and caverns in the dungeon. There are several small piles of chipped stone and plenty of dust in the room. In the center of the south wall there is a raised altar, and atop the altar is a bowl.

There are many bas-reliefs carved into the south wall. They show a man dressed in whimsical cloth transforming into a variety of creatures. In one scene he becomes a salmon, in another a horse, in another scene a bird taking flight, and finally a beautiful woman. Always in the bas-reliefs the man is speaking to others; when he reveals his true nature the others become angry, but his words always seem to sooth them.

This room is a newly consecrated shrine to the duergar god Loki. At present its lone occupant is Einaar, a cleric of Loki.

Tactics: Einaar usually begins battles by making himself invisible. Once invisible, Einaar casts *protection from good*, *enlarge person*, and *summon monster I* before wading into combat. Alternatively Einaar makes himself *invisible*, leaves and gathers allies, then returns after casting *disguise self*, pretending he is an escaped prisoner being chased by kobolds. Then he attempts to ambush the party at an opportune moment.

Einaar, Male Dwarf, Duergar Clr2: CR 2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8+8; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk heavy crossbow +2 ranged (1d10) or heavy mace +2 melee (1d8+1); SA Spell-like abilities; SQ duergar traits, spells; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Diplomacy +3, Heal +8, Listen +4, Move Silently -3, Spellcraft +2, Spot +4; Scribe Scroll.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – *enlarge person*, *invisibility* (caster level 3).

Spells Prepared (4/3): 0-level – *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *virtue*; 1st-level – *command*, *cure light wounds*, *disguise self**, *summon monster I*. *Domains: Trickery, Animal.

Possessions: Heavy crossbow, bolts (10), masterwork heavy mace, tanglefoot bag, banded mail, heavy steel shield, 102 gp, silver holy symbol (worth 25 gp), manacles, *scroll of cause fear*, *protection from good*, and *summon monster I*.

Area D-6 – Fusillade of Darts Trap (EL 1): The 5 by 5 foot square at the intersection of these three hallways contains a pressure plate. When stepped upon it triggers the following trap:

Fusillade of Darts: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 ranged (1d4+1, dart); multiple targets (fires 1d4 darts at each target in two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 14; Disable Device DC 20.

Area D-7 – The Itsy Bitsy Spiders (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The dungeon corridor splits into three much smaller hallways. Each of these hallways is obscured by long wisps of spider web that stretch from floor to ceiling.

The webs in the hallway are harmless. The spider swarms are not; they wait until their prey is well into the cave before attacking. Medium-sized characters wishing to move into the tight confines of the hallways and area D-7 will have to use squeezing movement rules.

Squeezing: Characters can squeeze through or into a space that is at least half as wide as their normal

space. Each move into or through a narrow space counts as if it were two squares, and while squeezed in a narrow space the characters take a –4 penalty on attack rolls and a –4 penalty to AC. A creature can squeeze past an opponent while moving but can't end its movement in an occupied square. To squeeze through or into a space less than half the character's space's width, they must use the Escape Artist skill. A character can't attack while using Escape Artist to squeeze through or into a narrow space, takes a –4 penalty to AC, and loses any Dexterity bonus to AC.

Spider Swarms (2): CR 1; Diminutive Vermin (Swarm); HD 2d8; hp 9, 11; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Atk/Full Atk swarm +0 melee (1d6); SA Distraction, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft., vermin traits, swarm traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 1, Dex 17, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.
Skills: Climb +3, Hide +15, Listen +2, Spot +2.

Area D-8 – The Auxiliary Guard Room (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

This oddly shaped room is home to a half-dozen or more of the rat-tailed creatures that inhabit this dungeon. Eight small bedrolls, a small pile of gnawed bones, and other odds and ends are strewn about the floor.

The kobolds here are in place to defend the bridge from intruders at area D-9. One of them is standing watch at the edge of the chasm at all times. The rest of them rush to defend the bridge at the first sign of combat or upon hearing the spear trap going off in area D-9.

Kobolds (8): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1/2d8-1; hp 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk -1, Grp -4; Atk spear -1 melee (1d6-1 spear) or sling +2 ranged (1d3); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +0, Hide +5, Listen +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, spear, sling, bullets (10), caltrops, noise makers.

Loki

Loki (neutral) is the elder Scandi god of mischief. His worshipers are now few and far between. Loki is a great schemer, liar, and contriver of all guile and fraud. His worshipers are usually found in the clerical and thieving classes. His storytelling nature is well regarded by bards, and his ability to shape change into animal form leads some druids to worship him. A celestial con man and trickster by nature, he is not necessarily evil, though he is forever indifferent to the suffering he has caused. Clerics of Loki may choose from the Trickery or Animal Domains. His favored weapon is the mace.

Area D-9 – The Chasm (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

A newly placed rope bridge spans the 20-foot-wide chasm before you. The chasm is 20 feet deep; the bottom is dark and rocky.

This rope bridge was recently constructed by the kobolds when they took up residence in this dungeon. It is in place because the kobolds think it would be funny to watch invaders fall off it. The 5-foot-space before the bridge contains a pressure plate which when stepped on triggers the following trap, which also makes a loud noise alerting the kobolds at area D-8 that intruders have arrived:

Spear Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +12 ranged (1d8/x3, spear); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. *Note:* 200-ft. max range, target determined randomly from those in its path.

Tactics: Upon discovering invaders on the rope bridge, six of the kobolds move from area D-8 and begin slinging missile fire to engage any party members currently on the bridge. Two of the kobolds move into position and use their spears to block any character attempting to get off the bridge. Two other kobolds rush to the ropes and on the next turn use full-round actions to untie the rope bridge. The goal is to have as many of the party fall into the chasm as possible. Any party members who survive the fall will still have the missile fire of the kobolds above to deal with. One of the kobolds will run to area D-5 and bring the duergar cleric Einaar to bolster the defenses, before going to area D-13 to rouse the resting kobolds in the common room.

The chasm is 20 feet deep, 25 feet long, and 10 feet wide. It takes a DC 15 Climb check to climb out of a chasm.

Rope Bridge: It takes two full-round actions to untie one end of a rope bridge, but a DC 15 Use Rope check reduces the time to a move action. If only one of the two supporting ropes is attached, everyone on the bridge must succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid falling off, and thereafter must make DC 15 Climb checks to move along the remnants of the bridge. This rope bridge is five feet wide. The two ropes that support it have 8 hit points each.

If the party conducts a Search (DC 12) of the bottom of the chasm they will find a small chest next to a skeleton wearing old moldy robes with the following treasure: *potion of shield of faith*, *potion of displacement*, *scroll of identify*, *magic missile* (CL 3rd), and *sleep*; 25 gp, 70 sp.

Area D-10 – The Deeper Pit Trap (EL 1): A deeper pit trap has been dug in the five-foot square marked as area D-10. It can be avoided by squeezing along the west side of the wall. Stepping on this area triggers the following trap:

Deeper Pit Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); DC 15 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 23.

Development: Triggering this trap may or may not alert the inhabitants of the surrounding rooms of the party's presence. Give each of the inhabitants in the rooms to DC 0 Listen check; remember the +1 modifier for each ten feet of distance between the trap in the listener and the +5 modifier for each door.

Area D-11 – Statue of Thor (EL 2): read or paraphrase the following. Note that the description will change slightly based on the direction the party approaches the room:

This room is broken up into two parts. The lower area is an L-shaped room, the main feature of which is an eight-foot-tall statue of a Scandi barbarian wielding a large war hammer. There are some runes carved about the base of the statue. Ten feet behind and above the statue is a balcony.

This cave was at one time a small shrine to the Scandi god Thor. The runes on the base of the statue can be read with a DC 15 Decipher Script check: "Thor, god of thunder and war."

A DC 15 Search check reveals the hidden offerings in the base of the statue detailed in the treasure section below. The cave is enthusiastically guarded by the kobolds on the balcony, behind a three-foot barrier that provides them with cover from attackers below.

A DC 15 Climb check allows a character to climb the statue.

Tactics: Each of the kobolds here has a pint of oil that they throw down upon the heads of any intruders who enter the lower part of the cave. Their leader Oddr then uses his alchemist's fire to ignite the oil, placing it so as to light up more than one character with the splash damage if possible. One of the kobolds will run to area D-5 and bring the duergar cleric Einaar to bolster the defenses, before going to area D-13 to rouse the resting kobolds in the common room.

Treasure: masterwork war hammer, 35 gp, 125 sp,

potion of bull's strength, potion of cure moderate wounds.

Oddr, Male Kobold Bbn1: CR 1; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1d12; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk greataxe +3 melee (1d10+1) or alchemist's fire +4 ranged (1d4) or sling +4 ranged (1d3+1); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft.; fast movement, illiteracy, rage 1/day; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Craft (trapmaking) +0, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5, Intimidate +0, Jump +5, Listen +3, Profession (miner) +1, Ride +3, Search +2, Survival +0, Swim +0; Toughness.

Possessions: Alchemist's fire, oil pint (3), bullets (10), sling, greataxe, studded leather armor, 14 gp, 6 sp.

Kobolds (4): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1/2d8-1; hp 2, 2, 3, 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk -1, Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear -1 ranged (1d6-1) or sling +2 ranged (1d3); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +0, Hide +5, Listen +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, spear, sling, bullets (10), caltrops, noise makers.

Area D-12 – Guðmundr's Cave (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

This somewhat circular cave offers few creature comforts, a bedroll atop a pile of furs, a desk, a lockbox, and a couple of recently-made chairs for sitting.

This room belongs to Guðmundr, leader of the duergar and their kobold minions. Guðmundr is a nasty-tempered, easily-angered, vindictive creature. He is kept company by Hrafn, a trained monitor lizard pet.

Note: Guðmundr is very busy working at deciphering the rune stones. He has left specific instructions NOT to be disturbed. The kobolds and duergar fear his wrath and will under NO circumstances appeal to him for help or reinforcement.

Treasure: In the lockbox (DC 18 Open Lock) there are 4 acid flasks, a masterwork short sword, a masterwork bastard sword, a darkwood buckler, and three gems (moss agate worth 15 gp, star rose quartz worth 130 gp, amethyst worth 200 gp). On the desk is a sheet of velum on which is copied the runes from the *rune stone of fury*. Atop the velum is a *stone of translation*, a new magic item used by Guðmundr to read the runes.

Tactics: Guðmundr's monitor lizard knows three tricks: "work," "come," and "attack." All require a DC 10 Handle Animal check. Guðmundr orders Hrafn to attack, hoping to block the adventurers from coming in his room. Ideally he will then make himself *invisible*, and with time permitting cast these spells in order: *shield of faith*, *protection from good*, *bulls strength* (from his potion), *enlarge*, *desecrate*, *spiritual weapon*, and *cause fear*. Then he will attack with his flail.

Guðmundr, Male Dwarf, Duergar Clr3/Bbn1: CR 4; Medium Humanoid; HD 3d8+1d12+12; hp 38; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk masterwork heavy flail +6 (1d10+3) and masterwork throwing axe +6 ranged (1d6+2); SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Light sensitivity, duergar traits; AL CN; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Heal +8, Listen +8, Move Silently -2, Spot +4; Scribe Scroll, Toughness.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – *enlarge person*, *invisibility* (caster level 3).

Spells Prepared (4/3/2): 0-level – *detect magic*, *inflict minor wounds*, *light*, *resistance*; 1st-level – *calm animal**, *cause fear*, *protection from good*, *shield of faith*; 2nd-level – *desecrate*, *hold animal**, *spiritual weapon*. *Domains: Animal, Trickery.

Possessions: Masterwork heavy flail, masterwork throwing axe, masterwork half-plate armor, *ring of protection* +1, *wand of sound burst* (22 charges), *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of bull's strength*, *scroll of cause fear* and *hold person*, 64 gp, 5 sp.

Hrafn, Monitor Lizard: CR 2; Medium Animal; HD 3d8+9; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5, Grp +5;

Stone of Translation

This device appears to be a simple rock crystal of minimal value. On command the crystal glows a gentle light and bestows upon the bearer the ability to read and understand all spoken and written languages as if affected by a *comprehend languages* spell. The bearer can use the stone once per day for 10 minutes.

Faint Divination; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *comprehend languages*; Price 1,620 gp; weight 1 lb.

Atk/Full Atk bite +5 melee (1d8+4); SQ Low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Hide +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Great Fortitude.

Area D-13 – The Kobold Common Room (EL 2):

Read or paraphrase the following:

This large, irregularly-shaped room appears to be the common room. More than a dozen sleeping bedrolls are strewn about the floor, as are a number of mundane items of interest to humanoids everywhere.

In the unlikely event that the party has penetrated the dungeon this far without raising any alarms, they find eight kobolds lounging about this room unarmed. Surprised kobolds take a round to arm themselves.

Kobolds (8): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1/2d8-1; hp 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear -1 melee (1d6-1) or sling +2 ranged (1d3); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +0, Hide +5, Listen +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

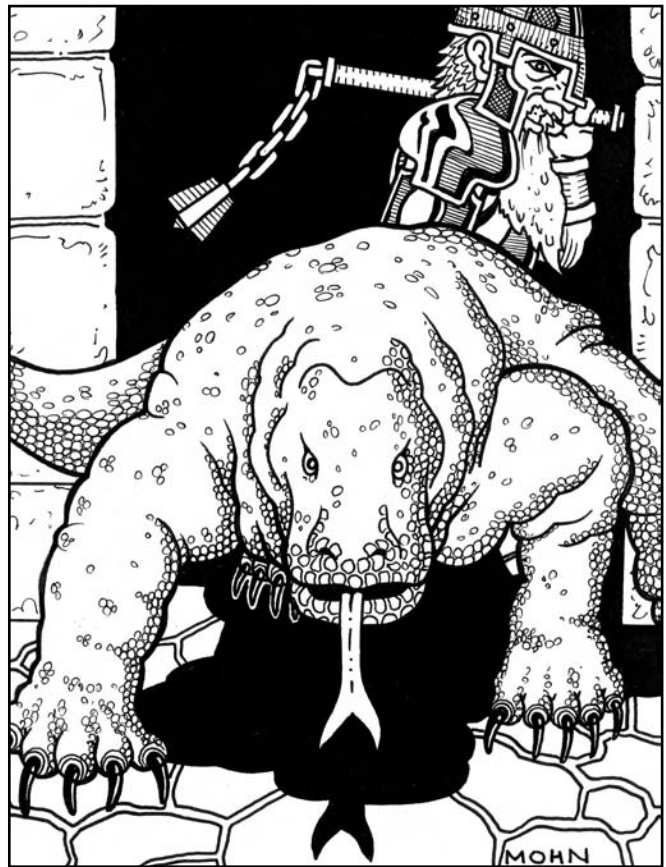
Possessions: Studded leather armor, spear, sling, bullets (10), caltrops, noise makers.

Area D-14 – The Egg Room (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The air in this chamber is warm and muggy. Several one-foot diameter holes are burrowed into the wall, creating tiny tunnels that twist off into the distance. Scattered throughout the sandy floor of the room are large eggs surrounded by broken eggshells.

This is the kobold egg room. They chose this room because it has a sandy floor and beautiful copper deposits on the walls. Shortly after they laid their eggs, a thoqqua chose to take up residence in this room for the same reason. The thoqqua has been busy burrowing out the copper veins surrounding this room, careful not to get too close to the ocean for fear of flooding the lower parts the cave. The heat from the thoqqua has kept the kobold eggs from perishing. The kobolds are afraid of the thoqqua and also fearful to move their eggs, so they are waiting until they hatch to try and sneak out the newborns.

Tactics: When a thoqqua is disturbed, its first



instinct is to attack. Its favored tactic is to spring directly at a foe, either by bursting out of the rock or by coiling up its body and launching itself like a spring. In either case, treat the maneuver as a charge.

Thoqqua: CR 2; Medium Elemental (Earth, Fire, Extraplanar); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk slam +4 melee (1d6+3 plus 2d6 fire); SA heat, burn; SQ darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, immunity to fire, tremorsense 60 ft., vulnerability to cold; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Heat (Ex): Merely touching or being touched by a thoqqua automatically deals 2d6 fire damage.

Burn (Ex): When a thoqqua hits with its slam attack, the opponent must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 13) or catch fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds if not extinguished sooner. The burning creature can use a full-round action to put out the flame.

Fire Subtype (Ex): Fire immunity, double damage from cold except on a successful save.

Tremorsense (Ex): Thoqqas can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

Area D-15 – Bear (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stench in this dark hole in the ground is unbearable, a combination of rotting garbage and bad breath.

This cave is home to a black bear, which does not like to be disturbed.

Black Bear: CR 2; Medium Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2, Grp +6; Atk claw +6 melee (1d4+4) or bite +2 melee (1d6+4); Full Atk 2 claws +6 melee (1d4+4) and bite +2 melee (1d6+2); SQ Scent, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +8, Swim +8.

Area E – The Old Skandi Barrows

Long ago, the Skandi clans buried their hallowed dead in these mounds. Now Grimmur, the kobolds' leader, lies here in a state of stupor while they try to revive him.

Area E-1 – The Clearing (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The dense dark forest opens to reveal a large clearing. There are four mounds that appear to be man-made in the clearing. Each of them has a stone doorway framed at the base. One of the four mounds is significantly smaller than the other three.

There are eight kobold zombies watching the forest path that leads into the barrow clearing. They are under strict orders to attack anything that enters the clearing that is not kobold, duergar, or monitor lizard.

Zombie Kobold (8): CR 1/2; Small Undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear +1 melee (1d6-1) or slam +1 melee (1d4-1); SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slash, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 11, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Area E-2 – The Collapsed Barrow: Read or paraphrase the following:

This barrow is not as high or round as the other three. Where the three set stones form a doorway on the other three barrows, there is only fresh dirt and rubble here.

When Grimmur and his allies excavated this barrow, it collapsed, killing the kobolds inside. If the party takes the time to dig out the barrow they will find the

remains of four kobolds and their belongings.

Development: A DC 5 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check reveals that the barrow has indeed recently collapsed. A check result beating DC 15 reveals that the cause of the collapse was likely a trap.

Area E-3 – The Open Skandi Barrow (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stone doorway to this barrow has been broken open. Looking inside, you see a 10-foot-wide by 50-foot-long wood-reinforced room located beneath the mound. Inside this burial chamber, there is a sarcophagus in the middle of the room, and six burial alcoves are dug into the sides of the room around it.

A duergar cleric and two kobold barbarian bodyguards have opened this barrow while they wait for the work crew to bring the rune stones from area C. They attack the party if disturbed. They have opened up the sarcophagus and cleared out the burial alcoves, tossing the skeletal remains of the long-buried druids about the cairn in frustration at a lack of burial treasure.

Tactics: Skeggi and Már rage in an attempt to block the doorway while Ari uses his spells to support them.

Skeggi and Már, Male Kobolds Bbn1: CR 1; Small Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 1d12; hp 15 each; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk greataxe +3 melee (1d10+1) or alchemist's fire +4 ranged (1d4) or sling +4 ranged (1d3+1); SQ Light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft., fast movement, illiteracy, rage 1/day; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Craft (trapmaking) +0, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5, Intimidate +0, Jump +5, Listen +3, Profession (miner) +1, Ride +3, Search +2, Survival +0, Swim +0; Toughness.

Possessions: Greataxe, bullets (10), sling, studded leather armor, 14 gp, 6 sp.

Ari, Male Duergar Clr2: CR 2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8+8; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk heavy crossbow +2 ranged (1d10) or masterwork heavy mace +2 melee (1d8+1); SA Spell-like abilities, duergar traits, spells; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Diplomacy +3, Heal +8, Listen +4, Move Silently -3, Spellcraft +2, Spot +4; Scribe Scroll.



Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – enlarge person, invisibility (caster level 3).

Spells Prepared (4/3): 0-level – detect magic, read magic, resistance, virtue; 1st-level – command, cure light wounds, disguise self*, summon monster I. *Domains: Animal, Trickery.

Possessions: Heavy crossbow, bolts (10), masterwork heavy mace, tanglefoot bag, banded mail, heavy steel shield, silver holy symbol (worth 25 gp), manacles, 36 gp, scroll of cause fear, protection from good, and summon monster I.

Area E-4 – The Closed Skandi Barrow (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stone doorway to this barrow is sealed.

A quick Search (DC 5) around the back of the barrow will reveal the 2.5-foot-wide tunnel that has been dug into the barrow. A DC 5 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check reveals that the tunnel has been dug from the inside out. It is possible for a Small character to easily crawl down the hole; a medium size character would need to squeeze down it (see Area D-7 for rules on squeezing).

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; hardness 8; 60 hp; Break DC 24.

If the party breaks open the barrow or crawls through the tunnel, read or paraphrase the following:

A 10-foot-wide by 50-foot-long wood-reinforced room is located beneath the mound. There is a sarcophagus in the middle of the burial chamber. Six burial alcoves are dug into the sides of the room surrounding it.

The burial mound is the home of two ghouls. Having long since sucked the marrow from the moldy old bones of the long-interred druids, they find themselves very hungry. The sarcophagus has been opened; its lid lies beside the casket, which is full of the skeletal remains of at least six different bodies. The bones of the druids buried in the alcoves have been tossed into the casket. There is no treasure.

Ghouls (2): CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 13 each; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6+1) or claw +0 melee (1d3); Full Atk bite +2 melee (1d6+1) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d3); SA paralysis, ghoulish fever; SQ undead traits, darkvision 60 ft., turn resistance +2; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease – bite, Fort DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoulish fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC

12) or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 minutes. Elves are immune to this paralysis.

Area E-5 – Burial Mound of Auðun Egillsdottir (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stone doorway to this burial mound is broken open. Looking inside you can see a 10-foot-wide, 50-foot-long wood-reinforced room is buried beneath the mound. Inside the burial chamber there is a sarcophagus in the middle of the chamber surrounded by crushed skeletal bones. The lid of the sarcophagus appears to be an 8-foot tall, 3-foot-wide rune stone. Lying atop the lid is a hideously ugly hulking brute with thick black scales on its skin, a pair of forward curving horns above its eyes and a misplaced serpentine tail.

The creature on the rune stone is Grimmur – the leader of the duergar expedition in search of the *rune stones of Odin*. Grimmur was tasked with traveling to scout the Isle of Faroe and report back to his superiors if he found evidence of the stones. Clearly he did not follow orders. His greed and Guðmundr's cunning have landed the two of them in a tight spot. Finding the stones, the two decided to loot the burial mounds before returning to the underdark. Opening the burial mound of Auðun Egillsdottir, Grimmur used the *stone of translation* to read the *rune stone of Baldr*. He failed his Will save and received the curse (see page 141 for details). Grimmur hoped he could cure his condition before returning to report to his duergar masters, so Guðmundr has been working day and night to find out what has caused Grimmur's stupor. Grimmur is in a constant rage from the embarrassment caused by his predicament and immediately attacks (if he makes his 50% roll – as per the curse).

Tactics: Grimmur is cursed and has a 50% chance each round to not be able to act. When he is acting he is a terror on the battlefield that likes to toy with his prey. Grimmur loves to rage up and smash things with his warhammer, and will sunder weapons from the hands of large, threatening-looking opponents. Once wounded, Grimmur flies into a barbarian's rage and uses his Improved Overrun feat to pursue the individual that wounded him first until they are laid flat. Grimmur is not inclined to use his breath weapon unless severely provoked. Grimmur will not coup de grace his foes; he wants to keep as many alive for slavery in the underdark as possible.

Note on EL: Grimmur is a very difficult encounter for a second or third level party. This is mitigated somewhat by the fact that Grimmur is cursed and has a 50% chance to not act on each round.

Because of this curse, the EL for the encounter is 5, even though Grimmur is listed at CR 6.

Grimmur, Male Ogre Bbn2: CR 6; Large Dragon; HD 4d10+2d12+18; hp 54; Init -1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +13; Grp +17; Atk/Full Atk adamantine warhammer +14 melee (2d6+9); SA breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, immunity to paralysis, sleep effects, and cold; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 29, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Jump +13, Listen +3, Spot +4; Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Breath Weapon: cone of cold, 30 ft., DC 15, 3d8 damage.

Possessions: Adamantine warhammer, +1 breastplate, darkwood shield, *ring of swimming*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 798 gp (optional treasure: the key to the door in area D-4).

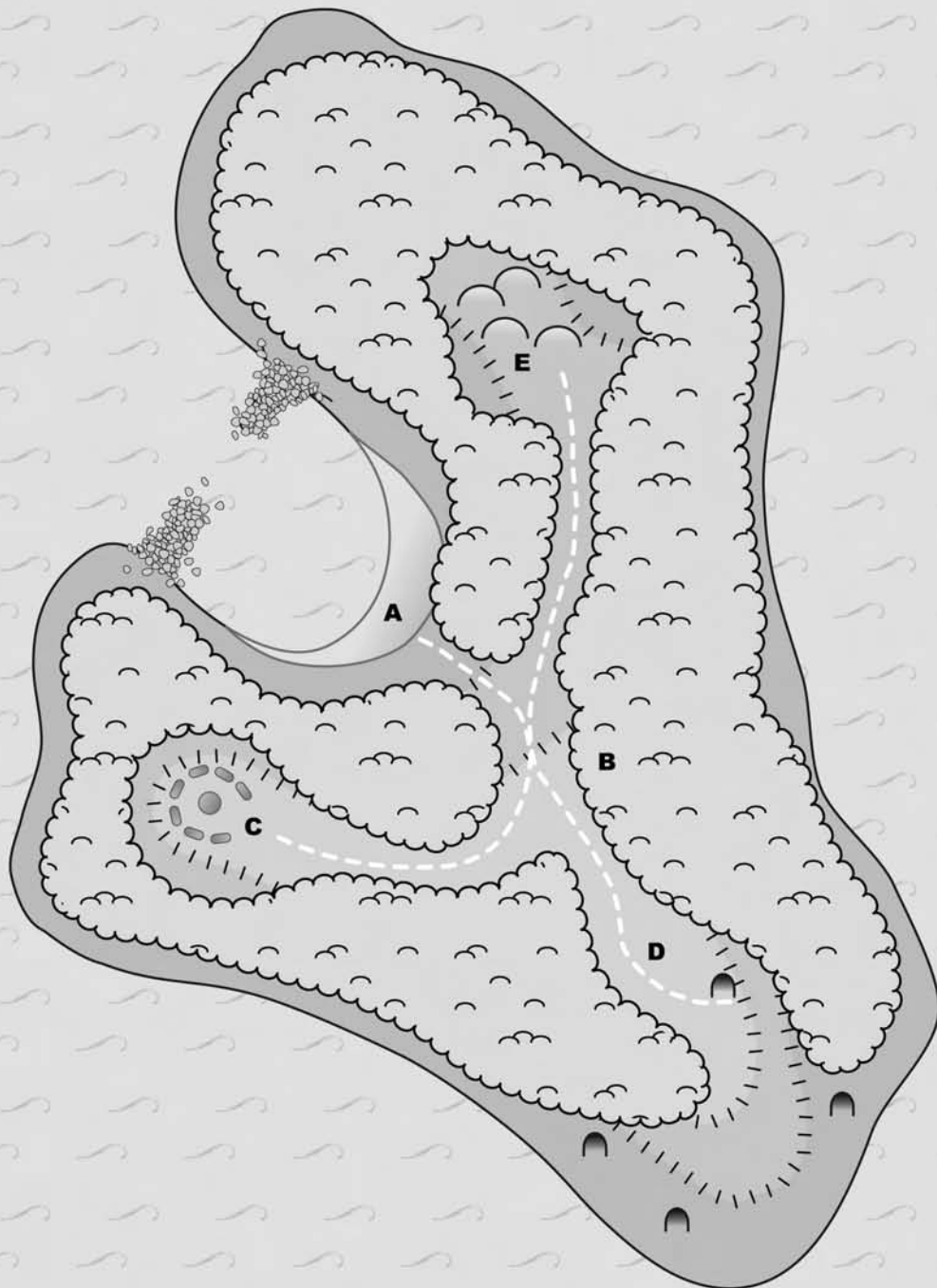
Treasure: The *rune stone of Baldr* is present (see page 141 for details).

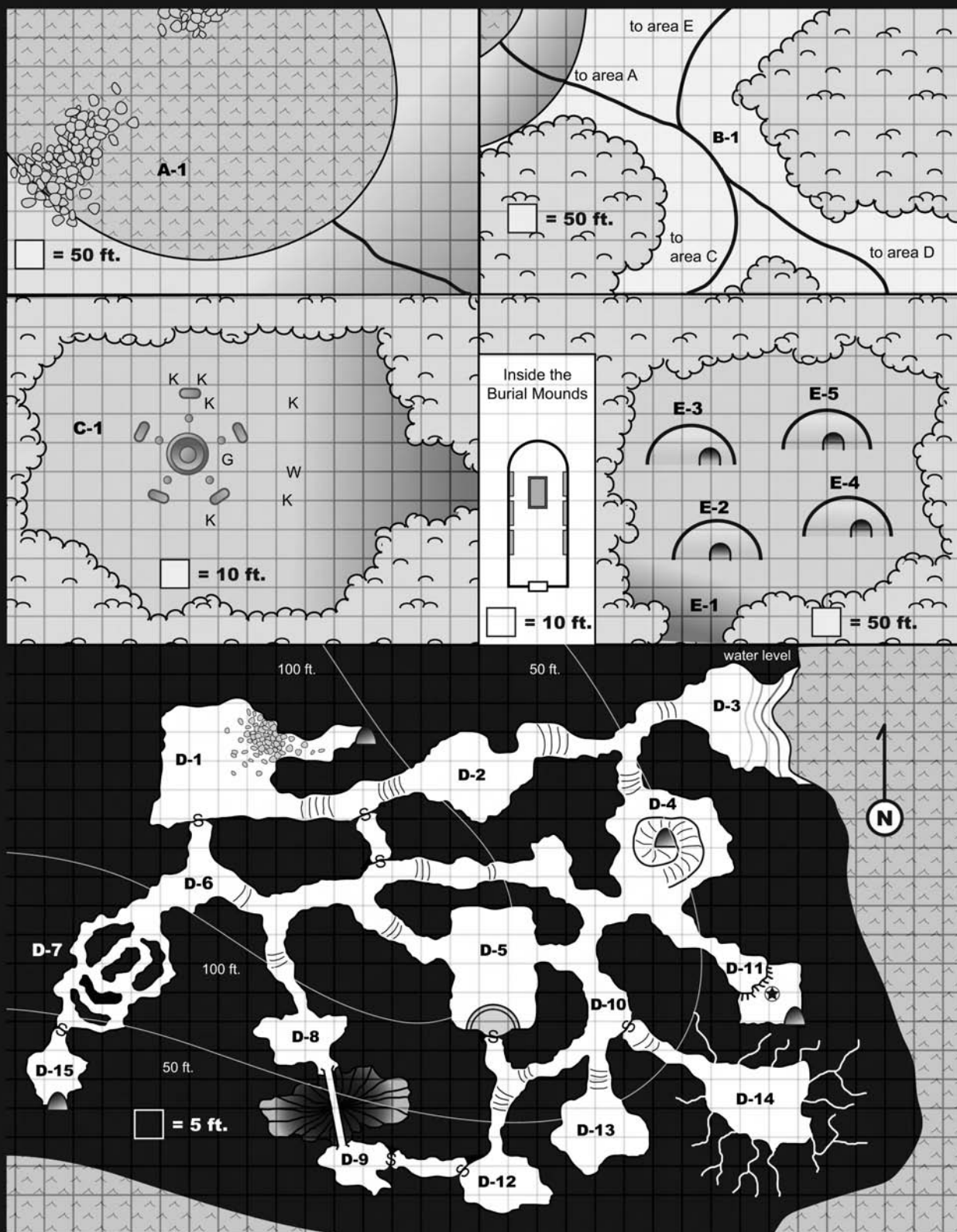
Further Adventures

With the defeat of Grimmur and his followers, the Isle of Faroe is safe for the moment from the depravations of the minions of Niflheim. If the characters take the rune stone rubbings to the old druid Hróaldr he will reward them with the 300 gp as promised and seek to find a way to reestablish the druidic vigil on the island. Perhaps he will seek the characters' aid to travel to the island and set up his mission – who knows what foul creatures may have come up through the door in area D-4?

The door at the bottom of area D-4 is a possibility for further adventure. Perhaps the key to opening it was on Grimmur, or perhaps Hróaldr has a key which he gives to the party as he encourages them to find out what further adventure lies beneath the Isle of Faroe.

Isle of Faroe - Overview





Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Beast of Barren Hill

By Michael Tresca
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Beast of Barren Hill is an adventure in the tradition of man vs. animal movies, with a fantasy twist. Too often, normal animals are given short shrift because there are so many fantasy monsters populating the same universe. It's easy to forget that lions, tigers, and, yes, bears have terrorized man for a millennia and could again, under the right circumstances. This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of 2nd to 3rd level. PCs who are accustomed to dealing with nature (barbarians, druids, and rangers) will have a better time of it. The adventure will be more difficult, and perhaps more exciting, if "city slicker" classes like paladins and wizards dare to take on the Beast. A rogue is essential for low-level parties to survive the traps and elves will be useful in detecting secret doors. See the "Scaling Information" section for unique ways to tailor this adventure to your group's size, level, and unique style of play.

Adventure Summary

The PCs are hired to track the Beast to its lair and destroy it before it kills again. The PCs have some competition – there is a rival goblin party that also seeks to

destroy the Beast and will attack all rivals. Adding to the confusion is an insane gnome druid who assists the Beast at every turn, making it far more formidable than it would be under ordinary circumstances.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	159	T	Fire trap	5
1-1A	160	C	Ugloshti, goblin Sor3, Bagosh, goblin Ftr2, 3 goblins	5
1-2	160	T	Shrieker	1
1-3	161	T	Fire trap	5
1-4	161	T	Spike growth trap	4
1-5	161	T	Rolling rock trap	1
1-7	162	T	Entangle trap	2
1-8	162	C	The Beast, black bear cub	5
1-8A	166	C	Elgith, male gnome Drd6	6

Scaling Information

The Beast of Barren Hill is designed for four to six PCs of 1st to 3rd level. 1st-level PCs will find it difficult; there should be at least six of them. The adventure becomes more manageable for smaller parties of 2nd or 3rd level. It can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. For PCs of 4th to 7th level, change the Beast to a brown bear instead of a black bear and increase Elgith's level to 7th. For parties over 7th level, change the Beast to a dire bear and increase Elgith's level to 13. The goblin levels should be increased to match the PCs.

Getting the Players Involved

Like all Dungeon Crawl Classics, this adventure is about "getting to the chase." The action starts at the mouth of the cave. It's up to you to explain how the heroes get there. Here are some hooks that can be used to get the players involved in the adventure. Whether you flesh out the encounter with the monastery, or simply fast-forward to the mouth of the cave, is up to you.

- The PCs are hired to find and destroy the Beast that has killed dozens of villagers and their livestock. The villagers know that the Beast must reside somewhere within the Barren Hill, but none are willing to approach it. Some believe that Barren Hill is cursed and that the Beast is its vengeance taken form.
- A local prince is suffering from a rare disease. A strange hermit declared that the only way to save the boy is through the powdered bladder of the Beast of Barren Hill. The PCs have been hired to kill the Beast and bring the important component back to the prince so a cure can be manufactured.
- Prospectors have determined that the Barren Hill is sitting over a large vein of silver ore. They offer a lucrative reward if the PCs can clear out the cave so mining operations can begin.

Background Story

Kiki was a normal black bear cub that had been captured by a man named Jingo. She was trained as part of Jingo's Traveling Circus and used as a form of sordid entertainment. To wit, a makeshift arena was constructed and the bear would be released. Two dogs were set upon the bear, the biggest mastiffs available in the village. Each dog was given a colored collar (red or blue) and bets commenced on all three: one of the two dogs or Kiki. There was just one problem. Kiki almost never lost.

Every village the Circus visited would breed its most ferocious dogs, only to have them viciously mauled by Kiki. Kiki was an exceptionally ferocious fighter, a trait that Jingo attributed to having survived on her own in

the wilderness. So Jingo decided to up the stakes.

Jingo began taking bets on live human opponents, armed only with a knife. The goal was not to kill Kiki but to survive a melee long enough with the bear before running away. The longer the human opponent battled Kiki, the more money he might win. Gamblers betted on how long a particular combatant would last.

Enter Elgith

The abuse of the bear and the fates of foolish villagers, many of whom died in the contests, eventually came to the attention of Elgith, a wandering druid. Driven mad with grief over a forest fire that had destroyed his grove, Elgith had been tracking the Circus for some time.

When Elgith discovered what happened to Kiki, he murdered Jingo with his bare hands and set the Circus' wagons ablaze. Seeing something of himself in the tortured bear, he bonded with it. Then, in a daze, he promptly wandered off. Left to her own devices, Kiki disappeared in the wilderness.

Goblin Problems

Elgith set his own grove ablaze in a desperate battle with goblins. The blaze drove the goblins out of their forest lair, but cost Elgith his grove. It wasn't long before they decided to take up residence in Barren Hill. Using it as their base of operations, they began terrorizing the surrounding villages. One year later, the attacks suddenly stopped.

It was then that rumors of the Beast began to spread. It had eaten all the goblins except one, who ran off to tell the slain tribal leader's brother. The brother happens to be another goblin tribe's shaman, Ugloshti, who is determined to get revenge on the beast and by doing so gain greater respect in his tribe. He has bullied the clan leader, Bagosh, to take part in the hunt. They plan to bring the jaws of the Beast back to their tribe and unify other goblin tribes through their might.

The Beast Strikes

There's just one problem: the Beast will not go down easily. Kiki found a mate and bore two cubs, one a year old. Although the male has long since disappeared, Kiki is gorging herself and her cubs for a long winter. She is fearless of humans, having been trained to fight them, and is cunning enough to know when to strike prey she can take on in melee.

The Beast's behavior attracted Elgith to its lair. When he discovered that "his" bear had cubs, he decided it was his way of getting revenge upon the surrounding villages. Now Elgith heals the Beast when she is hurt and has heavily trapped the bear's lair with magical and mundane defenses. He has also trained the Beast well so that she maximizes the use of her surroundings.

Player Beginning

Read the following to the players:

The tales of the Beast of Barren Hill have spread far and wide – stories of its attacks on men, women, and children can be heard around firesides for miles around. Villagers rush in from their tasks at night and armed guards watch over livestock. The Beast has shown no fear of fire or blade and has an uncanny ability to avoid traps.

You have pieced together the Beast's appearance from eyewitness reports, but even that is fragmented. What you do know is that it is at least as large as a man and covered in black fur, with huge teeth and claws. You've seen the aftermath of one of its attacks first hand. There were not enough pieces left to identify the bodies.

Barren Hill has long been considered cursed. Many villagers claim that the goblins that recently inhabited the caves beneath Barren Hill awakened something terrible. Whatever the case, there are no traces of the goblins either. Perhaps the Beast ate them too.

Tracking the Beast is near impossible because it inexplicably leaves no tracks after its attacks. But everyone in the area knows where the Barren Hill caves are, so it was a simple matter of taking the one-hour hike to the Hill.

True to form, Barren Hill is truly barren. It is covered with dried-out stumps of trees that have been viciously hacked down, probably by the goblins. At the bottom of the rocky hill is a maw-like entrance that spirals down into darkness. The wind blows a forlorn wail all around you.

Barren Hill

Unless noted in the text, all corridors are ten feet high and the walls are unworked stone. Ceiling heights vary from area to area. There are no wandering monsters in the caves.

Unworked Stone Walls: 5 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 900; Break DC 65; Climb DC 20.

Typical Stone Door: 4 inches thick; hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28 (stuck), 28 (locked).

Natural Stone Floors: The floors of the natural cave are as uneven as the walls. It takes two squares of movement to enter a square with a natural stone floor, and the DC of Balance and Tumble checks increases by 5. Running and charging are impossible, except along paths. Burrowing creatures (including black bears) are accustomed to this uneven terrain and are able to run and charge with no penalties to movement.

Stalagmite/Stalactites: These tapering natural rock columns extend from the floor (stalagmite) or the ceiling

(stalactite). A creature standing in the same square as a stalagmite/stalactite gains a +2 cover bonus to AC and a +1 cover bonus on Reflex saves (these bonuses don't stack with cover bonuses from other sources). The presence of a stalagmite/stalactite does not otherwise affect a creature's fighting space, because it's assumed that the creature is using the pillar to its advantage when it can. A typical stalagmite/stalactite has AC 4, hardness 8, and 250 hit points.

Roots: Barren Hill once had a great many trees on it, but the goblins chopped them all down. The roots of over a century of growth are still evident within the caves. Roots hang down in most areas and cover the ground in others. Elgith will attempt to use these roots to his advantage with *spike growth* and *entangle* spells.

Avoiding Detection: Depending on their actions, the PCs have a chance of alerting Elgith or the Beast. As soon as Elgith hears their arrival, he begins casting a variety of spells to defend the Beast. Similarly, the Beast may detect PCs through scent alone. It is very important to keep track of just when Elgith notices the PCs and begin counting off the rounds, as his actions are carefully timed.

Elgith must listen to the PCs through a stone wall (+15 to the DC) and at a significant distance, starting at 100 feet but decreasing as they get closer to the Beast's den (+1 per 10 feet of distance). Loud, violent noises like setting off a trap or the shrieker lower the DC to –10 for Listen checks.

For Survival checks using the Beast's scent ability, it must smell PCs through a stone wall (+15) and at a significant distance, starting at 100 feet but decreasing as they get closer to the Beast's den (+1 per 10 feet of distance). *Fire traps*, which give off a scent, set the DC at –10 for Survival checks, but the shrieker does not.

Areas of the Map

Area 1–1 — Cave Entrance (EL 5): This cavern is made to look deserted when in reality it is the entrance to a much deeper cavern complex. Read or paraphrase the following:

The opening to the cavern is worn smooth, indicating the passage of a lot of traffic at some point in the Hill's history. The opening is 10 feet high but burrows down underneath the hill. Peering inside, the cave mouth opens into an irregular area of about twenty feet in diameter. No other exits are evident.

Using his *stone shape* spell, Elgith created a secret stone door connected to the rest of the cavern network. He subsequently trapped it with a *fire trap* spell that he attuned to The Beast (Elgith deactivates the trap for the cubs). The Beast has been

trained to push on a certain spot on the floor, which opens the revolving stone door.

The secret door can be found on a successful Search check (DC 20). Elves have a chance to detect a secret door just by casually looking at an area.

Fire Trap: CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 6th-level druid, 1d4+6 fire, DC 16 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

If the PCs set off the trap, Elgith hears it on a Listen check (DC 15) or the Beast smells them on a Survival check (DC 15).

Area 1–1A — Goblins Attack (EL 5): The goblins arrive 10 rounds after the PCs. They enter the caverns intent on slaying the Beast themselves. At some point they encounter the PCs, though the exact point depends on how fast the PCs are moving (and your own discretion; this location is not defined on the map). When the goblins see the PCs, they attack the closest opponents. Read or paraphrase the following:

Your ears are assaulted by the yelps and squeaks of small, yellow-skinned goblinoids led by a particularly fierce leader. The leader's face is painted bright blue and he wears a headband of colorful feathers. To his left stands a bug-eyed goblin with a crossbow, almost as big as he is, leveled at your head.

*"Kill them!" shouts the blue leader in common.
"Kill them all!"*

Tactics: The goblins will perform the following actions in order:

Round Action

- 1 Bagosh fires his heavy crossbow at the weakest-looking PC. The goblins throw javelins. Ugloshti, in front, casts *color spray*.
- 2 Bagosh draws his bastard sword and defends Ugloshti. The goblins throw javelins. Ugloshti, in front, casts *burning hands*.
- 3 Ugloshti takes a five-foot step backwards and casts *magic missile* at what he perceives to be the most dangerous PC. Bagosh steps in front of Ugloshti and if necessary will engage in melee. The goblins switch to morningstars.
- 4+ Ugloshti casts *acid splash* and *ray of frost* until he runs out of spells, then he switches

to his crossbow.

The other goblins will flee if Ugloshti falls.

Ugloshti, Male Goblin Sor3: CR 3; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d4+6; hp 16; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk dagger +0 melee (1d4-1/19-20) or dagger +4 ranged (1d4-1/19-20) or light crossbow +4 ranged (1d8/19-20); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Concentration +8, Hide +7, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Move Silently +9, Ride +7, Spellcraft +6; Combat Casting, Spell Focus (evocation).

Arcane spells prepared (6/5, save DC 10 + spell level): 0 – *acid splash* (x3), *ray of frost* (x3); 1st-level – *burning hands*, *color spray*, *magic missile* (x3).

Possessions: dagger, masterwork light crossbow.

Bagosh, Male Goblin Ftr2: CR 2; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 2d10+6; hp 20; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +2; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk bastard sword +5 melee (1d10+3/19-20) or heavy crossbow +4 ranged (1d10/19-20); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb -4, Handle Animal +0, Intimidate +0, Jump -5, Move Silently -3, Ride +8, Swim -5; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

Possessions: Masterwork bastard sword, heavy crossbow, half-plate armor, heavy steel shield.

Goblin, War1 (3): CR 1/3; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk morningstar +2 melee (1d6/x2) or javelin +3 ranged (1d4/x2); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: leather armor, light shield, morningstar, 3 javelins.

Area 1–2 — The Alarm (EL 1): This area contains a shrieker. Read or paraphrase the following:

A strange-looking bulbous mushroom hangs upside down from the cavern ceiling. It is pock-marked with holes.

The mushroom is a shrieker that will only react to light, not sound. PCs carrying a light source within

10 feet will immediately set it off for 1d3 rounds. If the shrieker begins shrieking, Elgith and The Beast are alerted to their presence and immediately perform defensive maneuvers to defend the lair.

Elgith must make a Listen check each round the shrieker shrieks (DC 14) or be warned of the PCs.

Shrieker: CR 1; Medium plant; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init -5; Spd 0 ft.; AC 8, touch 5, flat-footed 8; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk —; SA Shriek; SQ Low-light vision, plant; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref —, Will -4; Str —, Dex —, Con 13, Int —, Wis 2, Cha 1.

Area 1–3 — Diverging Paths (EL 5): This tunnel actually leads to a trap that The Beast and her cubs have been trained to avoid. Read or paraphrase the following:

The rough cavern passage tunnels off to your right. A foul smell wafts from that direction.

Elgith trained the bears to associate the foul smell with danger. In reality, there is a secret door off to the left that can be found on a successful Search check (DC 20). Like the first door, it is also trapped. Failure to detect the secret door funnels the PCs towards the spike trap.

If the PCs set off the trap, Elgith hears it on a Listen check (DC 13) or the beast smells on a Survival check (DC 13).

If the PCs discover the secret door, the goblins will take the most obvious path and proceed down the false tunnel.

Fire Trap: CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 6th-level druid, 1d4+6 fire, DC 16 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

Area 1–4 — The Spike Trap (EL 4): This is the final part of Elgith's trap that he has carved out to mislead intruders. Read or paraphrase the following:

This part of the cavern is covered in damp earth. Roots from the trees above cover the walls, ceiling and floor. Clearly, something burrowed its way through here.

Using his *spike growth* spell, Elgith traps this section whenever he suspects The Beast is being hunted.

Circumventing the trap requires finding a way to cross the affected sections of the cavern floor without touching the floor – the most direct route being to climb the stalagmites near the entrance and leap beyond the trapped area. Climbing the stalagmites requires a DC 15 Climb check.

If any of the PCs shout out in pain, Elgith hears it on

a Listen check (DC 28). This trap kills one of the goblins if they have not yet found the PCs. Ugloshti is far too shrewd to explore this area himself...he always sends a goblin ahead, just in case.

Spike Growth Trap: CR 4; spell; spell trigger (alarm); no reset; spell effect (*spike growth*, 6th-level druid, 1d4 piercing/5 foot movement plus half movement for 24 hours or healed, DC 16 Reflex negates movement penalty); Search DC 28; Disable Device —.

Area 1–5 — The Rock Trap (EL 1): The final stage of the Elgith's mad plan is a rolling rock trap, also created with stone shape. Read or paraphrase the following:

There appears to be a roughly gouged outline of a very large, round opening at the end of the cavern tunnel here. Inside the opening is a smooth rock with a bulge at the center.

The door outline is a ruse crafted by Elgith. In reality, it is actually a boulder that will roll towards PCs who step up to inspect it. If PCs wish to escape it, they will have to run back into the *spike growth*. The rock has the added effect of rolling to the end of the tunnel, sealing off the exit. Moving it requires a Strength check (DC 20).

If the PCs set off the trap, Elgith hears it on a Listen check (DC 12). This trap kills another of Ugloshti's hapless goblins.

Rolling Rock Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee (2d6, rock); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 22.

Area 1–6 — The Shallow Pool: This shallow pool is actually the deepest part of the cavern complex and is thus prone to accumulate water, which the bears regularly drink from. Elgith has tunneled the cavern out with *stone shape* and uses *create water* to flood the tunnel as a defense. Read or paraphrase the following:

This part of the tunnel dips down into darkness, but you can see the shimmer of liquid below. There are no other exits.

Though it already has some water in it, Elgith makes it much deeper by repeatedly casting *create water*. If the PCs have not alerted Elgith, this part of the tunnel will not be flooded.

The shallow part of the pool has roughly one foot of standing water. It costs two squares of movement to move into a square with a shallow pool, and the DC of Tumble checks in such squares increases by 2. The pool imposes a –2 circumstance penalty on Move Silently checks.

Area 1–7 — The Deep Tunnel (EL 2): This part of the tunnel completes the defense of the cavern complex. It is here that roots branch downwards, a trap that becomes all the more deadly when *entangle*, *soften earth and stone* and *create water* are combined. Read or paraphrase the following:

At the deepest part of the tunnel, long stringy roots are all around you, obstructing your path. The rest of the tunnel slopes upwards and stretches away into darkness.

If Elgith has been warned, there is now four feet of standing water in a 40-foot stretch of tunnel. It costs Medium or larger creatures four squares of movement to move into a square with a deep pool, or characters can swim if they wish. Small or smaller creatures must swim to move through a square containing a deep pool. Tumbling is impossible in a deep pool. The water in a deep pool provides cover for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 bonus to AC, +4 bonus on Reflex saves). Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain this improved cover. Creatures with this improved cover take a –10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't also underwater. The pool imposes a –2 circumstance penalty on Move Silently checks.

Note that PCs walking through the water will have their torches extinguished. If they do not have magical illumination, they will be forced to proceed in complete darkness.

Elgith also casts *entangle* on the roots below, which will attempt to pull PCs into the water and hold them there (see stats below). A PC risks drowning after being held underwater for a number of rounds equal to double his Constitution score, whereupon he must make a Constitution check (DC 10, +1 cumulative/round). When the PC fails a Constitution check, he falls unconscious on the first round, drops to –1 hit points on the second round, and drowns in the third round.

If he has the time, Elgith will cast *soften earth and stone* on the PCs while they are within the flooded tunnel. They must make a Reflex save (DC 16) or be unable to move, attack or cast spells for 1d2 rounds. Otherwise they can move at half speed, but cannot run or charge.

Entangle Trap: CR 2; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*entangle*, 6th-level druid, *entangle*, DC 15 Reflex save to move at half speed); Strength (break free) DC 20; Escape Artist (wiggle out) DC 20.

Area 1–8 — The Beast's Den (EL 5): This is where the Beast and her cubs reside. The Beast has two cubs, but only the eldest, male cub is large enough to fight; the other cub (the size of a small dog) simply cowers. If Elgith has had sufficient time to prepare, he will significantly boost the Beast's abilities through magic and then retreat into the stone to ambush the PCs later. Read or paraphrase the following:

Stepping out of the tunnel's depression, you enter a large cavern filled with widely dispersed stalactites and stalagmites. The ceiling is 20 feet high at its highest point. Bones, droppings, and bits of vegetation are strewn about the cavern floor. A low growl and two pairs of feral eyes filled with rage peer out of the darkness.

Elgith believes that he should not take nature's wrath into his own hands, having been punished for doing so when fighting the goblins. Instead, he is content to let the Beast take care of intruders, while he casts defensive spells and eventually casts *meld into stone* to hide in the cavern wall. Once he is hidden, see the "Elgith's Revenge" section below. If the goblins get to the lair first, Elgith considers it an omen and casts all spells on himself instead, then casts *meld into stone* on the Beast instead. Regardless of who enters, all will fight to the death.

Tactics (The Beast): The Beast knows the following tricks: attack, defend, down, open door, guard, seek, stay and track. If fighting in darkness or in a *fog cloud*, the Beast will use its scent ability to detect opponents. Every time the Beast misses in melee because of concealment, it can reroll its miss chance percentile roll one time to see if it's actually hits with a +10% bonus for creatures with a normal scent, +20% for a strong scent, and +30% for an overpowering scent.

The Beast will perform the following actions:

Round Action

- 1 The Beast charges the largest PC, causing all who witness its attack to make Will saves against its frightful presence ability.
- 2 The Beast uses its Power Attack feat on the PC it charges, causing a –3 to its attack roll and adding a damage bonus of +3.
- 3 The Beast attacks as normal, using its Power Attack feat on PCs that inflict the most damage on it that round.

If the Beast or its male cub is wounded to half hit points and there is still cover (i.e., the *fog cloud* or just darkness in the cave), the Beast will flee into

the darkness. It is trained to eat a pile of *goodberries* scattered throughout the cave. There are three such piles. Eating them for one round heals the Beast up to 8 hit points.

Tactics (bear cub): The male bear cub is a year and a half old and just about ready to leave the den. It will fight along with its mother. The male bear cub knows the following tricks: attack, defend, down, guard, open door and stay. It will attack the second largest PC, leaving the largest PC (probably the one in the most armor) for its mother to deal with. Like its mother, the male cub knows to retreat into the darkness of the cave to eat goodberries before returning for combat.

Tactics (Elgith): Elgith will react to the PCs upon hearing them enter the caves, but when he notices them depends on the PCs' actions (see the various Listen checks in each area). He has already used *goodberry*, *longstrider*, *pass without trace*, and *spike growth*. Upon hearing the PCs, Elgith takes the following actions in order:

Round Action

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1-5 | Cast <i>create water</i> at the tunnel. |
| 6 | Cast <i>entangle</i> on the flooded tunnel as soon as he hears the second <i>fire trap</i> go off. |
| 7 | Cast <i>soften earth and stone</i> on the flooded tunnel. |
| 8 | Cast <i>fog cloud</i> at the face of the tunnel. |
| 9 | Cast <i>barkskin</i> on the Beast. The Beast's AC changes as follows: AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17. |
| 10 | Cast <i>protection from energy</i> on the Beast. Choose the damage type depending on what spell effects Elgith thinks he hears. |
| 11 | Cast <i>bull's strength</i> on the Beast. The Beast's Strength increases to 23. This changes stats as follows: Grp +10; Atk claw +10 melee (1d4+7); Full Atk 2 claws +10 melee (1d4+7) and bite +5 melee (1d6+5); Climb +11, Swim +11. |
| 12 | Cast <i>meld into stone</i> . |
| 13 | Drink <i>elixir of fire breath</i> . The <i>elixir</i> gives Elgith the ability to breathe fire up to three times in an hour, inflicts 4d6 points of fire damage in a straight line up to 25 feet away (Reflex DC 13 for half damage). |
| 15 | Meld into the cavern wall (see below). |

...and Bears, Oh My!

The Beast has been tweaked to modify its statistics so that it is more accurately reflects bears in combat. Here are the changes:

- Bears can sprint at up to 35 MPH. *Sprint (Ex)*: Once per hour, a bear can move eight times its normal speed (320 feet) when it makes a charge.
- Bears are known to be able to kill a deer with a single swipe of a paw. Thus bears receive the Power Attack feat as a bonus feat.
- Black bear claws are made for climbing and balance. Thus, black bears receive a +4 racial bonus to Balance and Climb checks.
- Black bears are harder to see at night due to their dark coloration. They receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks in dark areas.
- Bears have soft pads on their feet that help them move quietly. They receive a +2 racial bonus to Move Silently checks.
- Bears are known to be ferocious when defending their lairs. *Ferocity (Ex)*: When defending its lair, a bear is such a tenacious combatant that it continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.
- Bears attack by tearing at opponents. *Rend (Ex)*: If a bear hits with both claw attack, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an extra 2d4+10 points of damage.
- A bear has olfactory senses comparable to a dog. It receives a +4 bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.
- Bears charge and roar at opponents to scare them off. *Frightful Presence (Ex)*: This special ability takes effect automatically when the bear performs some sort of dramatic action (such as charging, attacking, or snarling). Opponents within 30 feet and with fewer hit dice than the bear must make a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 bear's racial HD + bear's Cha modifier) or become shaken for 5d6 rounds. An opponent that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to that bear's frightful presence for 24 hours. Frightful presence is a mind-affecting fear effect.
- Bears have a burrow movement of one foot per round. For the purposes of a gnome's ability to *speak with animals*, bears are considered burrowing mammals.



If the PCs surprise Elgith and the Beast, the first time they are aware of the intrusion is when the PCs step out of the tunnel. Elgith casts the following spells in order:

Round Action

- 1 Cast *soften earth and stone* on PCs still in the tunnel.
- 2 Cast *fog cloud* at the face of the tunnel.
- 3 Cast *bull's strength* on the Beast.
- 4 Cast *protection from energy* on the Beast.
- 5 Cast *bearskin* on the Beast.
- 6 Cast *meld into stone* and meld into the cavern wall (see below).

The Beast (black bear): CR 4; Medium animal; HD 5d8+10; hp 30; Init +2; Spd 40 ft, burrow 1 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +8; Atk claw +8 melee (1d4+5); Full Atk 2 claws +8 melee (1d4+5) and bite +3 melee (1d6+3); SA Frightful presence (DC 10), rend, sprint; SQ Devotion, evasion, ferocity, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skill and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +9, Hide +8, Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4,

Survival +5, Swim +9; Endurance, Power Attack, Run.

Evasion (Ex): If the Beast is subject to a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage on a successful saving throw.

Devotion (Su): The Beast gains a +4 morale bonus on Will saves against enchantment effects.

Description: The Beast is actually a black bear. It has small eyes, rounded ears, a long snout, a large body, and a short tail. It has a brown muzzle, lacks a shoulder hump (like a grizzly bear), and has a patch of white on its chest. She is 6 feet in length and weighs 520 pounds.

Male Cub: CR 3; Medium animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 40 ft, burrow 1 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk claw +6 melee (1d4+4); Full Atk 2 claws +6 melee (1d4+4) and bite +2 melee (1d6+2); SA Frightful presence (DC 10), rend, sprint; SQ Ferocity, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skill and Feats: Balance +5, Climb +8, Hide +7, Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Spot +4, Survival +5, Swim +8; Endurance, Power Attack, Run.

Elgith's Revenge (EL 6): Elgith's goal is to remain unseen, if possible. If he is spotted, he hopes to convince the PCs that he has fled. In all cases he will take the youngest cub with him into the stone with his meld into stone form. Elgith waits as long as he can (up to an hour) within the stone wall until he thinks the PCs have let down their guard. Read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly, you hear the feral snarl of an enraged bear behind you. It seems to have come out of the very stone itself!

Tactics: Elgith reemerges and reads his scroll of *summon nature's ally II* to summon a black bear (use the statistics for the male cub, above). Then he wild shapes into a black bear himself and attacks the party. The youngest cub hangs back, too young to fight.

If the goblins make it this far and the druid has not yet left the stone, he will reveal himself to attack them, even if his attack does not give him the element of surprise. If Elgith is sufficiently wounded, he will transform into a bat and attempt to flee the cavern.

Elgith, male gnome Drd6: CR 6; Small humanoid (gnome); HD 6d8+12; hp 38; Init +8; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +1 club +8 melee (1d4+4), or sling +8 ranged (1d3); SQ *dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, *pres-*

tidigitation, speak with animals 1/day; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft (alchemy) +12, Craft (weaponsmithing) +10, Diplomacy +1, Gather Information +1, Handle Animal +10, Hide +8, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +15, Move Silently +4, Ride +13, Search +3, Spellcraft +12, Spot +4; Improved Initiative, Silent Spell, Run.

Divine spells prepared (5/4/4/3, save DC 14 + spell level): 0 – *create water* (x5); 1st-level – *entangle, goodberry, longstrider, pass without trace*; 2nd-level – *barkskin, bull's strength, fog cloud, soften earth and stone*; 3rd-level – *meld into stone, protection from energy, spike growth*.

Possessions: *illuminating* +1 club, sling, sling bullets (11), masterwork large wooden shield, +1 leather armor, divine scroll of *summon nature's ally II* (CL 3), *elixir of fire breath*, pouch containing 48 gp, 8 sp, 88 cp, and 6 gems worth 30 gp each.

Searching the Cave: With a DC 20 Search check, the PCs find a human skeleton crushed under a large boulder. When Kiki was freed from Jingo, the confused bear dragged Jingo's corpse along with her. It's hard to say whether this animal impulse was a form of strange grief, or an act of triumphant freedom. Regardless, The Beast eventually left Jingo's corpse in the cave, where it was accidentally buried under a boulder as Kiki burrowed out her lair. Elgith never bothered to move it. Freeing the corpse requires a DC 20 Strength check (up to four PCs can cooperate in the attempt). If uncovered, it connects the pieces of the story for the PCs: the

body wears a silver signet ring stamped with a J (worth 10 gp), and bears a battered leather journal detailing Kiki's successes, including a note about some "crazy druid" threatening to ruin the author's "bear baiting scheme."

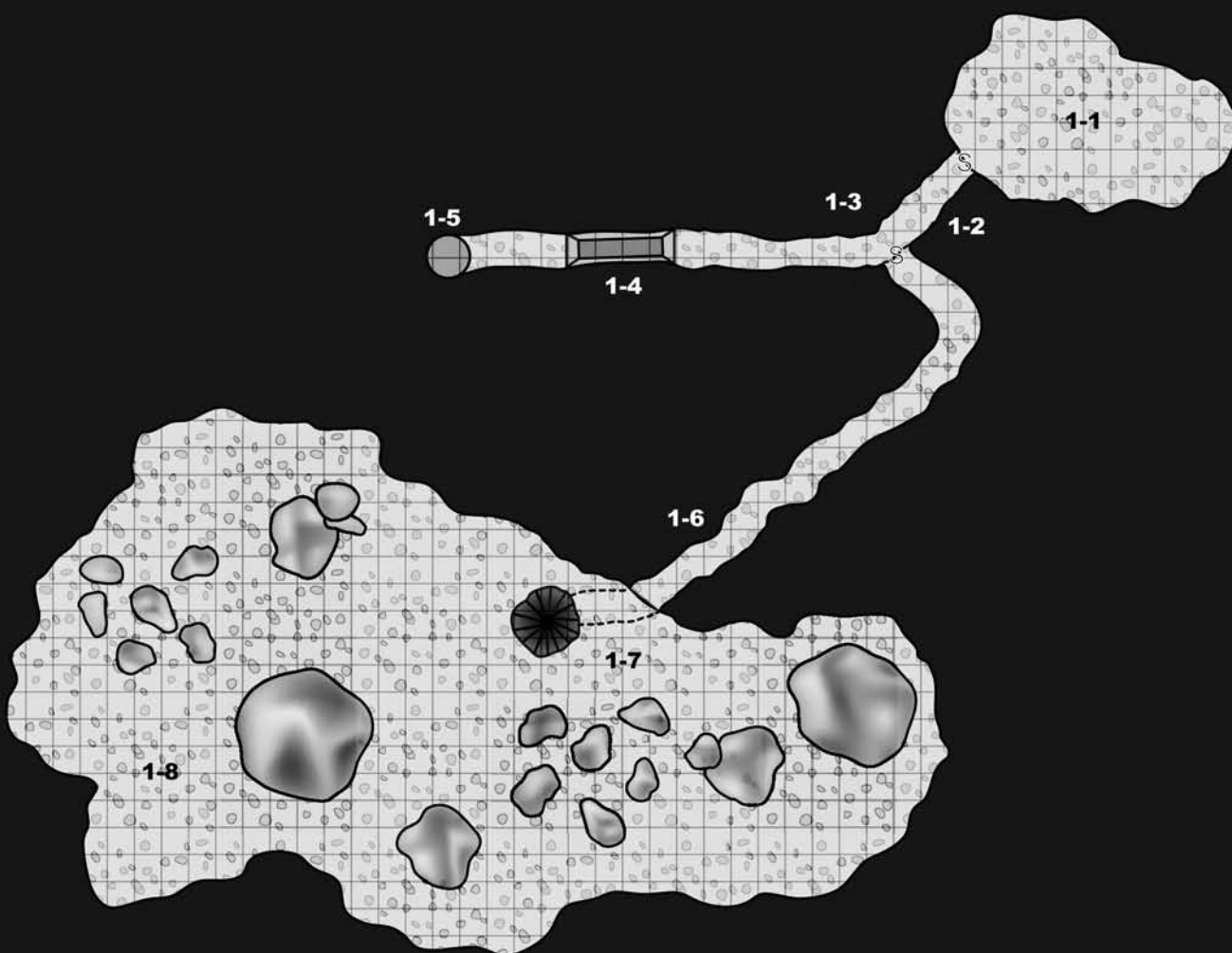
Rewards

If the PCs search the bear's den, they will discover a vein of silver ore. The PCs can sell the rights to the mine for 3,700 gp. PCs who hand in the Beast's pelt receive 1,000 gp from the collective villages as a reward. The Beast's bladder garners a reward of 2,500 gp as a cure for the sick prince.

Future Adventures

- Word of the PCs' deeds as great game hunters spreads far and wide. Villagers begin seeking them out for all manner of wild creatures that have been terrorizing livestock and settlers: lions that hunt men, wolf packs that wipe out entire villages, or even giant squids that raid fishing barges.
- If Elgith survives, he will seek out his revenge by bonding with a dire bear. And this time, he will be hunting the PCs.
- The curse may be real: any bear cub that survives is transformed into a fiendish dire bear that will return to wreak havoc on the new mine.
- If any of the goblins survive, they may go on to believe they have been tested by the bear totem. This goblin becomes a ferocious barbarian who dedicates his life to slaying miners of all types.

The Beast of Barren Hill



Dungeon Crawl Classics

A Question of Morels

By Jason Little

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

A Question of Morels is an introductory adventure best suited for a party of 4-6 first level characters. All classes will find this challenging, but characters with developed physical skills, such as barbarians, rogues, rangers, and monks, will fit particularly well. Given the inherent dangers of early level encounters, a character that can provide magic healing will be very useful.

Adventure Summary

An eccentric herbalist is looking for certain rare mushrooms to craft valuable elixirs. In exchange for obtaining these reagents, the herbalist offers a generous reward and a portion of the powerful potions he intends to brew from these fungal specimens. Why doesn't he simply

gather them himself? Ah, well... you see... the hollowed tree where the mushroom grows is rumored to be haunted, and the timid herbalist won't step foot in there himself. Mysterious lights, chilling howls and other spooky phenomena shroud the remains of the long dead tree nestled deep in the forest.

A kobold druid, himself a dabbler in herbalism, once traveled into the ancient tree, but fell down a massive, hollowed-out root and was badly injured. While recovering, his only means of sustenance were the strange mushrooms growing in the caves – which corrupted the kobold's body, making him more savage and feral. He is now a tainted creature (a new monster template), feeding off the mushrooms and breeding new specimens of fungus. He is the source of the haunted rumors surrounding the hollow tree.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	170	C	Dobbin (2/character)	2
		T	Moonsong spores	1
1-2	171	C	Tiny monstrous centipedes	1
		T	Weakened ladder rung	1
1-3	172	C	Violet fungus	1
		T	Fragile fungal shelf	1
1-4	172	C	Spider swarm	1
		T	Webbed area/difficult terrain	1
1-5	173	C	Withered dryad	3
		C	Ferrets	1
1-6	174	C	Tainted badgers	2
1-7	175	T	Silver mold	1
		C	Shrieker mushroom	1
		T	Velvet moss poisoned arm	1
1-8	177	C	Skunge, tainted kobold Drd34	

Scaling Information

GMs can quickly adjust the difficulty of the scenario to accommodate slightly more experienced groups. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

For stronger parties (characters above 1st level, or for more than 6 total character levels): Increase saving throw DCs by 1, and skill check DCs by 2. Increase the vertical distance between levels by 10-20 feet (thereby increasing falling damage by 1d6 per 10 feet added). Add 2 more dobbin to area 1-1. Add 2 more monstrous centipedes to area 1-2. Add 2 more ferrets to area 1-5. Add 1 more tainted badger to area 1-6. Replace the silver mold in area 1-7 with brown mold. Add 1 more druid level to Skunge Longtooth in area 1-8.

Vertical Map Notation

There are three “levels” in this adventure. Since there is one level above and one level below “ground level” within the tree, the following notations are used to define the different levels.

Level +1: The interior ledge inside the tree is approximately 30 feet above the ground level. This level consists of areas 1-4 and 1-5.

Level 0: The ground floor, housing areas 1-1 through 1-3.

Level -1: Access to the hollowed root system can be found in area 1-3. This leads underground, and is

approximately 20 feet below ground level. This level consists of areas 1-6 through 1-8.

Adventuring Underground and In the Dark

The adventurers will need to provide their own light source unless they have low-light vision or darkvision. The soft glow of luminous fungus provides enough light for characters with low-light vision to function without penalty, but characters with normal vision are considered partially blinded in the dim light. GMs may wish to review the rules on light sources and visual ranges before running this adventure.

Partially blinded: The character has great difficulty seeing. He loses his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any), moves at half speed, and takes a –2 penalty on Search and Spot checks, and on most Strength- and Dexterity-based skill checks. All opponents are considered to have partial concealment (20% miss chance) to the partially blinded character.

Background Story

Skunge Longtooth was once an aspiring kobold herbalist. Rather than take up the sword or bow like his scalebrothers, Skunge instead looked to the world around him, and the powerful tools nature provided. He spent many years learning of rare molds, mushrooms and mosses which could be combined to make poultices to tend to the wounded. The chieftain of Skunge's tribe soon looked to use the herbalist's talents in another way, and had Skunge focus instead on preparing poisons his warriors could use during battle.

Pleased that his skills found favor with the Chieftain, Skunge was eager to use his knowledge of herbalism for the glory of his tribe. After “convincing” several captive druids and alchemists to share their secrets of the craft, Skunge compiled a list of reagents needed to craft the poison that would grant him fame and honor among the scalebrothers – a vile concoction he affectionately named blood bite.

Skunge Longtooth set off into the forest, in search of an ancient dead tree thought to once hold the power of druids for preservation and nurturing. The great tree had died, and was now a rotted hollow shell. The powers of the tree that once protected the forest now corrupted all that grew within. Skunge found the tree and skulked around, searching for his prized mushrooms.

He roused the anger of the dobbin (an evil cousin to the genial fey known as grig) guarding the mushroom patch on the main floor, and during his attempt to escape he fell down a hollow, twisted root. The dobbin left Skunge for dead, but the kobold still clung to life. Feeding on the

mushrooms that grow in the root system, Skunge recovered his strength, but at a terrible price. The taint of the place corrupted his food and poisoned him. Skunge has become a twisted and sickened thing, a feral, crazed version of his former self. And he guards his precious mushrooms with his life.

The herbalist hiring the characters isn't scared of the tree being haunted – he's more concerned about the mushrooms themselves. The specimens he wants are poisonous, and he's not going to risk his own health to procure them; that's what adventurers are for. He's completely unaware of the other dangers lurking in the husk of the great tree, and knows nothing of Skunge, who now claims the lower tunnels beneath the tree as his home.

The Mushrooms

The herbalist hiring the characters has a different name for the mushrooms he's looking for, partially to hide the fact that the mushrooms are quite dangerous. A savvy character might be able to recognize the true nature of the different mushrooms when encountered. The Knowledge (nature) or Survival check DC and alternate names are listed here and with each mushroom's description where it is encountered in the adventure. Once a character has correctly identified one of the mushrooms, or grows suspicious after running afoul of a mushroom, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to identify the others.

Moonsong mushrooms (slumberhill caps): DC 13 Survival or Knowledge (nature). Mushroom spores are poisonous (DC 12 Fortitude save in main space, DC 8 Fortitude save in adjacent spaces, primary and secondary damage is fatigue).

Bloodrose moss (thinblood moss): DC 15 Survival or Knowledge (nature). Contact with exposed skin is poisonous (DC 12 Fortitude save, 1 Con/1 Con). It is much more difficult to stabilize a person who has been struck with a weapon coated with thinblood moss extract. A person struck by such a weapon does not get to check to stabilize when reduced to negative hit points. The Heal check DC increases by +2 when providing first aid.

Crone's ear morel (hag's head morel): DC 17 Survival or Knowledge (nature). Unless properly boiled and prepared, hag's head morels are poisonous when eaten (DC 14 Fortitude save, 1d3 Str/deafness). The deafness is not permanent. The character can attempt a new DC 14 Fortitude save every day; success means hearing is restored.

Player Beginning

After following the crude map you received from the herbalist, you've arrived in the very heart of the forest. Only the faintest light filters through the thick canopy of trees, and the soft bed of leaves and dirt muffles your footsteps. The air is rich with the sounds of vibrant wildlife. That is, until you press forward and cross the threshold into a darkened section of the forest.

The songs of birds fade as you pass a dense cluster of trees. You are greeted by an awe-inspiring sight. The broken and rotting husk of a once-mighty tree dominates a small clearing. The ground is dark and ruddy around the massive trunk, which must be nearly 100 feet across, and stretches more than twice that distance into the air, its top shorn off and splintered like broken teeth. Heavy layers of moss and lichen cling to the stump, enrobing it in rich shades of green, yellow and brown. The sickly sweet taint of mold and rot hangs in the air.

A small fissure beckons from the eastern side of the great trunk. The opening is barely three feet wide, and curls up the scarred bark like a wicked smile. A dim purple light, so faint as to perhaps be imagined, glows from within the trunk. The thrum of a low wind whispers through the forest – but as you train your senses toward the rotted husk of tree, you realize that the sound is coming from inside the stump itself.

Girding yourself for what may lie ahead, you make your final preparations. The reagents you seek for the herbalist lie within. You need to recover some moonsong mushroom caps, a portion of bloodrose moss, and crone's ear morels.

Level 0 (Ground Level)

The hollowed walls of the tree on level 0 and level +1 are still thick and durable, but slick with damp moss and mildew. The interior of the tree is 60 feet tall, and the ceiling is comprised of broken limbs and debris that has accumulated over the years and lets no light through. The root structure and dirt walls on level -1 are 10 feet tall unless otherwise indicated. There is no typical default door – this dungeon consists of sprawling natural areas and tunnels. There are no wandering monsters in this scenario.

Ancient Tree Walls: 3 ft. thick; hardness 3; hp 100; Break DC 30; Climb DC 25.

Earthen Walls: 3 ft. thick; hardness 5; hp 90; Break DC 30; Climb DC 18.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – The Mushroom Garden (EL 3): Once the party enters the hollow tree, read the following aloud:

The faint purple light provides trace illumination within the massive confines of the hollowed trunk. No hint of light trickles from overhead, where the walls of the great trunk race to their dizzying height beyond your vision. The air is thick with the smell of molded wood and rot.

The source of the hazy purple light is clear once your vision adjusts to the darkened interior. A massive sheet of small mushrooms sprawls across the center of the hollow. The circular patch must be at least 50 feet across, doming slightly at its centermost point. The odd curves of the crescent-shaped caps make it easy to identify these as moonsong mushrooms.

If any of the characters have darkvision or low-light vision, read the following to them:

Off to the north, a tattered series of wooden planks and a twisted knotted rope are spiked into the wall of the tree to form a crude rope ladder. The ladder trails upward for 30 feet, then disappears over a thick wooden shelf that stretches in a semicircle along the north, west and southern walls overhead.

A large fungal shelf clings to a portion of the floor and wall in the southwest. The fungal blooms along the shelf have wide ridges and wrinkled caps, and appear pale compared to the moonsong mushrooms glowing softly in the center of the hollow.

A small band of dobbin stumbled across the hollow many years ago, and now consider the tree their home. Dobbins are foul-tempered compared to their fairer grig cousins. They lurk within the great patch of moonsong mushrooms, keeping a wary eye on any who enter their tree.

The moonsong mushrooms present a hazard of their own. When disturbed, the mushrooms release poisonous spores into the air. The dobbins are too light to trigger this reaction from the mushrooms, even when moving through the patch. And the dobbins have become immune to the mushroom's poison, having lived in the hollow for so long.

The moonsong mushrooms release a poisonous cloud of spores when roughly disturbed, or when anyone weighing more than 25 lbs. enters a section of the mushroom patch. The spores are released in the space where the mushrooms were disturbed, and

each adjacent space. Each five foot square patch of mushrooms can release spores twice per day.

Tactics: The dobbins attack anyone who enters the patch or tries to gather any mushrooms, but will not leave the patch unless it is set on fire. The dobbins start the encounter invisible, with readied actions to fire their bows at the first character tampering with any mushrooms. Because of their size in relation to the mushrooms around them, dobbins still get a Hide check after making a ranged attack. A character must succeed at an opposed Spot check to see exactly where in the mushroom patch the attack came from.

The dobbins are fiercely protective of their hollow, but know enough to stay within the safety of the mushrooms as much as possible. The dobbins can use their *entangle* ability within the mushroom patch, which will also automatically trigger the affected mushrooms to release spores. The dobbins fight to the death.

Tiny creatures: The dobbins and several other creatures in this adventure are Tiny size. A Tiny creature typically occupies a space only 2-1/2 feet across, so four can fit into a single square. They must enter an opponent's square to attack in melee. This provokes an attack of opportunity from the opponent. A combatant can attack into his own square if needed, so he can attack such creatures normally. Since tiny creatures have no natural reach, they do not threaten the squares around them. A combatant can move past them without provoking attacks of opportunity. Tiny creatures also can't flank an enemy.

Reminder: Don't forget that players falling from the ledge on level +1 will fall directly into the mushroom patch. While their fall will be cushioned by the mushrooms, any fall from level +1 will automatically trigger poisonous spores. If the mushrooms are cleared away (fire will burn them off), falling characters will face lethal damage instead of nonlethal damage from the fall, but will not be subjected to the poisonous spores.

Aftermath: The dobbins have little treasure to speak of. Aside from the magic acorns (which function like *goodberries*), each dobbin has 2 silver pieces.

A thorough search of the mushroom patch will automatically trigger the poison spores, unless a character can succeed at a DC 15 Balance or Sleight of Hand check. A DC 18 Search check of the mushroom patch will reveal six Medium-sized humanoid skeletons near the center, below a layer of fungal growth. If the mushroom patch has been hacked apart or burned away, this becomes a DC 10 Search check.

The bodies are the remains of previous adventurers who fell victim to the dobbin. Only a few things among the bones are still useable – a cold iron dagger, 8 crossbow bolts, a masterwork morningstar, a small polished tourmaline (15 gp), 38 cp and 13 sp.

Moonsong mushrooms (slumberhill caps): CR 1; natural; location trigger (disturb space or apply 25 lbs. of pressure); special reset (can activate twice per day); poisonous spores (DC 12 Fortitude save in main space, DC 8 Fortitude save in adjacent spaces, primary and secondary damage is fatigue); multiple targets (triggering space and each adjacent space); Knowledge (nature) or Survival DC 13 to identify; Disable Device special (avoid disturbing, or burn away mushrooms).

Dobbin (2 per character): CR 1/2; Tiny Fey; HD 1/2d6+1; hp 3 each; Init +4; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +0; Grp -11; Atk/Full Atk Short sword +6 melee (1d3-3/19-20) or longbow +6 ranged (1d4-3/x3); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 5/cold iron, low-light vision, spell resistance 12; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 5, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Craft (alchemy) +4, Escape Artist +8, Hide +16, Jump +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +8 (+3 outside a forest setting), Perform (singing) +6, Search +2, Spot +3; Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Possessions: Tiny short sword, Tiny longbow, 20 arrows, 1d2 acorns each (function as *goodberries*), 2 sp

Dark fey: Dobbin are wicked versions of their fey cousins, the grig. They lack the grig's fiddle ability, and do not have access to *disguise self* or *pyrotechnics* as spell-like abilities. Dobbin also have much lower spell resistance.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day – *entangle* (DC 13), *invisibility* (self only), *ventriloquism* (DC 13). Caster level 9th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Area 1-2 – The Crumbling Ladder (EL 2): When the party moves toward the rope ladder to the north, read the following aloud:

The knotted rope appears slightly frayed and ragged, but is in fair shape. The wooden slats are covered with mildew and patches of grey moss. The iron spikes set every several feet are pitted and rusty. From this vantage, you can see that the crude ladder follows the slope of the trunk to a wooden shelf 30 feet overhead. It's too difficult to tell if the shelf is a separate structure, or the remains of wood not yet rotted away from the interior of the great tree.

The ladder was constructed by several of the



adventurers that eventually fell to the dobbin. While the ladder itself is benign, a nest of monstrous centipedes has taken up residence in a small crease along the wall near one of the ladder's spikes.

Despite its appearance, the ladder is sturdy enough to support 200 pounds without incident. Climbing up the ladder requires only a DC 8 Climb check. However, the rung next to the centipede nest will snap and crumble once anyone weighing 200 pounds or more grabs hold. If that rung is broken, the Climb check increases to DC 10 to navigate the ladder.

A character falling from this height while others are below him on the ladder forces those characters below him to make DC 12 Climb checks to remain on the ladder and keep from falling. Failing the roll means the character falls from his current height, and takes 1 additional point of damage for every 100 pounds that "lands on top of him" from other characters.

Tactics: The centipedes have readied actions to attack anyone reaching the weakened ladder rung. Characters do not get to make attacks of opportunity against the centipedes while climbing. Anyone taking damage from the centipedes must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + damage taken) or fall from their perch. The centipedes will not leave

their nest except to attack characters on adjacent sections of the ladder. The centipedes fight to the death.

Climbing: Since this combat most likely occurs while one or more characters may be climbing, the GM may wish to review the Climb skill. Keep in mind that characters climbing are considered flat-footed and denied their Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

Crumbling ladder step: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger (20 feet above ground, 200 lbs. applied); no reset (once broken, it is negated); 20 ft. fall (2d6 damage); DC 15 Climb check to hold onto ladder to avoid falling; single target; Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 10 (slide something solid into broken slat's knot, or secure the rope).

Tiny Monstrous Centipedes (8): CR 1/8; Tiny Vermin; HD 1/4d8; hp 1 each; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -13; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d3-5 plus poison); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Poison (DC 10 Fort, 1 Dex/1 Dex); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Hide +18, Spot +4; Weapon Finesse

Area 1-3 – The Fungal Patch (EL 2): When the party explores this section of the hollow, read the following:

The large shelf of fungus stretches 15 feet wide and fills in the entire edge where the dirt floor and wooden wall meet, crawling 10 feet up the wall at the shelf's highest point. The shelf appears thick and wood-like, with dozens of broad, wrinkled, buckler-sized caps dotting its surface. There's a strong earthy smell in this section of the hollow, like freshly tilled dirt.

If the characters provided their own light source and aren't relying on the purple glow of the moonsong mushrooms, read the following:

The wrinkled surface appears flush and crimson, as if blushing, and stretches ever-so-slightly as if the great broad caps were breathing.

The caps are immature violet fungus. They are not fully developed – but still dangerous. Skunge Longtooth used his herbalist knowledge to seed the area with the proper spores, and the fungal bloom grew here to seal off the root system where he lives below. The dobbin won't mess with the violet fungus blooms, another reason they stay in the center of the hollow.

The hollowed tree root which leads to areas 1-6 through 1-8 can only be reached by clearing away the fungal shelf housing the violet fungus blooms. However, a character weighing more than 100 lbs risks breaking through the fungal shelf and tumbling into the hollowed tree root toward area 1-6.

Tactics: The violet fungus blooms attacks anyone moving next to the fungal shelf, and will move from the shelf to pursue attackers if necessary. The violet fungus blooms will not enter the moonsong mushroom patch in the center of the hollow. The immature violet fungus blooms fight to the death.

Aftermath: The fungal shelf can be easily cleared with fire or by breaking it apart with slashing or bludgeoning weapons. A DC 14 Search of the fungal shelf uncovers the skeletal remains of a halfling rogue, a previous "snack" for the immature violet fungus. The halfling's corpse has a set of masterwork thieves' tools, a silvered small size dagger and a tattered coin purse with 18 cp, 6 sp and a small quartz crystal worth 5 gp.

Immature Violet Fungus (2): CR 1; Small Plant; HD 2d8+2; hp 10, 13; Init +2; Spd 10 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk Tentacle +1 melee (1d4 plus poison); Full Atk 2 tentacles +1 melee (1d4 plus poison); SA Poison (DC 12 Fort, 1d2 Str and 1d2 Con/1d2 Str and 1d2 Con); SQ Low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 8, Con 12, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 9

Fungal Shelf: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger (highlighted floor section, 100 lbs. applied); no reset (once broken, it is negated); 20 foot fall (1d6 damage, 1d6 nonlethal damage); DC 15 Reflex save to avoid falling; Search DC 20 (automatic if fungal shelf is removed); Disable Device special (burn or break apart fungal shelf)

Level +1 (30 Feet Above Ground Level)

Areas of the Map

Area 1-4 – The Narrow Ledge (EL 2): Once a party member reaches the lip of the wooden ledge, read the following:

The rough wooden ledge appears fairly stable, but its surface is bowed and warped, and littered with scraps of peeled bark, rotting leaves and debris. The ledge widens to 15 feet at a few points, but tapers down to 10 feet along most of its length. The great trunk is slightly narrower at this height, and the edge of this shelf overlooks

the circular patch of moonsong mushrooms below.

Traveling across the ledge is only treacherous to impatient characters. A portion of the floor and wall are covered with thick, sticky webs to snare unwary prey, as indicated on the map. The greatest threat is the spider swarm living along the northern wall of the shelf.

Difficult terrain: The uneven surface is covered with enough debris that each square is considered difficult terrain (each square costs two squares of movement). A character succeeding at a DC 10 Balance check can treat the ledge as normal terrain. If attempted during combat, the check must be made each round. Failing the check by 5 or more indicates the character has fallen prone.

Falling to level 0: If a character falls in one of the spaces along the edge of the shelf, there is a chance they will fall down to the ground level and into the mushroom patch in area 1-1. A DC 15 Reflex is needed to avoid falling off the edge of the shelf. If a character fails the Reflex save, he can cling to the edge by making a DC 20 Climb check. A character falling back to level 0 suffers 2d6 non-lethal and 1d6 lethal damage if the mushroom patch in area 1-1 is intact. If the mushroom patch is not intact, he suffers 3d6 lethal damage.

Webs: The map indicates several spaces covered with webs. A DC 18 Spot check is required to notice the fine webs amidst the debris before stumbling into them. A character entering a square with webbing must make a DC 12 Reflex save or become entangled. An entangled target can't move from its space, but can break loose by spending one round and making a DC 15 Strength check or a DC 20 Escape Artist check. Fire can be used to immediately destroy all the webs in a space. Aside from the differences noted, this spider web works the same way as a *web* spell.

Tactics: The spider swarm lurks along the edges of the webbed area, hidden from view. The spiders attack if a character enters the webbed area, disturbs their web or attempts to destroy the web. The spider swarm fights to the death.

Aftermath: A DC 15 Search of the debris littering the webbed area reveals a small ivory carved scroll case (worth 15 gp) and two small agates (10 gp each). Inside the ivory scroll case is a scroll containing the following divine spells, each scribed at caster level 2: *know direction*, *cure light wounds*, *faerie fire*. If the webs have been burned away, this becomes a DC 10 Search check.

Spider Swarm: CR 1; Diminutive Vermin (Swarm); HD 2d8; hp 10; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -; Atk/Full Atk Swarm (1d6 plus poison); Space/Reach 10 ft./0 ft.; SA Distraction, poison (DC 11 Fort, 1d3 Str/1d3 Str); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., swarm traits, tremorsense 30 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 1, Dex 17, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +19, Listen +4, Spot +4

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a spider swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round.

Area 1-5 – The Broken Limb (EL 4): As the party explores the southern edge of the wooden shelf, read the following:

Along the wall to the southwest lies a dark, round hole roughly 10 feet in diameter, just before the wooden ledge tapers off to nothingness against the wall of the massive tree. Based on your observations of the tree from outside, this appears to be the rotted-out knot of one of the larger broken branches. Most of the great limbs were twisted and broken, and you don't think it could extend much farther than 15 to 20 feet from the trunk.

The great tree was once the proud home of a dryad, which currently lives in the hollowed knot of the bole with her ferret companions. As the tree died, the dryad's spirit died, as well. She is now unwittingly the reason for the corruption. Once her spirit was broken, the foul mushrooms, bracken and dross began to spread through the rotten core.

The bloodrose moss the party seeks grows inside the hollow branch, covering everything inside in its velvety red embrace. The dryad's staff is sufficiently coated with the moss so that her first two successful strikes in combat benefit from the moss's poison. All the dryad's darts are considered poisoned. The dryad and her ferrets are immune to the bloodrose moss' effects.

A dryad is a formidable opponent for 1st level characters. This encounter is made even more perilous by being in narrow confines overhanging the mushroom patch below. To compensate for this, the dryad's Wisdom and Charisma have been lowered, to reflect her "fallen" status and broken spirit. The party will need to work well together to dispatch the dryad.

Tactics: The dryad and her ferrets attack anyone entering the hollowed branch. The dryad is very

intelligent, and uses her abilities to confuse, separate and sabotage the party's progress. If the party fought the spider swarm in area 1-4, the dryad knows they are nearby and assumes the form of a twisted tree with *tree shape* as the party approaches. If in *tree shape*, the dryad automatically gains a surprise round against any character failing to make a DC 20 Spot check.

The dryad targets weak-willed characters with *charm person* or *suggestion* to prevent them from attacking or turn them against their party members. She'll unleash *deep slumber* if she can get several party members at once. If party members fall asleep on spaces adjacent to the edge, she'll attempt to push them off the ledge to level 0 below.

The dryad sends her ferrets after spellcasters to keep them occupied and harassed while she tries to deal with the more intimidating party members. The dryad and her ferrets fight to the death.

Aftermath: Defeating the dryad slowly removes the taint from the great tree. For defeating the source of the taint, the characters receive a +1 luck bonus to all saving throws for 24 hours, or until they leave the confines of the tree, whichever comes first. Read the following aloud after the party has defeated the dryad:

As the fallen dryad lies dying, a strange feeling washes over you. Some indefinable energy courses through the heart of the great tree, as if the tree itself were letting out a great sigh of relief. A light wind swirls about you, stirring leaves and debris – but carrying with it a sweet smell of fresh, clean air, a vast improvement to the stale, rotted smell pervading the massive hollow.

Aside from the equipment on her person, the dryad has collected several interesting pieces of petrified wood from her precious tree. A DC 15 Search check will find 2d6 pieces worth 3 gp each.

Fallen Dryad: CR 3; Medium Fey; HD 4d6; hp 16; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk masterwork quarterstaff +6 melee (1d6 and poison) or dart +6 ranged (1d4 and poison); SA Spell-like abilities, poison (thinblood moss, DC 12 Fort, 1 Con/1 Con and special); SQ Damage reduction 5/cold iron, tree dependent, wild empathy (+6 bonus); AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 19, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Escape Artist +11, Handle Animal +9, Hide +11, Knowledge (nature) +11, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Ride +6, Spot +8, Survival +8, Use Rope +4 (+6 with bindings); Great Fortitude, Weapon Finesse

Possessions: Masterwork quarterstaff, 10 darts, 11 enchanted walnuts (function as *goodberries*, last 6 days once removed from tree)

Spell-Like Abilities: At will – *entangle* (DC 12), *speak with plants*, *tree shape*; 3/day – *charm person* (DC 12), *deep slumber* (DC 14), *tree stride*; 1/day – *suggestion* (DC 14). Caster level 6th.

Ferret companions (2): CR 1/4; Tiny Animal; HD 1/2d8; hp 3, 2; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d3–4); Space/Reach: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Attach; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +10, Hide +11, Move Silently +8, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse

Attach (Ex): If a ferret hits with a bite attack, it latches onto the opponent's body and automatically deals bite damage each round it remains attached. An attached ferret loses its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class and has an AC of 12. An attached ferret can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached ferret through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

Bloodrose moss (thinblood moss): DC 15 Survival or Knowledge (nature). Contact with exposed skin is poisonous (DC 12 Fortitude save, 1 Con/1 Con). It is much more difficult to stabilize a person who has been struck with a weapon coated with thinblood moss extract. A person struck by such a weapon does not get to check to stabilize when reduced to negative hit points. The Heal check DC increases by +2 when providing first aid.

Level -1 (20 Feet Below Ground Level)

Areas of the Map

Area 1-6 – The Twisted Root (EL 2): Once the party heads into the root tunnel, read the following aloud:

The air grows even more stale and damp. A massive, gnarled root twists its way into the earth, hollowed out by rot and decay. The main root is nearly 20 feet across where you enter. The spongy floor is caked with debris and mold-wood. The soft purplish glow from the moon-song mushrooms seems swallowed up in the darkness as you descend further into the earth.

A few smaller tunnels spiral off from the main root, but soon end clogged with mud and debris. The tunnel slowly wends its way south and east, slowly tapering to half its original width. An impossibly pale silvery glow beckons

from around a corner 30 feet ahead, where the root tunnel dips sharply south.

Two tainted badgers live in the main tunnel offshoots to the north and south. Upon awakening to his tainted nature, Skunge quickly befriended these two creatures. They protect the tunnel system fiercely from intruders.

Tactics: The tainted badgers begin with total concealment due to the debris, mud and darkness in the burrows where they are hiding. There is one badger hidden in each of the two smaller tunnels as indicated on the map. A character must make a Spot check opposed by the badger's +14 Hide check or the badgers receive a surprise round.

The badgers charge from their burrows once any character passes between them, which may put them in a flanking position. They focus on one target at a time, trying to take one down before moving on to the next. The tainted badgers use their poisonous strike ability on every possible attack, until they run out of uses. The tainted badgers fight to the death.

Aftermath: A thorough search of the northern burrow will reveal nothing of interest. However, a DC 15 Search of the southern burrow will reveal a small cache of baubles Skunge secreted away when he first tumbled down the root – but has long forgotten about. Amidst the dross and mud are the following items: a bolt case with 10 masterwork crossbow bolts (for a Small size crossbow), a sickle (Small) and a well made leather pouch containing a *ring of protection* +1, one *potion of cure light wounds*, 32 sp and 5 gp.

Tainted badgers (2): CR 1; Small Animal [augmented]; HD 1d8+3; hp 7, 8; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk Claw +4 melee (1d3 and poison); Full Atk 2 claws +4 melee (1d3 and poison) and bite -1 melee (1d3); SA Poisonous strike (4/day; DC 13 Fort, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex), rage; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5 (+9 vs poison, disease), Ref +5, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Escape Artist +7, Listen +2, Spot +2; Track, Weapon Finesse

Poisonous Strike (Ex): These tainted badgers can make 4 poisonous claw attacks per day. They must declare they are using a poisonous strike before making their attack roll.

Rage (Ex): A badger that takes damage in combat flies into a berserk rage on its next turn, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, and -2 to Armor Class. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily.

Area 1-7 – A Crude Laboratory (EL 2): Once the players reach the end of the root tunnel, read the following aloud:

The root tunnel turns toward the south and deteriorates quickly, eventually ending in a pile of splintered wood, earth and stone. A 10 foot wide section of the root tunnel wall has been peeled back along the northeast wall, revealing a roughly square room 25 feet to a side.

The room appears to have been crudely dug out of the earth. The walls and floor are packed down tightly, but unevenly. Thin tendrils of fibrous roots peek down through the ceiling. Worms wiggle their way through the walls, and bugs quietly chitter throughout the room. The pungent smell of decay, rot and dung is oppressive.

The west wall is covered in a thick blanket of phosphorescent silvery moss – the source of light you saw from further up the tunnel. The entire north and eastern walls have natural dirt shelves dug at regular intervals. On the shelves sit numerous logs, piles of compost and heaps of dung grown thick with mushrooms and molds of every description.

Massive shelves of dark brown fungus fan out from one of the piles, while delicate fungal blooms that almost look like roses grow from a rotted log. Long mushroom stems supporting pointed, wrinkled caps strain toward the ceiling from a compost heap. A soft velvety blanket of yellow moss covers a pile of wet refuse. You've never seen so many different types of molds, fungal blooms or moss in one place before.

This is Skunge Longtooth's laboratory, where he grows his precious fungi. Skunge has a variety of mushrooms and molds growing here, and could survive indefinitely on their sustenance. He uses the remains of unwary adventurers, scraps of wood and animal spoor as the breeding ground for his experiments.

The tunnel leading southeast from the laboratory to area 1-8 is not visible until characters enter the room.

The westernmost wall is one of Skunge's greatest accomplishment – the kobold has managed to breed a small sample of brown mold with other specimens to create silver mold. A shrieker grows on a shelf in the northeast corner, which will alert Skunge to the presence of the party should they stray too close.

Tactics: The silver mold's abilities are all passive.



The shrieker has no physical attacks, but will shriek when light stronger than the silver moss comes near – or if the silver moss has flared more brightly due to exposure to fire, alerting Skunge Longtooth. Skunge's tampering with the shrieker's food supply has greatly enhanced its piercing scream, which may deafen foes within 15 feet as indicated in the description.

Silver Mold (CR 1): Silver mold is a phosphorescent mold that feeds on the body heat of warm-blooded creatures. It normally comes in patches 5 feet in diameter, and the temperature is always chilly in a 15-foot radius around it. Warm-blooded creatures within 5 feet of silver mold take 1d6 points of nonlethal cold damage. A warm-blooded creature physically touching silver mold must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or lose 1d3 points of Constitution. Fire brought within 5 feet of silver mold causes it to shine more brightly (as a torch) and extends its cold effect to 10 feet. Any cold damage (such as a *ray of frost* or *cone of cold*) immediately destroys a patch of silver mold.

Shrieker: CR 1; Medium Plant; HD 2d8+2; hp 12; Init -5; Spd 0 ft.; AC 8, touch 5, flat-footed 8; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk -; Full Atk -; Space/Reach: 5 ft./0 ft.; SA Shriek; SQ Low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref -, Will -4; Str -, Dex -, Con 13, Int -, Wis 2, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: none

Shriek (Ex): Movement or a light source within 10 feet of a shrieker causes the fungus to emit a piercing sound that lasts for 1d3 rounds. Any creature within 15 feet of the shrieker must make a DC 11 Fortitude save or become deafened for 2d6 rounds.

Aftermath: There are dozens of different types of mushrooms and molds growing on the shelves. Should characters attempt to eat any, there is a 90% chance any given mushroom is poisonous. A GM should make up an appropriately wicked effect or use the stats for striped toadstool, arsenic or id moss.

A DC 15 Spot or Search check reveals the location of the crone's ear morels. The crone's ear morels are growing on a shelf just above the shrieker in the northeast corner of the room.

Close inspection of the room uncovers several items of interest. A DC 10 Search of the eastern wall reveals a rotted wooden chest, overgrown with benign tan mushrooms. The chest is not locked or trapped, but it does fall messily apart as soon as anyone attempts to move it. Amidst the rotted slats of wood and mud is a fine silver and jade necklace (25 gp), three pieces of blue quartz (10 gp each) and an ornate crystal philtre with a silver stopper (5 gp) currently filled with an application of *oil of magic weapon*.

A DC 10 Search of the northern wall reveals a severed humanoid arm being used to grow some small button mushrooms on a low shelf. The arm still bears one *bracer of armor* +1. The second bracer is on the matching arm, sitting on a higher shelf along the same wall, covered by a soft velvety yellow moss. Finding the second arm requires a DC 12 Search check. The yellow moss is poisonous, however, and a character seeking to remove the bracer risks exposure to the moss.

Crone's ear morel (hag's head morel): DC 17 Survival or Knowledge (nature). Unless properly boiled and prepared, hag's head morels are poisonous when eaten (DC 14 Fortitude save, 1d3 Str/deafness). The deafness is not permanent. The character can attempt a new DC 14 Fortitude save every day, success means hearing is restored.

Moss-covered arm: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; constant function; contact poison (yellow moss residue, DC 12 Fortitude save resists, 1d2 Dex/1d4 Dex); single target; Knowledge (nature) or Survival DC 15 identifies; Disable Device N/A (burn moss). A DC 15 Sleight of Hand check will allow a character to remove the *bracer* without touching the moss.

Area 1-8 – Skunge Longtooth's Lair (EL 4): Once the party enters area 1-8, read the following aloud:

A crude cavern yawns before you. The rough walls and clumps of dirt give the appearance that it was hastily dug. The smell of freshly turned earth thankfully drowns out the stench of the fungal blooms from the previous room. The room stretches 40 feet at the widest points along its uneven contour. A tangled mass of fibrous roots spills from the walls to the east and southeast, and muddy clumps of dirt litter that portion of the floor – as if excavation is still in progress.

Bits of splintered wood, small bones, chips of colored glass and other debris are scattered about the room. A mass of woven wilted reeds and thin roots lies on the floor near the northern wall. Nearby are several crude earthen clay bowls and a glimpse of metal. It appears to be some sort of mattress, and a small figure lies curled beneath a layer of large leaves.

This is Skunge Longtooth's personal lair, and adopted new home. He busies himself working with the fungus in area 1-7, and uses this room for sleeping and eating.

If the group triggered the shrieker in area 1-7, Skunge is aware of their presence and has moved to find cover in the small niche behind the roots on the eastern wall where he can observe the party unseen. In this case, a partially decayed goblin corpse lies in his mattress.

If the characters were able to move through area 1-7 without alerting Skunge, he lies sleeping in the mattress, and the goblin corpse is in the niche behind the tangle of roots instead. If Skunge is sleeping, roll Move Silently skill checks for the group, and make an opposed Listen check for Skunge (with a -5 circumstance modifier for being asleep). If Skunge fails to beat the lowest Move Silently check result, he will be considered helpless at the start of the encounter.

Once Skunge enters combat, he starts screaming angrily at the party in broken Common as he throws himself at the group. Read the following aloud:

Away! Away from here! This Skunge's home – mine, mine, mine! Back to sky with you all! You no get my blood bite! It all for me, I make it! You no get blood bite for scalebrothers – it my glory! It my creation!

Tactics: If Skunge heard the group and had time to prepare, he has cast *magic fang* on himself before battle begins. If not already lurking among the roots,

Skunge moves there as soon as possible. From the safety of the niche behind the roots, Skunge has partial concealment from ranged attacks, and can only be confronted by one person at a time in melee combat. He can also safely cast *entangle* without being affected by the roots himself.

Skunge relies on his druidic ability to spontaneously cast *summon nature's ally* spells in place of his normally prepared spells, opting first for a dire badger with *summon nature's ally II*, then a dire rat with *summon nature's ally I*. Skunge summons animals directly in the midst of the party, trying to separate them and harass casters. If cornered or forced into combat, Skunge will focus on the weakest-looking or worst-equipped character, trying to overcome him with his poisonous strike. Skunge fights to the death.

Aftermath: Once Skunge is defeated, the mystery and danger of the great hollowed tree are gone. The glint of metal near the mattress is a dented silver spoon (3 sp). A DC 12 Search of the reed mattress reveals a small hole in the ground below the mattress, covered with fresh dirt. Digging will quickly uncover a sturdy wooden chest. The chest is not locked or trapped, and contains 38 sp, 15 gp, a jewel encrusted dagger (50 gp), and four thick, opaque red potions. These are vials of blood bite poison that Skunge spent his life developing. There are notes scratched into bits of peeled bark which detail the process.

Searching the goblin corpse (either amid the tangled roots or in the mattress) reveals a bronze and silver ring (5 gp), and a masterwork light mace (small size).

Blood bite poison: Made from the extracts of several different mushrooms and molds, including the thinblood moss the characters recovered from area 1-5, blood bite can have a profound effect on its target, dramatically weakening him. Each vial of blood bite poison requires a variety of rare ingredients worth approximately 100 gp. Brewing the poison requires 1d4 days and a DC 18 Craft (poison making) skill check. Failure means the batch is ruined. Failing the check by more than 10 means the crafter has been exposed to the poison in the process and must save against its effect.

Blood bite poison: contact; Fort DC 15; initial 1d2 Con and fatigue; secondary 1d2 Con and 1d2 Str; 300 gp

Skunge Longtooth, tainted kobold Drd3: CR 4; Small humanoid [reptile, augmented]; HD 3d8+3; hp 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp -2; Atk Claw +5 melee (1d3

and poison); Full Atk 2 claws +5 melee (1d3 and poison); SA Poisonous strike (2/day; DC 11 Fort, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex), spells; SQ Darkvision, light sensitivity, nature sense, scent, trackless step, woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +4 (+8 vs poison, disease), Ref +3, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Craft (poison making) +4, Knowledge (nature) +3, Profession (herbalist) +6, Survival +6; Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claws)

Possessions: Masterwork leather armor, two *potions of cure light wounds*, dagger

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

Woodland Stride (Ex): Skunge may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at his normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion still affect him.

Trackless Step (Ex): Skunge leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. He may choose to leave a trail if so desired.

Divine Spells (4/3/2; save DC = 12 + Spell level): 0-level – *cure minor wounds*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *resistance*; 1st-level – *entangle*, *faerie fire*, *magic fang*; 2nd-level – *spider climb*, *summon swarm*.

Dire Rat: CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 6, 8; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp –4; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease); SA disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3;

Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse

Disease (Ex): Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

Dire Badger: CR 2; Medium Animal; HD 3d8+15; hp 29; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk Claw +4 melee (1d4+2); Full Atk 2 claws +4 melee (1d4+2) and bite –1 melee (1d6+1); SA Rage; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness, Track

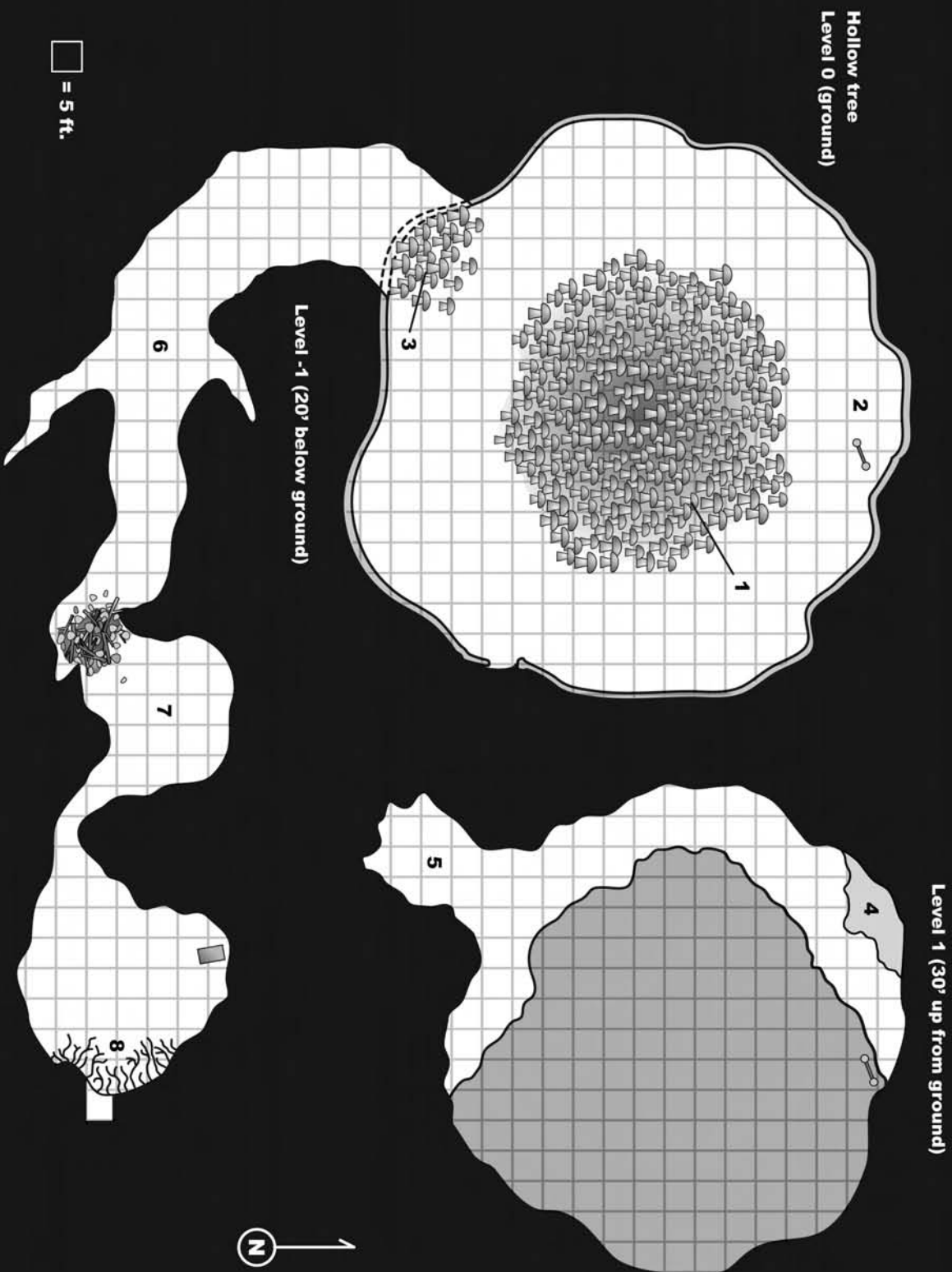
Rage (Ex): A dire badger that takes damage in combat flies into a berserk rage on its next turn, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, and –2 AC. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily.

Wrapping Up

Once the characters have completed their adventure in the massive hollowed tree and return to their herbalist patron, he rewards them with 25 gp for each specimen recovered, or 100 gp if they managed to recover all three types of specimens. If the group threatens him or points out that he failed to mention the specimens were dangerous, he increases the reward to 150 gp.

After 1d3 days, the herbalist provides them the last installment of their payment. Each character receives one *potion of cure light wounds*, one *potion of endure elements* and one *potion of bear's endurance*.

A Question of Morels



Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Black Larder

By Adrian Pommier
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Black Larder is designed for four to five characters of 3rd level who have 1st level abilities; the adventure assumes they have been given two negative levels by their captor, a powerful undead creature. While the characters can be of any basic character class, a cleric's ability to turn undead will be of particular use. Any character with a musical Perform skill will be able to solve an important riddle. Due to the concentration of stone secret doors and poor lighting, elven and dwarven PCs would be an asset to those trapped in the Black Larder.

Adventure Summary

The 3rd level PCs (who do not know each other) have separately been captured by members of the villainous Llandeyr family and brought to the Black Larder of the gaunt Marris Llandeyr. There, each has been systematically energy drained, kept at the barest minimum to remain alive (1st level in game terms). But now a mysterious tremor has damaged the wall to which the PCs were shackled, and they are free. To escape the Black Larder, the PCs must work together to survive the crumbling crypt, the living and undead servitors of the gaunt, and a

band of greedy tomb robbers. Clever players will be able to recover all their gear and find clues exposing the dark deeds and darker intentions of the Llandeyr family.

It is worth noting that all combats in this adventure (except the first) can be very dangerous if the PCs fail to recover their gear. Recovering their armor, weapons, and tools should be their first priority.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	182	C	<i>Hared Daen</i> , Rog1	1
		T	Organ trap	1
1-2	184	T	Falling rubble	1
1-5	185	C	<i>Nunsod Llandeyr</i> , Brd1	1
1-8	186	T	Nunsod the shadow	3
2-2	188	C	<i>Venaku</i> , Exp2, and <i>Hargnaw</i> and <i>Tud</i> , War1	3

Scaling Information

The Black Larder is a short adventure designed for 4-5 characters of 3rd level who have been level drained to 1st level. You can adapt the scenario for stronger parties with a few simple modifications. In area 1-1, Hared can swap out his Great Fortitude feat for Improved Unarmed Strike, making him more combat-effective. The collapsing ceiling in area 1-2 can be altered to catch more than one PC if it's triggered. Nunsod can be given more bard levels to increase the EL of area 1-5, and Hargnaw and Tud can be given more warrior levels to increase the EL of area 2-2. For parties of higher levels, allow them to encounter Marris in the crypt. Perhaps she retreated to area 1-8 after being turned, and is found there along with the shadow.

Getting the Players Involved

Some players may balk at the idea of having their new 3rd level characters start off a campaign with two negative levels and stripped of all possessions, familiars, and companions. Although that is a grim circumstance, it is not hopeless. Negative levels have no effect on feats and class features, and a single-class spellcaster would have access to more spells than at 1st level.

For purposes of this adventure, it is assumed that the PCs have consistently made their Fortitude checks every 24 hours with the help of the amulets of restored glory and recovered their lost levels (only to lose them again to the gaunt). Similarly, PCs are assumed to have their full complement of spells at the ready. Those that memorize spells haven't been able to re-memorize while in captivity, but they also have not been able to cast spells, so it is assumed they have the same spells they had when they were initially captured.

Since this is supposed to be a campaign-starting adventure, *The Black Larder* assumes that the PCs were traveling separately at the time of their abduction. This fact can be altered to fit the desired campaign.

Negative Levels Reviewed

The gaunt is a new undead creature, described on page 248, which can grant negative levels. Marris the gaunt has kept the PCs alive in her larder for some days, feeding off them through energy drain. Remember that the PCs, although made at 3rd level, have two negative levels. This means they suffer -2 to attack rolls, saves, skill and ability checks, and have -10 hit points. They are also at -2 effective level for any calculation that refers to character or class level; this could lead to someone casting spells or turning undead at 0 effective level. Spellcasters must lose two of their highest-level spell slots. These negative levels are recovered (or permanently lost!) through a Fortitude save made once every 24 hours for each level drained.

Making Higher-Level Characters

This adventure asks for 3rd level characters. Probably the best way to make a higher-level character is to "grow" one from 1st level, advancing one level at a time. Remember that 3rd level characters have on average 2,700 gp to outfit themselves and have earned a feat through advancement.

The Sky is Falling

Through continuous references to collapsing ceilings, the PCs are encouraged to move through the Black Larder quickly. Some groups may decide to ignore these hints. If a PC seems to be abusing the "take 20" rule, the GM should feel free to have a small section of ceiling fall on a randomly-determined character for 1d3 damage. Similarly, if the PCs try to rest, give them more hints about the cracking ceiling, and then have some rubble fall on them as above. In any case, they will not receive any two consecutive hours of rest as long as they are in the basement of the Black Larder. Should a dwarven character, or one skilled with Knowledge (architecture and engineering), inquire about the state of the mausoleum's decay, an acceptable answer would be, "You are not sure because you can't see all the damage, but it seems you have an hour, maybe two at most, before it collapses completely."

Background Story

Long ago, the acclaimed bard Bendel Llandeyr retired from the road to enjoy his wealth and raise a family. His descendants prospered for generations, producing many famous holy men and bards. Like all great families, however, the Llandeyrs fell into decline. This culminated with the infamous Marris Llandeyr, the so-called "Dragonfly," who would enchant and seduce her way into the good graces of rich men only to murder them and seize their wealth. When her crimes were discovered, the other members of the Llandeyr family, fearing a scandal, sealed Marris up prematurely in her crypt. The fortunes of the Llandeyr family crumbled shortly after, and they are now a footnote in history.

Marris languished and died in her early grave, but her avaricious and hateful spirit lingered as a gaunt. The gaunt of Marris haunted her family at first, but later convinced them that by serving her they can regain their prestige. To that end the surviving Llandeyr search the countryside, snatching victims and taking them to special locations, called Black Larders, where Marris can feed on their essence. This is the fate of the PCs at the start of the adventure. In return, Marris hunts the rivals and enemies of the family and gives them all the material goods of her victims. Fueled by blood money, the fortunes of the Llandeyr are starting to turn.

Unforeseen by Marris, however, is the arrival of a party of grave robbers. The Merry Bastards have come to plunder the Llandeyr family mausoleum where Marris has made her lair. In their greed, the robbers brought down a stone column in order to claim the gems set into it. This crash damaged the structure of the lower levels and accidentally freed the PCs. Marris went to combat them but is quickly turned by their cleric, and flees the Larder, chased by the Merry Bastards. Their three henchmen were left behind to continue looting.

Player Beginning

Read or paraphrase the following:

By different roads you have all come to the same fate. Each of you, traveling alone between the coastal hamlet of Carnelloe and the brilliant city of Summerhold, had stopped in a roadhouse inn called The Bard's Rest. At night, each of you lay down and awoke to find yourself blindfolded and gagged, chained by your wrists to a

cold stone wall. You had been stripped of all your belongings, but a strange amulet had been placed around your neck. You could hear the muffled complaints and clinking chains of other prisoners, and you each were visited by a fearful presence that would draw near and grasp at your very soul, wrenching pieces of it away with a slobbering cry of joy. How long you have languished in your cell, visited only by the gluttonous being that uses your spirit for food, you cannot say.

This monotony of horror was recently ended, however. The chilling spirit had come to feed again, but as it slavered over you, there was a tremendous crash that almost shook loose your teeth. In an otherworldly, feminine voice you heard it speak for the first time, "What has strayed into my larder, I wonder?" Suddenly, it was gone, and the cell shuddered as the wall behind you buckled and split. With a metallic clatter, the chains have fallen to the floor. You are still blindfolded, manacled, and gagged, but free to move.

The Black Larder, Basement

This subterranean floor of the mausoleum is where the ashes of cremated Llandeyr family members were interred into columbaria. Three particularly famous members of the family have crypts, those being Bendel (the founder), Brother Aelris, and Marris. This floor also features the massive organ that was used during services in the upstairs chapel.

Although Marris adopted this place as her primary Black Larder several years ago, no further work has been done, and the family has maintained it.

The DC to use the Track feat to determine high-traffic areas (and possibly an exit) is 20. The main hallway (area 1-2) sees a lot of use in both directions, the southern columbaria (area 1-4) sees infrequent use, and the northern columbaria (area 1-3) is almost never used.

Because of structural damage caused by the grave robbers, in some places the ceiling has collapsed or is in danger of collapsing.

The organ room (area 1-1) has a lit oil lantern, the main hallway (area 1-2) has four lit torches set into the wall, and Nunsod has a lit oil lantern in the reliquary of ashes (area 1-5). This floor is otherwise devoid of illumination.

Unless otherwise noted, ceilings are ten feet tall. The three doors in the main hallway open into the main hallway, and they have the following statistics:

Good Wooden Door: 1.5 inches thick; hardness 5; hp 15; break DC 18.

All crypt doors and secret doors open away from the hallway, and they have the following statistics:

Stone Door: 3 inches thick; hardness 8; hp 45; break DC 28.

The barred areas in the northern and southern columbaria slide to the left, and they have the following statistics:

Iron Bars: 1 inch thick; hardness 10; hp 30; break DC 25; Open Lock DC 30; Escape Artist DC 30 to pass through, bars are 4 inches apart.

All walls on this floor have the following statistics:

Masonry wall: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; break DC 35.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – The Organ Room (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

When you have removed your blindfold, you see that you are in a dimly-lit, 20-foot square room. A small chapel organ squats along the northern wall, taking up the central area. Immense pipes run from it into the ceiling. Opposite the organ, a small wooden table stands near a door. You can see a key ring on the table shining in the dim glow of an oil lamp. You, along with the others, were chained to a side wall, but the crash you heard weakened the wall such that the bolts holding your manacles have given way, freeing you. That wall is severely weakened, and motes of dust fall from the ceiling, indicating further damage to the structure you cannot see.

From outside the room, you hear running foot-

steps, then the slam of a door.

All of you are barefoot, wearing only basic clothing and the strange amulet.

The footsteps are Nunsod Llandeyr running to area 1-5. The key ring holds the key that unlocks all the manacles. The amulets are *amulets of restored glory* (see sidebar), used by the Llandeyr to keep the “food” alive, and each one has 1d3+1 charges left.

Hared Daern, a sneak-thief taken from the city of Carnelloe by the Llandeyr, is the extra person in the room. He is a human, 5’10, slim build, with dark tousled hair and yellowed teeth. If spoken to, he just looks around warily. Hared instantly attacks anyone who approaches him or who makes a move for the key ring.

The PCs and Hared are bound at their wrists, but have enough chain to use their hands normally. There is too much play in the chains for them to be used to garrote someone, but there is enough to make a kind of crude flail for the ensuing fight. The chains (or a broken table leg) do 1d6 damage, but these are improvised weapons and those using them suffer –4 to attack rolls.

The PCs begin against the eastern wall, one PC to each 5 foot square section. Hared is along the southern wall, close to the door.

Tactics: Hared attempts to capture the PCs and leave them in the Larder, hoping that will distract the gaunt so he may escape. He maneuvers himself around to minimize the PCs’ ability to flank him. He will not think to use the chains as a weapon until someone else does.

If Hared is captured, he turns on the PCs at every opportunity, stealing their weapons or riches with Sleight of Hand and trying to escape. Note that Hared can escape the manacles if he takes 20 (he was unable to escape earlier because his hands were above his head). Hared knows nothing about the Black Larder, but he will lie to barter for his life, saying that they are in an evil temple, that his

friends will come to rescue him, and that his wealthy family will reward the PCs for saving him.

If Hared escapes the PCs, he will unblock the door in area 2-1 but will get murdered by the henchmen in area 2-2. He does not set off the “trap” in area 1-2.

Hared speaks Common.

Chains: hardness 10; hp 5; break DC 26.

Manacles: hardness 10; hp 10; break DC 26; Escape Artist DC 30; Open Lock DC 20.

Hared Daern, Human Rog3 (2 negative levels): CR 1; HD 3d6-7 (7 hp); Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk punch +2 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal); SA sneak attack +2d6 (can’t use while unarmed); SQ evasion; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -2; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Escape Artist +10, Forgery +4, Hide +7, Open Lock +7, Sleight of Hand +10, Tumble +7, Use Rope +7, Use Magic Device +4; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Escape Artist), Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand)

The Organ: Read or paraphrase to anyone examining the organ, and give the players handout A:

This instrument once bellowed mightily, and looks as if it may do so again despite its obvious age. This particular organ has an extra set of keys, set near the top, seven in number. They are labeled “Do, Re, Me, Fa, So, La, Ti” and seem to be made of gold. Etched into the wood above the keys in gold leaf is the phrase, “Honor my family and my music.” Just beside the keys is a little notch, like a tube carved into the organ.

The correct sequence of golden keys is Do-Re-Do-Re-Fa-La-So-La – the first notes of Bendel Llandeyr’s favorite song (see area 1-9), corresponding to the names of his children (see area 1-2). The golden keys make no sound when pressed, and if the sequence of eight keys is pressed correctly, a small metal key falls into the notch. This

Amulet of Restored Glory

These items are often made by religious orders that aggressively hunt the living dead. Made of carved bone and engraved with words of scripture, an *amulet of restored glory* gives a +2 sacred bonus when making Fortitude saves to recover levels lost to energy drain. Furthermore, if that save is failed, the victim does not lose the level permanently but rather keeps the negative level. Each time one of those Fortitude saves is attempted, a charge is expended. A newly created amulet has 10 charges. When exhausted, the amulet becomes a non-magical item.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *restoration*; Price 5,310 gp.

key unlocks the metal bars in areas 1-3 and 1-4. If they are pressed in the incorrect sequence, the organ trap triggers. This, along with pressing any of the normal organ keys, alerts the three henchmen in area 2-2 that they are not alone. The PCs could try to smash through the organ, which would damage the main keys and trigger the organ trap.

Organ Trap (CR 1): Search DC 12; Disable DC 10; 1 point sonic damage to all in room; disabling the trap means the golden keys will not function at all until it is “un-disabled.”

Grand Organ: hardness 5, hp 120, break DC 25.

Area 1-2 – Main Hallway (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This seems to be a main hallway, 30 feet long but only 5 feet wide. Four torches set into the far wall brightly illuminate the place, and you can see there are three doors (counting the one you just exited) and four archways. Intricate carvings that depict a family tree cover the far wall, with birth and death dates, beginning on the left with a man named Bendel Llandeyr, his wife Aila, and their eight children. As you look at the genealogy, you are startled by that unearthly voice echoing from above, screaming in rage. With the dry groan of stone grinding on stone, the roof cracks slightly, sending dust and light debris down into the corridor.

Give the players handout B. The scream is Marris being turned by the Merry Bastards. Anyone with bardic lore or Knowledge (history) may make a DC 13 check for the Llandeyr name. Success earns the first paragraph of the background story. Anyone with Knowledge (local) can make a DC 13 check to know that a very minor noble family by the name of Llandeyr has started ruthlessly taking over smaller merchants in Summerhold. It is said their enemies often meet strange ends.

The eight children of Bendel Llandeyr are, in birth order: Dorean, Relsa, Donner, Realta, Farsis, Larenz, Sorsha, and Ladman. Those names are a clue to the organ trap in area 1-1. The names and dates of Aelris, Marris, Coris, and Nunsod also appear here. Aelris died fifty years before Marris was born, and Marris died sixty-seven years before Coris was born.

If the PCs open the door that leads to area 1-6, part of the ceiling collapses on them. This is not an actual trap, but is nonetheless a hazard. Dwarves are automatically entitled to make checks to detect this hazard since it involves stonework. A successful check notices that the cracked stonework is very

fragile and opening the door will put pressure on the wall, causing a slight cave in. This “trap” can be avoided by opening the door remotely (such as with *mage hand*) or by shoring up the roof.

Falling Rubble (CR 1): mechanical; touch trigger (opening the door); no reset; Atk +5 melee (1d6 damage); Spot or Knowledge (architecture and engineering) DC 12.

Area 1-3 – Northern Columbaria: Read or paraphrase the following:

This is a corridor that extends straight as far as flickering torchlight allows you to see. The walls are covered from floor to ceiling with small plaques, all of which give a name and dates of birth and death. You are in a columbaria, and behind those copper faceplates are the ashes of generations of the Llandeyr family.

The Search DC for the secret door is 15 due to the damaged walls. Just around the corners are sets of bars that prevent access to the middle area. A door is set into the bars, much like a modern jail cell, but it is locked. In this hallway, however, the eastern bars have been crushed by falling ceiling rubble, and lie open. PCs can enter the central area by climbing over the rubble, which would take them close to the secret door that leads to the crypt of Bendel Llandeyr.

Area 1-4 – Southern Columbaria: Read or paraphrase the following:

This corridor extends beyond the limit of torchlight. The walls are covered from floor to ceiling with copper plaques, all of which give a name and dates of birth and death. Small chambers behind those faceplates contain the cremated remains of the Llandeyr family.

The Search DC for the secret doors is reduced to 15 due to the damaged state of the walls. Just around the corners are sets of bars that prevent access to the middle area. A door is set into each set of bars, much like a modern jail cell, but it is locked. Piled in the middle of the barred-off passage are all the belongings of the PCs, taken from them by their abductor, Nunsod. All the gear is here except for any coins and gems; those have been taken by the family. In addition to what the PCs had taken, Hared's gear is here as well: studded leather armor, 10 darts, two daggers, a backpack filled with 50 feet of hemp rope and a grappling hook, and a potion of *cure light wounds*. Any familiars are also found here, kept in a cage of the appropriate type. Familiars are unable to escape on their own.

Area 1-5 – Reliquary of Ashes (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

A large desk blocks the entrance to this 20 foot by 25 foot room. An oil lamp hangs on the far wall, casting soft light about, and a metal pipe descends from the ceiling in the middle of the room. It is about a foot wide at the top and tapers to three inches wide at its end, some four feet off the floor. This room is very dusty and smells of soot, and the floor is covered in caltrops. The southwest corner contains a clutter of papers and other desktop items. In the far corner stands a handsome man with a buckler, tied-back long red hair, a broad flat nose, and a tattoo of a dragonfly on his cheek. This man you all recognize from The Bard's Rest. He was the performer the night you were taken. "Well, well," he says. "I was expecting grave robbers, not the food!"

Nunsod scattered the caltrops to fortify his position; each square marked "C" on the map contains caltrops. Moving the desk five feet requires a standard action and a DC 12 Strength check.

Anyone can make a DC 10 Search check to find several small ceramic bottles, one for each PC and one for Hared, that look like funerary urns. Each bottle is inscribed with the date corresponding to the date a PC or Hared was abducted, and they fit the tapered end of the metal tube. Nunsod has a letter from his uncle, Coris, which is players hand-out C, and an ornate golden key fashioned to look like a dragonfly that unlocks Marris' crypt (area 1-8). Note that if the PCs have not yet recovered their equipment from area 1-4, they are barefoot and particularly vulnerable to the caltrops.

This room was where the ashes of cremated Llandeyr would be swept down the tube from area 2-3. Anyone standing at the tube (not during a fight) can make a DC 13 Listen check to hear voices echoing from above (the henchmen in area 2-2).

Tactics: Nunsod is terrified of his great-great-grandmother Marris and fights to the death, afraid that he will be forced to return as a shadow (see area 1-8). He is aware of the grave robbers in area 2-2 and hopes to hold them off with caltrops, his whip's reach and trip ability, and spells. He knows that he can't use the whip against foes in armor. If he successfully subdues any PCs, he kills them. If the PCs flee, he gives chase up to the staircase, but not beyond. He then returns to the reliquary to wait until the looters leave.

If Nunsod is captured, he is uncooperative and tries to use *fascinate* to escape. He does not know how

to solve the riddle of the organ. If he escapes, he will elude the henchmen in area 2-2 (perhaps returning another day!). He always refers to the PCs as "food" but won't describe Marris beyond referring to "her."

Nunsod speaks Common and Draconic.

Nunsod Llandeyr, Human Brd1: CR 1; HD 1d6-1; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk whip +3 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal) or dagger +3 melee (1d4); SA fascinate, spells, trip; AL CE; SV Fort -1, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Concentration +3, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal +3, Hide +6, Knowledge (history) +5, Perform (oratory) +6, Sense Motive +5; Combat Reflexes, Weapon Finesse.

Spells Known (cast 2/day): *daze, know direction, mage hand, read magic*; DC 12; 5% spell failure.

Possessions: chain shirt, buckler, *whip* +1, masterwork dagger, *2 potions of cure light wounds*, letter from Coris (handout C), ornate key to Marris' crypt (area 1-8), 67 sp.

Caltrops: spike +0 melee (1 hp damage; half movement); the caltrops "attack" as a creature enters the square in which they are scattered; shield, deflection, and armor bonuses do not count; wearing boots adds +2 to AC; movement penalty lasts 24 hours, until a DC 15 Heal check, or until 1 point of magical healing is administered; charging or running creatures must immediately stop if they step on a caltrop; anyone moving at half-speed or slower may pick their way through without trouble.

Area 1-6 – Lower Stairs: Read or paraphrase the following:

A set of spiral metal stairs leads upward to a landing. The walls of this room are adorned with murals depicting the Llandeyr family. The west wall is severely cracked, however, and you watch as a bit of mural plaster collapses and falls at your feet. The painted, empty eyes of a red-haired man, some forgotten Llandeyr, stare up at you from the floor, his dead smile frozen in place.

Area 1-7 – Brother Aelris' Crypt: After the PCs open the secret door, read or paraphrase the following:

The fine engraved scrollwork at the top of this stone door proclaims it to lead to the tomb of "Brother Aelris Llandeyr." Worked into the door is a relief of a scene of a holy warrior holding aloft the symbol of his god. Rays of light shoot

from the symbol, and at the man's feet are beastly humanoid forms and animated skeletons. A banner carved into the bottom reads, "He brought death to the deathless."

The wax seal around this door looks to have been cracked some time ago, but the door is closed.

The description of the interior is as follows:

The sound of pious voices softly chanting breaks the silence common to the rest of this place. The noise compliments the small cathedral that is the inner chamber. An ornate stone sarcophagus bears the image of the man depicted on the outer door and is circled in carved words of holy scripture. Once-fine but moldy velvet curtains hang from a center point of the ceiling and flare out, giving the impression of the sarcophagus resting in a pavilion. Tile work on the floor depicts scenes from the life of Brother Aelris, usually him battling undead creatures. At the foot of the pall is a waist-high marble cistern filled with a viscous white fluid. Dangling by a golden chain anchored in the center of the ceiling is what could be a holy symbol: a flame firing out arrow-tipped rays. The flame is made of rubies and the rays of gold.

A DC 12 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that Brother Aelris followed the teachings of Lares of the Radiant Fire (see sidebar).

Anyone curious about the cistern is allowed a DC 10 Spot check to notice that it appears in some of the floor's tile work. In the scenes, Brother Aelris is forced to flee ghostlike images, then he anoints his mace with the cistern's oil and returns to slay them. The slime of the cistern acts as *oil of magic weapon* and additionally bestows the *ghost touch* ability. This effect lasts for 10 minutes. Oil taken from the cistern is rendered mundane, and if the cistern, which weighs 950 lbs, is somehow moved from Brother Aelris' crypt it becomes mundane. The holy symbol is worth 1,200 gp, and is a holy symbol of Lares.

When Marris first manifested as a gaunt and began

to torment some of the Llandeyr family, a few remembered Brother Aelris and broke into this crypt to dip their weapons. They were ultimately unsuccessful.

Area 1-8 – Marris' Crypt (EL 3): After the PCs open the secret door, read or paraphrase the following:

A stone door stands before you. It appears that you have uncovered the crypt of a famous Llandeyr family member. The carved name that arcs across the top reads "Marris Llandeyr," although you can see that some half-hearted efforts were made to mar the name long ago. Depicted on the stone door is a beautiful woman, lounging on a divan, surrounded by lush fruits and piles of gold. A sardonic, cruel smile is captured on her lips as she tilts her head back as if to laugh or sing. A dragonfly alights on her outstretched fingers, and the carved banner beneath the scene reads, "She keeps what is hers."

The wax seal to this crypt is broken, and you see that this door has a keyhole. It does not seem to be part of the original work.

Nunsod's key (from area 1-5) or a successful DC 30 Open Lock check is required to enter the crypt.

The description of the interior is as follows:

This 15-foot square inner chamber lacks the customary sarcophagus common to crypts. Lying in the center of the room where the pall would be is a shriveled and desiccated body. The shreds of once-fine evening wear still cling to what probably was once a female human. You can see that the fingers are broken at strange angles and that all the teeth are gone.

A few hundred small ceramic jars clutter the back wall of this room. Each one has some writing on it.

The jars, identical to the ones in area 1-5, contain the ashes of the victims of the Llandeyr family, each one written with the date of abduction on it. The dates range from 103 years ago to six weeks ago. These are left here in tribute to Marris. Scattered among the jars are Marris' teeth. When she was

Lares of the Radiant Fire

Lares is a neutral good deity who teaches that the undead must be combated regardless of the cost. The followers of Lares, the Acolytes of Radiant Fire, are considered by some to be callous fanatics and by others to be true champions of the living. Lares' domains are Good, Fire, and Repose. The symbol of Lares is a flame shooting golden rays in the four cardinal directions; each golden ray tapers to an arrowhead point. Her favored weapon is a mace.

interred her family tore out her teeth and broke her fingers so she couldn't cast any spells to escape.

If Nunsod from area 1-5 is dead, his shadow guards Marris' crypt, and will leap from within the floor to attack any intruders. Nunsod arrives the round after the inner door is opened. Read or paraphrase the following:

The temperature in the room seems to drop slightly as a creature seemingly made of wisps of darkness emerges, floating, out of the stone floor. With a start, you realize the disembodied spirit resembles the dragonfly-tattooed man just recently slain! With a look of hatred that transcends death, he leaps at you!

It may be useful to review the rules on encumbrance during this battle because over laden PCs with Strength drain may find themselves suddenly carrying heavy loads – or unable to move at all!

Tactics: Nunsod has failed Marris and the family, and so has returned to defend the gaunt's crypt. He will target clerics first, and always tries to attack the same enemy if possible. Although Nunsod will not leave the crypt, any new shadows he creates will be ordered to hunt down the PCs.

Nunsod the Shadow: CR 3; HD 3d12; hp 21; Init +2; Spd fly 40 ft. (good); AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk incorporeal touch +3 melee (1d6 Str); SA create spawn, strength damage; SQ darkvision 60', incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge. *Gains a +4 racial bonus to Hide in areas of shadowy illumination, suffers –4 in brightly lit areas.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to

Strength 0 by Nunsod becomes a shadow under his control within 1d4 rounds.

Area 1-9 – Bendel's Crypt: After the PCs open the secret door, read or paraphrase the following:

The secret door leads to a short hall ending in another door, this one apparently leading to a crypt. Ancient wax seals remain intact around the engraved stone. This door looks to be older than anything else you've seen in this place. A carved banner at the top proclaims the name, "Bendel Llandeyr," and one at the bottom reads, "He loved his children as much as his music and both more than gold." Between the two, a handsome, elegant man winks at you from the stone face of the door. He stands among several musical instruments, including a harp, a large organ, and a lute.

The description of the interior is as follows:

This 15-foot square room does not seem to have been disturbed since it was sealed. In the center of the room rests a plain pall, draped in a dusty velvet cloth. Several musical instruments, most of them crumbled and warped by time and disuse, rest on shelves built into the walls.

A bit of music wafts through this room, repeating itself – clearly a magical effect of some kind.

One of the instruments, a flute, is masterwork and still in good working order. If the PCs are intent on opening the pall, treat the lid as a stone door (stats given above). Bendel's body is wrapped in funereal white cloth and has no precious items. The music is Bendel's favorite tune, made to play forever due to a *ghost sound* and *permanency*. Anyone with a musical Perform skill would be able to replicate this tune, the first eight notes of which are the correct sequence for the organ in area 1-1.

The Black Larder, Ground Floor

This floor contains the funeral chapel of the Llandeyr family and a crematorium. The three henchmen grave robbers, Venaku, Hargnaw, and Tud, presently inhabit this level.

The only light in this floor is the small bonfire burning on the altar in the chapel (area 2-2). This floor is otherwise dark.

Unless otherwise noted, all doors and walls on this level have the following statistics:

Iron Door: 2" thick; hardness 10; hp 60; break DC 28.

Stone Walls: 5' thick; hardness 8, hp 900; break DC 28.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Upper Stairs (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is larger than the one beneath it. Moth-eaten ceremonial robes still hang on pegs on the north wall, and a small shelf beneath it contains tarnished ceremonial gear of a religious nature. There is a single door on the west wall of the room.

The door is slightly blocked by rubble and requires a DC 15 Strength check to open. Anyone may make

a DC 10 Listen check to hear at least two rough voices arguing about “loot” and “shares” in the next room. A DC 14 Listen check also reveals the repetitious sound of metal against stone, like someone tapping a dagger or a chisel. The door can be slightly opened to peek out, revealing the southern 10 feet of area 2-2, including the lights of the fire and a few shadows moving on the wall.

Area 2-2 – Chapel (EL 3): Read the following:

This wide-open area takes up most of the ground floor of this building. Once it was a beautiful chapel, but the wanton destruction recently wrought here has marred it irreparably. Two slender columns used to support the ceiling, but the eastern one has been torn down, causing great damage to the walls, ceiling, and floor. You realize it was this act that freed you. With the column's interior exposed, you can see that the pipes from the organ below cleverly run through the pillars. Such craftsmanship bespeaks the wealth of the builders.

You cannot see the northern end of this room in the dim light, but just ahead of you along the southern end is a small bonfire blazing on a raised altar of white marble. The bonfire seems to be made of shattered pews. Piled haphazardly on the dais with the altar is a small pile of gems and precious stones. They look like they were pried from the collapsed pillar.

Venaku, Hargnaw, and Tud, three henchmen working for the grave robbers, are in this room. See the tactics section below to determine where they begin this encounter. Venaku carries on him an old map made by the Stoneshaper Masons that gives the layout of the mausoleum, including the secret doors (players handout E). He also carries a note from his employer and leader of the Merry Bastards, Hengis (players handout D). A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check reveals that they are a group of dastardly adventurers and tomb robbers, and that their “inside man” recently was arrested.

The fourteen gems and semiprecious stones on the dais are worth 250 gp. The fire casts light in a 20 foot radius. The northernmost part of this area is blocked by rubble and broken bits of pews. Clearing each 5-foot square requires a full-round action.

Tactics: If they have been alerted to the presence of the PCs (possibly by someone playing the organ or by Hared escaping), then Hargnaw and Tud will be lurking in the darkness near the door to area 2-1 while Venaku examines the haul near the altar. If the henchmen are unaware of the PCs, all three will be near the altar looking at the loot.

Venaku tries to Intimidate the PCs into surrendering. When it comes to combat, he snipes from afar. In desperation, he uses *ghost sound* to make it seem as if his employers have returned. Hargnaw and Tud are simple killing machines, but they follow Venaku's directives.

If the PCs flee, the henchmen do not pursue for fear of someone coming and taking their loot. They also know that there is only one way out of the mausoleum, which they have blocked with rubble and pews.

Venaku speaks Common, Gnome, and Orc. Hargnaw and Tud speak Common and Orc.

Venaku, Gnome Exp3: HD 3d6; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 20 ft; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk small light crossbow +4 ranged (1d6/19-20) or small dagger +3 melee (1d3/19-20); SA spell-like abilities; SQ low-light vision; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 7, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +7, Disable Device +9, Intimidate +9, Hide +11, Open Lock +6, Search +10, Use Rope +7; Skill Focus (Intimidate), Skill Focus (Search).

Possessions: padded armor, masterwork small light crossbow and bolts, small dagger, masterwork thieves tools, *elixir of vision*, mausoleum map (players handout E), note from Hengis (players handout D), 100 gp.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – *speak with animals* (burrowing mammals), *dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, *prestidigitation*; DC 10

Hargnaw and Tud, Half-Orc War1: HD 1d8+1; hp 9 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk battleaxe +3 melee (1d8+2/x3); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6; Power Attack.

Possessions: scale mail, small shield, battleaxe, 50 ft. hemp rope, crowbar (Hargnaw), block and tackle (Tud), 50 gp each.

Area 2-3 – Crematorium: Read or paraphrase the following:

The door to this room hangs wide open and clearly shows marks of having been forced. The interior reeks of soot, and the walls are blackened by it. A large metal box, like a coffin in shape, sits in the center of the floor, raised on a framework platform. Against one wall are a variety of long-handled sweeps, each one clotted with ash. A pile of fresh firewood stands against the far wall.

As you enter the room, you hear a loud crack as part of the wall in the chapel begins to give way.

This is the crematorium of the Llandeyr, and they still use it to dispose of Marris' victims. The coffin, if opened, reveals a tube that runs down into area 1-5. If Nunsod is still down there, a DC 13 Listen check reveals him talking to himself.

Escaping the Mausoleum

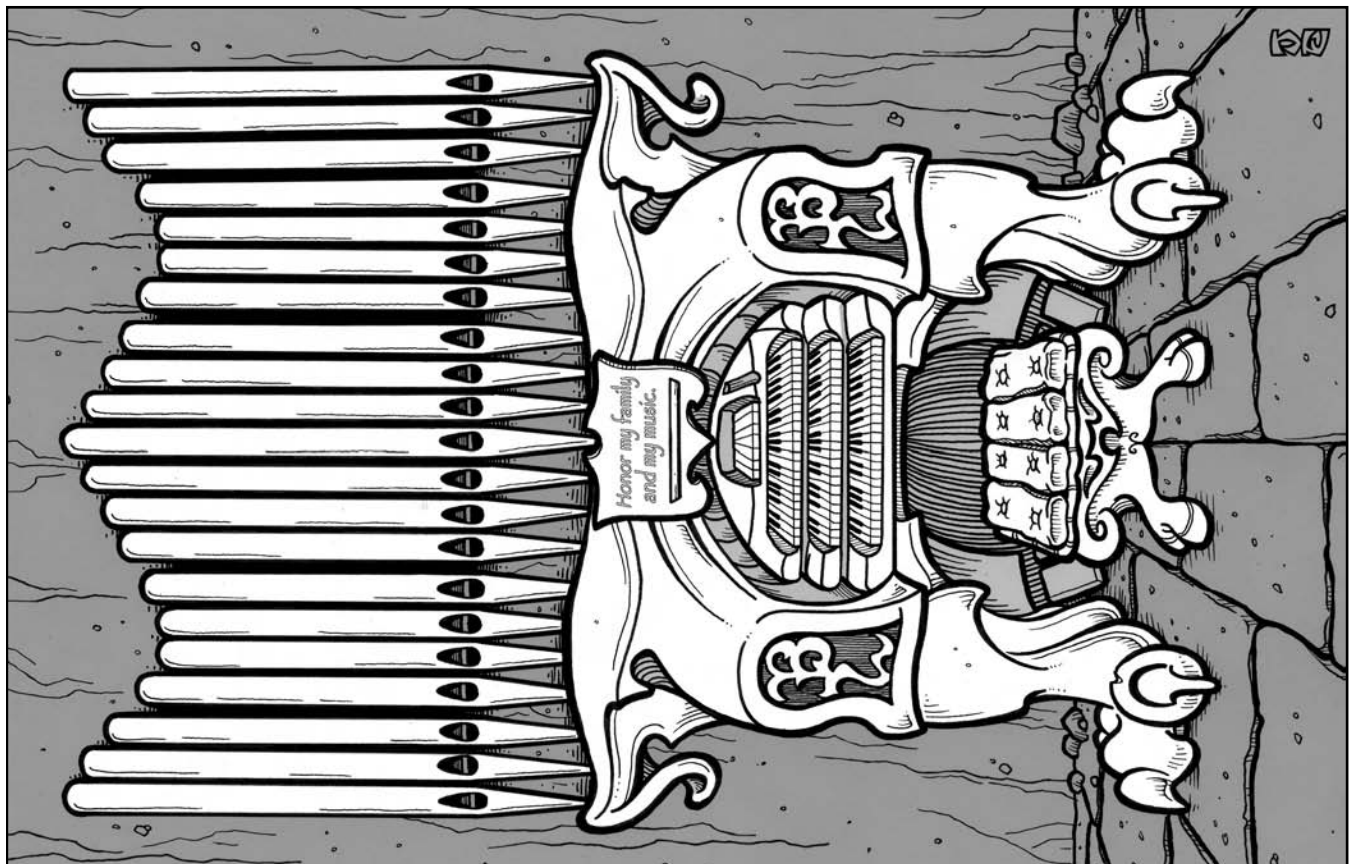
You exit into the fresh, cold night air, finding yourself in a large graveyard. In the distance you can see the watch fires of a city, but you're not sure at this distance which one. Suddenly, the night is rent by an ominous creaking, and then the whole eastern wall of the mausoleum at last gives way, falling inward and collapsing the weakened floor there. The roof follows suit and in short order the entire structure has crumbled, leaving behind a cloud of dust lit by the flicker of flames from deep inside.

The Black Larder is no more, but your adventures are about to begin.

Any animal companions belonging to the PCs will be located – unharmed – in a small building outside the Larder.

Further Adventures

- The Llandeyr family will not want the PCs spreading word of their activities, and will try to silence them.
- A reference to the second Black Larder is located on the body of Nunsod Llandeyr. The PCs may decide to track the gaunt there, or may try to free any "food" held there.
- The Merry Bastards will not appreciate someone having looted their prize and slain their henchmen, and may come looking for the PCs.
- The Bard's Rest is a front for the Llandeyr family and a major source of their victims. The PCs may think to return there for answers and vengeance.
- A splinter of the Llandeyr family that has not fallen into wickedness may approach the PCs and ask them to purge the second Black Larder in order to restore the family's name and to end the blight of Marris.
- The church of Lares could approach the PCs to ask for the return of Brother Aelris' holy symbol, or to ask them to destroy the gaunt.





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Nunsod you oaf, I have no idea how you managed to be appointed to this task, but listen well, boy. The mausoleum is getting full with the addition of that sneak-thief from Carnesse, and we have taken too many from the inn. Suspicions are growing. I suggest we consider reopening the warehouse. You know the price of failure... Llandeyr serve forever.

Uncle Coris

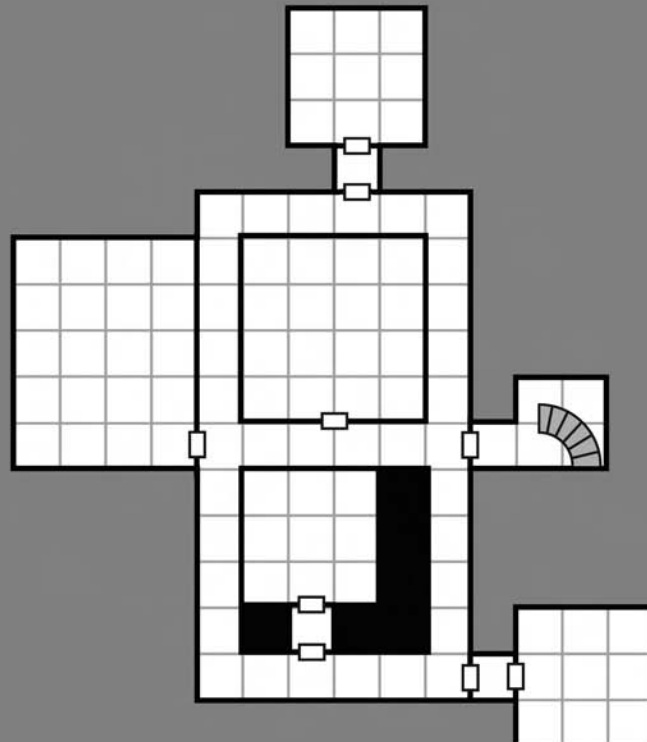
Venaku,

You and your lackeys are to be contracted for two jobs. The first is the Llandeyr mausoleum (map included) and the second will be determined at a later date, pending what we discover at the mausoleum. Your standard fees will be paid in full, of course. I expect that there will no trouble with...stew meat...this time, correct?

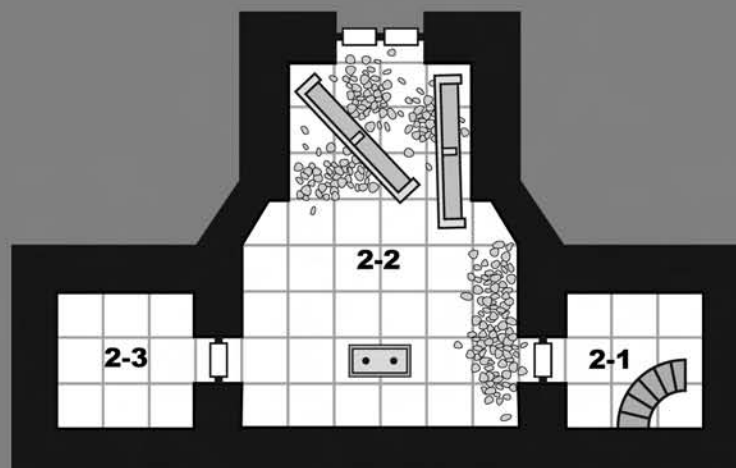
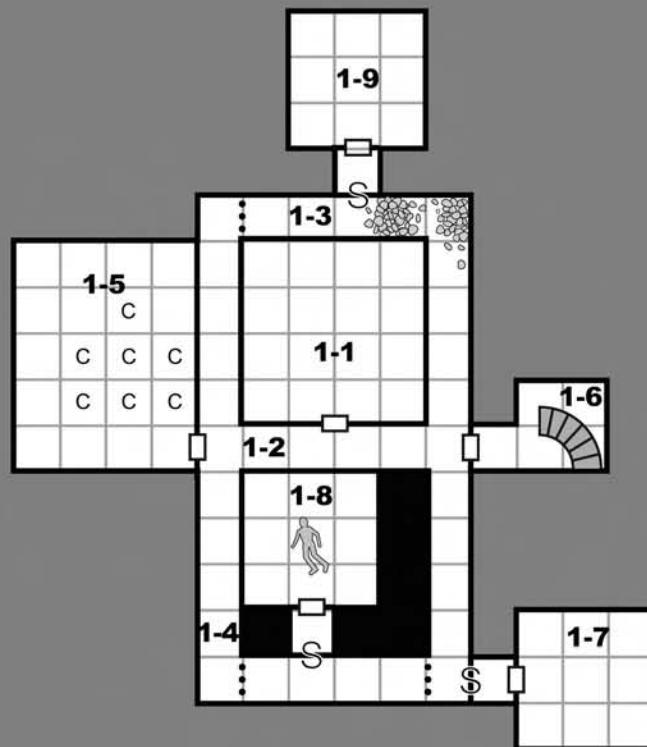
Hengis of the Merry Bastards

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The Black Larder



Dungeon Crawl Classics

Mage Maze

By George Strayton
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

Mage Maze is designed for four to six characters of 1st to 2nd level, with 5-8 total character levels between the party members. While the characters can be of any basic character class, a mix of character classes will certainly increase the odds of success. Clerics and rogues are especially valuable, but fighters and arcane spellcasters can provide significant support. See "Scaling Information" for suggestions on increasing the difficulty of the scenario for more experienced characters.

This adventure is designed for *experienced* players running *inexperienced* characters. While the combination of encounter areas falls within the range suggested by the DMG (thereby providing a balanced adventure with regard to game mechanics), those players lacking in gaming expertise (i.e., neophyte gamers) will find themselves hard pressed to successfully navigate their characters through the tower without injuries or, in the worst case, fatalities. Players with 1st-level characters would do well to rest in order to recover resources often, especially considering the absence of wandering monsters.

Adventure Summary

The characters have heard rumor of an ancient tower deep in the Great Swamp, a single-storey, stone structure once occupied by a strange, extra-planar necromancer. Supposedly, the tower now lies abandoned, but an unknown magic caused it to vanish from the prime material plane nigh on a hundred years ago. It reappears in its original position only on misty, moonless nights.

After a short journey through the Great Swamp, the characters enter the tower. They activate its bizarre magical security features and find themselves trapped in a circuit of six rooms, unable to find a door that leads back to the outside world.

The characters must face a variety of obstacles, including illusions, undead, and traps, but their greatest enemy is the tower itself. If they fail to find a means of egress, they will eventually starve or dehydrate. Clues throughout the tower areas provide the answer to this fatal puzzle. Once this riddle has been solved and the correct actions undertaken by the party, the characters confront a magic-wielding construct to gain their final escape, hopefully with the many magical and monetary treasures strewn throughout the tower.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	195	C	3 skeletons (harmless) Magical construct	1 3
1-3	196	C	Flayed horror	2
1-4	196	C	2 wolf skeletons	2
1-5	197	C	Illusory maw	1
1-6	197	T	<i>Heat metal</i> trap	3

Getting the Players Involved

The characters have heard tales of a fabled, abandoned tower in the Great Swamp (or a similar area of your campaign world) which supposedly holds a great hoard of treasure. They have learned that the tower appears only on misty, moonless nights.

Have each character make a Gather Information check and consult the following table:

DC	Number of Rumors Known
5	None
10	One
15	Two
20+	Three

For each rumor known by a character, roll 1d10 and consult the table below. Ignore duplicate results for the same character, but allow more than one character to know the same rumor (although, in the latter case, you may wish to vary the exact wording of the rumor for each character).

Roll	Rumor
1	No one has ever returned from Menoden's Tower. (True)
2	Menoden trapped a massive, dragon-like creature in the tower. Only its maw remains intact. (False)
3	Menoden dabbled in black magic. Some say he was a necromancer from another dimension who brought strange, otherplanar undead creatures to his tower. (True)
4	Any who enter the tower are cursed to die a slow, horrific death. (False)
5	Menoden created a simulacrum of himself that attacks any arcane spellcaster who initiates a spell in its presence. (False)

- 6 The necromancer was known to slay animals in the surrounding area and raise them as undead servants. (True)
- 7 Menoden plucked out and preserved the eyes of his victims, cursing them with black magic. Any who gaze into these eyes will be forever cursed. (Partially true)
- 8 Undead within the tower have the ability to cast evil divine spells. (False)
- 9 Menoden collected various sorts of treasures, with a particular fondness for those of extra-dimensional nature. (True)
- 10 Menoden suffered from paranoia and set traps throughout his tower to protect it from intruders. (True)

Scaling Information

Mage Maze is an adventure designed for 4-6 characters of 1st-2nd levels. You can adapt the scenario to higher level parties with a few simple modifications.

Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 2nd level): Increase the numbers of undead throughout the tower by 1-2 per location. Advance the wizard golem by 1-2 Hit Dice.

Starvation and Dehydration

Note well the starvation and dehydration rules, which may come into play if the characters have no means of creating food and water. Medium characters need at least a gallon of fluids and about a pound of food per day to avoid starvation. (Small characters need half as much.) A character can go without water for one day plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score. After this time, the character must make a Constitution check each hour (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

A character can go without food for three days, in growing discomfort. After this time, the character must make a Constitution check each day (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

Characters who have taken nonlethal damage from lack of food or water are fatigued. Nonlethal damage from thirst or starvation cannot be recovered until the character gets food or water, as needed — not even magic that restores hit points heals this damage.

Background Story

The necromancer Menoden, a worshipper of the Great Serpent, a deity known to but a few, constructed a squat tower in the midst of a dismal, noisome swamp on a backwater prime material plane. Aside from his expert-

ise in the field of death, Menoden also developed an interest in extra-dimensional spaces, evident to all who enter his tower.

On his last extra-planar excursion, Menoden failed to return to the tower. This set off a safe-guard, causing the tower to shift into an extra-dimensional pocket at all time save for foggy nights during the new moon. None know what happened to the necromancer, or whether he stills lives, but he hasn't been seen in nearly a century.

Player Beginning

Read or paraphrase the following:

On the first misty night of the new moon, you set forth into the Great Swamp, heading for the spot where you've been told you can find the tower. As you trudge through the thick mud of the bog, strange noises fill the air – chittering, hissing, and, every once in a while, a sudden screech that seems to come from the darkness just a few feet off.

Finally, after several hours, a single-storey tower appears out of the mists ahead of you. It seems to be about thirty feet in diameter with a single, unadorned stone door.

The Tower

Though the tower appears to be thirty feet in diameter on the outside, the interior space measures double that, making it some sixty feet across. In addition, only one door (the southern one) exists on the outside of the structure, while, to anyone who steps or looks inside, three other doors are visible along the interior walls. These are the first indications of the extra-dimensionality of Menoden's tower.

Once the magic of the structure has become active (see area 1-1), the tower turns into a modified tesseract of six circuitous chambers, i.e., characters traveling through the rooms find themselves trapped in an endless loop with no way to return to the outside world. The arrows on the map indicate how the six rooms are interconnected.

Only one door may be opened at a time. All attempts to open, break, or otherwise create a secondary portal automatically fail (part of the tower's innate magic). In addition, when closed, all doors seal air-tight. There are no visible hinges; the doors have been constructed on a pivot point along one edge. The mechanism is hidden in the wall, which allows each door to be either pushed or pulled open; i.e., they swing both directions.

Every door in the tower has a poison needle trap hidden in the lock with a 25% chance of automatic reset (after each time the door is shut). The first time a door is

opened, roll percentile to determine whether or not the trap is currently active.

Ceilings throughout the structure rise to a height of thirty feet. All walls and doors in the tower have the following statistics:

Magically Treated Hewn Stone Wall: 10 ft. thick; hardness 16; hp 1,080; Break DC 70; Climb DC 22.

Reinforced Stone Door: 4 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 200; Break DC 20 (locked).

Poison Needle Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; 25% chance automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged (1 plus greenblood oil poison); poison (injury; Fort DC 13; 1 Con/1d2 Con); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Point of No Return (EL 1, 3): When the characters first arrive to the tower, the southern door is not locked or trapped. When it's opened, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

As you pull the door open, several skeletons suddenly leap out at you!

Have the players roll for initiative. No matter what initiative you roll as GM, allow the players to take their actions first, hopefully burning a spell or two, or perhaps a turning attempt. The skeletons are simply the remains of an adventuring party that became trapped inside the tower ten years ago and were leaning against the door. It soon becomes apparent they are nonmagical and not animated.

After this incident, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The tower interior appears to be nothing more than a single, large, circular chamber of worked stone. At the center, on a four-foot-tall base, stands a life-size statue of a tall man with demonic features, his right hand held out as if holding an invisible staff, his left outstretched, palm up. Three additional doors are set at equidistant points around the room.

Once the entire party steps inside the room, the magic of the tower activates. The door slams shut, regardless of the precautions taken to ensure it remains open – spikes are crushed, spells are broken in a flash of magic, characters holding the door open are thrown back into the room. Any character who stands in the threshold, purposefully using his body to block the door from closing, is cut in half and dies instantly. All doors lock instantly when closed (there is a 25% that a needle trap in the handle will be reset).

Important Note: The southern door of area 1 now leads to the northern door of area 6, as depicted on the map. Again note that only one door in the entire tower may be open at any given time.

Escaping the Tower: The tower's extra-dimensional magic continues to operate until the following is accomplished: the platinum rod from area 1-5 is slid into the statue's right hand, the platinum bracelet from area 1-3 is slipped onto its left wrist, and the pendant from area 1-6 is placed around its neck. The next time the southern door in area 1-1 is opened, it leads back outside. Unfortunately, this also causes the statue to animate and attack. The statue's magic has faded over the ages so its hit points are not at full strength, making it a reasonable target for the party.

Note that the characters could simply escape through the southern door rather than fight the construct, for it will not leave the tower.

Once the southern door has been opened to the outside, the rod, bracelet, and pendant instantly vanish. PCs foolish enough to close the door while they're still within the tower become locked inside forever, or until someone opens the door from the outside. When the party returns to the outside world, they will discover that no time has passed – they exit the tower just a few minutes after they entered it, even if they spend days or even weeks inside.

Treasure: A search of the skeletons yields 76 gp, 92 sp, a suit of medium-sized studded leather armor, and a wooden scroll case filled with an oily, tan fluid that burns when imbibed (2 doses of anti-toxin).

Wizard Golem: CR 4; Medium Construct; HD 3d10+3; hp 25; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk Slam +6 melee (1d6+4); Full Atk 2 slams +6 melee (1d6+4); SA spell-like abilities; SQ construct traits, DR 5/masterwork, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, rebuilding; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 19, Dex 9, Con –, Int –, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Spell-like abilities: 5/day – *magic missile* (CL 3rd). See page 259 for additional ability descriptions.

Area 1-2 – Chamber of a Thousand Eyes: Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Floating in mid-air throughout the chamber are hundreds of eyeballs torn from the sockets of various types of creatures – humanoid, insectoid, reptilian. Bits of bloody sinew still cling to the back of each orb.

As each character enters the area, a group of 2d4 eyes pivots in place to watch him. If a spell is cast

within the room or an eye is touched or attacked, two voices – one high, one low – cry out in tandem, "Death to the defilers of Menoden's Tower! Now you will never escape my sight!"

The eyes are in fact harmless and have only 1 hit point each. However, each group will follow its target character throughout the tower, remaining within 2 feet at all times, no matter the character's speed or method of movement.

Area 1-3 – The Flayed Horror (EL 2): Hiding beneath a mound of bones and decomposing bodies lies a flayed horror. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

A pile of yellowing bones lies in a large mound on one side of the chamber, as if they were piled there by an intelligent being for some unknown purpose.

If a character comes within five feet, the flayed horror attacks, possibly gaining surprise.

If the flayed horror is killed, a voice shrieks out of the air, "May the curse of Menoden the twice-damned be upon you foul interlopers for killing my pet. Forever after, your blows will miss the mark and inflict little injury!" All characters in the room must make a DC 10 Will save or suffer a –1 morale penalty on attack and damage rolls for 24 hours. During combat (for the duration of the curse), all affected characters are afflicted with visions of demons emerging from and melting back into the walls of the tower. The curse may be removed with a *bless* spell, eliminating the morale penalties, but regardless, the visions continue for the full 24 hours.

Treasure: Also under the pile of bones is a platinum bracelet (1,038 gp), masterwork scimitar, a stoppered clay jar containing a clear, odorless liquid (holy water), a crystal tube sealed with wax and filled with a bubbling aquamarine fluid that tastes of cinnamon (*potion of ghoul touch*), a medium mighty composite shortbow (+1 Str bonus), a *battle axe* +1, and an arcane *scroll of cat's grace*, *summon swarm*, and *misdirection*.

Flayed Horror: CR 2; Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 21; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; touch 12; flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk Bite +5 melee (1d4+1 plus poison); Full Atk Bite +5 melee (1d4+1 plus poison) and 2 claws +4 melee (1d2); AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Stealthy.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fort DC 11, initial 1d2 Con, secondary 1d4 Con.

Area 1-4 – Wolf Skeletons (EL 2): Menoden captured and slaughtered a pair of wolves, raising them as undead creatures to guard the tower. The bones lie scattered among a massive collection of skeletal remains covering every square inch of the floor. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Thousands of bones and bone fragments cover the floor of this large chamber. On one wall hangs a large portrait of a robed man.

As soon as the second character steps across the threshold into the area, the bones of the wolf skeletons reassemble and attack (possibly gaining surprise).

If the characters inspect the painting, reveal the following information: the man depicted in the portrait is a perfect match to the statue in area 1, except that the necromancer shown in the painting holds a platinum rod in his right hand, wears a platinum bracelet on his left wrist, and has an emerald pendant hanging from a gold chain around his neck.

Treasure: Scattered among the bones are 270 gp, a flask filled with a syrupy, rainbow-colored fluid with a metallic taste (*potion of cure moderate wounds*), and a *cursed ring of mind shielding* (curse: only functions when within 10 feet of an arcane spellcaster).

Wolf Skeleton: CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 15, 14; Init +7; Spd 50 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 17, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: –; Improved Initiative.

Area 1-5 – Maw of Eternal Pain (EL 1): To protect this area, Menoden created a permanent illusion and then purposely spread rumors to support it. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

A gargantuan maw of razor-sharp teeth fills the floor of the chamber, a huge tongue intermittently lashing out from the center. You can see the gullet continues downward beneath the level of the floor, suggesting the creature's digestive system lies somewhere below.

A DC 10 Will save is required to disbelieve the illusion (which radiates moderate illusion magic for purposes of detect magic). Those failing are automatically grappled by the tongue and dragged into the maw, taking 2 points of damage per round as the giant mouth rends them into tiny pieces and finally swallows. In reality, the character throws himself into the center of the room and suffers from heart attacks which damage him internally. The tongue attacks once per round with a reach of 10 feet.

Those attacking the maw discover it is impervious

to damage from any form, mundane or magical.

The floor actually contains the bones of those who fell prey to the illusion, plus a small cache of treasure.

Treasure: 473 sp, 60 gp, and a platinum rod topped with a cluster of rubies (3,750 gp).

Area 1-6 – The Laboratory (EL 3): Menoden carried out his foul necromantic experiments here. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

This chamber reeks of mold, decay, and other more noxious vapors. On several rotting tables lie various wizardly accoutrements: a mortar and pestle, a brazier, a small prism, tweezers, a half-dozen pieces of chalk, dozens of half-melted candlesticks, a bellows, skulls of different creatures (some unrecognizable), a tripod, a pedestal, and, finally, a tome.

The tome is one of Menoden's spell books, which is trapped with an *explosive runes* spell (caster level 10) that can be detected on a DC 28 Search check. The spell book contains the following necromantic spells: 1st-level – *cause fear*, *chill touch*, *ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd-level – *blindness/deafness*, *command undead*, *false life*, *ghoul touch*, *scare*, *spectral hand*.

Lying atop the pedestal, which has been *stone-shaped* from the very floor of the chamber, is an emerald pendant on a gold chain (see treasure below). Removing the pendant from the pedestal sets off a heat metal trap.

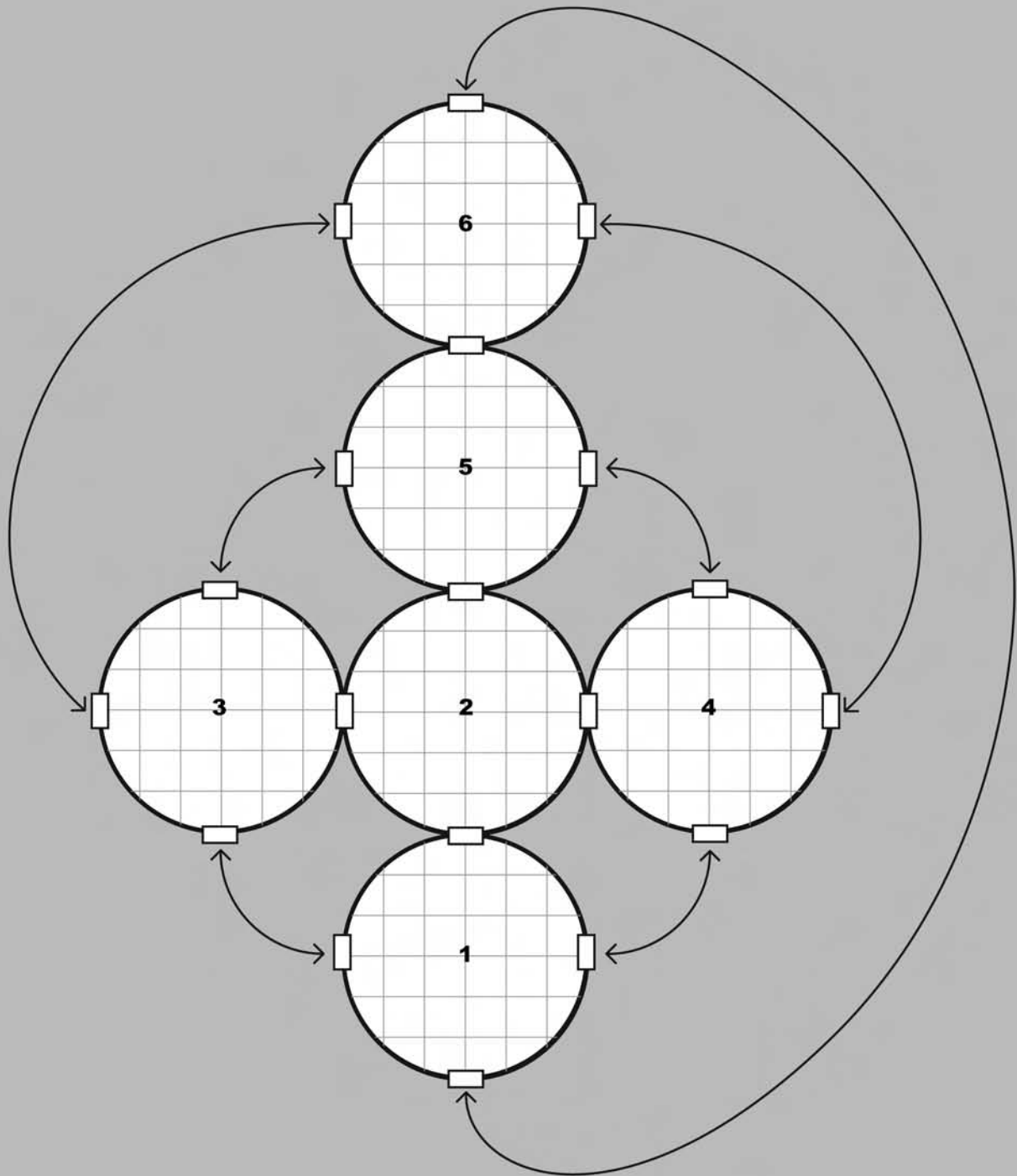
Heat Metal Trap: CR 3; magic device; touch; no reset; spell effect (*heat metal*, 5th-level druid, see spell text for effect, DC 13 Will save negates); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Treasure: Secreted throughout the room is the following treasure (Search DC 10): an emerald pendant on a fine gold chain (1,915 gp), a small masterwork short sword, a *handy haversack*, and a varnished (to protect from fluid submersion) divine scroll (*chill metal* and *speak with animals*).

Further Adventures

- Characters who abscond with Menoden's treasures and/or destroy his tower or his pets, may find themselves targets of the necromancer when he returns to this plane.
- The characters may wish to turn the tower into a base of operations for themselves, a place to store their treasures between adventures. If so, they may wish to set new security measures or perhaps clear the surrounding swamp of monsters.

Mage Maze



Dungeon Crawl Classics By Invitation Only

By Bret Boyd
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

By Invitation Only is designed for four to six characters of 1st or 2nd level, with a total of 6 total character levels between party members. While the characters can be of any basic character class, the sheer number of combat encounters necessitates combat-oriented classes. A cleric will be needed to lend a healing hand for those who survive those dangerous encounters. Having at least one rogue will aid in overcoming the trap.

Adventure Summary

The PCs are invited to a remote mountain dwelling where a dying adventurer wants them to take his treasure. But to gain the treasure, the PCs must first beat his dungeon and thereby prove their worthiness. Within the dungeon live rare monsters from exotic lands, each guarding a brass disc. Once the PCs obtain all four discs, they must use them to open the vault door. Inside the mostly empty vault is a paltry collection of treasure. When the PCs leave the dungeon, the rogue impersonator removes his "aged adventurer" disguise and tries to slay the PCs for the treasure.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
R-1	201	C	<i>Maris Zahn</i> , human Rog3	3
1-1	202	C	Rust spider	1
1-2	203	C	8 static bats	3
1-3	203	T	Rolling rock	2
		C	2 stink-fire beetles	
1-4	204	C	3 spellsnakes	3
1-5	204	C	Land squid	2
1-6	205	P	Moon phase door	1

Scaling Information

By Invitation Only is designed for 4-6 characters of 1st or 2nd level, but it can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adjusting the adventure as follows:



Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 2nd level): Add 2 rust spiders to area 1-1. Add two more pairs of wandering stink-fire beetles, ensuring that loud combat draws the remaining beetles in short order. Double the number of spellsnakes in area 1-4 but have the second trio wait two rounds before attacking from behind the PCs. Add 1 land squid to area 1-5, which remains hidden in the water until the PCs attempt to escape with the disc. Place a wide-mouth spiked pit trap across the entrance to area 1-6. Double the treasure in the vault and add two rogue levels to Maris Zahn.

Getting the Players Involved

The adventure begins with the characters receiving a written invitation to a nearby mountain outpost. The GM can place the outpost on any temperate mountain range in his campaign world. However, this does not have to be the only hook which gets the characters started. Feel free to consider one of these other options:

- Instead of the promise of “riches for the taking,” the letter’s contents are delivered verbally by messenger and promise instead “the opportunity to test your skills among your peers and reap a reward for your efforts.” Even if using this method, the disguised rogue’s greeting at the outpost is the same.
- A local sage has heard of rare animals being kept in an old adventurer’s mountain retreat. He hires the characters to go there, retrieve any unusual creature (and anything else of interest), and return them to him. The sage offers 250 gp per PC to be paid upon completion of the mission, but this is just a farce. The sage in this setup is a disguised Maris Zahn. Skip the opening speech as presented below and make sure to use the sage disguise as the rogue reveals himself before the final combat.

Background Story

A renowned fighter named Zolmik Thiat toured the known world in his adventuring days. After visiting a new territory, the warrior customarily captured an unusual monster to take back to his mountain retreat as a souvenir of the journey. Four of these specimens remained in holding when Zolmik was struck down in a great war only a year ago. Besides being curiosity pieces and personal mementos, the monsters also served as guards for the fighter’s treasure vaults. But

Zolmik rarely disclosed information about his mountain hideaway, not even to family. Thus, whatever treasure remained at the time of his death is a mystery.

Recent Events

The rogue Maris Zahn fought in the same war as Zolmik. While he did not know the fighter personally, he did know of the old warrior’s reputation for kindness to younger adventurers. When word reached the rogue (by a second-hand source) about the mountain retreat where a possible treasure lay unclaimed, he quickly traveled to find it. Unfortunately for Maris, his source did not know about the exotic monsters or dangers inside. The rogue found himself outmatched on his own, unable to gain entrance to the vault. Since he could trust no one else to aid him, Maris concocted a scheme to get others to help him unknowingly.

Zolmik’s death was not directly witnessed by others, as he died after tumbling off a low cliff into a roaring river while grappling with a vampire. Word of his death has not spread, and Maris decided to capitalize on this uncertainty. He invites a group of novice adventurers (the PCs) to the mountain retreat to have them get to the treasure and then, once they’re weakened from the task, plans to finish them off and take the treasure for himself. Little does anyone suspect that, before setting off on his last adventure, Zolmik all but emptied the vault for supplies.

A Magical Dungeon

Before moving his unusual creatures to the mountain hideaway, Zolmik commissioned a wizard ally to enchant his dungeon in ways to keep the monsters alive and content. Area 1-1 is enchanted to recreate any consumed mundane armor for the rust spider’s diet. While the plants in area 1-4 are natural, the ceiling light is magically permanent and grants the flora nutrients they normally get from sunlight. It is because of these enchantments that the rust spider and spellsnakes do not leave their areas in search of sustenance. The static bats and land squid are fed from the environment and are unlikely to leave their respective areas even after the magic’s collapse.

The final touch is the moon phase door to the vault. The magic which causes the discs to open the doors also *teleports* them to their original areas if improperly placed.

Unfortunately, when the vault is opened, the magical enchantments of the dungeon begin to fade and dissipate entirely in 24 hours. When Zolmik gathered the bulk of his treasure before leaving, he had the wizard “recharge” the dungeon for the fighter’s expected return with even more booty to store here.

Player Beginning

Whether the PCs come as a group or individually, Maris Zahn does not let them into the structure until all have arrived. Each character received a hand written message on the same day (or received one letter if the group already adventured together). The contents of the letter read as follows:

Pleasant greetings, young adventurer! I hope this missive finds you well. My name is Zolmik Thiat and I have an enticing business proposition for you. Your professional abilities and personal convictions are known to me and I wish to offer gifts that match such qualities. I invite you to my mountain retreat to discuss this matter further. All I ask for is your willing ear and in return you may have riches for the taking. The gods speed and watch over your journey.

Maris studied Zolmik's writing style from the fighter's personal journal and has approximated it with skill. A crude map and directions to the mountain dwelling are included with the letter. The adventure truly begins once all the PCs have assembled outside the structure's door. Then, without fanfare, a stooped old man opens the door and ushers them inside.

The Mountain Retreat

Carved from the mountain stone itself, this small building was once the outpost of a long-forgotten army. The structure is set into the windy side of the mountain (facing east) along a little-used trade road which winds past the outpost and eventually over the mountain top some three miles north. All doors on this level are locked and made of stone.

Stone Door: 4 inches thick; hardness 8; hp 60; break DC 28 (stuck), 28 (locked).

Areas of the Map

Area R-1 – Trophy Room (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The old man closes the door behind you and motions for you to take a seat on the two long benches sitting in front of a cushioned, high-backed armchair. Several ceremonial masks, rusted weapons, and other bric-a-brac hang from the walls and sit on dusty tables within this square chamber. Dressed in a silk crimson robe with gold embroidery, the man shuffles to the chair and eases into it. When he speaks, he does so in a soft raspy voice.

"It pleases me that you have come, my young friends. Let me speak plainly. As an adventurer of some years, I have amassed a collection of

items useful to practitioners of those in our line of work. For the last few months I have been searching for a group to pass some of those items on to. When your names and confirmation of your moral rectitude reached my ears, I knew I had found that group. You see, I am dying, and want you to put to use those items that would otherwise rot in my vault. But treasure should not come unearned. If you wish to lay claim to mine, you must first best my dungeon. Simply walk through the door behind me, gain access to the vault, and return here. You have twelve hours, and they start right now."

Maris trained in this guise for many weeks before inviting the PCs. While his face and voice are carefully disguised, his hands are less so. An observant or overly suspicious PC may note the young-looking hands (opposed Spot check against Maris' Disguise check; Maris has neither penalty to bonus or his roll, using only the ranks listed in his stat block). Maris' answer to suspicious PCs is that a magical potion he previously imbibed to halt his aging only worked on his hands. The Spot check should only be allowed if the player(s) specifically requests it or if he has the character acting extremely cautiously.

The stone door leading to the dungeon has the same statistics as the front door of the retreat (see above).

Tactics (if PCs attack Maris): Maris does his best not to arouse suspicion, but if the PCs do try to unmask him now as a fraud, the rogue flees into area R-2 and locks the door from the inside. He can listen to what is happening in the trophy room and only emerges after 5 minutes of not hearing anything. Even if the PCs do suspect the rogue's intentions, their curiosity is likely to get the better of them anyway and they will find themselves in the dungeon. Otherwise, Maris waits here in his disguise until the PCs successfully return with the treasure from Zolmik's vault. (See the end of this adventure for Maris' statistics and tactics after the PCs return from the dungeon successful. The encounter level indicated above is only appropriate for the combat against Maris at the adventure's conclusion.)

Treasure: The ornamentation on the walls was placed there by Maris himself to make the place look impressive. All items are cheaply made and cheaply purchased, being mock-ups of other cultures' artifacts. The collection would sell for 150 gold pieces on the open market.

Area R-2 – Bedroom: Read or paraphrase the following:

An unmade bed sits at the center of this chamber. To the right is a wooden chair and writing desk while the left side of the room sports a tattered wool tapestry. The wax of a spent candle coats the sides of its brass holder, marking the desk's only decoration. The tapestry depicts a fight amidst dark clouds between a grievously wounded red dragon and a smaller silver dragon.

Zolmik (and now Maris) used this chamber as a bedroom. A steel foot locker (1 foot by 2 feet) is hidden beneath the bed. Maris has long since cleaned out and sold everything of value. The rogue keeps some of his personal possessions beneath the bed in a backpack (see the adventure's conclusion for a listing of these items).

Treasure: The tapestry is something Zolmik purchased on one of his adventures simply because he liked it. Its sale would only fetch between 10 and 20 gold pieces due to its tattered state.

The Dungeon

Unless noted otherwise, all of the tunneled out stone corridors are 10 feet wide and 15 feet high. Within them at periodic intervals are *everburning torches*. These sit tightly within metal sconces but can be successfully removed with a DC 15 Strength check. All doors are made of wood and unlocked (except for area 1-6). The specific areas are not illuminated except for areas 1-4 and 1-6. Keep in mind that PCs using darkvision only cannot discern colors.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 10; break DC 13 (stuck).

Wandering Monsters

When inside the dungeon there is a 20% chance per corridor explored that the PCs encounter a pair of stink-fire beetles. There are a total of four within the dungeon. This chance is cumulative for every corridor explored (meaning that the third corridor explored carries a 60% chance of encounter and so on). The other pair of beetles is encountered in their lair in area 1-3. See area 1-3 for the beetles' stats.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Armory (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The door opens to reveal a thick coating of webbing across your path. Even before stepping inside, you can see the room is circular, a stone ramp winding up against the wall. Displayed along the ramp are suits of metal

armor and weapons, each in a varying state of decomposition.

Give out players handout A. Just beyond each door is a 5-foot sheet of webbing (see the rust spider's rust web quality below) that the PCs must contend with. The ramp is 10 feet wide and runs the perimeter of the room until ending above the south entrance. This top is where the moon phase disc is located.

The rust spider spends its days lounging in this haven of metal. The wizard who helped create Zolmik's dungeon laid a permanent enchantment on this room which creates a replica of any suit of armor or weapon consumed by the rust spider (thus allowing the creature to survive indefinitely).

The items here are extremely fragile. Any armor or weapon removed from the room falls apart after absorbing (armor) or delivering (weapon) one blow. Any item can be present here at the GM's discretion as long as it is made mostly of metal.

Tactics: The round following the disturbance of its web sheet, the rust spider skulks down the ramp until it can see the PCs. It opens combat by launching a rust glob at the closest PC.

Treasure: The "waxing" moon phase disc waits in its stand for the PCs at the top of the ramp.

Rust spider: CR 1; Medium aberration; HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk bite +2 melee (1d6) or rust glob +0 ranged (entangle); SA rust glob; SQ darkvision, rust web, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Hide +7, Listen +5, Spot +8, Swim +10; Alertness, Track.

Rust Glob (Ex): The rust spider can throw a glob of webbing up to three times per day. It must succeed a ranged touch attack (max. range 30 feet, no range increment) and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the rust spider. A struck creature suffers the corroding effects as a rust web (see below) and is entangled. The target can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 14) or burst the web with a Strength check (DC 14). The save DC is Constitution based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Rust Web (Ex): Any metal which comes into contact with a rust spider's web instantly corrodes (magical metal must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save) at the rate of 5 feet per 1-foot section of webbing. Each 5-foot sheet of rust webbing a spider creates has 6 hit points and damage reduction 5/-. A rust spider can move across its own webs at its climb speed.

Area 1-2 – The Gauntlet (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

This expansive chamber stretches into darkness ahead of you. Wooden platforms hang by chains and are connected to one another by narrow boards. Beyond the doorway, the floor drops away into an empty chasm.

If the PCs are using a light source, read the following as well:

You see your light's dim reflection undulating fifteen feet below floor level.

The reflection is coming off the 10 feet of water at the room's bottom. If a PC falls the 15 feet into the water, he takes 1d3 points of nonlethal damage. Navigating the platforms requires a DC 11 Balance check for every 5 feet of walkway a PC traverses. All walkways are 2-1/2 ft. wide. The DC rises to 14 if the PC is distracted (under attack or performing any action other than movement).

The goal is to reach the northwest platform. This can be accomplished by traversing the other platforms or, after falling into the water, by climbing the iron rung ladder beneath that final platform.

Tactics: As soon as the PCs have reached the second platform (or a PC falls into the water below), eight static bats emerge from their holes in the ceiling and attack. The bats are most attracted to motion so a PC flapping about in the water makes an especially tantalizing target.

Treasure: The "new" moon phase disc waits in its stand on the room's northwest platform. Give out players handout B.

Static bat (8): CR 1/3; Diminutive magical beast; HD 1/2d10; hp 3; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -17; Atk/Full Atk wing touch -1 melee (1d2 plus concussive shock); Space/Reach 1 ft./0 ft.; SA concussive shock (Fort DC 10); SQ blindsense 20 ft., dark-vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Hide +14, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Spot +8; Alertness.

Concussive Shock (Su): If a static bat makes a successful touch attack against a foe, it inflicts 1d2

points of electrical damage. The target must then succeed a DC 10 Fortitude save or convulse for one round (-2 penalty to any Dex-based skill checks and a -1 to attack rolls and Reflex saves). The save DC is Constitution based.

Area 1-3 – Beetle Lair (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The flight of stairs opens into a large rectangular chamber. A pungent smell attacks your senses as you spot a yellow-green layer of broken insect shells spread across the floor.

This is not only the lair of the stink-fire beetles, it is also the graveyard. These vermins' carapaces deteriorate very slowly and there are pieces of no less than three dozen of the creatures scattered about the area. It is difficult to move through the area without crunching on a dead beetle's shell. Moving silently requires a DC 20 Move Silently check, or a PC can forgo the check by moving at one-half speed.

A successful DC 15 Spot check allows a PC to see the movement of one of the living beetles in the field of corpses. Due to the overpowering stench even the corpses carry, the Fortitude save against the living beetle's stench quality is made at a -2 penalty in this area.

Trap: The stink-fire beetles never wander into the corridor which leads east from this chamber. They know about the rolling rock trap which is sprung by stepping on the ground in front of that corridor. Once sprung, the rock effectively blocks the eastern passage. Moving the boulder requires a DC 20 Strength check. Up to three PCs (on one side) can attempt to roll the boulder. In this case, one PC makes the Strength check while the others try to aid him. When aiding another, if a PC beats a 10 on his roll, then the PC he is trying to aid gains a +2 bonus to his check.

Tactics: Two stink-fire beetles are alive and well in the detritus of their kin. At the first sound of a carapace being stepped on, the beetles move at top speed to attack.

Treasure: PCs sifting through the layer of dead beetles could be rewarded. A successful DC 17

Moon Phase Discs

To keep his valuables safe, Zolmik had his wizard ally create a special locking mechanism for his vault. The key to opening the vault lies with four brass discs, each six inches in diameter. These discs are plain on one side but on the other are painted in such a way as to portray the phases of the moon – new, waxing, full, and waning. Each disc hangs by a magical thread beneath the apex of a steel tripod. Once grasped, the thread vanishes, leaving the disc unfettered.

Search check reveals a belt pouch containing 2 pearls (each worth 150 gold pieces). Zolmik accidentally dropped this pouch after retrieving it and other treasures from the vault before his final mission.

Stink-Fire Beetle (2): CR 1/2; Small vermin; HD 1d8; hp 4, 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk bite +1 melee (2d4); SA stench (Fort DC 10); SQ darkvision, vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Stench (Ex): All living creatures (except other stink-fire beetles) within 10 feet of a stink-fire beetle must succeed on a DC 10 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution based. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the stink-fire beetle's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from the sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws.

Rolling rock trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 22.

Area 1-4 – Arboretum (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

At first glance, it seems you're no longer in the dungeon. A green-tinted radiance beams from the top of this huge chamber. Its light shines on the small forest of trees in front of you. To the left, clear water laps calmly at the dirt coastline which stretches forward and around the forest out of your sight.

This area, like area 1-1, is highly dependant on magic to keep its monstrous inhabitants alive. The magic not only provides light as though it were daytime in the chamber, but also provides the trees and underbrush with the nourishment they need to survive. The trio of spellsnakes kept here feasts upon the plentiful and fast-growing fruit and native insects of the trees.

Tactics: The thick canopy of leafy branches conceals the spellsnakes until they can attack. Unless the PCs are being intentionally sneaky, the monsters spot their entrance. Once one or more PCs enter the trees or proceed halfway up the coastline, the spellsnakes strike. The most competent-looking spellcaster is strafed by a spellsnake with *color spray* while PC fighters are struck by the other two spellsnakes' *magic missile* attacks. The monsters despise intruders and do not flee once battle is joined.

Treasure: The "full" moon phase disc waits in its stand for the PCs in the area's northwest corner. Give out players handout C.

Spellsnake (3): CR 1; Small Magical Beast; HD 1d10; hp 3, 4, 8; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 120 ft. (average); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk bite +4 melee (1d3); SA spell-like abilities; SQ absorb magic, death throes (Fort DC 10); AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +8, Concentration, +4, Hide +7, Listen +5, Spot +4, Swim +4; Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will – *detect magic*; 1/day – *color spray* (from mouth, DC 12), *magic missile* (from tail).

Absorb Magic (Su): When touching a magic item, the snake's skin may absorb some of its power. The spellsnake makes a Charisma check opposed by the item's caster level check. If successful, the snake gains temporary hit points equal to 1/2 the item's caster level and the item cannot function for one round.

Death Throe (Ex): Upon death, the spellsnake explodes into a cloud of rancid vapors. Living creatures within a 5 ft. radius of this explosion must succeed a DC 10 Fortitude save or be nauseated for one round.

Area 1-5 – Headwaters Chamber (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The staircase leads into cold water before you even enter the chamber. Perhaps three feet of water must be waded through to get to a stone plateau across from the entrance. Heavy moss covers the walls and ceiling. Water tumbles noisily into the area from a crack in the east wall.

The floor of this area is indeed beneath three feet of churning water. The movement of the water is not enough to endanger waders unless they are smaller than Medium size. These PCs must succeed on a DC 13 Swim check to reach the stone floor beyond.

The water coming through the wall here flows through several holes in the western floor and reappears in area 1-4 and pools in area 1-2. The crashing noise of the underground river causes a -4 circumstance penalty to all Listen checks in this chamber.

Tactics: The land squid lurks in the southeast corner of the room, where the water splashes in to create underwater turbulence. The creature waits here until the second PC is moving toward the area's stony ground. It then strikes, hoping to drag and keep that PC under water and bite him until slain.

Failing this, it hides until able to climb onto the land where there are the fewest PCs. During land combat, it releases its ink slick.

Treasure: The “waning” moon phase disc waits in its stand atop a marble dais on the stone island. Give out players handout D.

Land Squid: CR 2; Medium animal (aquatic); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +3; Spd swim 60 ft., 15 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +8; Atk arms +4 melee (0); Full Atk arms +4 melee and bite -1 melee (1d6+1); SA improved grab; SQ ink cloud, low-light vision, water dependant; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7, Swim +10; Alertness, Endurance.

Improved Grab (Ex): After hitting an opponent of any size, the land squid can start a grapple (with a +4 racial bonus) as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. Success means the land squid can deal bite damage automatically.

Ink Cloud (Ex): Under water – can emit a 10-ft. cube ink cloud once per minute as a free action; provides total concealment. On land – can create a 5-ft. radius oil slick around itself as a free action; creatures caught in radius must succeed a DC 14 Reflex save or fall prone. Creatures can move through a slick area at one-half normal speed if they succeed a DC 10 Balance check. Failure by 5 or more on the Balance check means the creature falls.

Area 1-6 – The Vault (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following and give out players handout E:

Two massive stone doors impede further progress. Thinning cloud banks are depicted in the upper left and lower right corners. These serve to frame the four circular depressions that stretch across the doors and the inscription etched beneath them. While it is obvious that these stone blocks are doors, there is a distinct lack of handles or other means of opening them.

The four depressions on the doors are the spots where the moon phase discs must be placed. The inscription tells the PCs the proper order. It is written in Elven and reads, “Only after things grow bleak will one discover enlightening fulfillment.” Moving from left to right, the order of the moon phases discs is: waning, new, waxing, full. If improperly placed, the moon phase discs *teleport* back to their original locations and must once again be retrieved.

Once the PCs have placed the moon phases discs correctly, read the following:

The discs glow with a bright blue haze and disappear, then the stone doors grind open. Inside is a vast chamber ablaze in the familiar green glow of everburning torches. Five-tiered wooden shelves sit perpendicular to the entrance and stretch across the bulk of the chamber’s interior. Two large drawstring sacks lie to the right of the entrance, as if cast to the side and forgotten.

Before leaving on his last mission, Zolmik all but cleared out the accumulated wealth in this vault. What remains either could not be carried or was not important enough to take on the journey. The shelves are empty. Only the sacks have treasure.

The Treasure: Sack #1 contains 300 gold pieces, 45 silver pieces, and a *potion of cure light wounds*. Sack #2 contains 280 gold pieces, 155 silver pieces, and a *potion of jumping*.

Conclusion

When the PCs emerge victorious back in area R-1 with what little treasure remained in the vault, Maris Zahn is taken aback at their lack of encumbrance. If one of the PCs mentions that he thought there would be more treasure, Maris absently responds, “Me too!” Either way, read or paraphrase the following:

Your aged host greets you as you emerge from the dungeon. “You’ve made it!” he calls weakly from across the room, “And I see you’ve brought gifts!” The man reaches up to his head and peels off a fake balding pate to reveal a far younger, more sinister face. He swings a loaded crossbow around from behind his back and brings it to bear on your group. His now strong voice speaks confidently, “My thanks for running the gauntlet down there. Zolmik may not have left much behind when he died, but I’m sure it will more than pay for the cost of bringing you here. Now drop those sacks on the floor and go back through the door.”

Tactics: If the PCs comply, Maris shuts and locks the dungeon door behind them. If the PCs do not comply with Maris’ command, he shoots their spellcaster immediately with his crossbow. If a spellcaster is not in the front, he fires at the strongest fighter. On the second round, the rogue throws a tanglefoot bag at the center of the party. On round three, if the PCs are not already upon him, he throws a thunderstone at enemy spellcasters. He then draws his sword and moves in to finish off the party in melee. If the GM wishes, Maris may have heard the PCs coming up from the dungeon and quaffed his *potion of cat’s grace*, which will improve many of his combat abilities, armor class, and skill checks.

The GM should keep Maris from falling prey to flanking attack by having him Tumble out of harm’s way. Also

with his competent Tumbling skills, if the rogue gets into a tight spot, he can use the fighting defensively (+3 dodge bonus to AC) and total defense (+6 dodge bonus to AC) combat actions to better effect. When reduced to 2 hit points or less, Maris attempts to flee, running from the mountain retreat with shouted threats of vengeance on his lips. He drops his second tanglefoot bag in the front doorway to dissuade pursuit.

After Maris has fled or been slain, read or paraphrase the following:

The defeat of Zolmik's imposter has left you a bit confused and weary, but at least a little richer. If anything, this first adventure together has taught you the value of teamwork and that not everything is always as it appears – two essential lessons for a novice group of adventurers.

Maris Zahn, human Rog3: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d6; hp 12; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk masterwork rapier +5 melee (1d6/18-20) or masterwork light crossbow +4 ranged (1d8/19-20); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Balance +4, Bluff +7, Disable Device +5, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +7, Forgery +7, Hide +8, Intimidate +3, Jump +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Search +4, Sleight of Hand

+4, Spot +3, Tumble +8; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

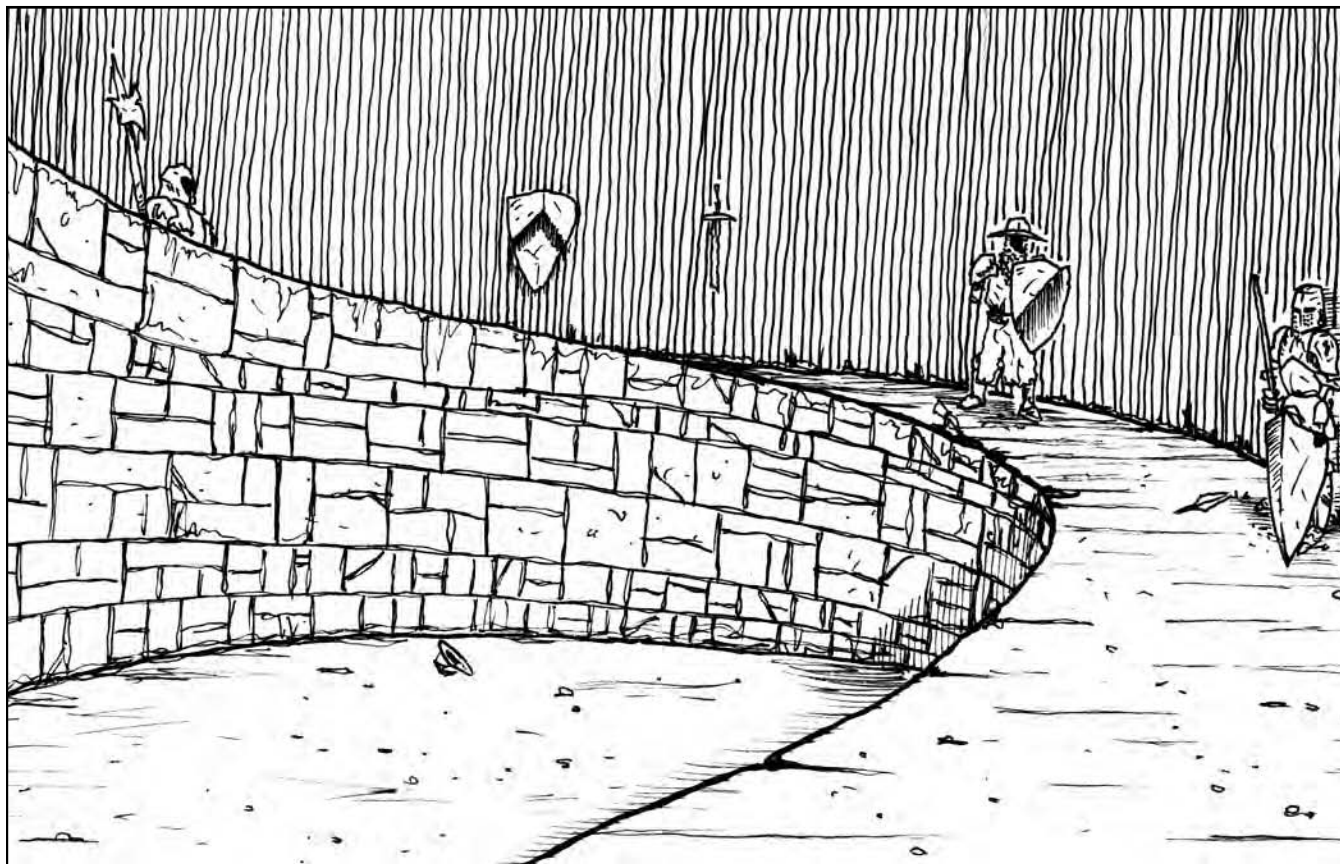
Possessions: 9 bolts*, cloak of resistance +1, disguise kit (8 uses remaining)*, masterwork light crossbow, masterwork rapier, masterwork studded leather, *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of sanctuary*, tanglefoot bag (x2), thunderstone (x3), 27 gold pieces. *Indicates that these items are inside Maris' backpack beneath the bed in area R-2.

Further Adventures

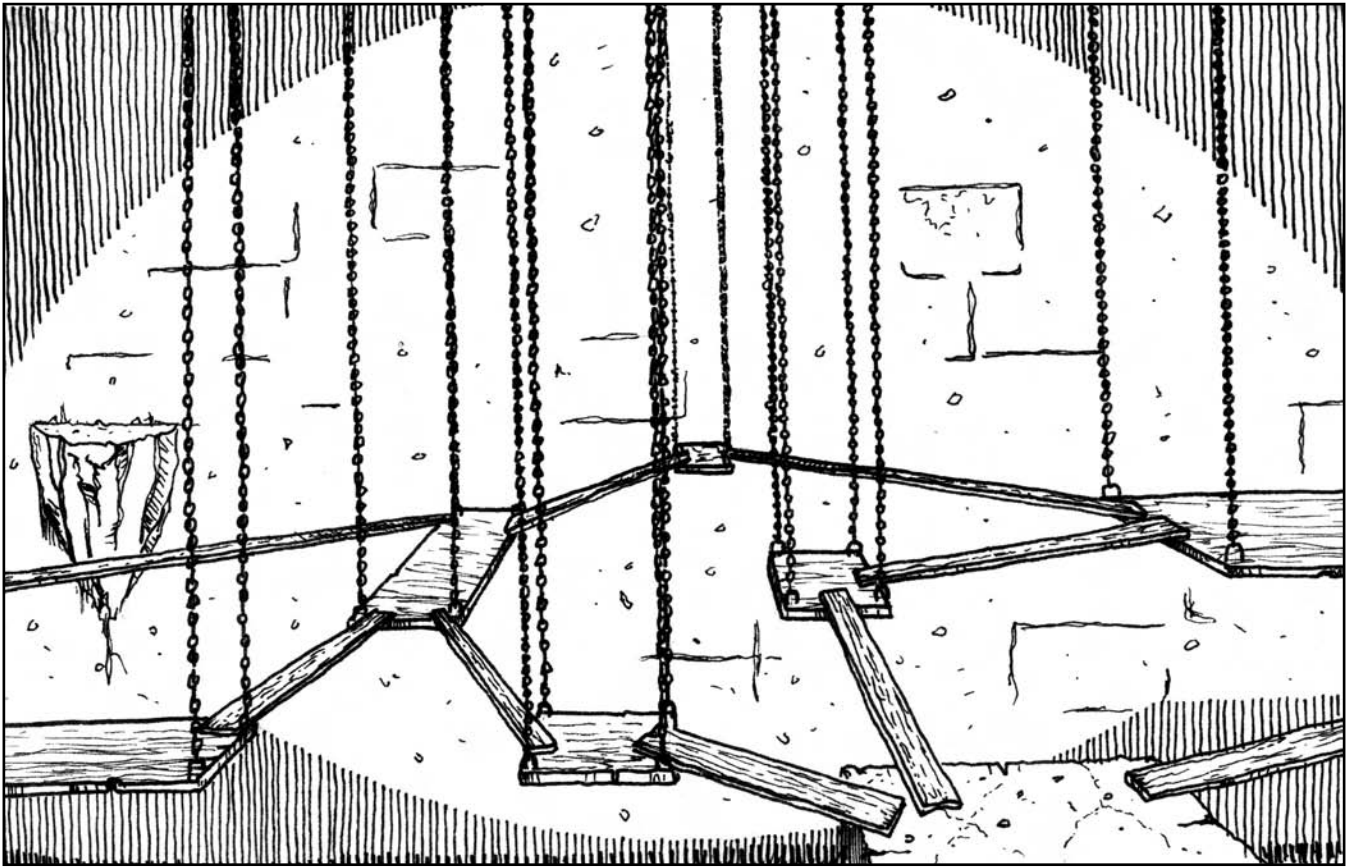
Although it is at least 10 miles from civilization, the PCs may decide to keep the Zolmik's retreat as their own private outpost. However, as discussed at the adventure's start, the dungeon's magics are not "reset" after opening the vault.

It is likely that other unscrupulous fortune hunters like Maris may have learned of Zolmik's death but not yet had the chance to find the retreat. Other sinister characters may come seeking the treasure supposedly lying in the vault.

The death of Maris need not be the end of his link to the PCs. Perhaps Maris had an accomplice who was waiting in a nearby city for word of the rogue's success. This accomplice could hunt the PCs either for the treasure or for revenge – or both!



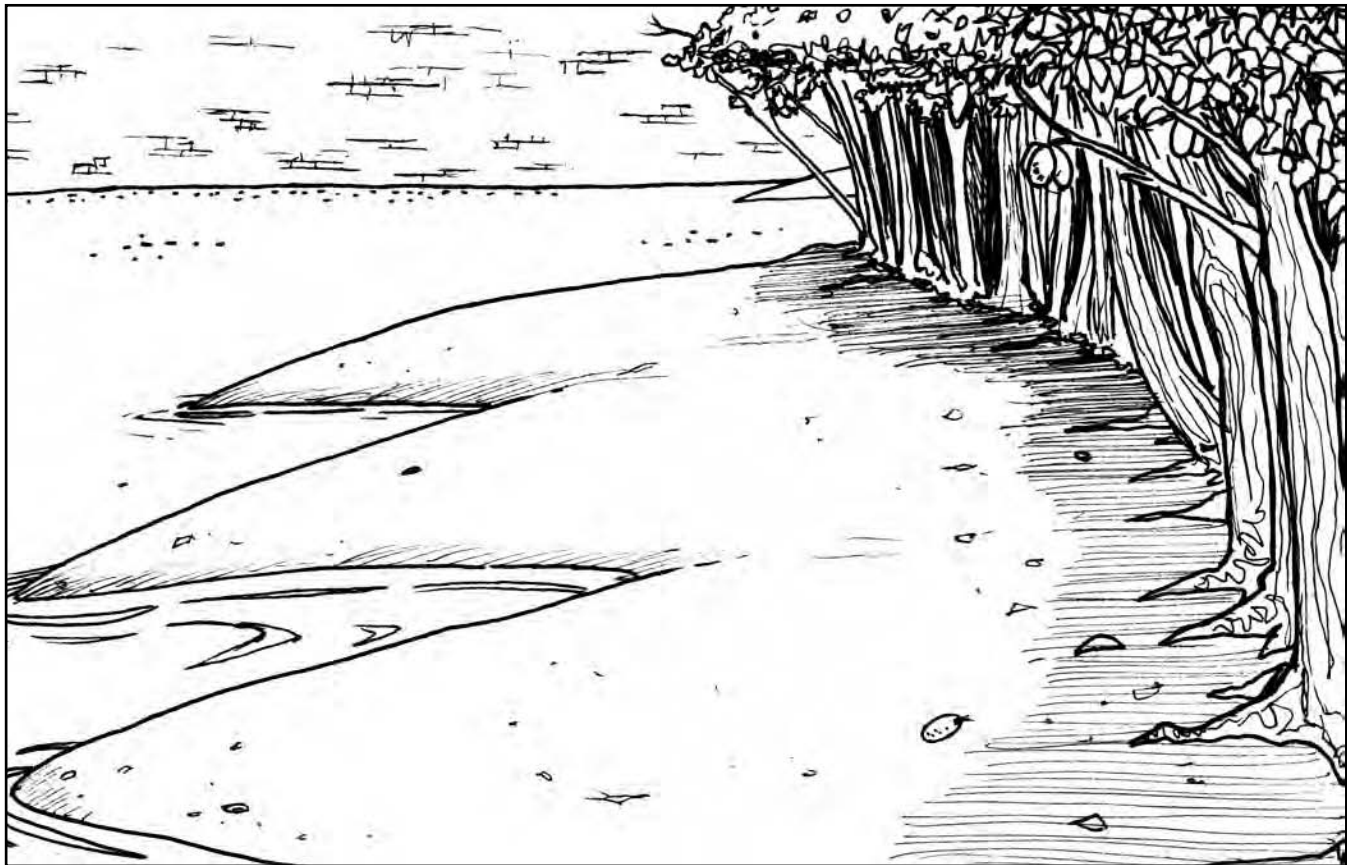
Players' Handout B



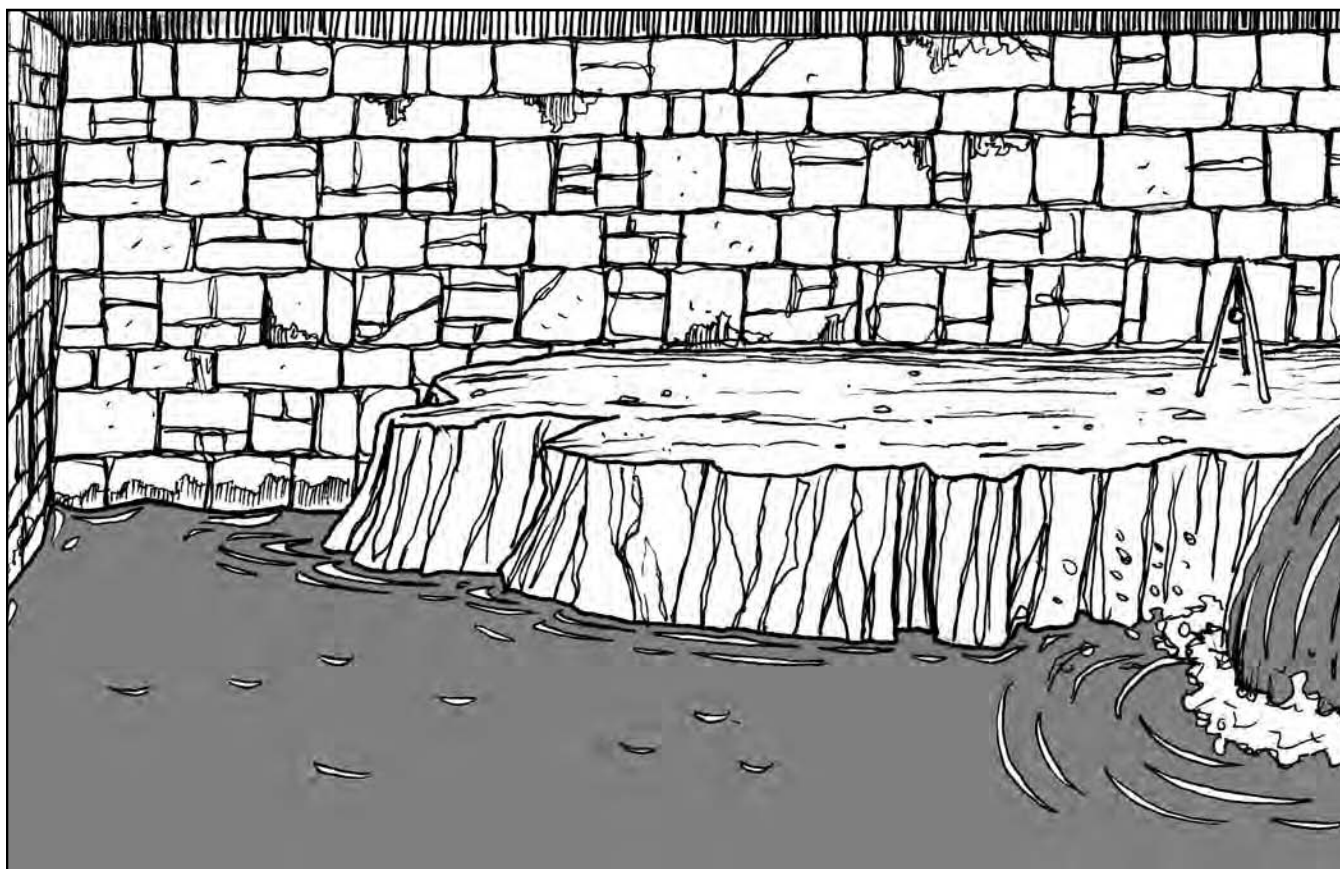
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Players' Handout C



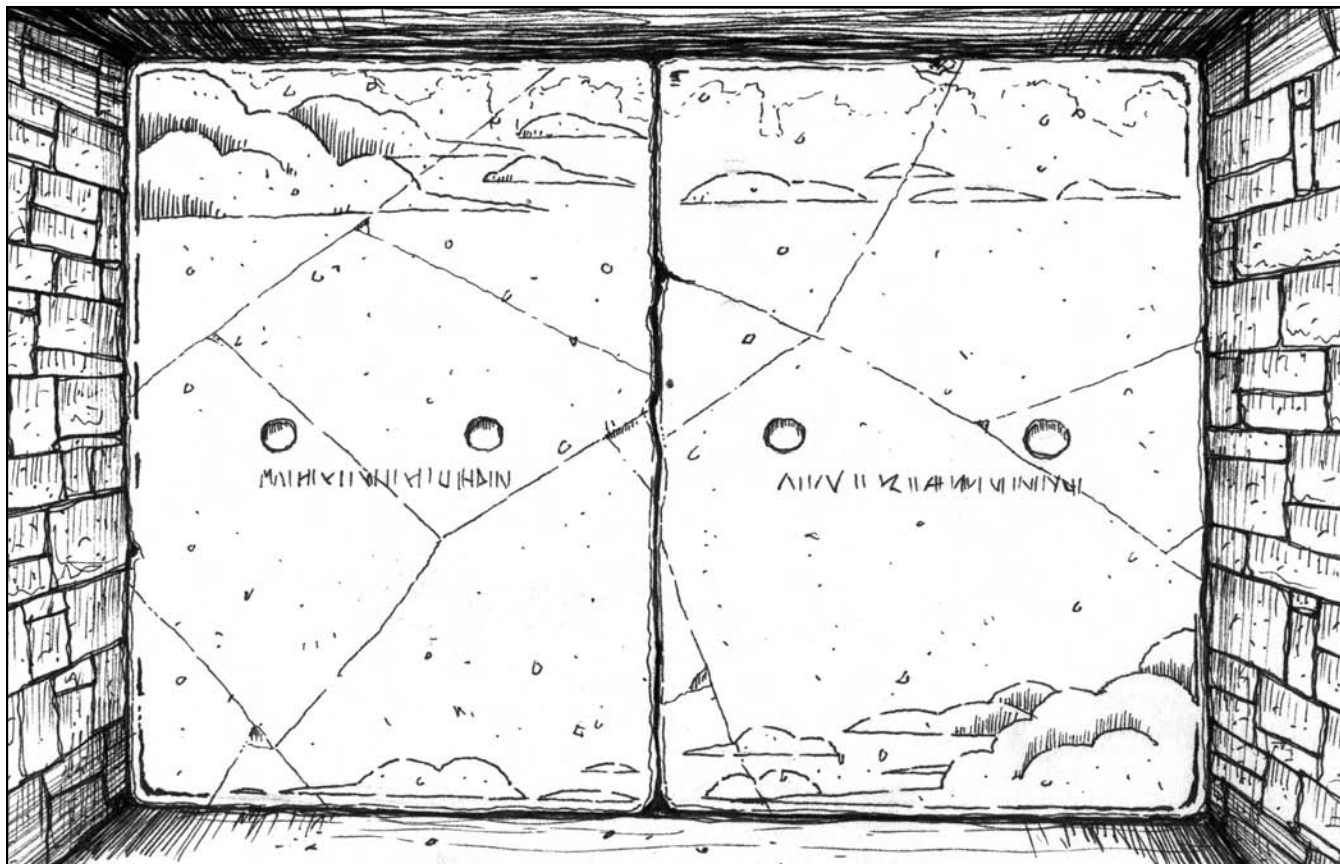
Players' Handout D



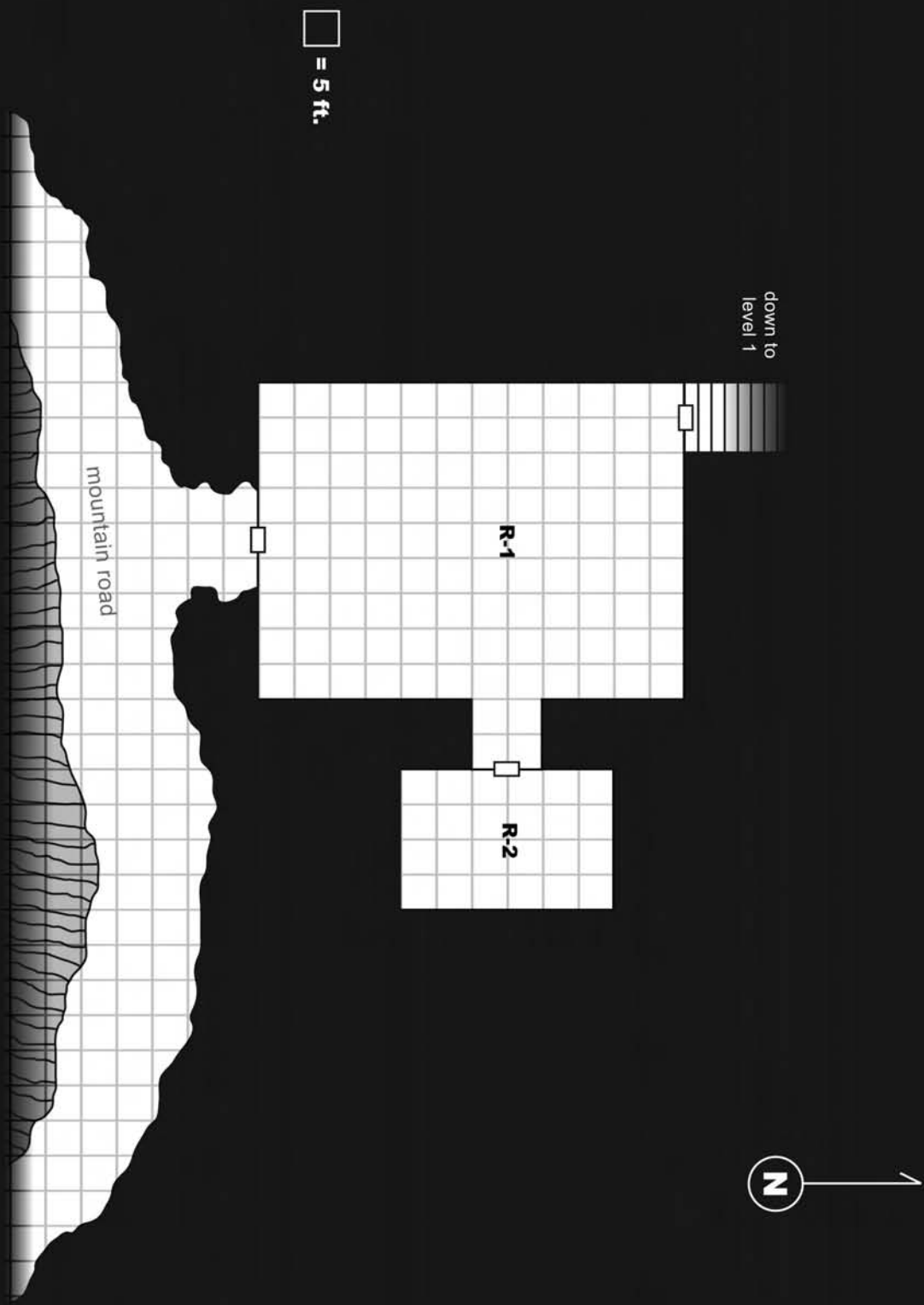
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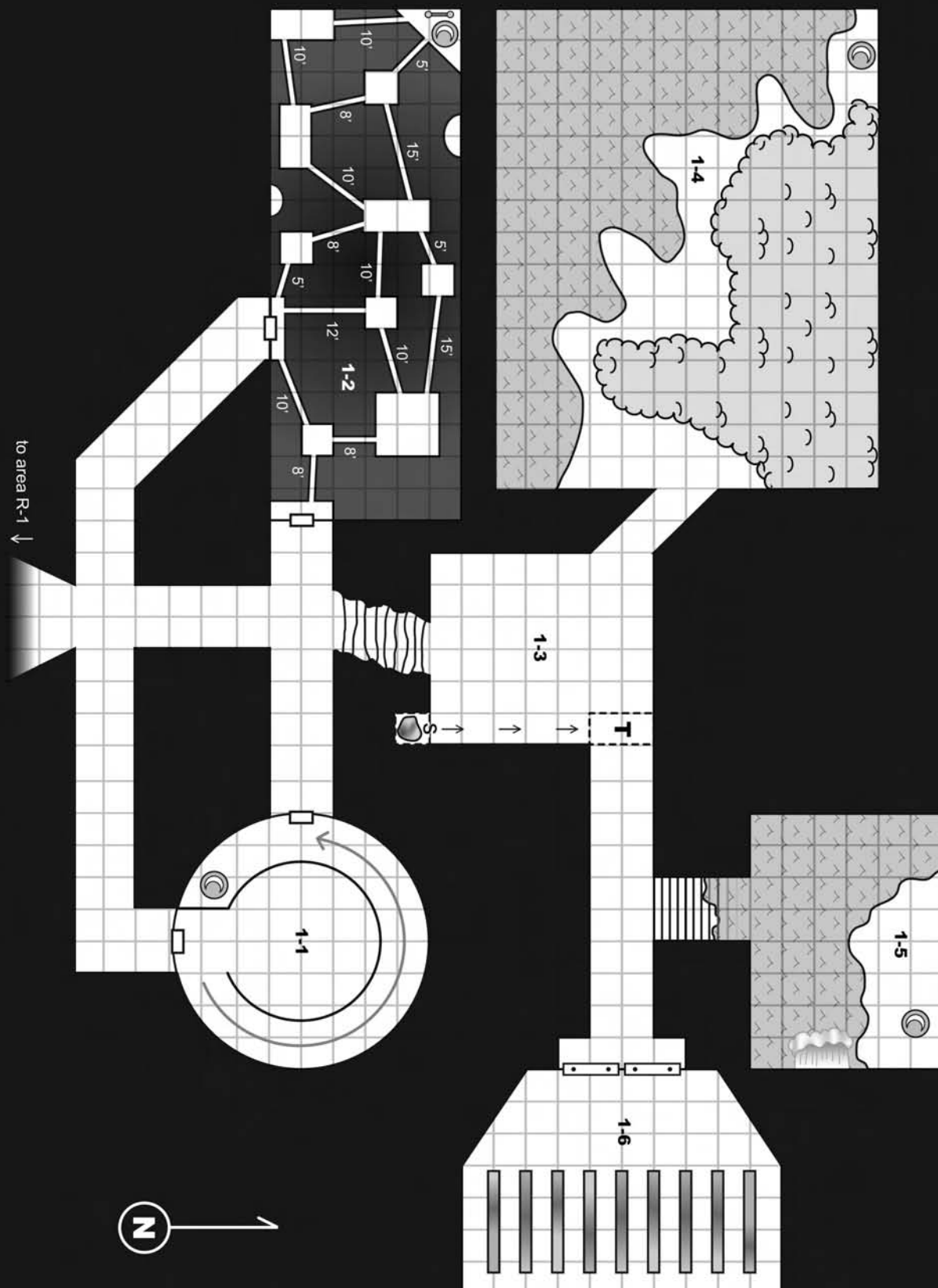
Players' Handout E



By Invitation Only: The Mountain Retreat



By Invitation Only: The Dungeon



Dungeon Crawl Classics

Hive of Villainy

By Andrew Hind

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

Hive of Villainy is an adventure suited for 4 characters of 1st level. A druid or ranger will be invaluable in the many animal encounters. A charismatic or diplomatic character, such as a rogue or bard, will help in gathering information and unraveling the mystery of what evil is besetting the town. The adventure can be placed in any temperate region, and the village of Beeton exchanged for a small community in any campaign setting

Adventure Summary

A local beekeeper has gone missing! After investigation in Beeton, the characters enter the caves below town where they discover the giant blister beetle colony responsible for laying waste to Will Dunraith's giant bee colony, destroying many of the other farmers' bee hives, and even the death of a village child. The PCs find the beetle colony's mutated queen, a monstrous mass of chitin and fungus. This hints at something evil at work, and soon the characters find its source: a shrine to Vilim-Zhula, the demon queen of fungi and vermin. There they learn the true source of Beeton's troubles: a fiend-empowered madman.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-3	214	C	Giant bees	2
1-4	214	C	<i>Gaeran Hartson</i> , human Com1/Clr1	2
1-4B	215	T	Floorboard-disguised pit	1
1-5	216	C	Giant blister beetle	1
2-2	218	C	Giant blister beetles	2
2-3	218	C	<i>Seraph</i> , grig	1
2-4	220	C	Krenshar	1
2-5	220	C	Giant blister beetles	3
2-6	220	C	Fiendish beetle queen	5
2-7	221	C	Azure fungus	2
2-8	222	C	Fungal mound	1
2-9	222	C	<i>Kazok-Ithor</i> , quasit	2

Scaling the Adventure

Hive of Evil is designed for a party of four 1st-level PCs. Here are a few ways to modify the adventure for different levels of play:

Stronger Parties (2nd-3rd level PCs): Run the adventure as written, but increase the number of blister beetles in all encounters by one and add an additional HD to the queen. Give Gaeran Hartson an additional level of cleric, as well as a *scimitar of fear*. Add another krenshaar or two to the lair.

Much Stronger Parties (4th-5th level PCs): As above, but add an additional HD to all blister beetles and two HD to the queen. Gaeran is now a 4th level cleric, and is now so mutated that a violet fungi grows like a hunch-backed mass from his body. He also has a pair of 2nd-level apprentices who protect Vilim-Zhula's shrine. Remember to adjust treasure values appropriately.

Getting the Players Involved

There is no shortage of ways to get the PCs involved in the adventure. It might be as simple as them hailing from Beeton and undertaking the mission of rescuing Will or investigating the community's recent rash of misfortune. Other ideas include:

- The characters might serve in the local militia and be ordered to undertake the mission.
- A merchant whom Will supplied with honey, or perhaps an investor in the bee-keeping scheme, hires the PCs to get the operation running again and protect his investment.
- If the characters hail from the environs, any of them might be related to either Helena or Will. This creates a personal tie that heightens the role-playing opportunities for all involved.
- A giant bee killed a traveler along the King's Road, and the local sheriff hires the PCs to travel to Beeton and determine whether charges should be brought up against Will Hartson. This works best if one or more of the PCs are learned, respected for their wisdom, or have noteworthy investigative skills.

Background Story

Helena Margwise did not have to worry about finding a future husband for herself. Pretty and well-liked, she was actively pursued by the young men of Beeton. There were two in particular who sought her attentions. She liked them both, and encouraged them equally.

Gaeran Hartson and Will Dunraith began courting Helena Margwise at the same time. What began as a

friendly rivalry quickly turned into something much uglier as both men vied to become that special someone in her life.

Eventually, Helena found herself falling in love with Will. She ended her relationship with Gaeran and began planning a wedding. Gaeran took the news badly and did everything in his power to change her mind. He begged her to marry him instead, but she turned a deaf ear on his pleas. Soon, Will and Helena were married.

While the newlyweds were exchanging their vows in front of the community, Gaeran Hartson hid in the nearby Darkenfold Forest and swore an oath of his own – that he would exact revenge on Will Dunraith, the man who ruined his life and shattered his romantic dreams. In his irrational frame of mind, he became an easy convert to the seductive preaching of Vilim-Zhula, the demoness of fungi and vermin who lays claim over the fell domain that is the Darkenfold. A manipulative temptress, she slowly drove a stake through what was once a good, if tortured heart. Only when his soul was rotten with hatred and his mind clouded by spores of jealousy did Vilim-Zhula at last lead Gaeran to a forgotten shrine to her worship and there revealed her true demonic nature.

Meanwhile, Helena and Will had settled into married life easily. If Helena missed the excitement of courtship, she was content with the security that came with living with a new husband who adored her. A few years ago Will struck upon the idea of using giant bees in place of the normal bees raised by his fellow beekeepers. It took him some time to get the operation underway and considerable expense to acquire giant bee larvae, but in the last two seasons his vision had finally begun paying off handsomely. His production easily outstripped that of the rest of Beeton's beekeepers combined, providing affluence he had previously only dreamt of.

Gaeran plotted his revenge. Little did he realize, however, that his little plot was serving Vilim-Zhula's machinations as well. Within the safe confines of the fungi-queen's hidden temple, Gaeran chanted and prayed, slowly awakening the dormant demonic power lying therein. He rejoiced when that power corrupted a hive of giant blister beetles and directed their appetites towards Will Dunraith's hive. With a natural taste for bees, the vermin needed only a gentle nudge, anyways.

The assault began only a few days ago, when the beetles burrowed through the floor of Dunraith's barn and began killing his bees. Will realized something was dreadfully wrong when the hive became agitated and several bees went missing. Putting aside his safety, he entered the barn to protect his investment. He never came out, and no villager is brave enough to go in after him.

Beeton and its Environs

Beeton (village): Conventional; AL NG; 200 gp limit; Assets 18,000 gp; Population 450 adults; Isolated (Human 96 %, Halfling 2%, Half-elf 1%, Other 1%).

Authority Figures: Mayor Belross Busex, male human Ari2.

Important Characters: Gaeran Hartson, male human Clr1/Com1; John Mossborn the blacksmith, male half-elf Exp2; Helena Dunraith, female human Ari1; Bayard, tavern proprietor, Halfling male Com2; Father Alnwick, male human Clr2.

Gathering Information

People freely gossip, particularly while over drinks in Bayard's Inn, and PCs who take the time should be able to easily get up to speed on local events. A DC 10 Gather Information check nets one rumor for every hour spent listening around.

- 1 Wolves from the Darkenfold are attacking livestock of late, taking off with several sheep. (Partly true; livestock are being preyed upon, but not by wolves. A lone kenshaar is responsible for the deprivations.)
- 2 Will Dunraith was using giant bees to protect something extremely valuable or scandalous inside his barn. (Untrue)
- 3 Several horses have died suddenly and for no particular cause after grazing in the fields north of town. (True; the horses died after eating grass contaminated by blister beetle residue)
- 4 A young girl, Elizabeth Mossborn, died after being stung by a bee-swarm in the fields north of town. (True; her body lies in state in the church)
- 5 Will Dunraith is mourned by everyone in town, except for Gaeran Hartson. Gaeran never got over Helena's decision to marry Will instead of him, and he's carried a hatred of his rival ever since. (True)
- 6 Helena Dunraith and Gaeran Hartson were having an affair. (Untrue)
- 7 The Darkenfold is not a place one wants to enter. It's tainted by evil, a poisonous forest where nothing grows but gnarled and half-rotted trees and mounds of fetid mushrooms. (True)
- 8 The fairy folk are more frequently seen of late. They've even been sighted in town on occasion, breaking into homes and stalking people (Partly true. Local spriggans are searching for an explanation for the disappearance of several of their

number. This has caused them to become more bold and venture into town on occasion, but they have no evil intentions and tales of their brazenness are greatly exaggerated.)

- 9 By using giant bees instead of normal ones, Will Dunraith had greater production the past two seasons than any other beekeeper in town. He was definitely onto a successful formula. (True)
- 10 An evil ogress hag that resides in the Darkenfold has been angered, and Beeton's recent misfortune is her revenge. (Untrue)

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Village Church: Read or paraphrase the following:

The church is built of fieldstone, though its walls are largely covered by creeping vines. It's humble but proud, like the village it tends.

Tending over the flock of worshippers is Father Alnwick, a heavy man whose bald head always seems to gleam with perspiration. He is dedicated to the community and quite concerned with its trouble, so he will lend his spells to assist the PCs. He can also be coerced to allow viewing of Elisabeth Mossborn's body with a successful Intimidate or Diplomacy check (add a +2 circumstance bonus if they have permission from her father).

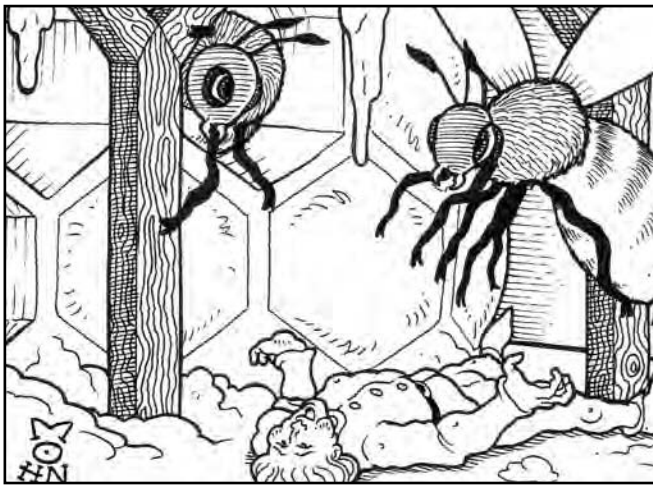
The exposed skin of the corpse is horribly swollen, so badly in fact that her features are almost undistinguishable. A close investigation and a Heal check (DC 12) determines that the skin is actually blistered, not swollen as one would expect of bee stings. In addition, a careful scrutiny (DC 15 Search) shows no sting wounds on the body. This should suggest to PCs that bees, giant or otherwise, were not the cause of death. In fact, Elisabeth stumbled upon a giant blister beetle burrow, was blinded by their acid, and stumbled several hundred meters before succumbing to her wounds.

Any number of individuals in the village can be convinced to guide the PCs to the spot where Elisabeth was found (Diplomacy or Intimidate check DC 12).

Area 1-2 – Mossborn's Smithy: Read or paraphrase the following:

The village blacksmith occupies a squat, smoke-filled shed from which echoes the sound of hammer striking metal. The pounding is relentless and angry.

John Mossborn is a powerfully built half-elf whose disposition has been clouded by the recent death of his daughter. He barely acknowledges visitors and



will be terse even when pressed. He begins any encounter with a hostile attitude.

John Mossborn: Male half-elf Exp2; hp 11; Str 18.

Area 1-3 – Dunraith Farm (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

This is clearly a prosperous farm. The cottage is stately and surrounded by well-tended perennial gardens. Through the open doors of a drive shed you see a fancy new carriage and a fine horse. But the large barn is what commands your attention. Its walls shake violently, and there is an occasionally loud thud from within that causes the walls to buckle dangerously. Most noticeable is the maddening drone coming from within, like that a great swarm of angry bees.

Helena Dunraith is a beautiful young woman, shapely and with hair the color of an autumn sunset. Unfortunately, when the characters meet her she is darkened by despair. Tears stain her cheeks, her eyes are red and swollen from crying and lack of sleep, and her hair is a tangled mess. Helena will cooperate completely and honestly with anyone who promises to rescue her husband. She also offers generous financial recompense (to the tune of 100 gp per character) if the farm can be saved.

The barn is made of solid wood, and stands two stories in height.

Barn Walls: 1-1/2 inch thick; Hardness 5; Hp 15; Break DC 18

Inside, the building is honeycombed by a giant bee hive. Honey drips down from the ceiling and oozes down the walls from cells that have been opened, pooling on the ground below. Characters moving through the honey act as if under the effect of a *slow* spell; those who fail a Reflex save (DC 10) are held fast.

The body of Will Dunraith lies upon the floor, bloated by poison and his skin punctured several times.

A Search check (DC 12) finds a 3-foot-diameter hole in the barn's earthen floor, leading at a 45-degree angle into the ground (see area 2-1). This tunnel was made by the giant blister beetles and leads into their warrens.

Monster: The barn is inhabited by two angry giant bees which represent the sole remnants of a once-large hive that has been systematically decimated by the blister beetles.

Tactics: Thrown into a maddened state by the ruthless assaults, the giant bees attack anyone who enters. Their main concern is flight, however, and if an obvious escape is provided (such as the barn door being left open) they will ignore the PCs and instead fly away. In this event, only characters blocking their flight will be attacked. Similarly, they do not pursue characters into the beetle warren.

Giant Bees (2): CR 1; Medium-size vermin; HD 3d8; hp 13, 10; Init +2; Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft. (good); AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Sting +2 melee (1d4 plus poison); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison (DC 11, 1d4 Con); SQ Darkvision 60 ft, Vermin Traits; AL Neutral; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int –, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills: Spot +5, Survival +1

Area 1-4 – Hartson Home (EL 2): The Hartson home may be the scene of combat. Refer to the close-up map of the home if the PCs enter. Read or paraphrase the following when they first come upon the house:

Several coffins lean against the wall under a shaded porch, suggesting this is the combined home and workshop of the community coffin-maker and undertaker. The building is poorly cared for, however, with moss growing from the rotting shingles and several of the porch's boards lifting with age.

Gaeran Hartson, the village coffin-maker and cemetery groundskeeper, will be found within the shop or the attached home, depending upon the hour. He is a soft-spoken man with wild, ever-darting eyes and an arm that clutches uselessly to his chest, having been crippled by some childhood illness. His sallow complexion and thinning hair are the result of the soul-rotting influence of Vilim-Zhula. He wears loose-fitting clothes to disguise the mass of mushrooms and fungi sprouting from his chest.

He is currently working on a coffin for his former rival, Will, and might be overheard (Listen DC 15)

muttering to himself as he labors: "This one's for you, Will my boy, this one's for you."

Hartson comes across as being perhaps a bit insane, but otherwise harmless both in terms of capability and temperament. Nothing anyone can do will get him to reveal any anger or aggression, save by demonstrating his loyalty to Vilim-Zhula and revealing his role in Beeton's misfortunes which will only come after the beetle caves are fully explored.

If the characters decide to visit Gaeran as part of their preliminary investigation, he is shy and guarded, beginning the encounter with a neutral attitude. He reveals the following information if his attitude is adjusted to friendly or helpful, depending on the results of Diplomacy or Intimidate checks.

Friendly: "I'm making a coffin for Will. His death is a shame, but he brought it all on himself (shakes his head sadly). We used to be friends, a long time ago..."

Helpful: "Poor Will, everyone says. Poor Will. What 'bouts me! Look at me. I'm a cripple. I lost my arm as a child. Will was sick too, but he came out of it fine. Then I lost my heart to Helena. Again, Will came out ahead. Poor Will, they says. What about poor Gaeran?"

The welcome the PCs receive after leaving the caves is the polar opposite. Gaeran realizes he's probably been incriminated by this point, and if given the opportunity flees to the basement where he prepares a harsh greeting.

Tactics: If given advance notice, Gaeran prepares for combat with one or several of *guidance*, *resistance*, and *virtue*. He'll also attempt to flee to his basement. In any event, his first combat action is to cast *obscuring mist*, followed up by releasing hypnotic cloud spores. Only then does he engage in melee combat.

Gaeran Hartson, Male Human Com1/Clr1: CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d4+1d8+4; hp 11;

Init +2; Speed 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 natural, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 11; Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk handaxe +1 melee (1d6+1) or crossbow +2 ranged (1d8,); SA Spellcasting, hypnotic cloud spore; SQ Immunity to spores; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +1, Craft (carpentry) +3, Knowledge (religion) +1, Listen +2, Spot +3; Persuasive, Silent Spell.

SA – *Hypnotic cloud spore*: 5-foot radius; Fort save DC 12 or fall into a catatonic stupor for 1d4 rounds; those failing the save must make another save at DC 8 or hallucinate upon awakening, seeing friends as enemies and acting as if under a confusion spell for 1d6 minutes.

Spells Prepared (3/2; save DC 10 + spell level): 0-level – *guidance*, *resistance*, *virtue*; 1st-level – *cure light wounds*, *obscuring mist*

Possessions: *Vestments of Vilim-Zhula*, crossbow and 12 bolts, handaxe, 12 gp, key to chest at area 1-4B

Area 1-4A – Workshop: Read or paraphrase the following:

The workshop is relatively spartan, little more than a large bench and overhead rafters holding various lengths of wood. A tool box rests beside the bench, and several coffins in various stages of construction lean against the walls.

There's nothing of interest to PCs here.

Area 1-4B – Living Quarters (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

Stepping into the humble quarters, you're taken aback by a sense of neglect that hangs in the air as thick as the must you smell. The only furnishings are a bed, a table surrounded by three chairs, a fireplace for both cooking and warmth, and a wooden pantry, all of which are covered in grime. A plain rug, trekked over with muddy footprints, covers the center of the room. While it's obvious the room is used, it's equally obvious no one has truly lived here for some time.

Vestments of Vilim-Zhula

Vestments of Vilim-Zhula appear as nothing more than rotting, moth-eaten, mildewed cloaks that have no appreciable value. Close inspection (a DC 15 Search check) uncovers arcane symbols threaded into the fabric. There is a slight stench to the cloak, and those wearing it find themselves suffering a -1 penalty to all actions due to dizziness, stomach cramps, and nausea (worshippers of Vilim-Zhula are immune to this effect).

The vestments provide immunity to any spore attack and a +1 natural armor bonus, allow the wearer to *speak to plants* (mushrooms and fungi only) at will, and once per day grant the wearer the ability to *command plants* (mushrooms and fungi only) as per the spell cast at 10th level of ability.

Faint abjuration; CL 2nd; Craft Wondrous Item, *tree shape*, *speak with plants*; Price 1,000 gp.

Gaeran rarely makes use of his home anymore, eating and sleeping in the basement where he feels closer to his demonic patron. The pantry holds cheap plates, cutlery, several mugs, and some foodstuffs.

A DC 15 Search check inside the living quarters reveals a trap door beneath the rug. Beyond the trap door, a ladder leads down to the basement.

Trap: A skilled carpenter, Hartson had no trouble sawing through several floorboards just inside the door and then fitting them back together to create a well-camouflaged pit. Characters who fall through are dumped 20 feet below in a bricked-off chamber measuring 5 feet by 5 feet.

Floorboard-Disguised Pit: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 15 Reflex save avoids; 20 feet deep (2d6 points of damage); Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 15.

Treasure: A large chest hidden under the bed contains Hartson's most valued possessions, but it is locked with a large padlock (Open Lock DC 15). Hartson has the key to the chest on his person. The chest contains 50 gp, a gold ring worth 25 gp, a note (see players handout A), and a *potion of cure moderate wounds*.

Area 1-4C – Basement: Read or paraphrase the following:

A ladder leads down into a dark, damp basement. In one corner lies a mass of rotting foodstuffs, covered in dark mushrooms. A small altar-like table stands against another wall, atop which lies a wooden bowl filled with a porridge-like substance.

If Gaeran has an opportunity to do so, he retreats here to make his final stand. The tight confines limit the number of opponents he has to fight at one time and enhances the effectiveness of his *obscuring mist* spell, and the spores of the black bile mushrooms serve to weaken enemies.

Black Bile Mushrooms (CR 1)

These small, black, grotesquely-shaped mushrooms give off an odious smell. Disturbing them in any way results in the release of a 10-foot square cloud of dark, foul-smelling spores that remain airborne for 1d4 rounds. Any character caught within one of these clouds must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round spitting up black phlegm. As long as the spore cloud hangs in the air, it serves as one-quarter concealment.

The porridge is a stinking substance made from various fungi that tastes even worse than it smells. If ingested, characters must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid being immobilized on the spot with cramps and nausea for 1d6 hours. If the save is made, however, the character is immune for the effects of spores for a 24-hour period. There is enough porridge in the bowl for three doses. Duplicating the obscure recipe requires a DC 20 Craft (alchemy) or Craft (herbalism) check.

Tactics: If engaged in combat here, Gaeran follows his usual set of tactics except for a few minor differences. He positions himself beside the black bile mushrooms, allowing him to disturb them with a free action at will. He does so whenever characters come within 10-feet.

Area 1-5 – Hillside (EL 1): Characters scouring the hillside near where Elisabeth Mossborn was found may find another entrance to the caves dug by blister beetles (Search DC 12). Rangers shown the exact spot where the body was located can similarly find the hole by following the hapless girl's tracks with a DC 13 Survival check. When the hold is located, read or paraphrase the following:

A hole burrows into the ground through soft earth. It measures about 3 feet in diameter and clearly goes some distance below ground as no end is visible.

The burrow descends gradually and poses no danger to characters wishing to climb down. If they make any significant amount of noise, a giant blister beetle comes to investigate and defend the lair. Characters of Medium size forced to fight in these cramped confines are considered flat-footed, and suffer a -3 penalty to both to attack rolls and damage.

Blister Beetle: CR 1; Small Vermin; HD 2d8+2; hp 9; Init +0; Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 16 (+1 size, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6); SA Blister spray, death spray; SQ Darkvision 60 ft, immunity to poison, tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +4

SA – Blister Spray: Once every 4 rounds; range 20 ft.; DC 12 Reflex save to avoid; on a failed save creatures take 1d3 points of acid damage and suffer -2 modifier to attack rolls and ability and skill checks for 10 rounds due to blisters and welts.

SA – Death Spray: Whenever a killing blow is struck against a beetle, all characters within a 5-foot square must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or be sprayed with the foul blistering liquid, as the blister spray ability.

Area 1-6 – Cave Entrance: This is the edge of the Darkenfold Forest. After the PCs have explored for some time, read or paraphrase the following:

The undergrowth thins, revealing several large stones leaning on one another with a yawning cave in their midst. The cave slopes gradually into the ground, curving to the left as it goes to. No man-made supports can be seen shoring up the tunnel.

This cave opening leads gradually into the ground, leading to area 2-4.

Characters that make a DC 10 Spot check see drag marks of an undetermined nature leading into the cave. Those who also succeed at a Track check observe tracks of what appear to have been made by a canine creature, similar to a wolf but much larger.

The Blister Beetle Caves

The caves vary greatly in dimensions, but unless otherwise stated the ceiling is between 7 and 10 feet in height. The caves are all natural and erratic, etched into the limestone by an ages-old stream that has long since dried up. In most cases, except when stated otherwise, the cave floor has been worn smooth and offers no impediment to movement. The entire cave network is completely dark, except for the shrine of Vilim-Zhula.

Blister Beetles

There are a total of 8 “rank and file” blister beetles inhabiting the warren, all loosely controlled by a dominant fiendish female (see area 2-6). While the beetles are occasionally nudged toward a course of action of Vilim-Zhula as she secures her strategic aims, in general they are left to their own devices and act as nature dictates.

They are nocturnal predators with voracious appetites. While they will eat just about anything if food is scarce, their preferred meals are bees and grasshoppers, both giant and normal-sized. Grigs are a novelty and are favored as well. Despite their lack of intelligence, blister beetles will work together in groups of up to five individuals to bring down particularly large prey. Unlike normal blister beetles, the giant variety does not often feed on plant matter. Still, they are a threat to farmers because they leave behind sticky black residue that spoils crops and which is highly poisonous (ingested, Fort DC 16, initial damage 1 Con, secondary damage 2d4 Con).

Even the blood of the blister beetle is dangerous, capable of causing painful welts (as per its blister spray ability). Whenever a killing blow is struck against a beetle, all characters within a 5-foot radius must make a DC 10

Reflex save or be sprayed with this foul liquid.

Standard Blister Beetle: CR 1; Small Vermin; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +0; Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 16 (+1 size, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6); SA Blister spray, death spray; SQ Darkvision 60 ft, immunity to poison, tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +4

SA – Blister Spray: Once every 4 rounds; range 20 ft.; DC 12 Reflex save to avoid; on a failed save creatures take 1d3 points of acid damage and suffer -2 modifier to attack rolls and ability and skill checks for 10 rounds due to blisters and welts.

SA – Death Spray: Whenever a killing blow is struck against a beetle, all characters within a 5-foot square must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or be sprayed with the foul blistering liquid, as the blister spray ability.

Wandering Monsters

Roll d20 every hour while the PCs are traveling in the tunnels and compare the result to the following table. If the PCs are using a light source, add +5 to the roll.

Roll	Result
1-9	No encounter.
10-12	Swarm of bats. The PCs disrupt a colony of bats, which suddenly fly directly towards the characters in a roiling swarm. The creatures are harmless, but players need not know this immediately and might waste spells and other resources in protecting themselves.
13-16	A lone giant blister beetle. Note that there are only 8 beetles in total within the lair. If the PCs have already claimed this number, there is no encounter.
17	Strange noise. Somewhere in the distance, the PCs hear an unsettling noise. It might be Slyph, the grig, screaming in pain and terror as he is attacked yet again; or ominous chanting by Gaeran Hartson during a visit to the shrine of Vilim-Zhula; or echoes of the Krenshar's roar; or the high-pitched wail of violet shriekers protecting the beetle eggs after something agitated it.
18	A wandering fungal mound. See area 2-8; if defeated, remove it from that area.
19-20	Sticky, black secretions upon the floor, actually offal matter left behind by blister beetles. Harmless unless ingested, but unpleasant and mysterious nonetheless.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Warren Entrance: When the PCs look down into the hole, read or paraphrase the following:

A roughly three-foot diameter shaft cuts through the earthen floor at a sharp angle and descends into the darkness below. The earth is loose and occasionally a bunch breaks way and tumbles into the void below. You can't help but think that could be your fate, should you attempt to climb down the shaft.

The shaft descends 25 feet to the caves below. The loose soil, absence of handholds, and the cramped confines make it difficult to navigate successfully. A DC 13 Climb check is required to safely descend; otherwise the character falls and suffers 2d6 damage.

Area 2-2 – Bee Corpse (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

You emerge into a low-ceilinged cave, measuring about 20 feet square. A narrow tunnel winds off opposite where you entered. Scattered wings, legs, and partially consumed giant bee corpses cover the floor. A more recent victim lies nearby, quivering slightly as if in final throes.

The cave is only 5 feet high, meaning Medium-size characters suffer a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls, and a -2 penalty to Dexterity modifiers (if any) to AC. Characters making a successful DC 12 Spot or Listen check realize that the giant bee is not quivering of its own accord; rather, there is something hidden behind its mass, feasting on the carcass.

Monster: Two giant blister beetles are busily feasting upon the giant bee.

Tactics: The beetles are content in their meal, but attack to defend themselves, to prevent access to the lair via the tunnel running off this cave, or if disturbed in any way (characters approach within 10 feet, make loud noises, etc.). If forced to fight, the beetles begin by spitting their blister spray, only raising their heads above the bee carcass. While behind the corpse, the beetles have 3/4 cover. If spray doesn't dissuade the interlopers, the beetles close in for melee.

Blister Beetles (2): hp 9, 11.

Area 2-3 – Meal on the Run (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

You round the corner and suddenly a 1-1/2 foot-tall humanoid with the wings, antennae and legs of a cricket literally flies into your

chest. He lets out a squeal of terror, clearly having not seen you. And the reason is all too clear; his face is a mass of painful welts and blisters, swollen so badly that his eyes are completely obscured.

The grig, a poor fellow named Seraph, was ambushed by the beetles and immediately blinded by a stream of blister spray. He was dragged into the lair and intended as a delicacy for the queen, but he managed to escape and has been on the run for several hours now. He's scared, panicked and desperate – resolved to do anything to escape.

Tactics: Seraph is out of his element. To begin with, he's blinded (and is therefore considered flat-footed). That's bad enough. But he's also lost his fiddle and has used his *invisibility* abilities for the day. Running out of options, he uses *pyrotechnics* and *ventriloquism* to distract any creatures – including the PCs – which he encounters. In the event that doesn't work, he attempts to flee and uses *entangle* on roots dangling through the ceiling to slow pursuit. If cornered, he fights fearlessly to defend himself.

Development: The grig is so frightened that a Diplomacy check (DC 12) is required for him to trust PCs who attempt to communicate with him. However, once they have earned his trust, Seraph willingly joins the characters in order to secure his freedom. He shares everything he knows (see below). A DC 10 Heal check or any *cure* spell heals his wounds, thereby bringing down the swelling on his face and restoring his vision.

Escorting Seraph to freedom is considered an EL 1 encounter for experience point purposes. Healing him should be worth an additional 200 XP reward.

What Seraph Knows: Several members of his clan have disappeared recently and Seraph was one of the individuals tasked with discovering what evil was at work. While sneaking around Beeton, he grew suspicious of Gearan Hartson – the man acted strangely, slept in his basement, and stole out into the woods at night. Seraph followed him to the caves, but that's when he fell victim to the blister beetles.

Seraph, grig: CR 1/2; Tiny Fey; HD 1/2d6 +1; hp 1 (normally 3); Init +4; Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (poor); AC 18 (+2 size, +4 Dex, +2 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +0; Grp -11; Atk/Full Atk Unarmed +6 melee (1 nonlethal); SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 5/cold iron, low-light vision, spell resistance 17; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 5, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Craft (basketweaving) +4,

Giant Blister Beetles

Habitat

Giant blister beetles survive in temperate climates, specifically prairies and light woods. They adapt well to cultivation of the land, and indeed thrive in pastures and crop fields where a steady diet of insects and nutrient-rich vegetation can be obtained. In fact, many farmers consider giant blister beetles a mixed blessing. They feed upon grasshoppers and locusts – both giant and mundane – and thereby keep infestations of these destructive insects to a minimum, but their diet also includes pollinating bees and many crops. Worse, blister beetles secrete an oily fluid which contaminates pastureland and feed, causing livestock to grow ill or die. On balance, they are generally considered a nuisance and exterminated.

Giant blister beetles don't inhabit arid environments, cold climates, or extremely moist areas such as jungle or marsh.

Habits

Individually, a giant blister beetle might lair in a log or hollow of a tree. When present in greater numbers, however, they create or assume a more permanent lair. Most often, these take the form of underground warrens, either excavated by the beetles themselves or by weaker insects that they evict. Giant blister beetles have also been known to inhabit natural caves, abandoned barns, or giant bee nests where they feed upon eggs, food stored in the walls, and even the adults.

Bees are a favored prey of giant blister beetles, but they also eat grasshoppers and locusts, either in normal or giant forms. Small fey, notably grigs, also fall victim to giant blister beetle predation. It's unknown whether the beetles mistake the vibrations of the grigs' wings for those of a bee, if they harbor some preference for the taste of these faeries, or whether they are simply opportunistic hunters. Whatever the reason, no grig community rests easy if a giant blister beetle colony establishes itself nearby. Vegetation also comprises a large portion of a blister beetle's diet.

Few creatures prey upon giant blister beetles, thanks to their ability to secrete foul-tasting black oils from their legs. Ankhegs, the voracious and undiscerning feeders that they are, seem to have no problem stomaching the beetles and constitute a major check to their numbers.

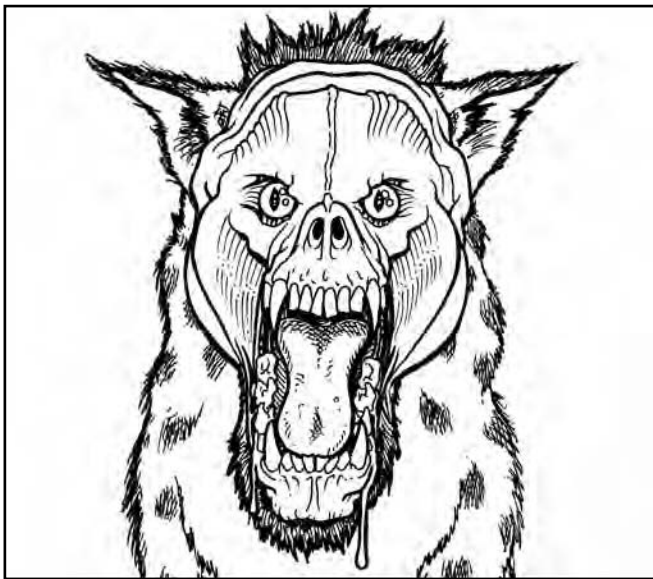
Physiology

Giant blister beetles have long, cylindrical narrow-bodied beetles, often four times as long as they are wide. They range in color from solid gray to black, from yellow-striped to red-spotted. Unusual for beetles, their heads are wider than the first thoracic segments, giving them a distinctive "neck." Though giant blister beetles are omnivorous, their powerful mandibles have been perfectly designed to latch onto and quickly kill prey with vice-like strength.

The oily black liquid which blister beetles spit out as a weapon also naturally bleeds from pores in their legs. This liquid can foul livestock feed and pasture grass, killing sheep, cows and even horses that ingest it (poison, ingested, Fort DC 16, initial damage 1 Con, secondary damage 2d4 Con). The glands that produce this liquid can be extracted from dead beetles with a successful Heal check (DC 12), allowing the acid to be harvested. A failed check destroys the gland and its contents, but also results in the character splashing the oily liquid upon himself and suffering 1d3 points of acid damage. A single dose can be taken from an adult blister beetle. Some primitive cultures, such as goblins, store the acid in dried gourds to be used as missile weapons. Mages have found the acid can be used as a material component to enhance *acid arrow* spells; when used as such, each missile deals 1d3 additional points of damage.

Life Cycle

Blister beetles reproduce and mature quickly. Females lay 2d4 eggs and typically bury them under the earth or deposit them in a hole in the nest. The male then covers the eggs with its blister spray, which both fertilizes them and acts as a deterrent to predation. Within three days the eggs pop open and the young grubs, measuring about the size of a human hand, swarm out. These grubs feed on regurgitated matter provided by females, but are not helpless for long; they reach maturity in about three weeks. Giant blister beetles go into torpor during the winter months, hibernating until the soil warms again in the spring.



Escape Artist +8, Hide +16, Jump +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Perform (string instruments) +6, Search +2, Spot +2; Dodge, Weapon Finesse.

SA – Spell-like abilities (still remaining): 3/day – *disguise self*, *entangle* (DC 13), *pyrotechnics* (DC 14), *ventriloquism* (DC 13).

Area 2-4 – Krenshar Lair (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a 30-by-30-foot chamber with earthen walls and small roots protruding from the ceiling. In the centre of this room lie scattered bones and partially consumed sheep carcasses. There can be no doubt about the creature responsible for this blood feast, for it stands before you, a hideous cross between a wolf and a hyena. Its shaggy mane stands bristled in anger. The creature lets out a heart-staggering roar, and as it does so it peels back the skin from its head, revealing musculature and bones.

Monster: The monster is a krenshar, a scout sent by its pride to locate new territory as their old domain comes under threat from a dire bear. It has been feasting primarily on sheep.

Tactics: The Krenshar attempts to drive away threats with its scare ability. If that fails, it fights to defend itself, but does not aggressively pursue characters that retreat or flee – there is far easier prey to be had than armed adventurers. If the creature suffers more than 5 hit points in damage, it will attempt to jump over the party and flee into the woods.

Development: If the PCs do not kill or at least frighten off the krenshar, the remainder of the pack arrives to take up residence in one week, presenting a whole new problem for Beeton.

Krenshar: CR 1; Medium Magical Beast; HD 2d10; hp 14; Init +2; Speed 40 ft. (8 squares); AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6); Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6) and two claws +0 melee (1d4); SA Scare (as per *scare* spell at 3rd level, Will DC 13); SQ Darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +4, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +6; Multiattack, Track

Area 2-5 – Cave of Webs (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

Your light stretches into a large, irregular cave with several shadow-shrouded recesses along its walls. The ceiling is high above and domed, and from it dangles moss-covered stalactites. Suddenly, from behind you come skittering noises that announce the arrival of three large beetles hungrily snapping their mandibles.

This cave ceiling is some 40 feet above. The former resident of the cave, a recently deceased giant spider, spun a network of webs that covers much of the cave. Because they were designed to snare bats and the occasional stirge, the webs extend from the ceiling to about three feet above the ground. These sheets of sticky webbing can be seen with a DC 20 Spot check; otherwise the approaching creature stumbles into the web and is trapped as though by a successful web attack. Small-sized creatures, including giant blister beetles, are safe to traverse the cave.

Right after the PCs enter the cave, three giant blister beetles attack from behind.

Tactics: The blister beetles are at an advantage in the narrow confines of the approaching corridors, so they press their attack. That being said, they're equally willing to pursue prey into the cave, driving characters into the webs and their ultimate doom.

Blister Beetles (3): hp 8, 11, 14.

Area 2-6 – Queen's Throne Room (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is uncomfortably warm and humid, and smells of rotting vegetation. A shiny film of clinging moisture covers the walls and ceiling and small rivulets drip down to the mass of mushrooms that cover the floor. Acrid steam billows along the floor, emanating from a pool of boiling water that bubbles from the ground in rhythmic burps.

Because of the moisture and slick nature of the

mushrooms, footing in the chamber is considered difficult terrain. Each round of fighting requires a DC 12 Reflex save or the character slips, suffering a -2 to attack rolls and armor class for that round.

The five-foot-wide pool of boiling water is a hellfire spring heated directly from the fires of the Abyss. It gives off a tremendous amount of heat. Characters coming within 5 feet of it take 1d4 points of non-lethal damage. Coming into physical contact with the water results in 2d4 points of damage. The pool also radiates enough heat that it acts as a *heat metal* spell (caster level 3) against characters within 5 feet.

Some of the mushrooms scattered throughout the room are black bile mushrooms (see page 216 for details). The beetle queen knows how to use them to her advantage.

Monsters: Hiding amidst the mushrooms is the beetle queen. It has been tainted by Vilim-Zhula, the demon queen of fungi and vermin, and now a mass of fungi and decomposing matter grows upon its carapace. This provides the beetle with a +4 bonus to Hide checks within in this chamber or any other location of dense fungal growth.

Tactics: During the first round of combat, the queen beetle uses her blister spray to target the greatest number of opponents, followed by bite attacks on those unaffected. She is clever enough to know that unarmored foes are the best targets for melee, and as such focuses on them. If any character stands near the hellfire spring, she'll attempt to bull-rush them into its depths.

Treasure: A search of the cave (DC 15) uncovers a skeleton covered by mushrooms. This is the corpse of an adventurer who ventured into these caves several months ago and never returned. In a rotting backpack is a *potion of heroism*.

XP Award: Because of the challenging environment, the experience award for defeating the blister beetle queen should be treated as an CR 5 encounter.

Fiendish Beetle Queen: CR 4; Small Vermin (extraplanar); HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +0; Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 15 (+5 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d6+1); SA *Smite good* (1/day, +4 damage), Blister spray, death spray, corrupting bite; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to poison, tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits, damage reduction 5/magic, resistance to fire and cold 5, spell resistance 9; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +4 (+8 among fungal growth)

SA – *Blister spray* (Ex): Once every 4 rounds; range 20 ft.; DC 12 Reflex avoids; on a failed save creatures take 1d3 points of acid damage and suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls and ability and skill checks for 10 rounds due to blisters and welts.

SA – *Corrupting bite* (Ex): When bitten, target must make a DC 12 Fort save or take 1 point of Constitution drain as flesh rots into a drippy fungal mess.

SA – *Death Spray*: Whenever a killing blow is struck against a beetle, all characters within a 5-foot square must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or be sprayed with the foul blistering liquid, as the blister spray ability.

Area 2-7 – Nest (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor opens up into an irregularly shaped chamber with numerous alcoves lining its walls. The ceiling is barely four feet high.

This chamber serves as the blister beetles' nursery, with the alcoves serving as nests. If the characters explore the cave, they find one alcove occupied.

A mass of mushrooms and fungi spreads across the walls and floor of this alcove like a seething wave of fetidness, and a heady smell assaults your nostrils. Feeding upon the mushrooms are several large white larva covered in a sticky mucous-like substance. Numerous soft eggs, each the size of a child's fist, lie partially submerged in the foul mass.

The nest contains 10 freshly laid eggs due to hatch in three days time. There are also 6 larva amongst the fungi, each one the size of a human hand but effectively harmless (AC 10, hp 1). These larva grow quickly and will mature into full-sized adults in only a few weeks time. In the meantime, they swarm over and feed upon any organic material that finds its way into the nest.

Monster: Among the mass of unappealing but otherwise unattractive mushrooms is an azure fungus.

Tactics: The azure fungus releases its spores as soon as a creature comes within range. The blister beetle queen, because of its taint by Vilim-Zhula, is unaffected by the fungus' spores and can freely come and go.

XP Award: Destroying the nest and all its contents should earn the characters experience as if they had defeated a CR 1 monster.

Azure Fungus: CR 2; Medium Plant; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; Init -5; Speed 0 ft.; AC 13, touch 8, flat-footed

13; Atk/Full Atk –; SA Hypnotic cloud spore; SQ Plant traits, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref –, Will +0; Str –, Dex –, Con 16, Int 1, Wis 11, Cha 9.

SA – *Hypnotic Cloud Spore (Ex)*: 1/round; 10-foot radius; DC 19 Fort save or fall into a catatonic stupor for 1d4 rounds; those failing the save must make another save at DC 12 or hallucinate upon awakening, seeing friends as enemies and acting as if under a *confusion* spell for 2d6 minutes.

Area 2-8 – It Fell From Above (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

Thin tendrils of greenish mist roil into this cave from some vent or crevasse in the far wall and creep along the ground, but otherwise the cavern is empty.

The mist flows from area 2-9, but is harmless despite its ominous appearance and unsettling smell. The mist seeps in through the seams of a secret door (Search DC 13).

Monster: Characters entering the cave should make a DC 20 Spot check to notice the fungal mound lodged in a crevasse in the ceiling. Those who succeed in the check have their attention directed toward the threat by drops of mucous landing on them from above, mere seconds before the fungal mound attacks.

Tactics: The creature targets only one character, attempting to entangle and kill her, dragging the corpse into its crevasse where it can be consumed at leisure. The rock affords the fungal mound half cover.

Fungal Mound: CR 1; Medium Plant; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +0; Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 7 (+2 natural, –5 Dex), touch 5, flat-footed 7; Base Atk +0; Grp –2; Atk/Full Atk Tentacle +1 melee (1d6–2 plus poison); SA Entangle, poison (Fort save DC 11+1 per round entangled or begin suffocating); SQ Plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 7, Dex

1, Con 12, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Escape Artist +10, Hide +10; Weapon Finesse.

Area 2-9 – Shrine of Vilim-Zhula (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

A foul-smelling, greenish mist clings to the floor of this cave, rising tentacle-like around your thighs. Moisture clings to the air, a blanket of oppressiveness that adds to the disquiet of this unsettling place. The entire room is cast in a pale glow from luminous fungi that grows along the walls. In the middle of the room stands an altar surrounded by mounds of grotesque mushrooms, obviously the place of worship for some fell deity.

An icy woman's voice shatters the silence. "You have dared to defile the shrine of Vilim-Zhula. How foolish. Swear fealty to my name and I shall spare your pathetic lives. Leave now and I may forget your indiscretion. But if you become unmanageable, I shall have to rot your flesh and mold your soul. Decide now how you shall have it."

The coldness of the voice causes your body to shiver and your skin to goose-bump. It takes all of your will to simply hold your ground in its presence.

This cave is indeed the shrine of Vilim-Zhula, Queen of Fungi and Vermin. However, the voice is not hers. Instead, it's that of Kazok-Ithor, a quasit in her service who has cast *invisibility* on himself and laces his voice with a *cause fear* spell.

Development: Characters need to make Will saves to resist the *fear*. They then need to decide how to proceed. Those that opt to leave are allowed to do so without interference. Characters who swear fealty to Vilim-Zhula are in for a rude awakening (see sidebar). Defying "her" results in vile curses cast in their direction, items being thrown about the room,

Swearing Fealty to Vilim-Zhula

Characters who swear fealty to Vilim-Zhula are in for a nasty surprise. Clerics automatically lose their spell-casting abilities, as their deities shun them. All characters suffer –2 penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks as their skin becomes sickly looking and puss-ridden, and an unhealthy odor hangs about them. As the individual slowly acclimatizes to his own stench he becomes immune to nausea; he cannot be sickened, even by magical means.

At the end of a month, if the character does not recant his oath, he is struck low by a sudden illness characterized by lapsing into a fevered sleep (Fort DC 14, initial damage 1 Wis, secondary damage 1d4 Wis). Vilim-Zhula comes to the character again in his dreams, offering her embrace. If the character accepts, either willingly or through weakness (Will save DC 15 to resist), he completely throws himself into her fold. The exact repercussions are best left up to the individual GM, but at the very least the character's alignment becomes chaotic evil.

and perhaps a claw attack to simulate divine anger.

In any event, characters should make a DC 15 Listen check. Impersonating a demon lord is great entertainment for Kazok-Ithor, and PCs may hear quiet giggles from the same direction as the demon-queen's disembodied voice, hinting at the ruse being played on them.

Tactics: If the PCs refuse to leave or grovel before his might, Kazok-Ithor goes into a rage and begins attacking like a child in tantrum. He's a coward at heart, however, and after suffering a single wound he attempts to flee. In the event that escape by conventional means proves impossible, he changes himself into a giant centipede and retreats through fissures in the wall. Self-interest far outstrips his loyalty to Vilim-Zhula, so if captured he grovels for his life and promises to tell the characters everything he knows (which includes the origins of the shrine, the nature of Gaeran's fall, and the plot against Beeton).

Treasure: On a successful Search check (DC 10), PCs discover that the flat stone lying across the altar's top slides off to reveal a hollow inside the altar itself. It contains a wooden chest and what appears to be rotting rags, but which are really *Vestments of Vilim-Zhula* (see sidebar on page 215). The chest is lined with lead (hardness 8, hp 5, Break DC 25) and secured by lock (Open Locks DC 15). The key to open the chest has long been lost. The contents include a velvet bag filled with 12 semi-precious stones worth 25 gp each, 130 gp in loose coins, and 3 silver bars worth 10 gp each. This is the sum of the resources of the cult that once worshipped here. It is hardly a hoard, but considering the lack of widespread appeal towards worshipping a fungi deity it's not all that surprising.

Kazok-Ithor, Quasit: CR 2; Tiny Outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil); HD 3d8; hp 15; Init +7; Speed 20

ft. (4 squares), fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 18 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -6; Atk Claw +8 melee (1d3-1 plus poison); Full Atk 2 Claws +8 melee (1d3-1 plus poison) and bite +3 melee (1d4-1); SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Alternate form, damage reduction 5/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 feet, fast healing 2, immunity to poison, resistance to fire 10; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +0 (+2 acting), Hide +17, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (herbalism – fungi only) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +6; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

SA – *Poison:* injury, Fort DC 13, initial 1d4 Dex, secondary 2d4 Dex.

SA – *Spell-like abilities:* At will – *detect good, detect magic, invisibility*; 1/day – *cause fear* in 30-foot radius with save DC 11.

Further Adventures

Beeton is rid of demonic influence now – but the dangers aren't gone forever. The krenshar pride may still move in to area 2-4 based on discoveries by its scout. And the shrine to Vilim-Zhula might not be the only one in the area. Another still-undiscovered shrine could begin spreading evil to other local minds with dark thoughts.

In a less ominous direction, Helena Margwaise may decide to restart her life, and she needs new breeding stock for her giant bees to do so. The heroes might be commissioned to capture a pair of *live* giant bees – or, even more difficult, a live queen. Even if Helena isn't interested in starting over, you can be sure the rest of the local beekeepers were impressed by Will Dunraith's accomplishments. Somebody's going to want some giant bees.

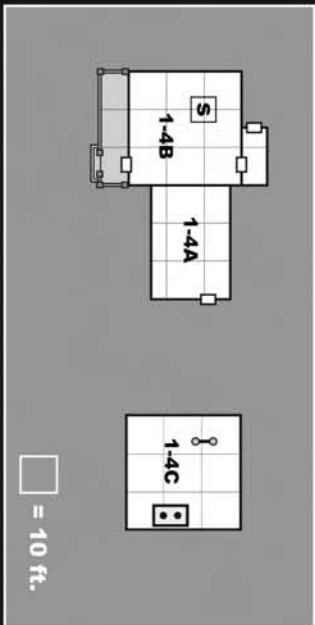
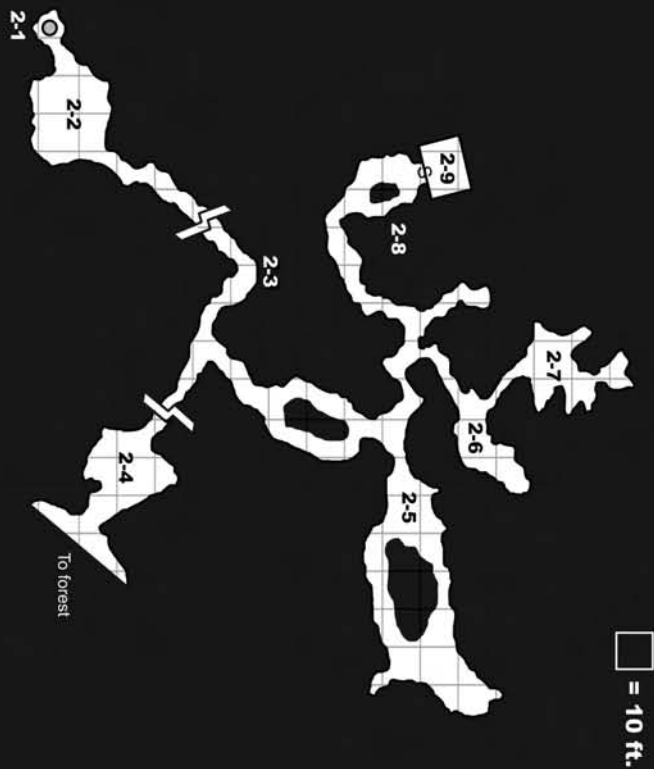
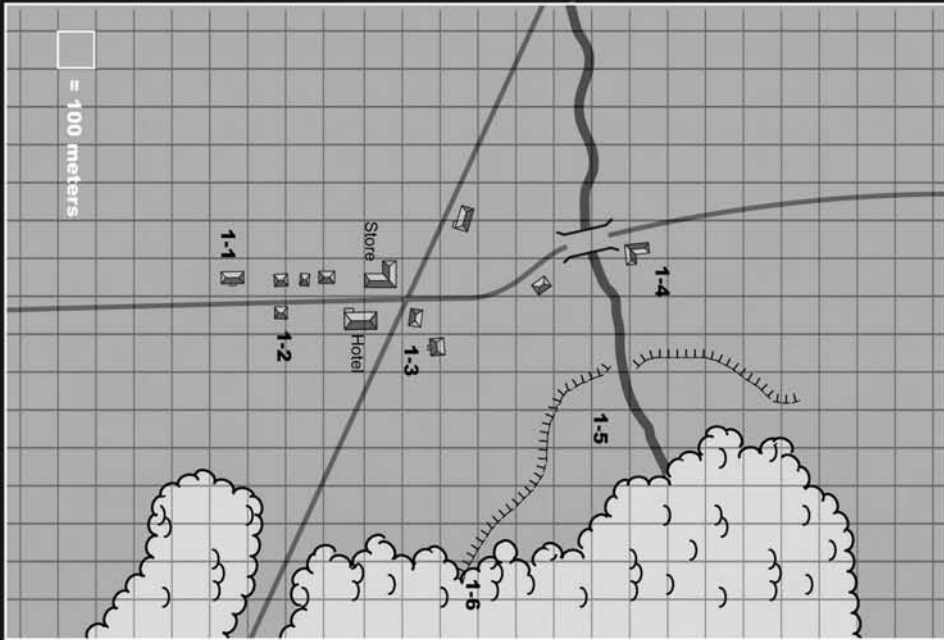
Players' Handout A

Dearest Helena,

I know you said your decision was final, that you had moved on, that your marriage was happy and forever. Right now, you must think you've made the right decision. Will is charming and handsome, whereas I am clumsy with words and crippled of body. Will is wealthy and respected. I, on the other hand, am poor and barely tolerated, I fear. But I have one thing your husband will never possess. Power. Not that which comes by money or office, but the kind of power that comes when you hold a man's life in the palm of your hands. I alone possess that power, and it's invigorating. Even as my body rots, I feel the energy coursing through my body. I wish you could share it with me. She wishes you could share it too, if only you'd give me your heart and her your soul.

Love Always, Gaeran

Hive of Villainy



Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Crystal Shrine

By Jeff LaSala

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Crystal Shrine is a short adventure that introduces four to six 2nd-level PCs to an extraordinary environment as well as a series of deadly encounters. The adventure will appeal to psionic PCs, but characters who are not psionic will still find it engaging. A fair mix of classes is suitable, though a rogue will help counter the dangers of their cunning enemy and anyone knowledgeable in the ways of the underdeep will recognize the rarity of the environment.

Adventure Summary

Word has reached the PCs of a deposit of unusual rock in a region of the underdeep. A city of svirfneblin, it is said, will pay well to learn the location, dimensions, and particulars of this curious locale. The PCs investigate the deposit, which proves to be a series of crystalline chambers, only to learn that the chambers are more than they seem. They have attracted an assortment of rare creatures and their current master is a slaving lunatic: a derro who believes himself the future master of the underdeep. In addition, the diminutive creators of the prismatic complex are a wonder in themselves, wor-

thy of study and respect. The PCs will learn about the strange environment and must defeat the derro and his traps, thereby inheriting the complex for their own use and a small cache of valuable magic and psionic items.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-6	229	C	2 monstrous centipedes	2
1-7	230	T	Frictionless slide trap	2
1-8	230	C	4 phrenic dire rats	1
1-9	231	C	Velth, derro Psi1 Spiked pit trap	4
1-10	232	C	Crysmal	3

Scaling Information

The Crystal Shrine can be scaled up for higher levels simply by adding additional psion levels to Velth and having him make more hit-and-run attacks at the PCs

through the walls with his powers. The centipedes should be Huge, and the crysmal should be advanced to 7 or 8 HD.

Getting the Players Involved

The crystal shrine can be placed anywhere underground, be it the depths of the underdeep or accessed from a shallow vault beneath an elven wood. Here are some possibilities:

- In an underdeep-based adventure, the PCs hear word that a city of svirfneblin is seeking the location of a cave of unusual rock. According to rumor, a scouting party once found this cave but lost it again when a party of duergar chased the deep gnomes out and claimed the caves as their own. Now the svirfneblin want to reclaim their discovery and will pay well for its finding. After exploring the region, the PCs find the entrance to the mysterious chambers.
- While wandering through the underdeep – or a more shallow subterranean area, such as one connected to the offshoot tunnels from *The Dragonfiend Pact* (DCC #11) – on an unrelated errand, the PCs stumble upon a well-hidden passage that leads to the crystal shrine.
- A psionic PC has gradually been drawn to a new region in the underdeep for reasons she doesn't understand. Something has called to her, a psionic pulse that is difficult to ignore and induces strange, otherworldly dreams. When followed to its source, the PCs find themselves facing the tunnel that leads to the crystal shrine.

Background Story

Twenty years ago, psions from another Material Plane world *planeshifted* to this one, seeking future sanctuaries for their beleaguered people. A day would come, their seers surmised, when they would have need of an environment that would nurture their descendants and their inherent talents. They visited various worlds, always choosing remote subterranean locations. On one such sojourn to this world, they found a well-hidden temple carved from the rock within the underdeep. Clearing it of its resident vermin, the psions then sealed the complex and left behind a small colony of creatures native to their world but not to this one: metadilos, small animals whose lithotrophic magic transforms the rock they feed upon into a hard, prismatic state. This new material is extremely receptive to psionic emanations. The psions call it crystallis. Sealing the temple door with powerful magic, they returned home.

Two decades passed, but the psions haven't yet returned. Perhaps they were eradicated. Perhaps they

never had the need for their sanctuary, or perhaps the time simply hasn't come yet. Whatever the reason, the metadilos have, as the psions intended, transformed the temple into a complex of translucent, crystalline walls.

The metadilos remained alone with their work all these many years – until recently. A scouting party of svirfneblin stumbled upon the temple while searching for a new vein in which to mine far from their home city. Their leader, a wizard of considerable skill, solved the intricate puzzle on the magical door sealing the temple. He led his awestruck team into the crystalline complex and discovered the metadilos at their work. Fascinated as deep gnomes are by unusual minerals, and never having seen the like of crystallis, they resolved to study this wondrous new environment for a time before reporting their find to their home city.

Unbeknownst to the svirfneblin, they had been tracked by a squad of the sadistic derro. Enraptured by their discovery, the deep gnomes were caught unawares when the derro attacked. In the ensuing conflict, the svirfneblin wizard was hurled into the gorge and all but one of his team were slain. Yet the derro had not expected so fierce a counter attack from the gnomes. The surviving svirfneblin fled, and one derro, a cunning lackey named Velth, survived the battle as well.

Overjoyed at his discovery of the temple, Velth's racial madness culminated when a psionic talent within him began to awaken within close proximity to the crystallis. Forsaking his home and people, Velth plans to make the temple his own personal luring ground to wealth and power; never mind that few, if any, know of this place. The derro are insane.

Current Situation

Velth now lives in the temple, venturing out only for food and for victims. He has never had psionic training, but has found victims enough to develop a crude but effective understanding of his wild talents. He has also learned how to make good use of his powers in conjunction with the crystal.

With the occasional appearance of giant centipedes, Velth suspects that the depths of the gorge (area 1-8) is a breeding ground for the monstrous vermin. Although he hates the light, he wisely carries fire with him at all times to ward them off. Velth isn't sure yet what to do with the metadilos. He quickly realized they were responsible for the crystal and lets them be, knowing they can expand his realm. Yet in his bouts of madness, he occasionally kills one.

The metadilos themselves have nearly exhausted the mineral nutrients of the complex and will soon venture down deeper into the gorge (within a few weeks). Most

of them are attached to the walls of the gorge already, though a few of them wander about the complex scouring the remaining nutrients.

Player Beginning

However they arrive there, the PCs will have discovered or been shown to a shrouded tunnel all but obscured from view. Those few who found it in recent years were turned away by the magic door in area 1-1. With the arrival of the *svirfneblin* only weeks before, the once hidden complex has been penetrated.

Before you is an unobtrusive cleft in the wall just large enough to admit a human-sized figure. The more spacious tunnel around you continues its sinuous curve into the darkness, making this crack in the wall seem like the byproduct of an earthquake worthy of no one's attention.

If the PCs explore the tunnel, they find that it winds for nearly half an hour before ending in area 1-1.

The Crystal Complex

Originally carved from the rock long ago by an unknown race, this complex was eventually claimed by a large band of troglodytes. The bulk of their tribe dwelled in nearby warrens, but they made these chambers into a temple for their reptilian god Lagos, the Scaly God. Once choked with the musk of this malodorous race, time, circumstance, and adventurers have all but washed away the troglodyte presence. Nearly twenty years ago, the psions claimed the temple and left behind the metadilos, whose feeding process converted the stone into crystallis, an exceptional material conducive to psionic use.

Every surface that was once stone is now crystallis, so the walls, floors, and ceilings are prismatic in appearance. Ice-like in translucence, crystallis refracts light in such a way that when peering through a 5-foot square of it (such as through the wall between areas 1-3 and 1-5), objects and creatures appear blurred but discernable. Between 5 and 15 feet, objects are colorful but indistinct in shape. Beyond 15 feet, crystallis is largely opaque, like a haze of white distorted by shapes and colors from chambers beyond. On the fringes of the complex, the white fades to grey where crystallis meets igneous rock. This is as far as the metadilos can reach through the stone with their proboscises (see the appendix for more information about the metadilos).

Illumination reflects and magnifies in this environment. Every single chamber is considered fully lit when a light source at least as bright as a torch is carried into it. Illumination weaker than a torch is merely doubled in its range. Light passes through walls as well, but its range is halved. For example, if a person standing by the

south wall in area 1-3 carries a torch, it will shine bright light 5 feet into the room and another 10 feet of shadowy illumination.

Walking upon crystallis is like walking on the surface of the ocean near the coastline; while looking down, one can see the ocean floor only a few dozen feet away. The GM is encouraged to reinforce the alien nature of this experience. Generally speaking, the igneous rock begins again roughly 15 feet away from the outermost edges of the complex.

Crystallis is extremely conducive to psionics, though it is not psionic itself. Psionic creatures peering through the walls are considered unimpeded by obstacles with most powers, such as rays, bursts, emanations, and spreads up through 15 feet. For example, a psion can target an opponent 10 feet away with *mind thrust* even if a wall separates them, as long as he can see his opponent. Crystallis is not considered stone for the purposes of spells such as *transmute rock to mud*, though it is vulnerable to the *shatter* spell or any other effects that manipulate or affect crystal. If a psionic PC manifests any power within the complex, they can make a Psicraft check (DC 17) to recognize the crystallis as psionically receptive. If a *detect psionics* is used, however, the crystallis detects as nothing.

Unless otherwise noted, corridor ceilings are 10 feet high and room ceilings are 15 feet high.

Crystallis: Hardness 9; hp 180 hp; break DC 70; Climb DC 20.

Wandering Monsters

The complex is largely free of wandering monsters, but if the PCs linger anywhere for too long, there is a 50% chance of another Large monstrous centipede crawling up from the gorge in area 1-6. If it does, it will seek them out. Make this check every hour. If the PCs take a very long time in exploring the cavern, Velth will grow impatient and try to lure them forward with liberal use of *ghost sound*.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – The Magic Door: Read or paraphrase the following:

You find yourself standing in a nondescript chamber of dark gray stone which at first appears like any of a hundred such small caves. A small circle of red light off to the west immediately arrests your attention. Beneath it, you spy a strange metal door otherwise hidden in the gloom. The light appears to emanate from a circular gem inlaid into the door, and the metal itself appears inscribed with many runes.

This enchanted door was placed here by a magic-

using ally of the plane-traveling psions. It was meant primarily to seal off the temple from the surrounding region. At one time the door was cloaked with magic to hide its existence, but the svirfneblin who discovered it stripped away the illusion and solved the runic puzzle that sealed it shut. Close inspection will reveal that the door is already open and is, in fact, slightly ajar.

A successful Decipher Script check (DC 20) or Spellcraft check (DC 18) reveals that a gordian rune puzzle was once built into the metal door, but it has long since been solved. Shutting the door does not lock it, but an *arcane lock* would certainly suffice. The door has no regular lock.

Treasure: The red gem, firmly affixed to the metal, is an *ioun stone* (deep red sphere). It was placed here to deter the metadilos from exploring any further in this direction, as they are repelled by strong magic. Removing the *ioun stone* requires a successful *dispel magic* (against caster level 6th) cast directly upon the door to weaken its placement, then it must be pried loose with the appropriate tools. Though this is a valuable treasure indeed, it will not likely be easily acquired just yet.

Area 1-2 – Crystalline Realm: Read or paraphrase the following:

After passing through the doorway, you feel as though you have stepped into a new realm altogether. The temperature drops slightly, and the walls around you – even the ceiling and floor beneath you – shift almost immediately from dark grey to varying shades of white. The rock appears to have been smoothly hewn from delicate crystal! Yet the sheer amount of the prismatic substance around you suggests that it is anything but delicate.

This is the northmost point that the metadilos have ventured to, having shied away from the magic of the *ioun stone* and the door itself.

When the PCs advance to the space marked A, continue with the following:

Within the depths of the wall to your right you glimpse movement. You can just make out what appear to be slender, vein-like tendrils of violet sweeping slowly back and forth as if through water. It's hard to tell from here, but it almost appears that the tendrils move through the solid crystal. A cloud of tiny grey motes lies between you and the tendrils.

What the PCs are seeing through the crystallis are two metadilos feeding, though they are actually clinging to the eastern wall of area 1-4, twenty feet

away. From this angle, the PCs can only make out their incorporeal proboscises slowly drawing out the last remaining nutrients from the igneous rock. The PCs are unlikely to be able to do anything more than watch from here.

Area 1-3 – The Greeting Chamber: The svirfneblin had begun to chip away some of the crystal to take samples. In one corner of the room a small iron pot still contains some samples they'd taken, small shards that Velth hasn't bothered to relocate yet.

After the PCs enter this chamber, Velth takes notice of them (drawn by their light) and makes his presence known. As he enters area 1-5, continue with the following:

Suddenly a black shape stirs in the whiteness across the room, making you aware of another room behind the prismatic wall. The shape moves forward, revealing itself to be a squat figure in dark clothing. It presses itself up against the wall, and through the warped, glass-like substance you can see a pale, grinning face wreathed with wild white hair and a long drooping mustache. The dwarf-like man opens his mouth and lets out a soundless shout even as he holds up a grey and red object for you to see. When he presses it against the wall, it leaves a dark brown stain. Dead eyes stare listlessly back at you. The figure is holding a rotting, decapitated head in his hand. From its size it must belong to a halfling or gnome.

Velth will drop the svirfneblin head and run into the western corridor, lingering there until the PCs continue their exploration. If they have sufficient light, they'll be able to mark his basic position through the walls.

The moment the first PC moves into the space marked B, Velth will manifest an *energy ray* targeting that character (see Velth's stats on page 232). Then he'll run off to the south again and await them in area 1-9.

Treasure: There are 17 tiny but well-shaped shards of crystallis in the iron pot. If sold to a collector of crystals and gems, each is worth only 1 gp, but to a knowing psion, each is worth 5 gp as they can be used to create psionic shards (of the +1 variety) even if the psion cannot identify this type of crystal.

Area 1-4 – The Lake: Read or paraphrase the following:

A spectacular scene opens before you: a natural chamber of crystalline white stretching more than seventy feet from end to end. A small waterfall issues from one side, nearly twenty

feet in the air, pooling into a small lake, then gradually flows into the opalescent wall at the other end. Through the clear-running water, you can see small, cave-dwelling fish with iridescent scales swimming about and even the lake's floor perhaps ten or fifteen feet deep. Two arched crystal bridges span the pool, creating a pathway around the water to exit again on the same side from which you entered. Above you, glittering stalactites protrude like icy teeth and from the ground rise knifelike stalagmites.

Nearly every stony inch of this cavern has been crystallized by the metadilos, including the lake's bottom, the stalactites and stalagmites, and the bridges. The ceiling is about 70 feet high.

Velth planned to rig a trap of some kind with the bridges, but hasn't yet done so. There is no danger in this room, only beauty. With an easy Spot check (DC 10), the PCs notice the metadilos clinging 15 feet up the eastern wall. Beyond the metadilos, they can just make out the corridor in area 1-2 and may make the connection that these are the creatures they saw from afar.

Clinging to the crystal wall above you like barnacles are a pair of strange creatures. At first, they resemble legless beetles, with ridged, shiny blue carapaces. Protruding from a crevasse in the center of each is a single, slender appendage that reaches like an arm into the wall. Where it touches the crystal, the limb fades into near-transparency and a network of violet wisps moves slowly through the crystal. Beyond them you can just make out the corridor you passed through upon entering the complex. These are the creatures you saw from afar.

The metadilos will ignore the PCs entirely and will only defend themselves if attacked.

Treasure: Some of the skinnier stalagmites can be broken off to form weapons. A successful Strength check (DC 20) is sufficient to break off any of them – there are five such contenders. Each can be wielded as a masterwork spear, though throwing one incurs a -2 penalty. In addition, at the bottom of the lake is one of the svirfneblin's weapons which Velth has failed to find: a white, mithral +1 *gnome hooked hammer*. A Spot check (DC 22) is required to notice it.



Metadilos (2): CR 1; Tiny Magical Beast; HD 1d10+1; hp 9; Init -2; Spd 5 ft., climb 5 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp -6; Atk/Full Flagellum +3 melee (1d2); SA Mineral drain (every 4 rounds touch attack deals 1 point of Con damage), shock (every other round 1d4 electricity damage to any creature touching the metadilos); SQ Immunity to electricity, cold resistance 10, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref -3, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 7, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 3.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +10; Toughness.

Area 1-5 – Chamber of Slaughter: Read or paraphrase the following:

The stench of rot fills this chamber, and patches of long-dried blood mar the glassy floor and walls. It is obvious that a violent battle once took place here, but the spoils have been removed. Bones, ragged pieces of clothing, and two severed heads lie strewn about the room. Above the carnage you can see that a picture of some kind has been carved into the wall.

In this chamber the svirfneblin and the derro began their fight. Most of the bodies Velth has thrown into the gorge, but the monstrous centipedes have occasionally come to this spot to scavenge. Velth's crysmal ally (area 1-10) usually chases them off again. One head belongs to a derro, and the other, a deep gnome.

The troglodytes who once lived here carved a great bas-relief into the eastern wall depicting their people hatching from eggs at the foot of a great, lizard-like monstrosity – Lagos, a savage god of caves and reptilian creatures. The scene is difficult to make out now that the rock has been entirely crystallized. At one time, the troglodytes made this chamber a hatchery for those destined for their clergy. Rounded depressions in the floor along the eastern side of the room where eggs were once nestled are all that remain of this.

Area 1-6 – The Gorge (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The darkness pulls back like a curtain as you enter a wide open space, the scintillating walls revealing a spacious cavern. A smooth bridge of transparent crystal stretches across a wide gorge. At the opposite end the bridge is swallowed by a large dome of deep shadow. On either side of the bridge, the cavern reaches out an indeterminate distance. Above and below, there is only darkness and the smell of water and minerals.

The crystallis bridge, though stronger now than its original state, is unnerving to walk upon, as looking down reveals only the darkness below. It is not slippery, but a fall will almost certainly lead to any creature's demise. The bottom lies thousands of feet below.

Unless the PCs are already familiar with the *darkness* spell, a Spellcraft check (DC 22) is required to identify it as such. Velth placed a *darkness* on a copper piece and dropped it on the south side of the area (as noted on the map). Although placing the *darkness* on the bridge itself would have been more dangerous to his intruders, Velth doesn't want them to fall into the gorge and deprive him of their valuables. Note that the *darkness* endures for only 30 minutes, and it was created only a few minutes before the PCs' arrival.

At the bottom of the gorge, far, far below, a colony of monstrous centipedes thrives, kept alive by tributaries branching out from the river that passes through area 1-4. The presence of carrion has recently drawn their interest to this level of the gorge, but Velth's crystal ally has kept their numbers in check. In their mindless search of food, the centipedes still venture up now and again. Consequently, two monstrous centipedes now lurk along the cavern wall underneath the bridge on the southern side.

Area D: The majority of the metadilos cling to walls near the area marked D, and anyone on or across the bridge may make a Spot check (DC 15, or DC 20 within the shadow illumination of the *darkness* spell) to notice them. Once they've fully sapped the walls of all nutrients, the metadilos will begin to venture deeper into the gorge. So far they've only crystallized the walls of the gorge thirty feet up and down from this level. There are 25 in all, including those in area 1-4.

Tactics: The PCs' presence attracts the centipedes. They begin to crawl along the underside of the bridge the moment the PCs begin to cross it, eventually twisting around to attack. PCs on the bridge can make a Spot check against DC 14 to notice the centipedes' advance *through* the crystalline bridge. Failure will result in the centipedes gaining a surprise round.

Monstrous centipedes, Large (2): CR 1; Large Vermin; HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk Bite +3 melee (1d8+1 plus poison); SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Hide +6, Spot +4;

Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 11, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Area 1-7 – Storage (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This room is bereft of furniture, but through the opposing wall you can see a large black shape. From its downward angle, you can see that it lies upon a lower level than this room and is accessed from the doorway across the way.

Originally intended as a storage chamber, Velth has made a simple trap of this room. A gradual incline leads down into a smaller space. Pushed against the wall is a large chest of black metal. Velth has emptied it and dragged it from area 1-10, now using it as bait for his trap. There is only a not-quite-dry *svirfneblin* skull within. It is obvious that the lock on the chest is broken.

Velth discovered that grinding fragments of crystallis creates a fine, exceptionally slippery powder. Velth has dusted the inclined corridor with it. At the bottom of the incline is a roughly-hewn 20 feet drop that the troglodytes once used for food storage.

Noticing the powder at all requires a Spot check (DC 25) or a Search check (DC 15). The moment a character steps into the space marked C, he or she must make a Reflex save to catch himself on the wall before slipping down the frictionless incline into the 10 feet pit. If anyone in metal armor blunders into this trap, the ruckus will be quite loud and will likely elicit a distant laugh from Velth (who is likely lurking across the bridge in area 1-6).

Treasure: Within the chest, easily opened, is 1 gp and 4 dried, shriveled tongues of Velth's former derro companions. This treasure is another sign of the derro's madness.

Frictionless Slide Trap: CR 2; proximity trigger; no reset; DC 22 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 5 (brush away enough powder to allow traction).

Area 1-8 – False Treasure Chamber (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The horrid stench of decay assails your senses before your attention is drawn to a pile of bodies in the far corner of this chamber. Exposed bone and tatters of leather are all you can glimpse of what used to be dwarf-sized figures. Small, grey-furred shapes and gleaming red eyes stir amidst the remains as you look upon the scene, as it appears that you've interrupted the scavenges of some very large rats.

A family of phrenic dire rats recently investigated the complex, having been attracted to the newly exposed crystallis through the opened door in area 1-1. Though they are psionic, they still scavenge like regular dire rats and have chosen to feed on what remains of the derro and svirfneblin bodies.

Allow the rats a Listen check to hear the PCs when they enter area 1-6 (DC 12 if the PCs are making no efforts to move silently). If they succeed, the rats will instinctively have manifested *force screen*. If the PCs do anything other than immediately retreat from this room, the rats attack.

Because all walls are translucent, the secret door is more difficult to spot than it used to be and requires a Search check (DC 23) to find.

If the PCs fight the rats, the crysmal in area 1-10 notices them. It will crawl over to view them through the crystallis of the secret door, but it will move slowly. It has learned from its time here that its body is well-camouflaged in this environment. A DC 17 Spot check is required to notice it. Even if the PCs spot it, the crysmal will only scrutinize. If they act aggressive, it will crawl back to the vault and await them there. If the PCs open the secret door, however, they will have to fight it.

Treasure: If the rats are defeated and the carrion picked through, the PCs can find the one valuable that Velth has not found. A severed svirfneblin hand still bears a silver ring set with a green tourmaline (total value 110 gp).

Phrenic dire rats (4): CR 1/3; Small Magical Beast [Augmented Animal, Psionic]; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease); SA Disease, psi-like abilities; SQ Low-light vision, naturally psionic (+1 power point), power resistance 11, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Spot +5, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Psi-like Abilities (Sp): 3/day – *defensive precognition*; 1/day – *force screen*. Manifester level 1st.

Area 1-9 – The Shrine of Lagos: Read or paraphrase the following:

When you step into this prodigious chamber – as beautifully crystal-white as everywhere else – your gaze is drawn up above banks of stairs toward a great altar and a translucent throne.

Though it is cloaked in a conspicuous dome of shadow, you can make out the crystalline head of an immense lizard-like creature jutting from the wall above the altar. Arrayed upon four wide pedestals like gleaming ice sculptures are large figures carved of the same crystal as the entire complex. Yet these statues depict warriors of reptilian bearing, holding massive morningstars and holding out claws as formidable as swords.

Characters with an appropriate Knowledge skill (dungeoneering or underdeep local) can make a check (DC 12) to recognize the statues as troglodytes, though they are twice the size of the reptilian humanoids themselves.

The giant lizard head is merely a representation the troglodytes made of their god Lagos. It is imposing but harmless. The four pedestals rise five feet above the landing atop each bank of steps. A curiously shaped groove has been carved into the throne since its original creation to accommodate a tail. This throne was once used to seat the high shaman, whom the troglodytes considered god-like in omniscience.

Another *darkness* spell has been placed upon another copper piece and laid on the ground at the top of the steps (as noted on the map). An open 10-ft.-by-10-ft. pit with metal spikes lies at the center of the second bank of stairs. A Spot check (DC 10) is required to even notice it (DC 15 within shadowy illumination).

A level, 10-ft.-by-10-ft. space before the throne once concealed a trapdoor that was used to dispatch visitors who displeased the shaman. A slight protrusion at the foot of the throne could trigger it, but time has broken the device. Now, sufficient weight upon it (40 lbs.) is enough to collapse the trapdoor, which swings open just as easily in its new crystallis state as it did when it was made of stone. The rusty iron spikes at the bottom make the trap slightly easier to locate through the translucent trap door.

Tactics: Velth himself now waits in the space marked E. The throne provides him with cover, and though it doesn't hide him well, the *darkness* does. Before the PCs' arrival, he will have manifested *inertial armor*. The first PC who comes within range of his position will be the target of an entangling *ectoplasm* power (25 ft. range). This will most likely be the last power point he can use this day. He will attempt to suppress the power's display (Concentration check DC 16) and thereby not reveal his presence just yet. If he succeeds, his attack will be a surprise round and his location will remain unknown. Immediately following this action, however, Velth will leap out and attack his foe even if the target is not entangled, beginning with a

throwing axe. He will try to lure a PC to fall into the pit if possible.

Development: Unless the PCs have reached area 1-10 already, the crysmal from that area will be watching the battle through the secret door. If it appears that Velth is losing or is slain quickly, it will immediately join the fight. If a target is within range of its *mind thrust*, it will target them through the wall. If not, it will push open the secret door and engage them to the best of its ability.

Spiked Pit Trap: CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d3 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 15 (wedge the doors to prevent collapse).

Velth, derro Psi1 (1): CR 4; Small Monstrous Humanoid; HD 3d8+1d4+4; hp 22; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (19 with inertial armor), touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk Masterwork warhammer +5 melee (1d6+1/x3) or throwing axe +6 ranged (1d4+1 and poison); SA Poison use, spell-like abilities, sneak attack +1d6; SQ Madness, spell resistance 15 vulnerability to sunlight; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 5, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +10, Listen +2, Move Silently +8; Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

Madness (Ex): Velth uses his Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of his Wisdom modifier, and has immunity to confusion and insanity effects. Velth cannot be restored to sanity by any means short of a miracle or wish spell.

Poison Use (Ex): Velth carries 5 doses of greenblood oil and has already applied some on his throwing axes. He is not at risk of poisoning himself when handling poison.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will – *darkness*, *ghost sound*; 1/day – *daze* (DC 13), *sound burst* (DC 15). Caster level 3rd. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Psion Powers Known: (3 power points) 1st – *energy ray*, *entangling ectoplasm*, *inertial armor*.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex): Velth takes 1 point of Constitution damage for every hour he is exposed to sunlight, and he dies if his Constitution score reaches 0. Lost Constitution points are recovered at the rate of 1 per every 24-hour period spent underground or otherwise sheltered from the sun.

Possessions: Masterwork warhammer, 3 throwing axes, black leather armor, *potion of cure light wounds*, steel crowbar, and a large black pearl worth 600 gp (that Velth has been planning to use to replace one of his own eyes).

Languages: Undercommon, Terran.

Area 1-10 – The Treasure Vault (EL 3): The secret door to this area can be detected with a DC 20 Search check. Read or paraphrase the following:

Sitting in stark contrast to the white prism walls of this chamber are two large chests of black metal. Each one is scored with numerous dents and one of them appears to have been pried open. A small pile of gems and silver coins glitters in one corner. Hovering over the treasure is a large arachnid seemingly made of crystal with small blue gems for its many eyes. It quivers for a moment, then springs forward toward you!

In these three chests the psions left behind a cache of items they might need upon their return. Velth has already used some of what he found and traded the rest with other underdeep travelers on his ventures outside the complex. The third chest he has not succeeded in opening. A simple knock spell would suffice to open it. The psions have the original key.

Shortly after claiming the crystal complex as his own, Velth had a visitor: a crysmal. After sizing each other up for a fight, Velth found himself able to communicate with the gem-like spider. Though it could understand Terran, it could not itself speak. The two began an uncertain alliance. The crysmal would frighten off mindless predators like the giant centipedes and the derro would lure in new victims, victims who would likely be carrying what the crysmal prizes above all: gems.

Tactics: If the crysmal did not join the fight in area 1-9, then it will be here now, and will attack immediately. The PC with the most gems in her possession will find herself the primary target of the crysmal's attack.

Treasure: Velth has managed to pry into one of the chests and now keeps some of his treasure in here as well as some of the psions' valuables. The chest contains 330 gp, a *potion of bear's endurance*, and a *power stone* (containing *body adjustment* and *psionic tongues*).

The other chest, to Velth's frustration, is still locked (Hardness 10, 25 hit points, Break DC 28, Open Lock DC 27). It contains a *dojze of bestow power* and 20 *power stones*, each containing the *sustenance power*.

Wrapped in a leather sack is a large, 8 lb. shard of light blue crystallis infused with a psionic energy that attracts metadilos. Every few days it sends out a psionic pulse through the surrounding metal, rock, and crystal that metadilos (and sometimes psionic creatures) are sensitive to. It encourages them to

favor rock that is closer to the shard than rock that is not. In this way the metadilos slowly convert the region around them in a pattern desirable to the psions. Until now, it has kept the metadilos from venturing down into the nearby gorge. The shard has no other powers. It was created by the psions for this very purpose. It might sell to a knowledgeable psion for 100 gp.

Laid in a nest of silver coins (85 sp) in one corner is the crysmal's collection of gems: a 100 gp amethyst, a 50 gp moonstone, a 100 gp garnet, and a 500 gp aquamarine. The gems and crystals that comprise the crysmal's body may also be sold for a total of 700 gp.

Crysmal: CR 3; Small Elemental (Earth, Psionic); HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +4; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Sting +7 melee (1d3+3); SA Psi-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, elemental traits, immunity to fire and cold, resistance to electricity 15; AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +9, Climb +5, Jump +5, Listen +2, Spot +10; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes.

Psi-Like Abilities: At will – *control object, control sound, detect psionics, empty mind, mind thrust* (2d10, DC 13*); 3/day – *psionic dimension door*. Manifest level 2nd. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Conclusion

Once Velth and the crysmal have been removed, the PCs will have free run of the complex. So long as the door in area 1-1 remains open, however, other creatures will begin to investigate.

At the GM's discretion, the crystallis may have additional properties, such as:

- Any time a psionic creature stands within the crystallis complex, it always retains at least 1 power point in its reservoir. In other words, if it has only 1 power point and manifests a power requiring the use of 1 power point, the creature needs expend none to power it. However, to actually *use* further points, the creature must wait 10 minutes. This means a psion depleted of all power points could still manifest *my light* indefinitely. Note that this point cannot be used to add to a character's existing reserve to manifest higher-leveled powers.
- All powers manifested within the crystallis complex are treated as though affected by the Extend Power feat.

These properties make this environment very valuable indeed, and perhaps exceedingly useful to psionic PCs themselves as a "home base" for their underdeep adventures. Alternatively, psions or the svirfneblin city will pay well for its location. In sheer coin, they will pay up to 15,000 gp, but the PCs would do better to simply make allies of such parties.

The PCs can break off pieces of crystallis (such as those found in area 1-3) and try to sell them. This will eventually draw further attention to the source, however, and gradually devalue the crystal as a whole.

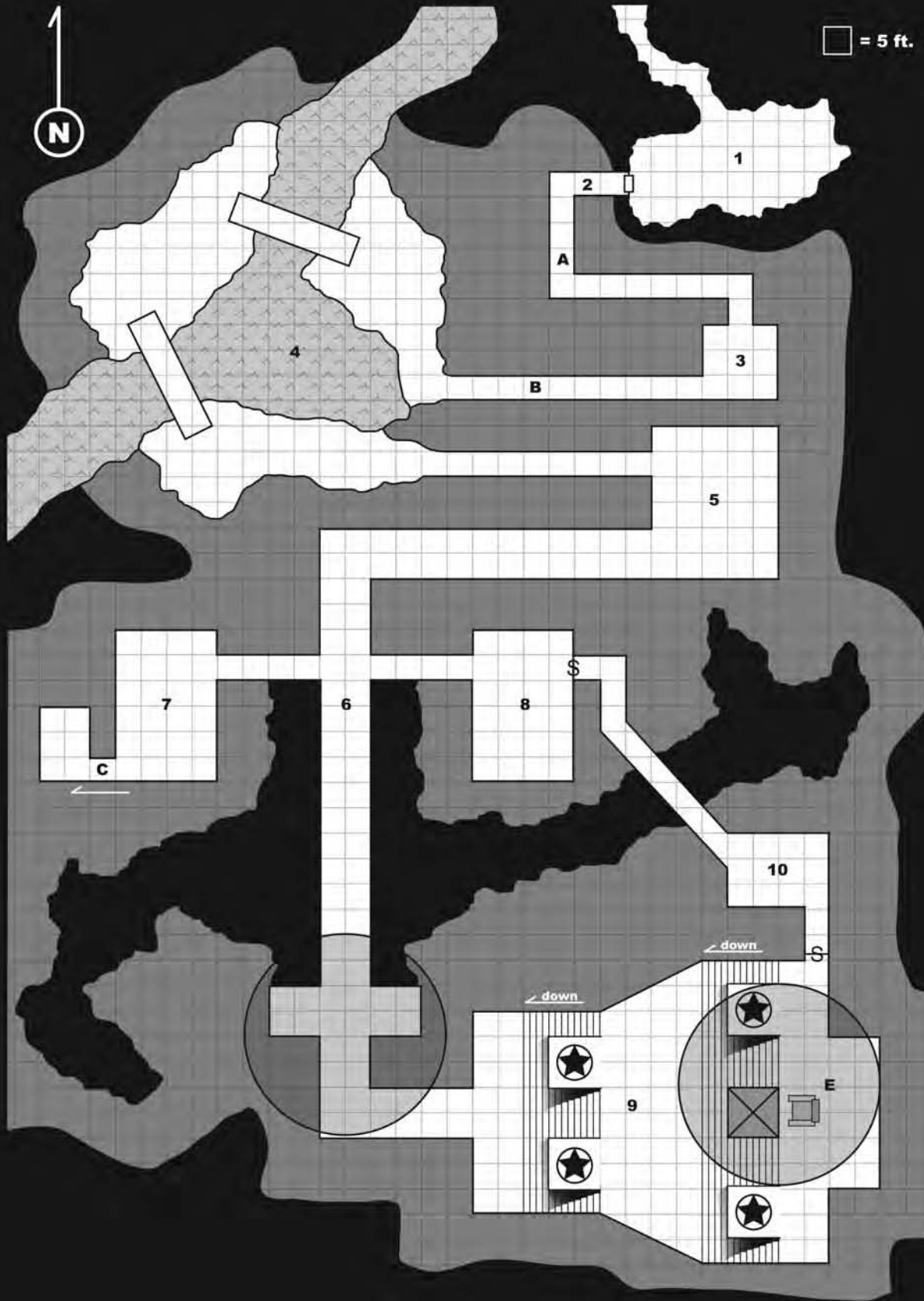
The metadilos themselves represent a rare find. Study of them would be invaluable to both wizards and psions, and providing a live specimen to an interested party can yield 1,000 gp per creature or more.

Further Adventures

Any long term occupation of the crystal complex will inevitably draw curious explorers. As valuable as the crystal caves are to possess, the PCs will likely have to contend with other claimants. Some possibilities include:

- The svirfneblin wizard who first discovered the complex may have lived. Velth never saw him die; he only saw him fall. If the wizard returns, he may lay claim to the complex but he will be grateful to the PCs for dispatching the derro. They will have earned a friend in him just as well as if they'd informed the svirfneblin city of the crystal complex.
- Both the locked chest from area 1-10 and the *ioun stone* from area 1-1 are quite valuable, and it may take some time for the PCs to find the power to open and remove these. The *ioun stone*, especially, is a highly-coveted item, and the PCs may find themselves hunted by a collector of such rare treasures.
- If word reaches any troglodyte tribes that this lost shrine has been discovered, they will seek to reclaim it. That it has been transformed into a temple of crystal is surely a sign from their wicked god that their time has come!
- Lastly, the psions themselves may return for their new sanctuary. Whether they are a good, neutral, or evil people is up to the GM. As well, the psions needn't be human. They could be elans, dromites, or even xephys. Knowing the usefulness of crystallis, they will be eager to dwell within the complex and will most certainly want to reclaim their cache of psionic goods.

The Crystal Shrine



Dungeon Crawl Classics

The Dripping Temple

By Rob Manning

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-2



Introduction

The Dripping Temple is designed for 4-6 characters of 1st level. While the characters can be of any basic character class, a good mix of character classes is helpful. A good-aligned cleric would be helpful, for both healing and advantages against undead.

Adventure Summary

The characters come across a cleverly hidden entrance to a topaz mine. Inside they find a forsaken derro outpost. During their exploration, they overcome the traps laid by the last paranoid survivors of the derros, encounter the undead remains of the colony, and discover an ancient temple to a strange twisted deity. After defeating the guardian of the temple, a derro-sized flesh golem, the PCs find a hidden passage to a crypt where a being from the infernal planes awaits a new group of victims.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
A-1	237	C	Medium monstrous spider	1
A-3	237	C	2 small animated objects	2
		P	Elevator key	—
A-4	238	T	Four traps	0-2
A-5	238	T	Pit and spear trap	1, 2
A-6	239	C	Animated cart	2
A-7	239	C	2 small water elementals	2
A-8	239	T	Hail of needles trap	1
A-9	239	C	Digger gnome	2
T-1	240	C	Ogre skeleton, 3 goblin skeletons	2
T-2	241	C	Shrieker, violet fungus	4
T-3	241	C	3 skeletons	1
T-4	241	C	2 ogre skeletons	3
T-6	242	C	2 derro zombies	1
T-7	242	C	Derro flesh golem	4
		T	Flame jet trap	2
T-8	243	C	2 mold-infested zombies	3
T-9	243	C	Painshrieker, 2 derro zombies	5
		T	Poison needle trap	2

Scaling Information

The Dripping Temple is designed for 4-6 characters of level 1, but may be adjusted to suit parties of different sizes or level. If any PCs receive enough XP to level up, allow them to do so during the module. Consider adjusting the adventure as follows:

Stronger Parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 3rd level): Double the hit dice of all zombies, due to the powerful sustaining force offered by the alien slime. Add +4 to the DCs of all traps, and consider increasing trap damage by one die. Advance the painshrieker in area T-9 by 1-2 levels as a fighter. Add hit dice to the derro flesh golem in area T-7. Consider changing the zombies into ghouls or even ghosts for a bigger threat.

Getting the Players Involved

One way or another, the characters must come across a well-hidden entrance to the topaz mine that begins this adventure. The following hooks may help in involving the players:

- The characters are traveling through a small town as part of another endeavor. When they reach the town square, they find the villagers lamenting the loss of a prized retriever. The villagers heard the dog baying in the night up in the foothills and then the roar of a rockslide silenced the hound. The owner of the hound spots the characters and attempts to hire them for 50 gold pieces to retrieve the hound.
- The villagers tell the tale of the ghostly gnome that wanders the foothills. The PCs are sent out at dusk with stories of a long-lost mine collapse that caused the ghost's death. The ghost is benevolent and shows the PCs the hillside where the mine is hidden. All the ghost wants is a proper burial for the gnome remains in area A-2.
- A newly-opened cave tunnel is releasing luminous gasses. The nebulous glowing clouds frighten the village at night and the characters are asked to find the source of the lights.
- A small earth elemental has gone berserk in the rocky hills. Its rampage caused the tunnel to be exposed. The characters hear the rampage still taking place and investigate.
- The characters are wandering through the rocky hills and hear the roar of a major rockslide. They decide to investigate.

Background Story

Long ago, a small clan of derro split off from traditional derro worship when their savant leader opened a gate to the infernal planes and brought forth a champion. The derro followed their new spiritual leader to a hallowed-out cavern complex infested with slime and fungi. Their infernal champion, a creature known as a painshrieker, led the derro warriors in overtaking the small, dark tunnels, easily vanquishing the goblins and ogres that dwelled there before the derro arrived. The previous inhabitants were sacrificed deep in the tunnels at the altar of the dripping temple dedicated to the derro's new god.

The dripping slime and fungi that infested the tunnels turned out to be the downfall of the new colony. It poisoned the brains of the worshippers and caused them to rise up after their deaths as undead creatures. A handful of derro, those who had taken up quarters far from the temple, were not affected by the slime, and the colony was split into two groups: one slime-maddened, one not.

Shortly after the slime-madness began, the derro halls were breached by gnome miners working a vein of topaz nearby. The derro slaughtered the invading gnomes, rapidly clearing out the rest of the gnomish mine. The retreating miners were saved by their intricate lift system, which the derro could not figure out. The gnomes ascended to the surface in their lift and collapsed the mine, sealing the derro within and scattering to find their fortune elsewhere.

The derro survivors took up residence in the topaz mine, far from their dripping temple. They set traps to protect themselves from the return of the gnomes and their own mindless undead brethren. The derro savant finally fell to old age, as did the few remaining derro in the mine. But all of their traps survived, and their infernal champion still lived within the dripping temple.

Years later, rocks shifted on a hillside, and the topaz mine was exposed to the world once more...



Player Beginning

Adjust the text below to match the adventure hook you're using, then read or paraphrase the following:

The rocky trail becomes more and more overgrown as it rises into the foothills. Small weeds become bushes that soon give way to larger saplings as the path winds farther from civilization. Eventually, the path is completely obliterated by the remains of a rockslide. The hill above reveals a gaping hole in its side and the evidence of timber beams are visible in the mouth.

This is the entrance to the decades-lost topaz mine. Add any description needed to cover any of the plot

hooks given, if used:

- The whirling dervishes of the berserk small earth elemental near the top of the hill (Spot DC 10 to notice).
- A set of tracks to the wounded hound in a nearby thicket (Search DC 18).
- The gnomish ghost.
- The scent or sight of the luminous gas, which is harmless; it just smells of rot and decay.

The Gnomish Topaz Mine

This level of the mine is slightly damaged from the collapse. The rough walls are cracked; the floors are uneven and covered with debris. Running or charging requires a Balance check (DC 13); failure indicates the character falls prone. There are no doors on this level. Ceilings average a height of 7 feet throughout this level.

Weakened Rough-Hewn Stone Wall: 3 ft. thick; hardness 6; hp 350; Break DC 40; Climb DC 18.

Areas of the Map

Area A-1 – Entry Tunnel (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The entryway is mostly cleared of rocks, though a few are still scattered down the passageway. Scrambling over one of these is a fairly large spider. It is headed toward the opening of the cave.

Tactics: This beast was staying out of the weather. It was attracted by the footfalls of the PCs. It attacks on sight.

Medium Monstrous Spider: CR 1; Medium Vermin; HD 2d8+2; hp 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk bite +4 melee (1d6 plus poison); SA poison (Fort DC 12, initial 1d4 Str, no secondary), web; SQ Darkvision and tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +7, Jump +0, Spot +4.

Area A-2 – Main Tunnel: Read or paraphrase the following:

The entry hall widens into a chamber with many small cots laid out in disorderly rows. One is

piled with several blankets. The room is lit by magic of some kind. A hallway continues deeper into darkness.

The room is lit by still-functioning *continual light* spells. The surviving gnomes grabbed as much as they could and left the mine in a hurry. There are 25 cots and 12 overturned footlockers. One mundane gnome skeleton lies on a cot under a pile of rotted blankets. A Search check reveals:

DC 10: 1 gnome hooked hammer (20 gp)

DC 12: 3 rough-worked topaz gems (10 gp x3)

DC 18: A magnifying glass (100 gp)

DC 22: 3 rare bottles of wine (150 gp)

Area A-3 – Lift And Fountain (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

A large metal platform dominates this small 15-foot square area. Standing atop it is a detailed life-size metal statue of a gnome holding a pick and appearing to shout at the ceiling. A large lever is built into the opposite side of the platform. It seems to have three settings and is now pulled to the right of the statue.

A working fountain burbles out water into a basin on the west wall. Two cruder metal statues of gnomes holding picks stand near the basin.

The two cruder statues are actually monsters and were instructed to attack anything that enters the room.

The Lift: The lift system is both mechanical and magical in nature. The mechanical apparatus will not work until at least one pint of liquid is poured

into the open mouth of the detailed statue. After that happens, the lever can be moved until the lift stops moving, at which point more liquid must be poured to start it up again. The lever's three positions are:

- Toward the statue's left hand (moves the elevator down)
- Middle (stops the elevator)
- Toward the statue's right hand (moves the elevator up)

If the lift is set in motion, it descends 200 feet to area A-4.

If a full pint of any liquid other than water is poured into the mouth (oil, alcohol, etc.), the lift is powered, and a secret compartment in the base of the statue opens in addition. This action reveals the treasure.

Tactics: The two statues are considered animated objects. They wade in and strike with their picks until destroyed. Don't forget to subtract hardness from damage inflicted. They cannot be disarmed as the picks are fused to their arms. The command words to program these (and all other) animated objects in the caves are long gone, and in a dialect of Gnomish different than that which most PCs will know.

Treasure: There is a rough-cut topaz (80 gp) in the bottom of the mold-choked basin (Search DC 10). The secret compartment under the statue holds a +1 *short sword*, three *potions of cure light wounds*, and a *wand of color spray* (5 charges). The password "guard" is stamped on the wand in an odd dialect of Gnomish.

Gnome Statues, Small Animated Objects (2): CR 1; Small Construct; HD 1d10; hp 5 each; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk light pick +1 melee (1d4/x4); SA -; SQ hardness 5, construct immunities; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: -

Area A-4 – Greetings From The Derro (EL 2, 2, 0, 2):

This level of the mine is undamaged and much larger than the upper floor. The floor is uneven and covered with debris. Running or charging attempts require a Dexterity check (DC 13). There are no doors on this level. Ceilings are 10-12 feet on this level.

Rough Hewn Stone Wall: 3 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 540; Break DC 50; Climb DC 22.

Once the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The lift comes to a halt in a larger room scattered with bones. Directly in front of you is a pyramid of skulls. A cavern stretches away into the cobwebbed darkness. To the north, there is a moldy, sagging table holding a rusty metal box and a few gems in a pile.

This room has several traps and loud warning devices that the derro once used. Both the pile of gnomish skulls and the rusty box have a *fire trap* spell cast on them. There is also a *magic mouth* triggered to shout when passed. A hooked net equipped with bells hangs just outside the lift room.

Fire Trap (x2): CR 2; 5-ft. radius blast (1d4+7); Reflex save (DC 17) for half damage; Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

Magic Mouth Trap: CR 0; triggered as soon as someone steps foot on the floor of A-4; three loud shouts.

Hooked Net Trap: CR 2; triggered by tripwire (as indicated on map); Atk +5 melee (1d3 plus see note); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25. *Note:* Characters in 10-ft. square are grappled by net (Str 18) if they fail a Reflex save (DC 14).

Treasure: The gems on top of the box are cracked and flawed, worth a total of 10 gp. Inside the box is a *cursed ring of clumsiness* (which appears to be a *ring of feather falling*).

Area A-5 – Further Greetings (EL 1, 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The passageway widens again with a small bookcase set into the north wall. There are a dozen moldy books mildewing on the shelves.

A 10-ft. by 10-ft. area in front of bookcase is a covered pit. The floor of the pit also triggers a spear to fire from behind the case. Even if the spear misses the characters, it hits a gong hidden on the opposite wall, making a loud clang.

Treasure: The books are mostly ledgers and records of the mining operation, but wedged in between the damp pages is an arcane scroll with *ray of enfeeblement* and *slow*.

Hidden Pit Trap: CR 1; no attack roll necessary; fall 20 feet (2d6); DC 20 Reflex save avoids; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

Spear Trap: CR 2; triggered when weight of 50 pounds hits floor of pit; fires at waist level from the bookcase; Atk +12 melee (1d8/x3); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. *Note:* 200-ft. max range, target determined randomly from those in path.

Area A-6 – The Wild Cart Cave (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

Three mine carts are scattered around this rather large area, two near a loading dock of sorts and a third tipped over beside a mound of debris. The area is covered with prominent patches of a slime-like mold. It drips from the ceiling and envelops most of the room's surfaces. A detailed metal statue of a gnome similar to the one on the lift stands near the archway that leads further into the darkness.

The cart farthest from the PCs, near the dock, is an animated object. It is larger and moves faster on its wheels than the ones in area A-2. The treasure is in the cart's carrying bin. The mold is harmless, though disconcerting. The statue is benign as well.

The concealed door is actually just a curtain of the slimy moss covering a small opening 8 feet from the floor (Search DC 20).

Tactics: The cart tries to crush anything alive in this room that it can see, using its speed to its advantage. Another of the gnomish inventions left behind, the cart was left alone by the derro since it is trapped in this room with the level floor.

Treasure: One of the mine carts holds 2 metal flasks of holy water (50 gp), 3 roughly cut topaz gems (20 gp each) and 1 polished gem (110 gp).

Animated Cart: CR 2; Medium Construct; HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +0; Spd. 70 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –; Atk/Full Atk slam +2 melee (1d6+1); SA none; SQ hardness 5, construct immunities; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -5; Str 12, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Area A-7 – The Flooded Tunnel (EL 2): The PCs have to succeed at a DC 15 Climb check to arrive at this encounter. (A similar check is necessary to return to the main part of the caves.) Failure means the character takes 1d6 damage from falling down the steep incline 30 feet to the water's edge. Once the characters have descended, read or paraphrase the following:

The small tunnel slopes down from the cart room and a set of natural stairs descends into water. The water is completely choked with floating pads of slimy moss. The tunnel splits into two directions twenty feet after the water starts. There is about three feet of air above the water's surface. The water's depth is unclear from here.

The water is only about three feet deep. The individual tunnels stop about 10 feet after the split.

A glint of something reflects from the end of the southern hand tunnel (Spot DC 10). Two small water elementals skulk around the treasure at the end of the tunnel.

Tactics: One of the elementals rises up and tries to drench the party's light source while the other one moves to cut off one PC from the rest of the party. Both elementals use power attacks, unless they make no successful attacks for two rounds. Neither one uses its vortex ability in the shallow water.

Treasure: The reflective glint from the end of the tunnel is the metallic surface of a blue, beetle-shaped *scarab, golembane* that only works against flesh golems.

Water Elemental, Small (2): CR 1; Small Elemental (water, extraplanar); HD 2d8+2; hp 11, 13; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +1; Grp –1; Atk/Full Atk slam +4 melee (1d6+3); SA water mastery, drench, vortex; SQ Elemental, darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +5, Power Attack.

Area A-8 – The Derro Abode (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

A scorch mark about twenty feet in diameter engulfs most of this room. It was once a laboratory but only the workbench remains. There are glass shards and shredded papers spread all over the room. A small overturned cot and a tipped-over wardrobe are the only other furnishings.

This room once served as a bedroom lounge for the leader of the surviving derro. She was the creator of the magical defenses of this part of the mine but was destroyed when trying to create a *ring of shooting stars*. The explosion also ruined all of her notes and spell books.

Treasure: The wardrobe contains some very moldy cloaks and a locked metal box. One cloak still has a silver clasp in the shape of an apple worth 60 gp (Search DC 15 to locate). The box (Open Lock DC 16, break DC 25) has a needle trap that fires out of the keyhole when picked. It contains a *feather token*, *whip* and a gold ring with a symbol of a wave imprinted on it (150 gp, no magic).

Hail of Needles Trap: CR 1; Atk +20 ranged (2d4); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

Area A-9 – The Pit (EL 2, 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This cavern is lit by several continual flame

spells. There is a small body of water behind a retaining wall to the northeast. To the south, a large exposed pit spans from wall to wall in the hallway. It appears that the hall continues for a long way beyond.

The pool of water is the home of a species of albino crawfish that the derro used to eat. The crawfish are mundane and not dangerous.

Hiding in an alcove is another animated object. This one is shaped like the digger gnomes from area A-3, but larger and equipped with a flamethrower. In addition to the slam attack, once a round it can fire a *burning hands* spell from a wand fused to its arm.

Tactics: The flamethrower tries to burn anything in this room that it can see. Another of the gnomish inventions left behind, the gadget was left by the derro to help guard this end of the caves.

Trap: The 10 foot wide exposed pit is 20 feet deep and completely prevents passage, unless the indi-

viduals use special means. Climb (DC 18) or Jump (DC 15) checks must be used to proceed.

Digger Gnome with Flamethrower, Animated

Object: CR 2; Medium-Size Construct; HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +0; Spd. 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk slam +2 melee (1d6+1) or *burning hands* (10-ft. burst; 2d4 damage; Reflex DC 14 for half); SA *burning hands*; SQ hardness 5, construct immunities; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -5; Str 12, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Possessions: wand of *burning hands* (26 charges). The wand can be removed with a DC 23 Strength check, but the character must also make a DC 10 Dexterity check or he accidentally damages the wand in half in the process, and rendering it useless.

Pit Trap: CR -; no attack roll necessary; fall 20 feet (2d6); DC 20 Reflex save avoids; Search DC -; Disable Device DC 20.

The Dripping Temple

This area of the cavern complex was designed for larger creatures. The floor is still treacherous, though for a different reason. The floor, walls and ceilings are covered with slimy mosses and molds a full inch in depth. This is interspersed with patches of all varieties of mushrooms. Running or charging attempts require a DC 15 Balance check or the charger falls prone.

The doors on this level are made of solid wood. They are stuck shut due to the overgrowth of slime. Ceilings are 12-15 feet high on this level.

Anyone who spends more than three months in this area will contract cackle fever from the intensity of mold spores in the air (see description in DMG).

Rough Hewn Stone Wall: 3 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 540; Break DC 50; Climb DC 27.

Doors, wooden: 1-1/2 inches thick; hardness 3 (from rot); hp15; Break DC 16.

Areas of the Map

Area T-1 – Skeleton Slaves Hall (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

This room might have once been a barracks, as there are many bunk beds and what seems to be a couch in one corner. The details are hard to make out because a carpet of slimy fungus covers everything, extending into the two hallways to the left and right of the room.

Long ago, the derro savant animated the conquered ogres and goblins. These undead slaves now rest under mounds of slime. Describe the horrible sight of the skeletons rising up from mossy lumps on the floor, as they have not moved in a long time. The ogre skeleton is farthest from the PCs, near the hall leading to area T-2.

Remember that fast movement requires a DC 15 Balance check or the character falls to the ground.

Treasure: Hidden beneath one of the lower bunks on the north wall (Search DC 25), in a flat wooden carrying case buried in slime, are 25 +1 arrows, 1 vial of greenblood oil poison, and a *potion of sneaking*.

Ogre Skeleton: CR 2; Large Undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Full Atk 2 claws +7 melee (1d6+5); Atk claw +7 melee (1d6+5); Space/Reach 5 ft./10 ft.; SA -; SQ DR 5/ bludgeoning, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

Possessions: masterwork chain shirt (slightly tarnished, 200 gp).

Goblin Skeleton (3): CR 1/3; Small Undead; HD 1d12; hp 8, 6, 5; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Full Atk 2 claws +0 melee (1d3-1); Atk claw +0 melee (1d3-1); SA -; SQ

DR 5/ bludgeoning, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 15, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

Area T-2 – Outer Guardroom (EL 4): This small room was where the derro first gained access to the temple and the other rooms. It has been barricaded and reinforced with rocks and boards and debris. Removing the barricade takes sixty man-hours of labor (up to four people can participate). The passage beyond the obstruction can lead anywhere the GM desires, including part of the mines near the town of Silverton from DCC #1: Idylls of the Rat King, or to the Mysterious Tower from DCC #3, or to any other site for the PCs' next adventure.

If PCs are using a light source, the shrieker begins its defense as soon as it sees them, distracting the PCs from the real danger, the fiendish violet fungus. The fiendish violet fungus is attached to the ceiling and is slightly concealed from attacks and sight (half cover: Spot DC 18, +4 AC, +2 saves, +1 Atk). The sounds from the shrieker do not alarm the other inhabitants of the temple; the painshrieker makes a similar racket at random times and has made everything else in the temple more tolerant of loud noises.

Shrieker: CR 1; Medium Plant; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init –5; Spd 0 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk –; Grp –; Atk/Full Atk –; SA shriek; SQ plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref –, Will –4; Str –, Dex –, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 2, Cha 1.

Fiendish Violet Fungus: CR 3; Medium Plant; HD 2d8+6; hp 16; Init –1; Spd 10 ft.; AC 17 (+4 cover), touch 17, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Full Atk 4 tentacles +3 melee (1d6+2 and poison); Atk tentacle +3 melee (1d6+2 and poison); Space/Reach 5 ft./10 ft. with tentacle; SA cold/fire resistance 5, SR 5, smite good 1/day (+3 damage); SQ plant traits; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1 (+2 cover), Will +0; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Area T-3 – Loud Skeletons Room (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The rotted door gives way to a small room. Three beds and a wardrobe take up much of the space. Suddenly the wardrobe bursts open and bony arms reach out from the rotted clothing!

This small room was a semi-private residence for a derro trio. These three fought as a team in life and died together from the poisoning as the colony started its downfall. They arose in undeath as monsters and try to kill anyone who enters the room. Each one has a thunderstone wired to their left

hand, so it detonates as the skeleton makes its first successful attack against a PC.

Thunderstones create a deafening bang on impact. All creatures within 10 feet must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be deafened (–4 initiative, 20% chance to miscast spells with verbal component).

Treasure: In addition to any unexploded thunderstones (worth 30 gp each), there is a locked wooden box on top of the wardrobe (Search DC 12, Open DC 18, break DC 22). It holds 3 silver rings (50 gp each) and a masterwork silver dagger (200 gp).

Derro Skeletons (3): CR 1/3; Medium Undead; HD 1d12; hp 8, 6, 5; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Full Atk 2 claws +0 melee (1d4–1 plus thunderstone for first attack); Atk claw +0 melee (1d4–1 plus thunderstone for first attack); SA –; SQ DR 5/ bludgeoning, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 9, Dex 16, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Thunderstone.

Area T-4 – Fiery Skeletons Room (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The door gives way to reveal a room filled with dripping curtains of green and yellow mold. A large growth of purple puffball mushrooms dominates a cot in the nearest right hand corner. There is a pair of sarcophagi on a dais in the center of the room, divided by a decorative screen. Several chairs are set in rows leading up to the dais.

Two ogre skeletons occupy this room. One of them is waiting in a stone coffin. The other one is under the mushroom patch, completely hidden by the mushroom growth. The ogre skeleton under the mushrooms bursts forth suddenly, possibly gaining surprise. One round later, the other skeleton tears the lid from the sarcophagi and attacks.

Treasure: In the bottom of the coffins (Search DC 12) are 2 clay jugs of aromatic oil (100 gp x2), and 2 pieces of copper jewelry (60 gp x2).

Ogre Skeletons (2): CR 2; Large Undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Full Atk 2 claws +7 melee (1d6+5); Atk +7 melee (1d6+5); Space/Reach 5 ft./10 ft.; SA –; SQ alchemist's fire, DR 5/ bludgeoning, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

Alchemist's Fire: These skeletons were special-

ly prepared before their animation by the savant. Each one of their skulls was sealed with wax and filled with alchemist's fire. A called head-shot, or the impact of the skull on the floor at the time of death, breaks the seal and set a 5 foot square area on fire for two rounds (per the alchemist's fire entry in PHB). Any normal attack has a 5% of breaking the seal.

Area T-5 – Waterfall Hall: Read or paraphrase the following:

The hallway appears to end in a deafening wall of water. It pours rapidly from a fissure in the ceiling and splashes in a small pool before disappearing into a large crevice in the floor.

This obstacle came into being long after the derro perished. Pressure from an underground river finally cracked the tunnel here and caused a minor chasm about 10 feet wide. A DC 15 Jump check is required to keep from being knocked down by the force of the water. Those knocked down fall 10 feet to a ledge below (1d6 damage). A DC 12 Climb check can be substituted if a rope or some other support is secured across the gap.

Area T-6 – Zombie Kitchen (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This large room appears to have been a kitchen and dining hall. There are two long tables and several short pews all in moldy disarray. The kitchen area still seems to have a cook, though it is hard to discern from the distance. A yellowish humanoid shape stands near a chopping block with its arm raised, a rusty cleaver in its grip.

If the PCs wait more than a minute, the derro zombie begins to swing the cleaver down to the block. Another derro zombie waits in a huge cauldron nearby. This pair was the chef and his assistant during their life. They are now zombies. When they become aware of the PCs, they slowly shamle forward to attack, taking two full rounds to cross the room if the PCs stay still.

A DC 14 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check identifies the zombies as derro in origin. A failed check may misidentify them as some other kind of dwarf.

Derro Zombie (2): CR 1/2; Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 13, 10; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Atk/Full Atk slam or cleaver +0 melee (1d6); SA –; SQ undead traits, partial actions only; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: Rusty meat cleaver.

Area T-7 – Golem Temple (EL 4, 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

This huge room was obviously a temple of some kind. There are pews hewn out of the stone floor and a large platform with a great reddish-colored altar. The statue behind it is stunning in its own repulsive way. The slime and mold seem to accent the beauty of the woman depicted. The woman represents a demon that must hold quite a bit of respect, at least to the worshippers here. The craftsmanship is amazing; the bony plates and barbed spikes look as if they could come alive on their own. A corpse lies at her feet, wrapped in ceremonial tapestries.

The corpse at the statue's feet is actually a derro flesh golem. The temple is dedicated to the Duchess of Domination, an obscure derro deity. A DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check reveals this fact.

The secret door to area T-7 and beyond is very difficult to find because of the slimy moldy walls (Search DC 20).

Tactics: The golem stands dramatically and lets the tapestry drop to the floor. The derro didn't have enough materials on hand to build a fully functional specimen, so it is not nearly as powerful as one would expect for a flesh golem. It resembles a zombie as much as a golem; a DC 16 Knowledge (arcana) check is necessary to properly identify what it is. The golem advances fast and tries to close into melee combat. Remember that charging requires a Balance check or the creature falls.

Treasure: In a locked box (Open DC 18, break DC 25) behind the altar, guarded by the flame jet trap that fires out of the front of the box, is 5,000 sp and a necklace of pearls (200 gp). One of the pearls is a yellow *pearl of power* (1st level).

Derro Flesh Golem: CR 4; Medium Construct; HD 5d10; hp 26; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk slam +4 melee (1d10+1); SA berserk; SQ Construct, magical resistance (see below), damage reduction 5/magic; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 11, Con –, Int –, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: –

Magical resistance (Ex): This flesh golem is not completely immune to magic, but does have some resistance. Treat it as having SR 10, with these limitations: A magical attack that deals cold or fire damage automatically bypasses SR and slows the flesh golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds with no saving throw. A magical attack that deals electricity damage automatically bypasses SR and heals 1



point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal.

Flame Jet Trap: CR 2; 1-ft. wide, 5-ft. long stream of flame (2d6); Reflex save (DC 13) avoids; Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 26).

Area T-8 – Moldy Zombie Hall (3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The hallway beyond the secret door is lined with hundreds of eight-inch square niches. These compartments have small piles of bones topped by small skulls. The mold has taken over this part of the cavern. Patches of yellow and black mold grow and thrive throughout the area. Stairs lead down into a wider hall.

Most of the mold here is relatively harmless. Two zombies wait behind concealed doors for anyone to disturb the burial chamber and then burst out from hiding, catching the intruders by surprise. Both zombies are infected with yellow mold.

Treasure: Hidden in the back of one of the niches (Search DC 15), behind the bones, is a silver wire ring of climbing.

Mold-Infested Derro Zombies (2): CR 2; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 12 each; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Atk/Full

Atk slam +0 melee (1d6); SA –; SQ undead traits, partial actions only, yellow mold; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Yellow Mold: The chest cavity of both zombies is infected with a small batch of yellow mold. When each monster receives its first hit, all PCs with 10 feet must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 1d3 points of temporary Con damage. Another Fortitude save (DC 15) is required 1 minute later – even by those that were successful the first time – to avoid taking 1d3 more points of temporary Con damage. Fire destroys the mold and sunlight renders it dormant.

Area T-9 – Painshrieker Crypt (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

The hallway splits in three directions ahead. It looks like the central passage dead-ends after 20 feet. The tunnel has dwarf-sized sarcophagi standing up on end lining the walls, making a very uneven surface. At the far end is a small altar and squatting atop it is a bone-white gaunt figure covered in dark tribal tattoos. Possibly a humanoid at one time, it isn't any more. The lower jaw has been removed, and the throat and chest have been split open in a single gaping wound. This slit widens as the very air

begins to vibrate in a sonic wave.

This is the painshrieker, the infernal creature called forth by the derro savant so long ago. It has been sitting in one spot since the downfall of its worshippers, occupied by a faulty *medallion of clairaudience*. The painshrieker has been on this plane of existence several times and has plied its trade in torture chambers. Contacting those old haunts to relive old missions with the *medallion* passed the time, though the magic quits working at random intervals.

There are two derro zombies hidden in the two coffins closest to the intersection, waiting to flank any charging PCs.

A DC 18 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the painshrieker as a moderately powerful infernal creature rarely seen on the material plane.

Tactics: The arrival of the PCs is a break in the monotony for the painshrieker. It attacks immediately with its shock ability in the first round. The fiend blasts the whole hall for as many rounds as it can, hoping the zombies can whittle down its opponents in the meantime.

Treasure: A chest carved out of the rock floor shows a mighty derro warrior beating back his enemies. This chest belonged to the derro champion of this group and is a memorial to him. It can be located with a DC 20 Search check. It is locked (Open Lock DC 22, break DC 25). It contains 30 sp in a small leather pouch, a small bust of the derro champion made of amber (300 gp.), a *wand of summon monster II* (12 charges), and a +1 *footman's mace of frost*.

Among the effects is the warrior's diary. Written in a Derro script similar to Dwarvish (any character who reads Dwarvish can decipher the general meaning), the diary details the events leading up to the establishment of the temple, including the summoning of the painshrieker, and the later effects of the mold.

Painshrieker: CR 5; Medium Aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 38; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Full Atk 2 *keen* +1 *sickles* +3 melee (1d6+2/19-20); Atk *keen* +1 *sickle* +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20); SA Shock, sonic barrage; SQ blindsight, damage reduction 5/magic; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Search +4, Spot +6; Alertness, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Blindsight (Ex): Painshriekers "see" by emitting

high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most creatures, that allow them to locate objects and creatures within 120 ft. A *silence* spell negates this, effectively blinding the painshrieker.

Shock (Su): The sight of a painshrieker is so disturbing that a viewer must succeed at a Will save (DC 11) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d3 rounds. Whether or not they are successful, that creature cannot be affected again by that painshrieker's shock ability for one day. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Sonic Barrage (Su): A painshrieker can create a devastating sonic attack in a 50-ft. long cone. Anyone within the cone immediately takes 1d8 damage (Fort DC 15 for half). Those affected continue to shake as the harmonics rise in a frenzied pitch. On the second round within the cone, they must succeed at another save or take 1d10 damage. On the third round they must save again or take 1d12 damage. Successful saves halve the damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Possessions: *Medallion of clairaudience* (as *medallion of detect thoughts*, 30% chance of becoming inert for 1d3 hours every 20 minutes, worth 4,000 gp.), *ring of protection* +2, 2 *keen* +1 *sickles*.

Derro Zombie (2): CR 1/2; Medium-Size undead; HD 2d12; hp 13,10; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk slam +0 melee (1d6, slam); SA none; SQ undead traits, partial actions only; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

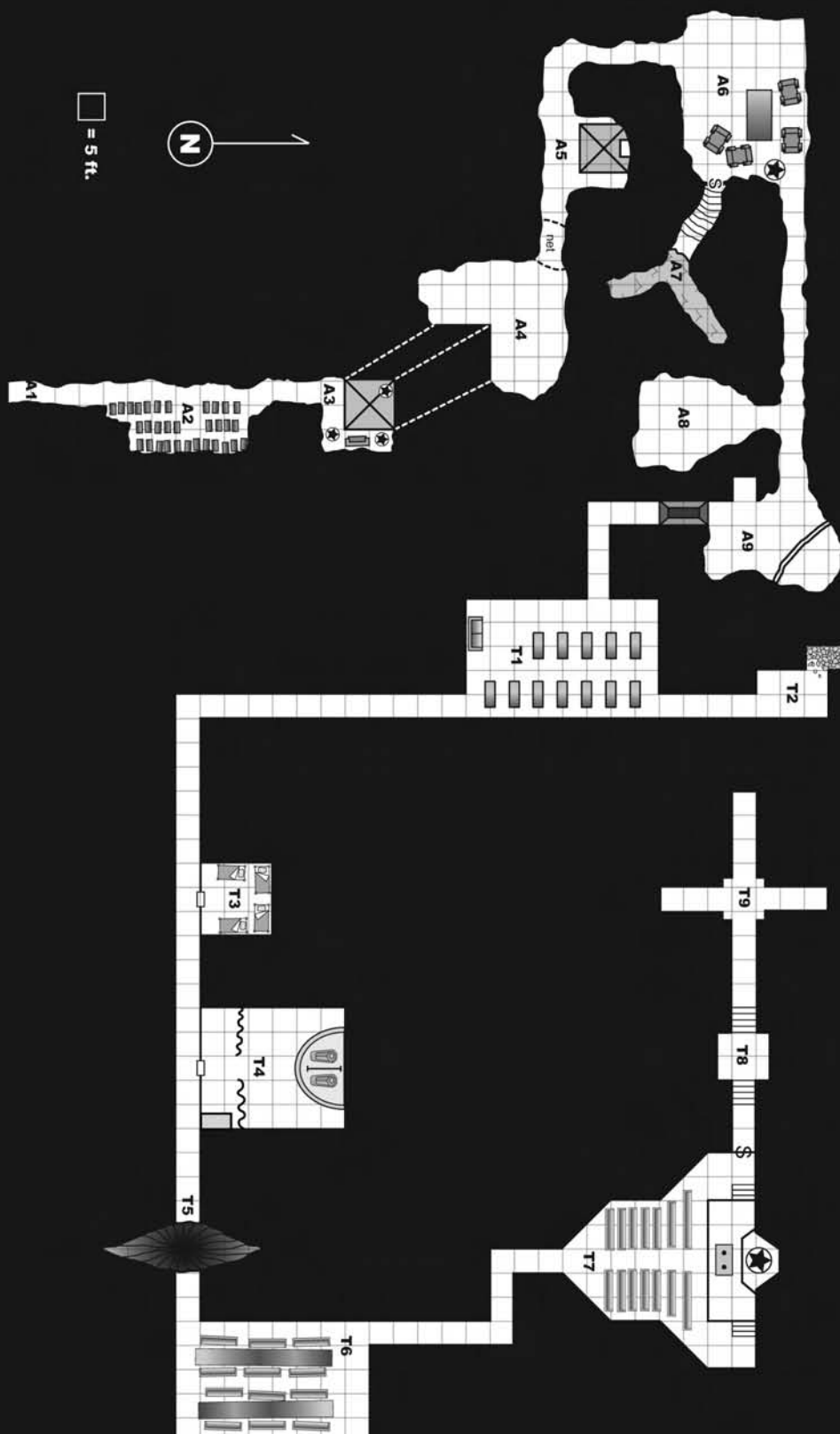
Possessions: Banded mail, small metal shield.

Poison needle trap: CR 2; Atk +8 ranged (1 plus giant wasp poison); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25. Note: Giant wasp poison (Injury DC18, 1d6 Dex, 1d6 Dex).

Further Adventures

The tunnel leading away from the complex in area T-2 can connect this adventure to almost any published DCC module. Alternately, the villagers could rejoice in the discovery of the topaz mine and launch a new mining campaign. Who knows what other dangers they might uncover in the hills. The derro deity from area T-7 might become interested those who destroyed her altar, and send trouble in the direction of the characters.

The Dripping Temple



Appendix 1: New Monsters

ABOLLAR (TEMPLATE)

Upon rare occasion, the sinister and mysterious creature known as the aboleth has been known to breed with its humanoid slaves. The resulting offspring, known as an abollar, is a pariah and generally shunned by both its parent races. Most abollars become evil mercenaries with little loyalty to anyone.

The abollar is a hideous-looking creature vaguely resembling a humanoid covered in mucus and slime. Two long, thin tentacles hang below each of its arms, and its face possesses three enormous, jelly-like eyes, just like its aboleth parent.

CREATING AN ABOLLAR

“Abollar” is an inherited template that can be added to any living, corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature). An abollar uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature’s type changes to aberration. Size is unchanged. Do not recalculate Hit Dice, base attack bonus or saves.

Speed: The abollar’s slime coating allows it to breathe water as easily as air, and to move effortlessly underwater. Unless the base creature has a better swim speed, the creature can swim at the base creature’s land speed.

Armor Class: Natural armor improves by +1 (this is addition to any natural armor bonus that the base creature may have).

Attack: An abollar has four tentacle attacks that can be used as natural weapons. If the base creature can use weapons, the abollar retains this ability. An abollar fighting without weapons uses a tentacle when making an attack action. When it has a weapon, however, it prefers to use the weapon instead.

Full Attack: An abollar fighting without weapons uses all four tentacles when making a full attack. If armed with a weapon, it uses the weapon as its primary attack and a tentacle as a natural secondary attack.

Damage: Abollars have tentacle attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the damage values in the table below. Otherwise, use the values below or the base creature’s damage values, whichever are greater:

Size	Tentacle Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	3d6
Colossal	4d6

Special Attacks: An abollar retains all the special attacks of the base creature, and also gains the following special attack:

Slime (Ex): A creature struck by an abollar’s tentacle must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or begin to transform over the next 1d4 rounds, as its skin becomes completely covered with a thin, clear mucous. An affected creature must keep its mucous-covered skin completely submerged in cool, fresh water or suffer 1d4 points of damage every round. Additionally, the mucous reduces the affected creature’s natural armor bonus by 1 (but never less than 0). The save DC is Constitution-based.

The effects of this mucous attack can never be healed naturally; however, a simple healing spell such as *cure minor wounds* or greater reverses the affliction instantly, and can also heal the damage caused by the mucous attack.

Special Qualities: An abollar has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

- Darkvision out to 60 ft.
- Immunity to poison
- Resistance to acid 5 and cold 5
- Vulnerability to fire

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +2, Con +2, Cha +4.

Skills: Abollars have a +2 racial bonus on Listen, Spot, and Swim checks. Otherwise, same as the base creature.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +1 (minimum 2).

Alignment: Always evil (any).

Level Adjustment: Same as the base creature +2.

FLAYED HORROR

	Medium Undead
Hit Dice:	2d12 (13 hp)
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class:	14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12
Base Atk/Grapple:	+1/+2
Attack:	Bite +5 melee (1d4+1 plus poison)
Full Attack:	Bite +5 melee (1d4+1 plus poison) and 2 claws +4 melee (1d2)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Poison
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +3 turn resistance
Saves:	Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12
Skills:	Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7
Feats:	Stealthy
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary, gang (2–5), or pack (9–14)
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always lawful evil
Advancement:	3 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment:	—

This undead creature appears as a humanoid being whose skin has been flayed off, revealing the sinew, organs, and muscles beneath.

Flayed horrors are hideous undead created through unknown means. They are usually encountered as guardians employed by necromancers with rare arcane knowledge.

COMBAT

Whenever possible, flayed horrors attempt to hide and attack with surprise.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 11, initial damage 1d2 Con, secondary damage 1d4 Con.



FUNGAL MOUND

	Medium Plant
Hit Dice:	1d8+1 (5 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	20 feet (4 squares)
AC:	7 (+2 natural, -5 Dex), touch 5, flat-footed 7
Base Atk/Grapple:	+0/-2
Attack:	Tentacles +1 melee (1d6-2 plus poison)
Full Attack:	Tentacles +1 melee (1d6-2 plus poison)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Entangle, poison
Special Qualities:	Plant traits
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0
Abilities:	Str 7, Dex 1, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2
Skills:	Climb +6, Escape Artist +10, Hide +10
Feats:	Weapon Finesse
Environment:	Any forest, swamp, or underground
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	1
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	2-4 HD (Medium), 5-7 HD (Large)

This creature is a squirming, sentient mass of fetid plant matter, composed of mushrooms, molds, and other fungi. It constantly exudes a foul-smelling and sticky slime. Tentacles dripping this foul mucous lash about like twitching roots.

Fungal mounds roll and slither through fetid swamps, gloomy forests, or dark caverns in search of sustenance, leaving a track of slime in their wake. They can consume any creature they manage to kill, and have no obvious preferences. Feeding is simply a matter of slithering over the carcass and then slowly, over a period of weeks, digesting the creature's bodily fluids. The mucous excreted by the fungal mound slowly breaks down organic matter into fluids that can similarly be consumed. When the creature is finished feeding upon its prey, nothing is left but a skeleton coated with glistening slime.

A typical fungal mound is 5 feet long and weighs 100 pounds.

COMBAT

A fungal mound usually clings to ceilings or trees, or hides in clefts within rock faces. It lashes out with its tentacles, and if it hits it attempts to grab hold of that foe and reel it in. A victim that is killed will be slowly melded into the creature's mass and then slowly digested.

Entangle: Fungal masses can entangle a creature up to two sizes larger than itself with its tentacles by making a grapple check. If it wins the grapple check, the opponent is entangled and suffers tentacle damage and the effect of its poison each round the hold is maintained. While a foe is entangled, the fungal mass cannot attack another enemy.

Poison: The poison of a fungal mass causes a victim's breathing to become thick and phlegmatic as fungal parasites rapidly work their way through the bloodstream to infect the lungs. Each round the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 11 + 1 per round in which it is entangled). When a save is failed, the character begins to suffocate.

GAUNT

Medium Undead

Hit Dice:	6d12 (39 hp)
Initiative:	+4
Speed:	Fly 80 ft.
Armor Class:	16 (+3 deflection, +3 Dex), touch 16, flat-footed 13
Base Atk/Grapple:	+3/–
Attack:	Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain)
Full Attack:	Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Energy drain
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, undead traits, aura of hunger
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +6
Abilities:	Str –, Dex 16, Con –, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 17
Skills:	Bluff +14, Hide +12, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +10, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10
Feats:	Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Persuasive
Environment:	Any inhabited
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	6
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral evil
Advancement:	7–13 HD (Medium)

Before you floats the faintly illuminated image of a ravenous woman, emaciated and stricken with hunger. She stares at you enviously, licking her lips.

Gaunts are the desperate spirits of those who wasted their life in avaricious, wrongfully ambitious, or lustful pursuits. Never satisfied with what they have in life, they starve for what they lack in death. Gaunts appear much as they did when alive, only with nearly sticklike limbs and features horribly pinched as if by severe hunger.



Gaunts manifest their greed and lust in the afterlife by feasting on the soul-stuff of their victims, and the energy drain attacks of gaunts are particularly hard to shake off. As a gaunt feeds on the energy of a victim, it begins to lose its starved appearance, only to regain it again as time passes without feeding. Gaunts know any languages they knew in life.

COMBAT

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a gaunt's incorporeal touch attack gain a negative level. The Fortitude save DC to remove a negative level is 18. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +2 modifier unique to gaunts. For each such negative level bestowed, the gaunt gains 5 temporary hit points and a +1 bonus to Charisma (which affects the deflection bonus to AC, the aura of hunger, and further energy drain save DCs). These temporary Charisma points fade at a rate of 1/hour.

Aura of Hunger (Su): Any living creature that gets within 15 feet of a gaunt must make a DC 16 Will save or be stricken with a ravenous hunger. Treat this as a *suggestion* to eat. Victims will devour any food they can find to the exclusion of all else, or if out of foodstuffs will look around for something to eat. Victims are not compelled to eat things unnatural to them (such as an elf trying to eat a table). This effect lasts as long as the victim is within the aura, but a new save is allowed each round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

GIANT BLISTER BEETLE

	Small Vermin
Hit Dice:	2d8+2 (11 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class:	16 (+1 size, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16
Base Atk/Grapple:	+1/-3
Attack:	Bite +2 melee (1d6)
Full Attack:	Bite +2 melee (1d6)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Blister spray, death spray
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to poison, tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0
Abilities:	Str 11, Dex 10, Con 12, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 7
Skills:	Hide +4*
Feats:	–
Environment:	Warm forest
Organization:	Solitary, cluster (2-5), or click (4-9)
Challenge Rating:	1
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	3-6 HD (Small)

A loud skittering noise announces the arrival of a large beetle hungrily snapping its mandibles.

COMBAT

When riled, a blister beetle releases a foul jet of inky black liquid that burns and blisters the skin of any creature it hits. Afterwards, it skitters in to finish off the newly-blinded creature with its powerful mandibles.

Death Spray (Ex): Whenever a killing blow is struck against a beetle, all characters within a 5-foot square must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or be sprayed with the foul blistering liquid, as the blister spray ability below.

Blister Spray (Ex): Once every four rounds as a standard action, a blister beetle can shoot a stream of oily, black liquid in a 20-foot line. A creature within the area must succeed on a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid the spray. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d3 points of acid damage and a -2 modifier on attack rolls and ability and skill checks for the next 10 rounds from painful blisters and welts that quickly appear on exposed skin. A DC 10 Heal check or any *cure* spell heals the blisters and negates the penalties. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Tremorsense: Blister beetles can automatically sense the location of anything that is in contact with the ground within a 60-foot radius.

Skills: *Blister beetles have a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in their natural environment.

INFECTED (TEMPLATE)

“Infected” is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal creature that is not immune to disease (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

Size and Type: The creature’s size and type remain unchanged.

Hit Dice: Halve the number of hit dice (to a minimum of 1). The creature will probably lose any Con bonus as well, as described below.

Speed: An infected creature’s speed is reduced to half of its normal speed. If the base creature can fly, its maneuverability rating is reduced by one level.

Armor Class: Natural armor bonuses remain unchanged, but the creature will probably lose any Dex bonus, as described below.

Base Attack: An infected creature has a base attack bonus equal to half of that of the base creature.

Attacks: An infected creature retains all natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies of the base creature.

Damage: Attacks deal damage normally, but the creature will probably lose any Str bonus as described below.

Special Attacks: An infected creature only retains the special attacks of the base creature that are supernatural in origin. The creature is left too weak, clumsy, and addled with fever to use other abilities. An infected creature also gains the following special attack:

Infection (Su): Infected creatures are carriers for so many diseases that any creature standing within five feet of one has a chance of contracting a non-magical disease. The disease may be chosen by the GM or determined randomly, and the affected character must immediately make a Fortitude save against a DC appropriate to the disease. An infected creature may transmit any non-magical disease in this manner, regardless of the method the disease is normally transmitted. A character damaged by an infected creature in melee combat will similarly contract a random disease (in addition to the one possibly contracted for simply being next to the creature).

Special Qualities: The infected creature retains any special qualities of the base creature, and becomes immune to disease.

Saves: Fortitude and Reflex saves are halved (round up) and Will saves remain as the base creature.

Abilities: Each ability score is modified in the same manner. If the base creature’s ability score is greater

than 10, it is reduced to half the original score or to 10, whichever is higher. If the base creature's ability score is less than 10 it remains unchanged.

Skills: An infected creature's skills remain the same excepting the modifications to its ability bonuses.

Feats: An infected creature's feats remain unchanged.

Environment: Any

Organization: Any

Challenge Rating: The challenge rating of an infected creature is half that of the base creature. If the creature has a number of supernatural abilities it can still use, the challenge rating may be slightly higher.

Treasure: As base creature.

Alignment: As base creature.

Advancement: As base creature.

INFECTED MINOTAUR

	Large Monstrous Humanoid
Hit Dice:	3d8 (14hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	15 ft. (3 squares)
Armor Class:	14 (-1 size, +5 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 14
Base Atk/Grapple:	+3/+7
Attack:	Gore +3 melee (1d8) plus disease
Full Attack:	Gore +3 melee (1d8) plus disease
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Infection
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., natural cunning, scent, immune to disease
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -2
Abilities:	Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8
Skills:	Intimidate +2, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +7
Feats:	Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Track
Environment:	Underground
Organization:	Solitary, pair, or gang (3-4)
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Usually chaotic evil
Advancement:	By character class
Level Adjustment:	+1

METADILOS

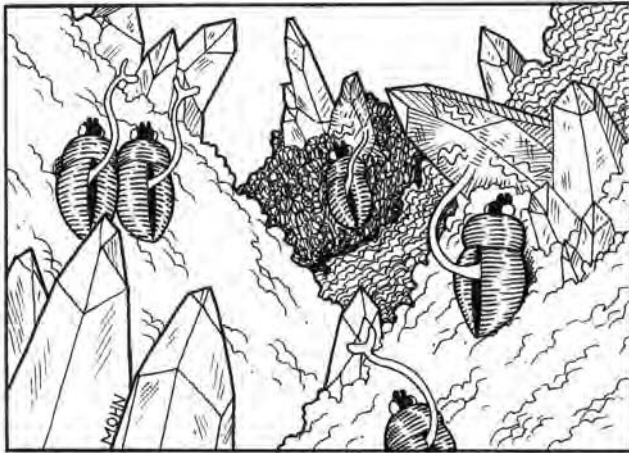
Tiny Magical Beast

Hit Dice:	1d10+1 (9 hp)
Initiative:	-2
Speed:	5 ft. (cannot run), climb 5 ft.
AC:	14 (+2 size, -2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14
Base Atk/Grpl:	+2/-6
Attack:	Flagellum +3 melee (1d2) or +3 touch (mineral drain; see below)
Full Attack:	Flagellum +3 melee (1d2) or +3 touch (mineral drain; see below)
Space/Reach:	2-1/2 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Mineral drain, shock
Special Qualities:	Immunity to electricity, cold resistance 10, magic repulsion, tremorsense 60 ft.
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0
Abilities:	Str 10, Dex 7, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 3
Skills:	Balance +9, Climb +10
Feats:	Toughness
Environment:	Underground
Organization:	Colony (10-30)
Challenge Rating:	1/3
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Advancement:	Small (2-4 HD), Medium (5-8)

Clinging to the wall before you like a barnacle is a creature which at first resembles a legless beetle, its ridged carapace a shiny blue. Protruding from a crevasse in the center of this shell is a slender appendage that reaches like an arm into the wall. Where it touches the crystal, the limb fades into near-transparency and a network of violet wisps moves slowly through the crystal.

A species native to another Material Plane world, metadilos (singular and plural) were brought into this one by psions to cultivate an environment more suited to their talents. They are small animals with disk-shaped, flat-domed bodies about two feet in width with a ridged, blue outer shell iridescent like fish scales. They travel very slowly with a multitude of tiny, tube-like feet (like a starfish's podia), and can breathe water as easily as air.

Metadilos feed on stone, favoring igneous rock such as granite. A long, slender, flagellum protrudes from the creature's dorsal side between the ridges of its shell, allowing it to manipulate its environment and right itself if capsized (if tossed onto its back, it can right itself as a full-round action). When this appendage makes contact with rock, it spits out an incorporeal proboscis. Serving more like a tongue than an arm, the proboscis splits into a network of root-like wisps, which slowly sweep back and forth through the rock. This is how the



metadilos feed, drawing nutrients from the stone. As a by-product of this feeding, the rock itself magically transposes into a translucent, crystalline state.

COMBAT

Metadilos are not aggressive. They wish only to go about their business, feeding on rock and tending to their own. Their shells protect them from most predators, but their primary defense is the electrical shock they produce when touched, and their flagellum can be used to lash opponents.

Pulling a metadilos off a surface it clings to requires a Strength check (DC 22).

Mineral Drain (Su): If pressed, a metadilos will use its incorporeal proboscis to drain a target's bodily minerals. If it makes a successful touch attack with its flagellum, its proboscis automatically reaches into an opponent and deals 1 point of temporary Constitution damage. A metadilos can make this attack every 4 rounds. Against creatures with the earth subtype, this damage is 2 points of Strength.

Shock (Su): Any time a living creature touches a metadilos, exactly one round later as a free action they automatically generate a shock that deals 1d4 points of electricity damage to anything in contact with them (no save). If contact is maintained, the metadilos can produce additional shocks every other round.

Resistances and Immunities: Metadilos are immune to electricity and resistant to cold. As a result, they can survive in some extreme environments.

Magic Repulsion: Strangely, metadilos are repulsed by magic. They are not vulnerable to it, but they shy away from areas that radiate continual magic.

Skills: Metadilos have a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. They can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

PAINSHRIEKER

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice:	5d8+15 (38 hp)
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	30 ft.
Armor Class:	15 (+3 natural, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 13
Base Atk/Grapple:	+3/+4
Attack:	<i>Keen</i> +1 <i>sickles</i> +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20)
Full Attack:	2 <i>keen</i> +1 <i>sickles</i> +3 melee (1d6+2/19-20)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Shock, sonic barrage
Special Qualities:	Blindsight, damage reduction 5/magic
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8
Skills:	Hide +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Search +4, Spot +6
Feats:	Alertness, Two-Weapon Fighting
Environment:	Infernal planes
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	5
Treasure:	Standard plus two keen +1 sickles
Alignment:	Chaotic evil
Advancement:	By character class

A bone-white gaunt figure covered in tribal tattoos squats before you. In each hand it clutches a wicked-looking sickle. The creature's lower jaw has been removed, and the throat and chest have been split open in a single gaping wound. This slit widens as the very air begins to vibrate in a sonic wave.

The painshrieker is a horrid monster believed to have originated on the infernal planes. Though not a demon or devil, it is nonetheless a purely evil creature. They are now found in the underdeep regions with some regularity, and can also be called forth from their homes on other planes.

COMBAT

Blindsight (Ex): Painshriekers "see" by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most creatures, that allow them to locate objects and creatures within 120 ft. A silence spell negates this, effectively blinding the painshrieker.

Shock (Su): The sight of a painshrieker is so disturbing that a viewer must succeed at a Will save (DC 11) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d3 rounds. Whether or not they are successful, that creature cannot be affected again by that painshrieker's shock ability for one day. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Sonic Barrage (Su): A painshrieker can create a devastating sonic attack in a 50-ft. long cone. Anyone within the cone immediately takes 1d8 damage (Fort DC 15 for half). Those affected continue to shake as the harmonics rise in a frenzied pitch. On the second round within the cone, they must succeed at another save or take 1d10 damage. On the third round they must save again or take 1d12 damage. Successful saves halve the damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

PLAGUE WIGHT

	Medium Undead
Hit Dice:	4d12 (26 hp)
Initiative:	+1
Speed:	30 ft.
AC:	15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14
Base Atk/Grapple:	+2/+3
Attack:	Slam +3 melee (1d4+1 plus disease)
Full Attack:	Slam +3 melee (1d4+1 plus disease)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Infection
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits
Saves:	Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14
Skills:	Jump +7, Listen +7, Spot +7
Feats:	Combat Reflexes, Improved Unarmed Attack
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary, pair, gang (3-5), or pack (6-11)
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Usually chaotic evil
Advancement:	By character class
Level Adjustment:	+2

This creature looks like a human corpse ravaged by various diseases. Its flesh putrefies on its bones, its skin is covered in boils and pustules, and blood leaks from its nose, eyes, and ears. Its eyes are yellow with a feverish intelligence.

Plague wights are the undead remains of someone slain by disease. Whether through magic or sheer force of will, these beings become animated once again and spread pestilence through the land. A plague wight appears much as it did in life, except that its body is horribly ravaged by all sorts of disease. A plague wight generally stays where it originally died, or nearby. Some plague wights, however, have been known to congregate in areas where the chances of contracting disease are high, such as city sewers.

Generally plague wights prefer not to kill their opponents. They will if it is necessary to preserve their existence, or if the opponent is immune to disease. Since a plague wight exists to spread disease, they prefer to infect their prey with several diseases and then let them go, hoping they will spread the infection to others before finally being killed.

A humanoid that becomes a plague wight retains all class levels gained in life, as well as any memories and skills. Often the basic personality remains intact as well, although it is twisted toward evil and chaos.

COMBAT

Plague wights with no class levels attack by hammering with their fists or raking with their fingernails. Plague wights with class levels usually fight with whatever weapon they were most comfortable with in life.

Plague wights are vulnerable to *cure disease* spells and take 1d8 damage from each casting.

Infection (Su): Plague wights are carriers for so many diseases that any creature standing within five feet of one has a chance of contracting a non-magical disease. The disease may be chosen by the GM or determined randomly, and the affected character must immediately make a Fortitude save against a DC appropriate to the disease. A plague wight may transmit any non-magical disease in this manner, regardless of the method the disease is normally transmitted. A character damaged by a plague wight in melee combat will similarly contract a random disease (in addition to the one possibly contracted for simply being next to the plague wight).

Create Infected (Su): Plague wights have the ability to infect other creatures with numerous diseases without killing them in order to spread the diseases far and wide. Any creature that spends more than a week in close proximity to a plague wight becomes infected, and has the infected template applied to it (see page 249).

More daring plague wights will hold defeated opponents captive until they are infected, but more often it will hide near the home of a creature to infect it. This ability does not affect creatures that are immune to disease.

RUST SPIDER

	Medium Aberration
Hit Dice:	3d8+3 (16 hp)
Initiative:	+3
Speed:	40 ft., climb 20 ft.
AC:	18 (+3 Dex, +5 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 15
Base Atk/Grapple:	+2/+2
Attack:	Bite +2 melee (1d6) or web glob +0 ranged (see below)
Full Attack:	Bite +2 melee (1d6) or web glob +0

ranged (see below)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Rust glob
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., rust web, scent
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +4
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 8
Skills: Climb +6, Hide +7, Listen +5, Spot +8, Swim +10
Feats: Alertness, Track
Environment: Underground
Organization: Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 4-8 HD (Medium); 9-15 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment: —

This spider-like creature is the size of a human and has a wide, yellow-red carapace. It has two beady eyes set above a wide maw filled with stubby yet sharp teeth. Its spindly legs burst suddenly into motion to turn toward you.

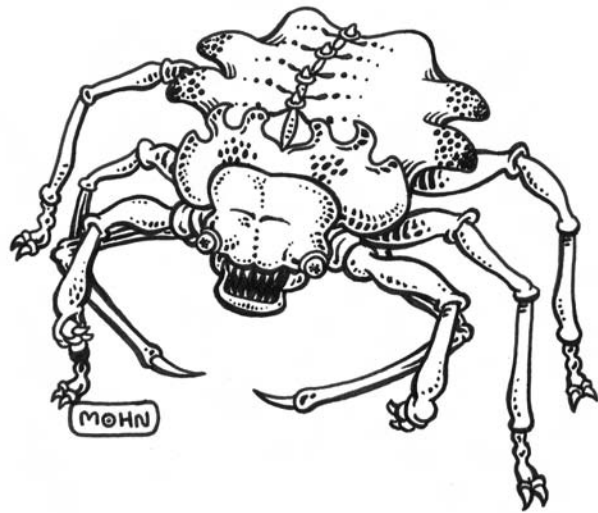
Part rust monster, part monstrous spider, the rust spider's origins are mysterious at best. Once thought the product of magical crossbreeding, their recent appearance across the known underearth is too widespread to chalk up to a single mage's genetic meddling. Although its origins may be in question, there is no doubt that this creature is an anathema to sword-swinging warriors everywhere. The rust spider does not have the classic rust monster appearance that many adventurers know from stories told of them. As a result, many adventurers are dumbfounded when their weapons suddenly deteriorate after hacking at some webbing.

The rust spider survives on metal, just like a rust monster. It feasts after its webbing rusts the desired bit of metal. It can smell metal objects from up to 60 feet away and prefers ferrous metals (iron or steel) over precious metals (such as gold or silver) but devours the latter if hungry.

COMBAT

Encountered outside its lair, the rust spider attacks first by spitting a rust glob at its foe. It then closes on the distracted foe to use its bite attack. If multiple opponents threaten it, the rust spider retreats to its lair and climbs high into its webbing. Once creatures start to lose the advantage of metal equipment amidst the lair's webbing, the rust spider spits rust globs from on high until it can safely descend to bite its foes.

Rust Glob (Ex): Besides spinning rust webbing with its spinnerets, the rust spider can throw a web glob five times per day. This is a ranged touch attack with a maximum range of 30 feet, and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the rust spider (up to Large). A struck creature is entangled and can



escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 14) or burst the web with a Strength check (DC 14). The check DCs are Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus. Metal items worn or carried by a creature struck by a rust glob are affected as per the rust web ability below.

Rust Web (Ex): Any metal which comes into contact with the rust spider's web corrodes, falling to pieces and becoming useless immediately. A 1-foot section of webbing can destroy up to a 5-foot cube of metal instantly. Magic armor and weapons, and other magic items made of metal, must succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save or be dissolved. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus. A metal weapon that deals damage to a rust spider's webbing corrodes immediately. Wooden, stone, and other nonmetallic weapons are unaffected.

A single strand of rust spider web is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Rust spiders often create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 60 feet square, depending on the size of the spider. They position these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful rust glob attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has 6 hit points, and sheet webs have damage reduction 5/—. A rust spider can move across its own web at its climb speed.

Skills: The rust spider has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +6 racial bonus on Climb checks. A rust spider can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Rust spiders use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher.

SNAPDRAGON SWARM

	Diminutive Plant (swarm)
Hit Dice:	2d8+2 (11 hp)
Initiative:	+3
Speed:	20 ft. (8 squares), climb 20 ft.
AC:	16 (+2 Dex, +4 size), touch 16, flat-footed 14
Base Atk/Grapple:	+0/–
Attack:	Swarm (1d6)
Full Attack:	Swarm (1d6)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Breath weapon
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., immune to fire damage, tremorsense 60 ft., plant traits, swarm traits
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 1, Dex 16, Con 12, Int –, Wis 12, Cha 2
Skills:	Climb +6, Hide +9 (+17 in plant-like environments), Listen +3, Spot +3
Feats:	Alertness
Environment:	Warm forest or underground
Organization:	Solitary or grove (2–4 swarms)
Challenge Rating:	1
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	None
Level Adjustment:	–

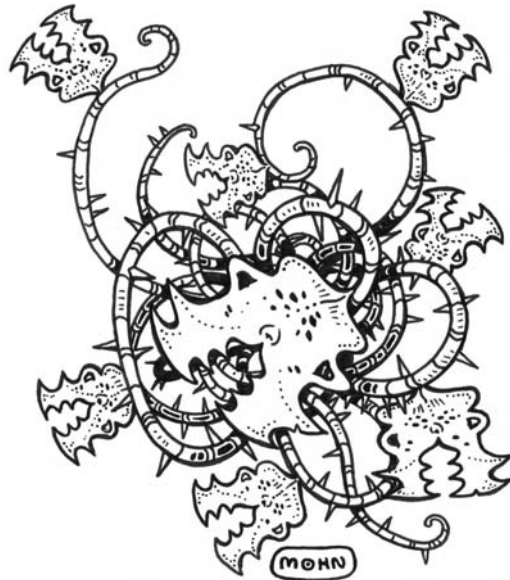
Suddenly the vegetation seems to come alive as a swarm of small plants shaped like dragon heads moves toward you!

Snapdragons are small but deadly magical plants that hide among vegetation and strike unsuspecting prey with fiery attacks. Gathering in colonies, they resemble ivy, although their leaves are vaguely shaped like the head of a dragon. They often choose to hide amongst vines of ivy or other forms of thick underbrush in order to conceal themselves. While they can easily survive both above and below ground, snapdragons prefer to stay near roads, tunnels or other areas frequented by solitary travelers, where they can easily find and attack prey.

COMBAT

Snapdragons lie concealed amongst other plants, attacking only when potential victims pass by. They attack first with their fiery breath weapon attack, which the swarm can collectively use once per day. They then surround and attack their victims.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath weapon for a swarm of snapdragons is a 10-foot line of fire that inflicts 1d8 points of damage. This breath weapon may be used once per day. A DC 14 Reflex save is allowed for half



damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Snapdragons are difficult to pick out from other plants. They receive a +8 bonus to Hide checks when surrounded by plants or in plant-like environments.

SPELLSNAKE

	Small Magical Beast
Hit Dice:	1d10 (4 hp)
Initiative:	+3
Speed:	20 ft., fly 120 ft. (average)
AC:	14 (+1 size, +3 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 11
Base Atk/Grapple:	+3/–1
Attack:	Bite +4 melee (1d4)
Full Attack:	Bite +4 melee (1d4)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Spell-like abilities
Special Qualities:	Absorb magic, death thro
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0
Abilities:	Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 12
Skills:	Balance +11, Climb +8, Concentration +4, Hide +7, Listen +5, Spot +4, Swim +0*
Feats:	Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse
Environment:	Temperate hills and underground
Organization:	Bunch (2–5)
Challenge Rating:	1
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Usually lawful evil
Advancement:	2–4 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment:	–

This winged snake is about four feet in length with a wingspan nearly half that size. Its scaly exterior is milky

white with black spots and its eyes blaze with a crimson radiance.

The spellsnake is a fierce guardian for those particularly magical locales that adventurers frequently call dungeons. They seem instinctively drawn to places of magic and mark off their own territory close to these places.

The spellsnake is quite carnivorous (although it can survive without meat) and attacks any beings entering its territory. It attacks with a special ferocity if intruders are bearing magical items or weapons. The spellsnake subsists on the same diet that normal snakes do but magic holds a special flavor and the creature is drawn to such items like a moth to a flame.

COMBAT

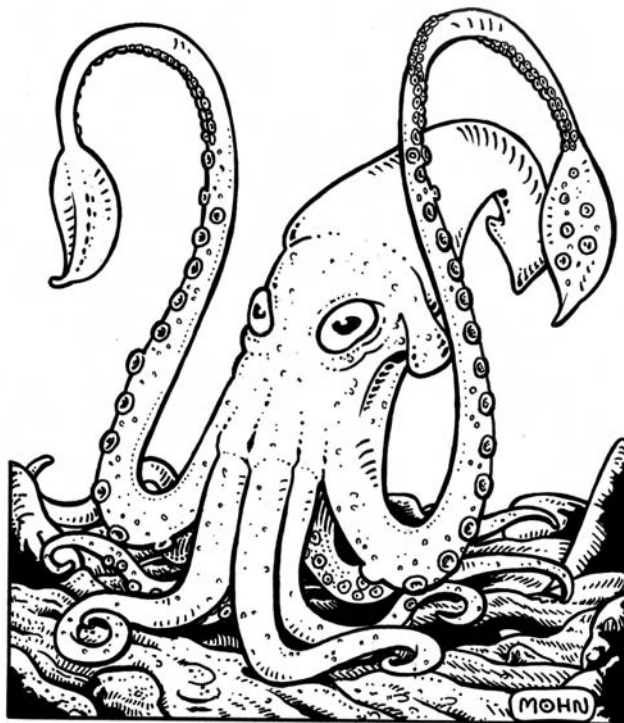
When a spellsnake does attack, it first launches *magic missile* from its tail at a safe distance. Next, one of the monsters strafes the intruder with a *color spray* while its companions dive in behind it to bite any affected prey. Magic-bearing opponents are attacked first if possible.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will – *detect magic*; 1/day – *color spray* (from mouth, DC 12), *magic missile* (from tail). Caster level 1st.

Absorb Magic (Su): When a spellsnake comes into physical contact with a magic item, it has a chance of absorbing a fraction of its power. The spellsnake is littered with epidermal magical absorbers (the black spots on its skin) which inhale magical energy like a fish's gills do with water. When it touches a magic item, the spellsnake makes a Charisma check opposed by the item's caster level check. If successful, the spellsnake gains temporary hit points equal to 1/2 the item's caster level and the item cannot function for 1 round. If the spellsnake fails, there is no effect.

Death Throe (Ex): Upon its death, the spellsnake explodes into a cloud of rancid vapors. Living creatures within a 5-ft. radius of the explosion must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10) or be nauseated for one full round, unable to do anything beyond taking a 5-ft. step. The save is Constitution based and spellsnakes are immune to this effect.

Skills: Spellsnakes have a +4 racial bonus on Concentration, Hide, Listen, and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. A spellsnake can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. Spellsnakes use either their Strength modifier or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher. *A spellsnake has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.



SQUID, LAND

	Medium Animal (Aquatic)
Hit Dice:	3d8 (13 hp)
Initiative:	+3
Speed:	Swim 60 ft., 15 ft.
AC:	16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13
Base Atk/Grapple:	+2/+8*
Attack:	Arms +4 melee (0)
Full Attack:	Arms +4 melee (0) and bite -1 melee (1d6+1)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Improved grab
Special Qualities:	Ink cloud, jet, low-light vision, water dependent
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 14, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2
Skills:	Listen +7, Spot +7, Swim +10
Feats:	Alertness, Endurance
Environment:	Temperate aquatic or land
Organization:	Solitary or school (4-9)
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	4-6 HD (Medium); 7-11 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment:	—

Many thick arms protrude from the bottom of this squid-like creature. Its skin has the color of ripe apples with distinctive black stripes on its tip and its eyes have a golden tint.

Land squids are a seldom-seen genetic offshoot of classic squids. This land variety shares its cousin's aggressive tendencies both in and out of the water. The land squid eats whatever comes into its home.

COMBAT

While it prefers to fight in the water, a land squid has no problem with taking a fight onto dry land. In either case, it uses its grab and bite combination when attacking and its ink cloud when fleeing after being severely damaged.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a land squid must hit an opponent of any size with its arm attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and automatically deals bite damage. *A squid has a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks.

Ink Cloud (Ex): Under water, a land squid can emit a cloud of jet-black ink 10 feet high by 10 feet wide by 10 feet long once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment, which the squid normally uses to escape a losing fight. All vision within the cloud is obscured.

On land, this ink cloud emerges as a black oil slick which spreads out in a 5-foot radius around the land squid. Any creature in the area when the oil is released must make a successful Reflex save (DC 14) or fall. This save is repeated on each round that the creature remains within the area. A creature can walk within or through the area of oil at half normal speed with a DC 10 Balance check. Failure means it can't move that round (and must then make a Reflex save or fall), while failure by 5 or more means it falls (see the Balance skill for details). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Jet (Ex): A land squid can jet backward once per round as a full-round action, at a speed of 240 feet. It must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting. This ability is useless on land.

Water Dependent (Ex): Land squids can survive out of the water for 1 hour per 2 points of Constitution. After that, they begin to drown.

Skills: A squid has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

STATIC BAT

Diminutive Magical Beast

Hit Dice:	1/2d10 (3 hp)
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)
AC:	16 (+4 size, +2 Dex), touch 16, flat-footed 14
Base Atk/Grapple:	+0/-17
Attack:	Wing touch -1 melee (concussive shock)
Full Attack:	Wing touch -1 melee (concussive shock)
Space/Reach:	1 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks:	Concussive shock
Special Qualities:	Blindsense 20 ft., darkvision 60 ft.
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4
Skills:	Hide +14, Listen +8*, Move Silently +6, Spot +8*
Feats:	Alertness
Environment:	Any underground
Organization:	Colony (5-25) or crowd (30-50)
Challenge Rating:	1/3
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	—
Level Adjustment:	—

A faint blue haze crackles around the flapping wings of this small gray-furred bat.

The static bat is a unique addition to the bat species. Created by the magical crossbreeding of a bat with a shocker lizard, the static bat has served as a curiosity piece in many a sage's essay. These bats survive on small insects and underground algae. Static bats also enjoy the sensation of electricity which builds in their wings when they flap them. This is due to special kinetic glands located along the spines of the wings which collect electricity when in motion.

COMBAT

The static bat attacks in the only way it knows how – by smacking into opponents. The electrical charge it builds while flapping its wings then discharges and hopefully convinces the creature to flee. Striking an opponent in this manner means that the static bat must enter the opponent's square and thus provokes an attack of opportunity.

Concussive Shock (Su): A static bat builds up an electrical charge while flying. If it touches a living creature during flight, the charge inflicts 1d2 points of electrical damage. The target also must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10) or convulse for the next round. This brief period of spasms inflicts a -4 penalty to any Dexterity-

based skill checks as well as a -1 penalty to attack rolls and Reflex saves. Succeeding on the Fortitude save means the target takes the 1d2 damage only. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Blindsense (Ex): A bat notices and locates creatures within 20 feet. Opponents still have 100% concealment against a creature with blindsense.

Skills: *A bat has a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

STINK-FIRE BEETLE

Small Vermin

Hit Dice: 1d8 (4 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 16 (+1 size, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16
Base Atk/Grapple: +0/-4
Attack: Bite +1 melee (2d4)
Full Attack: Bite +1 melee (2d4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Stench
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 7
Environment: Warm plains and underground
Organization: Pair, cluster (3-5), or colony (6-11)
Challenge Rating: 1/2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 2-3 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: —

This beetle has a yellowish-green carapace and two dangling glands that glow with a faint red radiance. It walks with an uneven gait.

These luminous insects are prized by miners and adventurers much like their giant fire beetle cousins. They too have two glands, one above each eye, that produce a red glow. The glands' luminosity persists for 1d4 days after removal from the stink-fire beetle, illuminating a roughly circular area with a 10-foot radius. The chemical within the glands that the beetle uses for its stench attack also lasts for 1d4 days. It can be used as a weapon if the gland is struck against another surface (or a creature if the gland is used like a weapon). A successful strike means that the surface (or target) gives off the stench until it is cleaned or 24 hours have passed. Stink-fire beetles are about 2-1/2 feet long.

COMBAT

The stink-fire beetle acts on instinct, attacking anything which impedes its progress and is not one of its own kind. It activates its stench power immediately before

closing to melee. If wounded, the stink-fire beetle flees unless cornered.

Stench (Ex): When a stink-fire beetle is encountered, it secretes a musk-like chemical from its glands that nearly every form of animal life finds offensive. All living creatures (except stink-fire beetles) within 10 feet of a stink-fire beetle must succeed on a DC 10 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same stink-fire beetle's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from the sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws.

TAINTED (TEMPLATE)

Tainted creatures are the byproduct of long-term exposure to poisonous or diseased conditions that ravaged but did not kill the creature. No matter the form, tainted creatures appear dirty, feral and crazed.

"Tainted" is an inherited template that can be added to any living, corporeal creature with an Intelligence score of 2 or higher and a Constitution score of 10 or higher.

A tainted creature uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to outsider. Do not recalculate the creature's Hit Dice, base attack bonus, or saves. Size is unchanged. Tainted creatures retain their base creature's type, but add the [augmented] subtype.

Speed: A tainted creature's speed is not affected.

Armor Class: Natural armor improves by +1 (this stacks with any natural armor bonus the base creature has).

Attack: A tainted creature has two claw attacks. If the base creature can use weapons, the tainted creature retains this ability. A tainted creature fighting without weapons uses a claw when making an attack action. When it has a weapon, it usually uses the weapon instead.

Full Attack: A tainted creature fighting without weapons uses both claws when making a full attack. If armed with a weapon, it usually uses the weapon as its primary attack. If it has a hand free, it uses a claw as an additional natural secondary attack.

Damage: Tainted creatures have claw attacks. If the base creature does not have these attack forms, use the damage values in the table below. Otherwise, use the values below or the base creature's damage values, whichever are greater.

Size	Claw Damage
Fine	—
Diminutive	1
Tiny	1d2
Small	1d3
Medium	1d4
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8
Gargantuan	2d6
Colossal	3d6

Special Attacks: A tainted creature gains the poisonous strike special attack.

Poisonous Strike (Ex): A tainted creature can make a limited number of poisonous claw attacks per day, equal to 1 + the creature's Constitution bonus. He must declare he is using a poisonous strike before making his attack roll. The poison causes damage based on injury (claws only), based on the creature size. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Size	Fort DC	Damage
Diminutive	8	1 Dex
Tiny	10	1 Dex
Small	10	1d2 Dex
Medium	10	1d3 Dex
Large	11	1d4 Dex
Huge	14	1d6 Dex
Gargantuan	17	1d8 Dex
Colossal	23	2d6 Dex

Special Qualities: A tainted creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- +4 racial bonus on Fortitude saves against poison and disease.
- Scent

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +2, Con +2, Int -2 (minimum 2), Wis -2, Cha -2.

Skills: A tainted creature gains skill points as its base creature

Challenge Rating: HD 5 or less, as base creature +1; HD 6 to 10, as base creature +2; HD 11 or more, as base creature +3.

Alignment: Any nonlawful.

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature +2.

WAR-WORM

Small aberration

Hit Dice:	1/2d8+1 (3 hp)
Initiative:	+1
Speed:	20 ft., burrow 10 ft.
AC:	13 (+1 natural, +1 Dex, +1 size), touch 12, flat-footed 12
Base Atk/Grapple:	+1/+1
Attack:	Bite +1 melee (1d4-2)
Full Attack:	Bite +1 melee (1d4-2)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Blood drain, infest
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft.
Saves:	Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 6, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 2
Skills:	Hide +7, Move Silently +6
Feats:	—
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Swarm (2-24)
Challenge Rating:	1/4
Treasure:	Only incidental
Alignment:	Always chaotic evil
Advancement:	—

The horrid aberration squirms on the ground, moving toward you with alarming speed. The body is that of an enormous maggot, but the head belongs to a hissing, snarling, fanged human. It stinks of the grave, and leaves a smear of blood and mucus as it comes for you!

Rising from the blood-soaked earth of battlefields to stalk the living, war-worms are the souls of warriors trapped in the bodies of tormented aberrations. A war-worm resembles a two foot long chitinous worm with the head of a fanged, human warrior. The bite of a war-worm is fearsome, allowing the worm to tunnel through soil and tear apart armor. The worms leave trails of slime wherever they slither; this acid is slightly acidic, and over the years war-worm warrens will slowly grow larger, eaten away by the slime.

The worms hunger for one thing: the blood of the living. They hunt exclusively at night, rising from the earth and swarming sleeping victims. The frequency of their attacks increases after rainstorms, when the ground is wet and easier for the worms to burrow through.

The horrid creatures appear most often at the place of a massacre or slaughter, or any place where a large number of souls died senselessly.

COMBAT

When forced into melee, war-worms try to overwhelm their prey with numbers.

Blood Drain (Ex): A war-worm can suck blood from a liv-

ing victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of temporary Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained.

Infest (Ex): A creature slain by a war-worm's blood drain rises as a war-worm zombie (see below) 1d4 days after death. The zombie is a host to 2d12 larval war-worms that slowly consume the corpse. After 3d20 days, the zombie collapses, devoured from the inside, and the mature war-worms go in search of living prey.

WAR-WORM, QUEEN

	Large aberration
Hit Dice:	2d8+8 (18 hp)
Initiative:	-2
Speed:	10 ft.
AC:	14 (+7 natural, -2 Dex, -1 size), touch 7, flat-footed 16
Base Atk/Grapple:	-2/-
Attack:	Acid Spray -2 ranged touch (1d6)
Full Attack:	Acid Spray -2 ranged touch (1d6)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Acid spray
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft.
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 18, Dex 6, Con 19, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 2
Skills:	—
Feats:	—
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	Only incidental
Alignment:	Always chaotic evil
Advancement:	3-6 HD (Large), 7-10 HD (Huge)

The enormous, horse-sized maggot rolls and lolls about weakly. Its long, raspy tongue tests the air, flicking out between long fangs, searching for fresh meat. The stench of the death is overwhelming, like the smell of crushed maggots many times over.

War-worm queens are as terrifying as they are disgusting. Massive, fat and gray, they harken back to another time, when alien powers ruled the races of man. Unable to capture their own prey, queens rely on worshippers to supply them with a steady diet of humanoid blood. This practice stretches back into time immemorial, and many of mankind's oldest temples contain hieroglyphics depicting high priests feeding mammoth war-worms.

Some elf sages argue that these temples demonstrate that the human race was created for the sole purpose of feeding the endless hunger of the war-worms, citing the race's rapid rate of reproduction and willingness to blindly follow senseless causes.

Given enough time and enough blood, every war-worm has the potential to grow into a queen. At some point in the worm's growth the fanged face is absorbed, leaving only vestigial fangs and the queen's trademark tongue. Raspy and strong, the tongue is perfectly designed to lap at wounds of the worm's prey.

COMBAT

The war-worm queen is largely ineffectual in combat. Her one defense is an acidic excrement she can fire from her abdomen. This requires the queen to face with her foes behind her. What it lacks in accuracy, the spray makes up in volume; the attack is capable of drenching entire adventuring parties in burning acid.

Acid Spray (Ex): One per round a worm queen can launch an acid spray, a ranged touch attack with a range of 20 feet. The spray is a grenadelike attack, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target, and 1d4 points of splash damage to all creatures within 5 ft. of the target.

WAR-WORM ZOMBIE

The bloated, mucus-covered corpse stumbles slowly towards you. Bubbles of slime gurgle from its mouth, steaming as they strike the floor. Its distended belly undulates and rolls, as if filled with snakes or worse...

"War-Worm Zombie" is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal creature (other than an undead) that has a skeletal system (referred to hereafter as the base creature). This process is identical to that of zombies described in the MM, with the following exceptions:

Hit Dice: War-worm zombies have been drained of all fluids. Their dried husks damage more easily than normal zombies. War-worm zombies use d10s for hit dice instead of d12s.

Special Attacks: War-worms larvae generate acidic slime that pools in a zombie's lungs. At the worm's command the zombie can exhale hard, vomiting a gout of acid.

Acid Gout(Ex): Three times per day a war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid, a ranged touch attack with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target.

When war-worm zombies are defeated in combat they "bleed" harmless war-worm larvae. Unless these larvae are introduced into another host, they expire after 1-3 rounds.

WIZARD GOLEM

Hit Dice: 3d10+3 (107 hp)
Initiative: –1
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class: 15 (–1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 15
Base Atk/Grapple: +2/+6
Attack: Slam +6 melee (1d6+4)
Full Attack: 2 slams +6 melee (1d6+4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Spells
Special Qualities: Construct traits, damage reduction 5/masterwork, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, rebuilding Fort +1, Ref 0, Will +1
Saves: Str 19, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
Abilities: —
Skills: —
Feats: —
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 4–8 HD (Large); 9–15 (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

This creature appears as a stone statue carved in the likeness of the wizard who created it.

This golem has a humanoid body made from stone. A wizard golem is 6 feet tall, weighs around 1,500 pounds, and looks exactly like the spellcaster who constructed it.

COMBAT

A wizard golem can inflict severe damage with its slam attacks. It targets out-of-melee-range arcane spellcasters with its *magic missile* spell.

Spell-like Abilities: 5/day – *magic missile*. Caster level 3rd.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A wizard golem is immune to spells or spell-like abilities up to 1st and 2nd level that allow spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows a wizard golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points.

A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but negates its damage reduction and immunity to magic for 1 full round.

Rebuilding (Ex): A damaged wizard golem rebuilds itself within 24 hours, unless the pieces are disintegrated.

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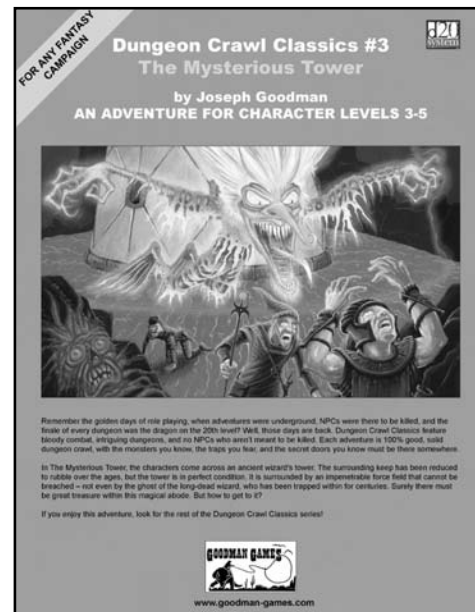
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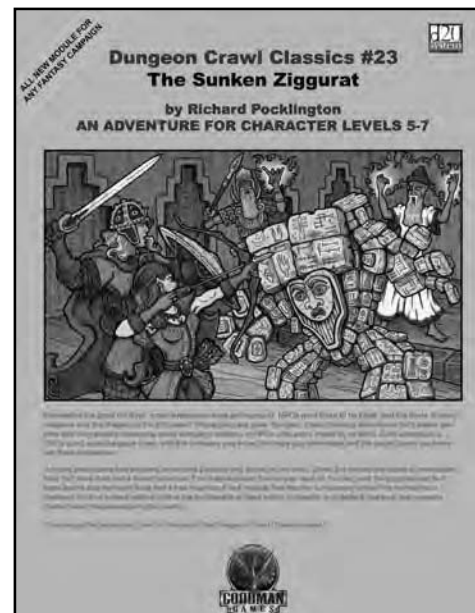
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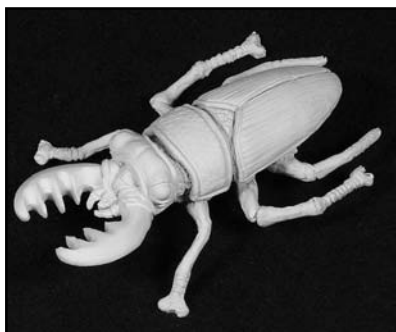
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