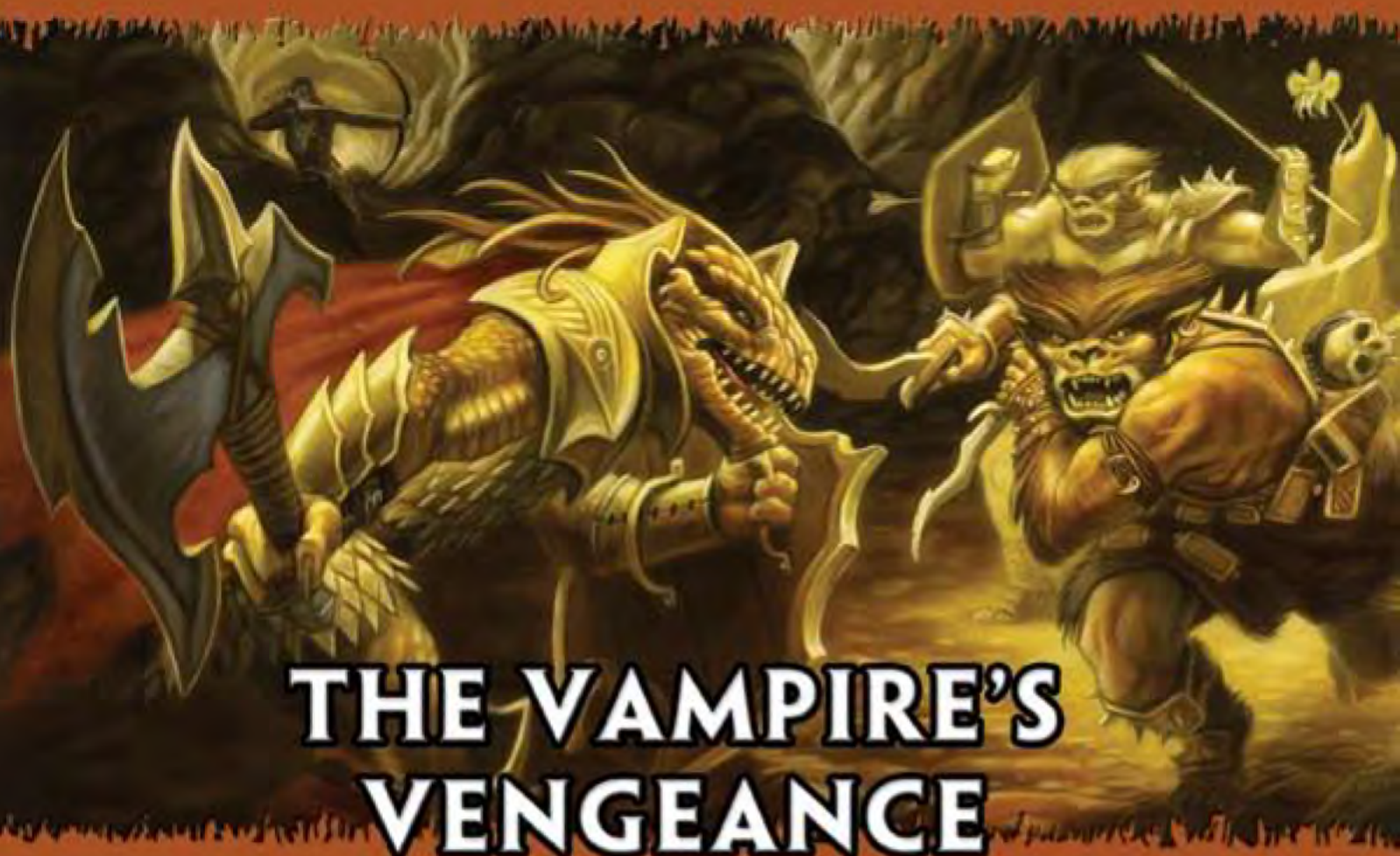


THIS ADVENTURE MODULE IS 4E COMPATIBLE

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS



THE VAMPIRE'S VENGEANCE

BY ADRIAN POMMIER
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 6-7





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BY ADRIAN M. POMMIER

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Author's Dedication: For John Vulgamore, my first GM

INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

STORY ARC

This adventure is divided into four chapters, which are likely known as The Vampire's Vengeance. Though each chapter is a small part of that larger story, each one can be used as a stand-alone adventure as well. Here is how they interconnect:

One: *Treasure of Tanglethorn Manor*: The heroes enter a cave in search of a golden orchid, supposedly stolen years ago by the crone Elziba Caulwik. They find the treasure they seek, but discover that it's been used to lure a clan of bugbears into attacking the farms north of the cave, their home.

Two: *The Burning Tower*: Inside a burning guard tower, the heroes kill the bugbear leader and save several villagers. Their victory turns bittersweet as the noon sky turns dark and vampires destroy the mobilized militia, leaving Ramsgate defenseless.

Three: *Marsh of the Miscreants*: As Ramsgate is plagued by a plague of vampires, the heroes venture into the marsh to confront the foul Yenbrue clan. Destroying the vampire apparatus restores the sun, instantly killing the vampires. Here they learn the location of Elziba's lair.

Final: *Down Among the Dead*: The heroes launch a final assault on Elziba's lair beneath the sewers of Ramsgate. Unless they stop her now, the vampire crone of Tanglethorn will return to wreak havoc in the future.

GAMEMASTER'S SECTION

GMs will find information that will be helpful in running this adventure. Each chapter of this adventure includes more information specific to that section for the GM to help him prepare.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – this indicates if the encounter is a combat (C), disease (D), hazard (H), puzzle (P), or trap (T). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.

Below is a sample Encounter Table entry. Each chapter of this adventure contains an Encounter Table like this one which refers to all encounters in that section.

NO EXTENDED REST

The party must complete each chapter of the adventure without taking an extended rest. As soon as they do, the scenario is over.

This adventure (and others written in the tournament style) tests a team's tactics, resolve, ingenuity, and luck. It also tests resource management...daily powers become that much more important when you can't rest whenever you like.

SKILL NOTATIONS

Some skills have parenthetical notations behind them. These refer to the particular function of that skill. For example, it is handy to know that scaling a cliff requires Athletics (climb) because a climbing kit adds +2 to the check.

Perception (search) and Perception (track) refer to the functions of Perception that requires 1 minute to perform and searches all adjacent squares; when this notation appears, other uses of Perception are inadequate to learn or discover the relevant material.

Magic items are followed with the notation (Arcana DC X, none) or (Arcana DC X, arcane). This relates to the "sense the presence of magic" function of the Arcana skill.

ITEMS IN BRACKETS

Throughout the adventure, there are items set in brackets, like this: [right-to-left] or [3].

In the case of phrases, they are instructions or cues for the GM.

In the case of numbers, they reflect an average result. If a series of numbers are presented, they indicate a sequence to follow (and repeat, if necessary).

For falling damage, assume creatures take 5.5 points of damage per 10 feet fallen (round down).

ENCOUNTER TABLE SAMPLE

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-2	7	C	4 spitting frogs Dire frog	6



The purpose of bracketed instructions or values is to level the playing field between competing teams. Sometimes a GM's dice are "hot" and monsters do a lot of damage; sometimes the inverse is true. Using bracketed values puts success or failure more firmly in the party's hands.

RECHARGE NOTES

For monsters with powers that recharge on random die rolls, look in the appropriate Tactics section for a series of expressions like "round +X." These expressions are how many rounds after its initial use that a power recharges.

For example, let's say it reads "round +2, round +7." If a monster uses a recharging power on round 2 of combat, that power recharges on rounds 4 and 9, or two and seven rounds later.

The expressions represent random die rolls made over 10 hypothetical combat rounds. If combat lasts more than ten rounds after a recharge power is used, go through the cycle again, adding +10 to the numbers displayed.

For example, "round +2" becomes "round +12."

Like bracketed items, the purpose of recharge notes is to allow players' actions and decisions to determine their success, rather than random die rolls.

FORTIFICATIONS

Chapter Two of this adventure, *The Burning*, introduces a new type of challenge: the fortification.

Fortifications are an abstraction that represents defenses. They share many traits with traps (selectively targeting foes) and hazards (cannot typically be destroyed) but they require a crew...defenders of some sort.

Although a crew is typically composed of several creatures, a fortification is considered one element of an encounter (much like how a swarm works). If a fortification is destroyed without killing the crew, they become creatures again.

A fortification's crew determines its level since the crew attacks and deals damage. The crew also determines the initiative and passive Perception of the fortification, the fortification itself may add or subtract to those values. The crew of a fortification usually enjoys superior cover.

CHAPTER ONE: TREASURE OF TANGLETHORN MANOR

Treasure of Tanglethorn Manor is designed for five characters of 6th level. While the characters can be of any basic class, a party both prepared for physical combat and able to negotiate difficult terrain will fare best. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's unique style of play.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Elziba claims the crone of Tanglethorn Manor, Elziba, grew an orchid with golden petals. Recently, proof was found that the legend is true, and the heroes have a river cave beneath the ruins of the manor house. They know their treasure-hunt is about to uncover a plot for revenge against the city that cast her out!

Now a vampire, has ordered her lieutenant Keldoss to buy gold from the orchid to the Gnawface bugbear by paying their loyalty. She plans to use them to attack the city north of Ramsgate as bait to lure the city's militia. At present, however, a few bugbears are trying to get more money out of Keldoss and another of Elziba's lieutenants, Larek Yenbrue.

The heroes can win the orchid and destroy Keldoss, but the battle has already begun, thus launching them into more adventures...

GAMEMASTER'S SECTION

SCALING INFORMATION

Treasure of Tanglethorn Manor is designed as an adventure for five characters of 6th level. The adventure, however, can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. When adjusting the module to suit your game, consider the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (4th level or lower): Remove two levels from all monsters and traps/hazards in the dungeon. Change the chloroblast's *chloroflame spit* to a standard action, and remove Keldoss's *shield of defiance*. Have the hindering terrain in area 1-5 only deal 2 points of poison damage.

Adjust the treasure accordingly.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 7th level): In area 1-2, add one spitting frog and add one level to all frogs. In area 1-3, add a third rat swarm and a fourth vampire spawn fleshripper, then increase the levels of all fleshrippers by one. In area 1-4, add one level to the chloroblast. In area 1-5, add one level to all creatures, then add two more Gnawface bashers. Finally, increase the damage dealt by the leechwort to 6 points of poison damage.

Adjust the treasure accordingly.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

This chapter of the adventure begins as the heroes enter the waterfall cave beneath the ruins of Tanglethorn Manor. This presumptive plot hook assumes the party is in search of the golden orchid.

- Trappers and huntsmen have noticed bugbears entering and exiting the cave at odd intervals. Although bugbears are common in the Bitterstone Hills, they don't venture this far south when not raiding.
- Astrologers have noticed that the Devouring Star, Aubaridan Ahktar, grows larger in the sky. Fell legends surrounding this star worry these seers, who know that the despicable Yenbrue clan invokes its dark power. Recently, Larek Yenbrue has been spotted in the vicinity of the waterfall cave.
- A few farmers have gone missing over the last several weeks. One, Danica Myrsil, has been seen entering the waterfall cave. In this scenario, make the female vampire spawn fleshripper Danica.
- A thornblood slave managed to escape Elziba's garden. It made its way to the forest before dying, telling the tale of its brethren trapped inside. The heroes are asked (or hired) to save them. In this scenario, the heroes know why and how Tanglethorn Manor burned.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-2	7	C	4 spitting frogs	6
			Dire frog	
1-3	8	T/C	Pit trap	3
			2 rat swarms	
			3 vampire spawn fleshrippers	
1-4	10	C	Chloroblast	5
1-5	11	C	6 Gnawface bugbear bashers	8
			Goolat, Gnawface bugbear strangler	
			Larek Yenbrue, foulspawn grue	
			Keldoss, battle wight	

BACKGROUND STORY

Elziba Caulwik lived alone at her ancestral home, Tanglethorn Manor, the last of a noble family that had fallen on dire times. To sustain herself, she took to gardening. To entertain herself, she studied books on arcane lore from her family's moldering library. It was inevitable that the two pastimes would mingle.

This marriage of botany and alchemy culminated with the creation of an orchid with golden petals, which Elziba used to purchase supplies from nearby Ramsgate. When asked how her fortunes had reversed, however, her tale of the wondrous orchid was dismissed. The good folk of Ramsgate believed instead the crone had sold her soul for gold. Accused of devilry, Elziba was run out of town, barely escaping with her life.

Elziba swore Ramsgate would burn, but knew her mortal years were nearing an end. In desperation, she contacted the pariah Yenbrue clan, shunned for the dark secrets they hold. Through their auspices, Elziba was transformed into a vampire under the un-light of their god-being, Aubaridan Ahktar. Thus was born Elziba's oldest alliance.

The spinster set to creating the means to "burn down" Ramsgate immediately, growing a terrible plant, the flame-belching chloroblast. This drew the ire of the local fey, particularly a band of thornblood. They attacked her ancestral home, and in the battle the chloroblast went berserk, burning down Tanglethorn Manor. Elziba killed or captured the fey, making slaves of them.

Elziba built a new lair beneath Ramsgate, and the tale of the treasure of Tanglethorn Manor became the stuff of local legend.

The vampire spent the next eight years raising a small army of undead, including Keldoss, her lieutenant. Under the battle wight's direction, the thornblood slaves eked every bit of gold out of the orchid to buy the loyalty of the Gnawface bugbear tribe.

At last, she is ready to strike, and Ramsgate's only warning is a single golden petal, dropped by a careless bugbear.

THE YENBRUE CLAN

Hearing the name "Yenbrue" or seeing their sign allows a DC 12 History check to remember they are a clan of degenerates living in Polzoi Mire, known for practicing dark rites and shunned by proper folk.

PLAYER BEGINNING

This chapter of the adventure begins with the heroes standing inside the mouth of the river tunnel. Start the adventure by reading the following and giving them Handout A, which is an area map:

Last night, a trapper came into Ramsgate claiming he found a weird lump of gold alongside the bank of a nearby stream. At first dismissed as a drunkard, he produced the item as proof: a golden flower petal, just like in the tale of the treasure of Tanglethorn Manor.

According to local legend, the spinster Elziba Caulwik lived alone at the manor, the last of a down-on-their-luck noble family. About eight years ago she showed up suddenly in Ramsgate with gold to spend, claiming she had cultivated an orchid with golden petals. The superstitious townsfolk believed instead that she had consorted with devils and ran Elziba out of town, nearly killing her. Shortly afterward, Tanglethorn Manor burst into a pale green flame and burned to the ground. Elziba was never seen again.

As it happens, though, the stream where the petal was found flows from a cave system beneath the ruins of Elziba's old house. Maybe the spinster was telling the truth after all!

Now Ramsgate has gold fever. Bakers and cartwrights scuffle over the last lanterns in the general store while guards plan excursions to the cave in their off-duty hours.

Your party, however, is first on the scene. If you are to find the treasure of Tanglethorn Manor, you must go without a rest. Time is your enemy here, but not your only one...

AREAS OF THE MAP

It is assumed to be dawn as the party approaches the cave beneath Tanglethorn Manor.

Unless otherwise stated, all areas are unlit and all ceilings are between ten and fifteen feet high.

Referring to the map, all squares containing rubble and staircases are difficult terrain.

A DC 15 Athletics (climb) check is required to descend the natural surface in these caves.

All squares of shallow water (between two and ten feet deep) are difficult terrain. Medium or smaller creatures can elect to swim in shallow water should they choose (DC 10 Athletics (swim)); creatures cannot drown in shallow water unless they are unconscious.

All petals of the golden orchid are essentially as valuable as worth 100 gp. They were all dropped by a careless courier who had a hole in his treasure sack. The courier passed through the dungeon six days ago, and the party must try to cover his tracks. Each area describes his path to follow it, and where it leads. He leaves behind him a pair of large, square-nailed boots.

I-I

Cave Entrance

As the game begins, read or paraphrase the following:

Following the stream north, you arrive at the mouth of the cave beneath the ruins of Tanglethorn Manor. Every Ramsgater knows that the stream is fed by a waterfall inside the cave, and that the depth can change suddenly.

From ahead, you hear the roar of the waterfall and feel its mist dampen your face.

Development: A DC 27 Perception (listen) check will hear the low croaking of frogs under the waterfall's roar. The DC decreases by 2 after a hero has moved 3 squares into the cave [Delaris hears it at this point].

The Courier: The bugbear courier's path exits the cave



TREASURE OF TANGLETHORN MANOR



1 square = 5 feet



by following stream banks (first north, then south as he exits). Outside the cave, it continues to follow the east bank of the stream for a ways before turning east and becoming impossible to track. A DC 26 Perception (track) check is required to find and follow the track.

Terrain: The water here and in area 1-2 is turbulent and murky; it's nearly impossible to tell when there is a sudden dropoff. A DC 20 Perception (spot) check can identify relative water depth in adjacent squares. A DC 22 Dungeoneering check, however, tells a hero exactly where the deep water squares are located (based on ripples in the water, the waterfall, and the contours of the cave).

All shaded squares are deep water (10 feet deep). Creatures blundering into deep water from land or shallow water lose the rest of their move action as they flounder.

Deep water squares require a DC 15 Athletics (swim) check to navigate.

I-2 The Waterfall (EL 6, 1,350 XP)

When the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The thundering waterfall drowns out most other noise in this oblong cavern. The water cascades from a hole in the ceiling, some thirty feet above the waterline. Just to the south of the waterfall is a small island, only about fifteen feet across and rising only about four feet out of the water.

Development: Several giant frogs lair in this cave. When the bugbear couriers pass this way, they throw oversize, dead centipedes at the frogs to distract them.

When the party can see the stairs up, read or paraphrase the following:

A set of worn, age-smoothed stairs leads upward to the southwest. They look like they were originally formed by natural water action, then crudely shaped.

The Courier: The bugbear courier's path enters this area from the staircase, crosses the island, then follows the northeastern bank down the river to area 1-1. A DC 26 Perception (track) check is required to find and follow the track on solid ground; it's impossible through the water.

Treasure: In the southwest waterfall square, on the pool's muddy bottom, are the remains of a long-dead explorer. The half-buried bones still wear a rusty longsword and dregs of clothing, including an intact pair of boots; a pair of *boots of striding* (Arcana DC 24; none).

In the square of the spitting frog at the base of the stairs is a petal of the golden orchid.

Terrain: Squares marked with a "W" are where the waterfall descends into the cave. The water here is 25 feet deep and requires a DC 25 Athletics (swim) check to navigate. Additionally, any creature entering a W square is "attacked" by the waterfall.

The waterfall blocks line of sight to and from the frogs behind it, but they will be drawn to combat.

Waterfall: +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 [2] damage, and the target is pushed to the bottom of the pool.

Referring to the map, the starting locations of the spitting frogs are marked with an "F" and the dire frog with a circle and a "D."

Tactics: All monsters in this are familiar with its geography; the frogs elect to swim through most squares. Note that the shallow water is difficult terrain, which disallows shifting.

The frogs react to the party (attack) as soon as they can see them, which should be as soon as the party sees the frogs. Spitting frogs hang back and let the dire frog do the melee fighting. They concentrate their fire on the hero closest to them.

The spitting frog's *leap* recharges on round+8.

The dire frog swims toward the nearest hero, p bloodied or Small heroes if it can reach multiple with the same movement.

The dire frog uses *stunning croak* as soon as it c two or more heroes. Assume that other frogs are to *stunning croak*. The dire frog's *stunning croak* on round +4.

The dire frog fights to its destruction, but the spitting when reduced to single-digit hp (toward area 1-1, if p

Dire Frog

Level 8 Brute

Large natural beast

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +10

HP 108; **Bloodied** 54

AC 20; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 16

Speed 6, swim 6

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+11 vs. AC; 2d6+6 [13] damage, and target is grab

↑ **Swallow Whole** (standard; at-will)

This creature attempts to swallow a stunned Medium or smaller creature it is grabbing; +9 vs. Fort; target is swallowed and restrained (no save) and takes ongoing 5 acid damage. The swallowed creature can make melee basic attacks with one-handed or natural weapons. If this creature dies, creatures trapped inside it can escape with move actions, ending the action in a square adjacent to those formerly occupied by this creature; *Miss:* target is still grabbed.

Stunning Croak (standard; recharge 6) ♦ Thunder Close burst 3; +7 vs Fort; 2d6+5 [12] thunder damage and target is stunned (save ends).

Leap (move; at-will) This creature shifts 6 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** n/a

Skills Athletics +14 (+19 jump)

Str 21 (+9)

Dex 17 (+7)

Wis 13 (+5)

Con 18 (+8)

Int 2 (+0)

Cha 8 (+3)

Description This monstrous frog is bright red and looks capable of swallowing a human with ease.



Spitting Frogs

Level 6 Artillery

XP 250

Medium natural beast

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +3

HP 58; **Bloodied** 29

AC 18; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 16

Speed 4, climb 4 (spider climb); see also *leap*

↑ Bite (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d6+3 [6] damage.

⚡ Venomous Spit (standard; at will) ♦ **Poison**
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d8+4 [8] poison damage,
and the target is blinded until the end of the spitting
frog's next turn.

Leap (move; recharge 5,6)

Spitting frog shifts 4 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Skills Athletics +10 (+15 jumping)

(+5)

Dex 18 (+7)

Wis 11 (+3)

(+6)

Int 2 (-1)

Cha 8 (+2)

Description This mastiff-sized frog has bright red
coloration and veiny, warty hide. Two large sacs
protrude from its jaw, sloshing with venom.

I-3

Crossroads (EL 3, 750 XP)

As the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

Surmounting the smoothed stairs, you enter a short tunnel formed by the ancient flow of water. There are large cracks in the north wall where it looks like water seeped through, and several stalagmites dot the floor; in one area you see a stone pillar, a fused stalactite and stalagmite.

It looks like the tunnel continues to the northwest, but the way is blocked by stacked bits of staircase, a smashed statue, rubble from a column, and other bits of broken masonry.

Development: When Keldoss took command of the golden orchid, he ordered a pit dug to guard the approach to the golden orchid and the secret tunnel dug so as to avoid the chloroblast. Creatures serving Elziba pass through the cracks and the secret door to reach the orchid's garden.

A DC 20 Perception (listen) check hears high-pitched squeaking coming from the cracks [Balgrun and Delaris hear this automatically].



The vampire spawn accompany Keldoss wherever he goes, but he has little use or respect for them...they're on guard duty and snacking on rats.

When the party can see the area north of the cracks, read or paraphrase the following:

A low-burning brazier lights this small antechamber. A pair of finely-made wooden cages rest against the wall, and the floor here is littered with the torn bodies of rats, but very little blood.

The north wall is worked masonry, and an open doorway leads to a narrow corridor and a set of stairs leading upward.

Secret Door: The secret door at the base of the stairs requires a DC 20 Perception (search) check to find.

The Courier: The bugbear passed through the cracks on his way out, and in so doing tore open his bag. The trail is harder to follow here than in the mud of the waterfall cave (DC 36 Perception (track)).

The tracks effectively end at the open doorway to area 1-4. They are impossible to track beyond that point.

Treasure: In the cracks is a golden petal, dropped by the bugbear courier. Any hero who enters the cracks automatically finds it.

Terrain: Squares containing stalagmites and the rock column are blocking terrain.

Passing through the cracks to the vampire spawn is not easy. Small creatures merely treat it as difficult terrain, but Medium creatures have to squeeze. Note that the swarms can pass through the cracks without difficulty.

A DC 15 Athletics (climb) check is required to scale the walls of the pit.

Referring to the map, the starting locations of the vampire fleshrippers is marked with a "V," and the rat swarms with an "R."

False-Floor Pit

Level 6 Warder **XP 250**
Trap

Trap: A 2 by 2 section of floor hides a 30-foot-deep pit.
Perception

DC 25: The character notices the outline of the pit in the cavern floor.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a creature enters one of its four squares.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Target: Triggering creature

Attack: +9 vs. Reflex

Hit: Target falls into pit, takes 3d10 [16] damage, and falls prone.

Miss: Target returns to last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: Pit is exposed

COUNTERMEASURES

- A hero adjacent to a trapped square can trigger it with a DC 10 Thievery (disable) check.
- A hero adjacent to a trapped square can disable trap with a DC 25 Thievery (disable) check. The floor is now safe.
- A hero can leap the trapped squares with a DC 11 Athletics (jump) check (doubled if not running start).

Tactics: The rat swarms are afraid of the vampires (the simple beasts fear undead), and always move away from them if adjacent. The vampires use this to their advantage to herd the rats toward the humans and into the pit.

Spawn tactics depend on if the heroes are in the pit or not. If not, two pass through the cracks to attack the hero (ideally a bloodied one) and herd the rats. One stays out of sight, hoping the heroes fall in the pit. If the heroes are in the pit, the vampires drop the brazier and throw rocks.

Neither the rats nor the vampires willingly move toward the pit (revealed or not); note that swarms are immune to forced movement from melee and ranged attacks.

The rat swarms flee if reduced to single-digit hp, pass toward area 1-1. The vampires fight to their destruction.

2 Rat Swarms

Level 4 Skirmisher

Medium natural beast (swarm)

Swarm Attack aura 1; this creature makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +7, low-light

HP 44; **Bloodied** 22

AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13

Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks

Vulnerable 5 close and area attacks

Speed 4, climb 2

↑ Swarm of Teeth (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d6+4 [7] damage, and ongoing 3 damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 12 (+3)

Dex 17 (+5)

Wis 10 (+2)

Con 12 (+3)

Int 2 (-2)

Cha 9 (+1)

Description Flooding from the cracks in the wall comes a horde of rats, thousands of needle-teethed, beady-eyed, furred bodies, all looking for their next meal.

3 Vampire Spawn Fleshrippers

Level 5 Minion

XP 50

Medium natural humanoid (undead)

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +4, darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic

Speed 7, climb 4 (spider climb)

↑ Claws (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+11 vs. AC; 5 necrotic damage (7 necrotic damage vs. a bloodied target)

⚡ Thrown Rock (standard; at-will) ♦ **Improvised, Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 3 damage.

Brazier Dump (standard; encounter)

is a lit brazier; close blast 2; +6 vs. Reflex;

pires kick over or dump the brazier, dealing damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+4);

Con 16 (+5) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 14 (+5)

Description These look like villagers, two men and a woman, but they seem to have gone feral...their hands resemble claws and there is a wild look in their black eyes.

I-4

Green Fire (EL 5, 1,000 XP)

As the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

Ascending the stairs, you find a large study of some kind. The southeast corner of the chamber has a large pool of rancid water, and the center has a massive table that looks like it could seat about ten comfortably. Carvings of hunting scenes decorate the wood, but the surface is deeply gouged and blackened in places.

Just north of the table is a wooden chair, possibly as would be used by the master of a house. The chair's crown has been crudely re-carved to the semblance of a fanged mouth.

A large portcullis is set into the east wall, leading to a corridor that turns south after a second portcullis. A green flame flickers from somewhere after the turn; you hear something heavy shuffling that way.

To the west, two levers are set into the wall in an alcove; both are set into the "down" position.

Some words have been scratched into the wall near the two levers.

Development: In Goblin [which Nestiro and Tasia speak], the words read, "Danger! Leave these alone!"

For the last eight years, Elziba has been trying to figure out a way to harvest chloroflame bulbs without killing the plant or having them go inert after 24 hours.



When the party can see the chloroblast, give them Handout B.

Levers: Lever A raises (in an up position) or lowers (in a down position) portcullis A; lever B does the same for portcullis B. A minor action raises or lowers a lever.

The Mouth: A DC 20 Arcana check to detect the presence of magic finds an effect centered on the chair's fanged mouth. A similar DC 20 Arcana check can identify it as a Magic Mouth ritual.

If a hero sits in the chair, the ritual is triggered, speaking through the fanged mouth and in the voice of an old woman:

"The chloroblast has proven a disappointment. Even after burning down my manor I have been unable to harvest its bulbs to use against Ramsgate. Keldoss, you are to leave it alone until I have opportunity for further research. Keep the Yenbrue and the bugbears away from it."

Treasure: After the chloroblast is slain, up to 1d3 [2] of its chloroflame bulbs can be harvested and carried as grenade-like objects. Treat them as improved ranged weapons that deal 1d10+4 fire damage in a burst 1 when thrown; on a miss, they simply don't explode.

If a hero takes a critical hit while carrying a chloroflame bulb on their person, it explodes as if it had been thrown at the hero.

The bulbs go inert (and are useless) after 24 hours.

Terrain: Standing in water (either in the cell or the rancid pool) adds a +2 bonus to Reflex defense against the plant's chloroflame jet and a +2 bonus to saves to get rid of ongoing fire damage.

The pool in the cell is clean water.

Referring to the map, the starting location of the chloroblast is marked with a circle and a "C."

Tactics: The chloroblast never attacks the same foe twice consecutively unless that is the only target left. It prefers (in order) 1) targets close to it 2) who have damaged it and 3) are bloodied.

The only creatures spared its fury are the thornblood slaves in area 1-5.

It uses action points in the first two rounds of combat, most likely on *chloroflame jet* attacks.

Note that the sap gout, although a minor action, can only be used once per round.

Although it has a melee attack, it prefers chloroflame jet over tendrils, using the latter only for opportunity attacks and for retributive slap.

The chloroblast fights to its destruction.

Chloroblast

Level 5 Solo Artillery **XP 1250**

Large natural animate (plant)

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +5, blindsight 10

HP 268; **Bloodied** 134

AC 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 16

Immune poison; **Resist** 15 fire

Saving Throws +5

Speed 4

Action Point 2

↑ **Tendrils Whip** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +12 vs. AC; 1d6+4 [7] damage.

⚡ **Sap Gout** (minor; at-will) • **Poison**

Ranged 10; +10 vs. Fort; 1d10+4 [9] poison damage, and the target's resistance to fire (if any) is reduced by 10 points (minimum 0) until the end of this creature's next turn.

The chloroblast can only use this attack once per round.

⚡ **Chloroflame Jet** (standard; at-will) • **Fire**

Ranged 10; +10 vs. Ref; 2d6+5 [12] fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Retributive Slap (immediate interrupt, when damaged by an opportunity attack)

Once per round, this creature makes a melee basic attack against the foe that damaged it.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 18 (+6)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 15 (+4)

Con 19 (+6)

Int 2 (-2)

Cha 4 (-1)

Description This is some kind of massive plant, a gourd-like body moving around on thick, whipping vines. From its top sprout thinner, ropelike vines tipped with elongated thorns. A semi-transparent bulb grows in the center of the thinner vines, glowing with a pale green flame.

I-5 The Golden Orchid (EL 8, 1,750 XP)

When the party enters the main cave, read or paraphrase the following:

This large cave is a garden of some sort. Two small depressions are filled with a riot of some purplish-black flowers.

Beyond the farthest fungus pit is a crude portcullis the size of a small room. Several small, green-skinned creatures. They look malnourished and despondent.

Past the closer fungus pit is a short staircase that leads to a small room. There, on a small dais and struck squarely by a shaft of light descending from a shaft in the ceiling, is an orchid the size of a grown dwarf. It droops under the weight of petals of pure gold.

Braziers with low-burning coals dimly light this cavern.

A gang of bugbears stands idle watch, and at the stairs a larger bugbear holds whispered discourse with an ugly old man and an armor-clad warrior. There is an unsettling wrongness to both the man and the warrior.

Development: On the eve of their attack on the Ramsgate farms, the Gnawface bugbear tribe has decided to try to get more gold. The small contingent, led by a strangler named Goolat, is in negotiation with Keldoss while Larek Yenbrue tries to mediate.

Regardless of their dispute, all villains in this room view any intrusion as a hostile act and unite to attack.

A DC 20 Strength check lifts the portcullis to free the thornblood slaves, who attempt to flee the room.

Treasure: Keldoss uses a *shield of defiance* (Arcana DC 24; none). Larek wears a gold necklace with the seal of the Yenbrue clan (250 gp). Each Gnawface basher wears a copper nosering worth 20 gp; Goolat's nosering is silver and decorated with carved flames (110 gp).

Terrain: The stalagmite is blocking terrain. Referring to the map, the starting locations of the bashers is marked with a "B," and Keldoss, Larek, and Goolat with a "K," "L," and "G," respectively.

Squares with braziers can be entered easily, but any creature entering or beginning their turn in such a square takes 10 fire damage. The braziers can be kicked over as a standard action; they scatter coals in a close blast 2 (+9 vs. 10 fire damage to any creature in the blast).

Leechwort can be identified as leechwort with a DC 17 Intelligence check, learning all the information below:

Squares marked with an "X" contain leechwort, which is blocking terrain. The poisonous mushroom deals 4 poison damage to any creature entering a leechwort square.

Use the fire or area attack with the fire keyword that goes into the square of leechwort destroys the fungus, making the square safe to enter.

OVERHEARD DISSENSION

The party can overhear Goolat, Keldoss, and Larek with a Perception (listen) check on the other side of the secret door in area 1-3 (DC 22) or through the door in area 1-4 (DC 27).

(passive) *You hear a hushed conversation from somewhere up ahead. You can't quite make out what they are saying.*

(active) *You hear a deep voice speaking in hushed tones. "Your tribesmen have been paid, Goolat. Asking for more gold is pointless. And dangerous. It tells me you don't value Elziba's patronage."*

Another voice interrupts; this speaker sounds constantly out of breath. "Besides, the attack on the farm has already begun. You will find plenty of plunder there, yes?"

A third voice speaks, this one brutish, "Plant almost dead. Want more gold now. Farmers have no gold."

If the heroes first hear the conversation passively and then make an effort to listen, they come in on the second voice (Larek's). After the third voice (Goolat) speaks, the conversation descends into a short standoff, and then even more quiet negotiation (impossible to hear).



TAUNTING THE HEROES

Keldoss says things like:

"Your bodies will feed Elziba's garden!"

"I can cure you of your living problem, wretch!"

"Even if I fall, your farms will burn, living scum!"

"Kill them all! Elziba commands this!"

Larek says things like:

"Ha-ha-ha... your blood is so bright!"

"Not quite skilled enough, are you?"

"Aubaridan Ahktar curse you!"

"By my breath, you will pay for that!"

Tactics: The Gnawface bashers near the staircase surge forward like good minions, and try to flank with Goolat. If they are having trouble hitting, they use aid another actions to boost their attacks.

The Gnawface bashers in the leechwort pit (behind the secret door) instead race to let the chloroblast out. They run, use a move action to open the secret door, and use minor actions to pull the levers. Afterwards, they flee the chloroblast, circle back to where they started, and fight like their fellows.

Goolat moves with the staircase bashers, circling around to get the flank he needs to *strangle*; he fights alongside Keldoss. Goolat's *body shield* recharges every other round.

Larek tries to stay near Keldoss but away from melee, relying on his shortbow when he can't use *whispers of madness* or *mind worm*. Larek's *whispers of madness* recharges on round +1, round +7, and round +10.

Keldoss gleefully enters melee with the heroes. As soon as he has at least two heroes in melee, he uses *one against many*. He uses *soul reaping* as often as he can. Keldoss's *soul reaping* recharges on round +3, round +4, round +5, and round +10.

If he's fighting alone, Keldoss enters leechwort squares in an attempt to lure the heroes there – note that he's immune to poison.

The thornblood slaves do not participate in the fight. Their spirit is broken.

Keldoss and the Gnawface bashers fight to their destruction. Goolat retreats if both Keldoss and Larek are dead and he is reduced to 10 hp or fewer. Larek retreats if reduced to 20 hp or fewer, regardless of who is left alive.

7 Gnawface Bashers

Level 5 Minion

XP 50

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 17; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14

Speed 6

↑ **Morningstar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon** +10 vs. AC; 8 damage.

Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)

This creature deals an extra 1d6 [3] damage on the next attack it makes with combat advantage. It must apply this bonus before the end of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+4)

Con 15 (+4) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, morningstar, copper

Description These bugbears bear clear bite-marks on their faces, one is missing an entire cheek. Clearly these burly warriors are no stranger to combat.

Goolat, Bugbear Strangler

Level 8 Lurker

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

HP 70; **Bloodied** 35

AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18; see also *body shield*

Speed 7

↑ **Morningstar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon** +12 vs. AC; 1d12+5 [11] damage.

↑ **Strangle** (standard; sustain standard; at-will) Requires combat advantage; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d10+5 [10] damage, and target is grabbed (until escape). A target trying to escape the grab takes a -4 penalty to the check. The bugbear strangler can sustain the power as a standard action, dealing 1d10+5 [10] damage and maintaining the grab.

Body Shield (immediate interrupt, when target is in melee or ranged attack against AC or Reflex; recharge 10) Requires grabbed victim; the victim is now the target. This power can't be used to redirect attacks made against the grabbed victim.

Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)

This creature deals an extra 1d6 [3] damage on the next attack it makes with combat advantage. It must apply this bonus before the end of its next turn.

Quick Step (minor; encounter)

Goolat shifts one square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+6)

Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+5)

Equipment leather armor, morningstar, rope garrote, silver nosering

Description This stout goblinoid has tremendous forearms and a sneering look to him. Bristly hair frames his face like a lion's mane.

Larek Yenbrue, Foulspawn Grue

Level 8 Controller

XP 350

Small aberrant humanoid

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +5, low-light vision

HP 87; **Bloodied** 43

AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20

Speed 4, teleport 4

↑ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+13 vs. AC; 1d4+4 [7] damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). If the target is already slowed, it is dazed instead (save ends).

⚡ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 15/30; +10 vs. AC; 1d8+4 [8] damage

⚡ **Mind Worm** (standard; encounter)

+10 vs. Will; target takes a -2 penalty to Will and is slowed (save ends both).

⚡ **Whispers of Madness** (standard; recharge 5, 6)

♦ **Psychic**

Ranged 5; deafened creatures are immune; +10 vs. Will; 4d6+3 [17] psychic damage, and target is slowed (save ends). If target is already slowed, it is dazed instead (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech,

Elvish

Skills Stealth +13

Str 8 (+3)

Dex 19 (+8)

Wis 3 (+0)

Con 15 (+6)

Int 11 (+4)

Cha 16 (+7)

Equipment shortbow, 10 arrows, gold necklace

Description This hunched creature wears torn and faded finery, like a noble on hard times. It resembles an old, emaciated man, but his eyes are perfect, yellow orbs and his mouth opens far too wide.

Keldoss, Battle Wight

Level 8 Elite Soldier

XP 700

Medium natural humanoid (undead)

Initiative +7

Senses Perception +3, darkvision

HP 180; **Bloodied** 90

AC 26 **Fortitude** 23 **Reflex** 17 **Will** 23

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

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Saves +2

Speed 5

Action Points 1

↑ **Souldraining Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦

Necrotic, Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 [9] damage, and the target loses 1 healing surge and is immobilized (save ends). If the target has no healing surges left, it takes an extra 1d6 [3] damage.

↑ **One Against Many** (standard; recharges when bloodied)

Keldoss makes a basic melee attack against every foe adjacent to him.

⚡ **Soul Reaping** (standard, recharge 5, 6) ♦ **Healing, Necrotic**

Ranged 5; affects an immobilized target only; +11 vs. Fort; 2d8+5 [14] necrotic damage, and Keldoss regains 10 hp.

Shield of Defiance (immediate reaction, after taking a critical hit; daily) ♦ **Healing**

Keldoss spends a healing surge, regaining 45 hp.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Intimidate +14

Str 20 (+9)

Dex 13 (+5)

Wis 9 (+3)

Con 18 (+8)

Int 12 (+5)

Cha 20 (+9)

Equipment plate armor, heavy shield of defiance, longsword

Description If the dead went to war against the living, this creature would be at the forefront. Its waxy hide is protected by an impressive suit of plate armor and a heavy shield. Sickly yellow light plays along its sword and dances in its death-fogged eyes.

THUS THE HEROES WIN THE TREASURE OF TANGLETHORN MANOR!

WRAPPING UP

You have won the treasure of Tanglethorn Manor, the gold-bearing orchid, but the undead warrior spoke of Ramsgate's farms being put to the torch as you fought. He also spoke of his mistress, Elziba Caulwik.

If the crone yet lives, she cannot intend well for your home... as you will soon discover.

This adventure is continued in Chapter Two: *The Burning Tower*, wherein the Gnawface attack and burn the farms north of Ramsgate. When the heroes arrive, the bugbears are holding captives inside a guard tower, including family and friends of the characters!

As stated above, the thornblood slaves can fill the heroes in on the backstory of the module.

6 Thornblood Slaves: Nature +8, Stealth +9; Captured eight years ago, kept in servitude to maintain Elziba's garden. They know her entire background story and gladly tell it to the heroes in exchange for their freedom.

Description: *This tall, thin humanoid has green-skin, pale green eyes, and delicate elfin features. It is dressed in clothing composed of bark and leaves.*

The golden orchid is a unique plant; it cannot be duplicated without Elziba's help. Similarly, it cannot be moved from this spot without destroying it. Finally, the plant is ailing; unless treated (as determined by the GM, but likely involving another adventure) it dies in a month's time.

The orchid currently has four petals. At any given time, it must have two to remain alive. It regrows one petal a week; until they are fully grown, they are just normal petals.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

This scenario can springboard into other adventures.

- The thornblood captives could tell the heroes about others of their kind imprisoned in the nearby swamp, held by the inbred Yenbrue clan of foulspawn.
- The Gnawface bugbears, financed by gold from the orchid, launch a series of successful raids into civilized lands until the heroes raid their mountain stronghold.
- Keldoss serves a greater power, the vampiress hag Elziba Caulwik. He could carry a map that leads to her sewer-crypt beneath Ramsgate.
- The golden orchid is weak, and requires a special solution of rare ingredients to flourish (and produce more gold). Questing to find these objects could occupy heroes for some time, and take them to the fantasy world.



THE VAMPIRE'S VENGEANCE

CHAPTER TWO: "THE BURNING TOWER"

The *Burning Tower* is designed for five characters of 6th to 7th level. While the characters can be of any basic class, a party skilled in using terrain to their advantage will fare best. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this chapter of the adventure to your group's unique style of play.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Bugbears have attacked the local farms and claimed a nearby guard tower as their headquarters! Slaying their leader will break their morale and allow the militia to retake the tower...but the tower is still smoking, and the bugbears have powerful allies who have yet to reveal themselves.

GAME MASTERS SECTION

ENCOUNTER TABLE

SCALING INFORMATION

The *Burning Tower* is designed as an adventure for 5 characters of 6th level. The adventure, however, can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. When adjusting to module to suit your game, consider the following suggestions:

Smaller parties (4th level or lower): Remove two levels from the iron-eaters, beetles, and stirge in area 1-1. For area 1-3a, remove two levels from Loggat and the skullsplitters,

then remove one skullsplitter. If the party manages to enter area 1-4b, remove three farkillers. In area 1-5, remove two levels from the tomb guardian and Harggat, and one level from the farkillers.

Adjust the treasure accordingly.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 7th level): Add two levels to the arrow slits and iron-eaters in area 1-1. Also remove one level from the dire stirge, then add a second. For area 1-3a, add three levels to Loggat, two levels to the skullsplitters and murderholes, and one level to the blazing timbers. If the party enters area 1-4b, add one level to all farkillers. In area 1-5, add one level to the farkillers and add a fourth farkiller. Additionally, add two levels to the tomb guardian and Harggat.

Adjust the treasure accordingly.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The adventure begins after the culmination of Chapter One: *Treasure of Tanglethorn Manor*, as the heroes approach the burning guard tower as it is occupied by the bugbears.

If players did not complete Chapter One prior to running *The Burning Tower*, the GM could adapt one of the following hooks to get the characters started:

- The heroes attack the tower as part of a larger crusade to purge the bugbears from the hills. Harggat is holed up in the tower with the captives to force the army back, but the heroes are sent in to kill him. In this scenario, remove the vampire spawn and the coda.
- The tower was constructed as a sacrificial point, and the bugbears are going to burn the captives alive. In this scenario, remove the vampire spawn, and change Loggat to being fire-themed as he lights the fire.
- The tower is a watch tower that guards an entrance to an enemy kingdom. If the heroes can take it quickly, the nearby garrison will not be alerted. In this scenario, remove the fire, captives, and vampire spawn, and add additional bugbears.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	17	F/C	2 Gnawface iron-eaters Dire stirge 2 tangler beetles 2 arrow slits	8
1-3a	21	F/H/C	Loggat, bugbear icecaller 3 Gnawface skullsplitters Gnawface basher Murder-holes 2 blazing timbers	8
1-5	25	C	Harggat, bugbear strangler elite Run-down skeletal tomb guardian, elite Gnawface basher 3 Gnawface farkillers	9
Coda	27	C	0-20 vampire spawn fleshrippers 0-3 vampire spawn bloodhunters	6

BACKGROUND STORY

The Gnawface bugbear tribe has lurked in the Bitterstone Hills north of Ramsgate for as long as anyone can remember. Various expeditions have tried to wipe them out, but they've always come back, stronger than before.

Under the leadership of Harggat, his cult of stranglers, and his icecaller brother Loggat, the Gnawface have struck a deal of convenience with the vampire crone Elziba Caulwik. In return for gold grown on a wondrous orchid (see *Treasure of Tanglethorn Manor*), the bugbears attack as she directs, when she directs.

Their sacking of the farms is, in fact, a feint to draw the Ramsgate militia out of the city as part of Elziba's master plan. Even now, the degenerate Yenbrue clan of foulspawn chant forbidden rituals to block out the sun. Soon, Elziba's vampiric thralls will rise to feast on the living...with the heroes in the middle of the bloodshed!

VAMPIRES!

Elziba ordered the Gnawface to "seed" the farms with "corpses" wrapped in funerary shrouds. They complied, not understanding that the "corpses" were actually dormant vampire spawn fleshrippers and bloodhunters.

Twenty fleshrippers and three bloodhunters are scattered throughout this adventure. The party has a chance to find and destroy them before the Yenbrue clan finishes their ritual (see "The Darkest Day," below), possibly avoiding a fight. Fleshrippers are marked on the map with a circled "V," and bloodhunters with a circled "B."

When the party finds a corpse, read or paraphrase the following:

The dead body of a villager has been wrapped in funerary shrouds, giving them dignity in death.

Unwrapping a spawn in areas 1-1 or 1-5 prior to "The Darkest Day" destroys it, giving the party a solid clue as to its true nature. If a party does so, read or paraphrase the following:

As you peel back the shroud, the body is exposed to sunlight, and bursts into white flame. The body screams as it is instantly rendered to ash.

If the party unshrouds a "corpse" inside the tower, a DC 15 Religion check recognizes it as a dormant vampire spawn.

Dormant vampires are helpless, and a coup-de-grace destroys them. If the party isn't in combat, assume the vampire is automatically destroyed.

PLAYER BEGINNING

The adventure begins with the heroes approaching the burning guard tower at mid-day. Start the adventure by giving the players Handout C. Read the following:

Hours ago, a small army of bugbears descended from the Bitterstone Hills and sacked the farms north of Ramsgate, your home. Many captives were taken, possibly including

friends and family, and the thought of leaving them to the mercy of the Gnawface tribe is unthinkable.

Fortunately, the bugbears lack discipline, and their forces have degenerated into looting.

Unfortunately, the bugbears lack discipline. Even if the Gnawface have a plan for the captives, they'll kill them at the slightest provocation. You must hurry if you are to save the civilians.

You've learned that their leader, a strangler named Harggat, now controls a militia tower, still burning from the attack. That's where the captives will be.

AREAS OF THE MAP

It is assumed to be mid-day as the party approaches the burning tower.

All ceilings in the guard tower are ten feet high.

Referring to the map, all squares containing rubble staircases are difficult terrain (except those in area

Bugbear, militia, and civilian tracks crisscross the area; it is impossible follow any one track, but several tracks (DC 15 Perception (track)) lead toward the tower.

Finally, several squares throughout the adventure marked with an "X," representing billowing smoke. Such a square provides concealment, but ending your turn there (not merely passing through) results in a failed Stealth check unless the creature is crawling.

Smoke: +6 vs. Fort; target takes 2 fire damage. Targets that take damage are dazed until the end of their next turn. They also cough, possibly alerting guards.

I-1 Killing Ground (EL 8, 1,750 XP)

As the game begins, read or paraphrase the following:

Nearly every building in the farms has been destroyed or smashed by rampaging bugbears or burned to the ground. The noon sun looks down on blackened shells of buildings, smoke, and unburied bodies of farmers and militia-men.

At the tower, a pair of burly bugbears in chainmail guard, each accompanied by a massive beetle with iron mandibles. One has a bloated stirge on its wrist, a mockery of a proper falconer. You can see that one of them has been knocked off its hinges, but the other is most

Development: The party can enter the map from the south or north, as they like.

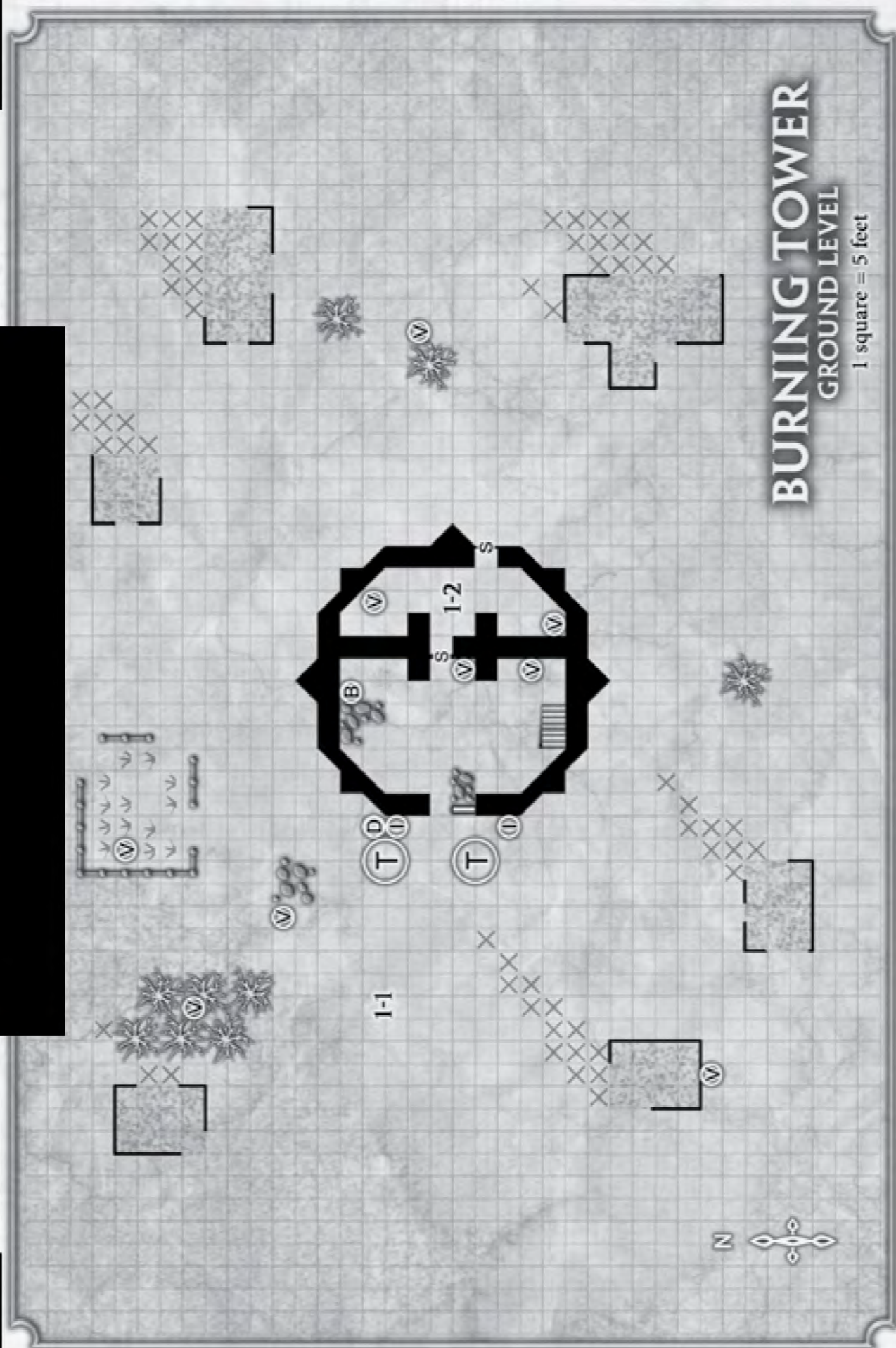
[The pregens are Ramsgaters; if they ask, allow a DC 20 History check to remember there is supposed to be a secret way into the tower.]

The intact door in the tower is blocked closed with rubble; it cannot be opened.

Like in area 1-2, there are support beams in the base of the tower. Unlike area 1-2, these are sturdy and undamaged by fire. Heroes can hack through them, but doing so would collapse the entire tower (already stressed by the fire damage).

When they notice that the arrow slits are manned [Delaris does automatically], read or paraphrase the following:





CLIMBING THE TOWER

The tower's total height is 40 feet; heroes can't squeeze through arrow slits, so they must climb to the top (area 1-5).

It requires a DC 20 Athletics (climb) check to scale the tower. From 25-28 feet up, however, increase the Athletics DC to 25 as the hero reaches the third level overhang.

Finally, as the hero climbs past level three, he or she is exposed to arrow slit fortifications. Remember that heroes who take damage while climbing must make a new check or fall.

You see shadows moving behind the arrow slits on the third floor. It looks like there are a lot of them.

Improvised Defenses: The farmhouses were wooden construction; a hero could rip off a large section of intact wall to use as a makeshift tower shield, providing cover during the dash across the open. Similarly, a hero could cut limbs from the tree for concealment. Neither makeshift defense can be used for Stealth ("Why is that tree walking?").

Fortifications, Part I: Bugbear crossbowmen in the third level of the tower (area 1-4b) can fire through arrow slits as the heroes approach the tower. Although each given arrow slit only has a 90-degree arc of fire, there are enough slits to cover any blind spots.

When this encounter begins, roll initiative for the arrow slits as if they were creatures.

Secret Door: The outside (eastern) secret door to area 1-2 requires a DC 30 Perception check to locate; the inside (western) one is easier to find, requiring a DC 27 Perception check.

Noisy Upstairs: The bugbears in area 1-3a are too busy putting out fires to hear the battle. Anyone who understands Goblin can hear shouts of, "Do it again!" and "Hurry up!" coming from up the stairs.

2 Arrow Slits

Level 5 Blaster

Fortification

XP 200

Crew: Eight Gnawface farkillers in area 1-4b.

Fortification (Superior Cover): Two Gnawface farkillers per fortification (four total) attack each round on their initiative.

Perception

N/A: The arrow slits are obvious

DC 20: The hero can see that several arrow slits have archers behind them.

Initiative +5

Passive Perception +19 (-2 penalty due to reduced visibility)

Trigger

A hero is within range and exposed to fire.

Attack

Standard Action **Ranged 15** (Crossbow)

Targets: Each farkiller attacks one hero.

Attack +9 vs. AC

Hit 1d10+5 [10] damage

COUNTERMEASURES

- Heroes could use Stealth to approach the fortification.
- Using cover or concealment to approach the tower hinders the fortification's ability to attack.
- Killing all eight Gnawface farkillers in area 1-4b defeats this fortification.
- Creatures adjacent to the base of the tower be attacked until they reach the height of

Treasure: Each iron-eater wears a helmet chased v (worth 250 gp) and a copper nosering (20 gp).

Terrain: Understanding terrain plays a crucial role in this encounter.

Referring to the map, there are several shapes with light and shaded squares. Rather than draw buildings, these represent intact sections of burned farmhouse wall that provide line of sight and provide cover from the arrow slits for the tower. The shaded squares are the "footprint" of the building; such square is difficult and hindering terrain (entering a square or starting your turn there inflicts 2 fire damage).

North of the tower is a battered-down fence and a field of tall grain. Grain squares provide concealment; the fence provides cover.

The scattered trees provide cover, and the various squares provide concealment (and see Areas of the Map).

Gnawface iron-eaters are marked "I" on the map; the stirge is marked "D," and the tangler beetles are marked "T;" note that they take up four squares.

Tactics: The iron-eater releases the stirge as a minion when combat begins. It streaks for the nearest hero and attacks; it is sacrificed to keep the party in range of the arrow slits.

The iron-eaters don't try to exchange ranged fire with the heroes; instead they (and the stirge) retreat inside the tower and wait for the heroes to come to them.

In melee, the iron-eaters guard the door, trying to keep the party outside and within range of the arrow slits. They withdraw to the staircase if necessary. They flank with each other and concentrate on one foe at a time, but don't really cooperate with the beetles or the stirge.

Once they have a foe flanked, one or the other uses *temple crush*. Note this is a Reliable power.

When a hero is within 5 squares of the tower door, the tangler beetles (somewhat trained by the bugbears) rush out and hose them down with *entangling spittle*, hopefully immobilizing them in range of the arrow slits.

The stirge flees (north) when reduced to 5 hp or fewer; all others fight to their destruction.

Gnawface Iron-Eater

Level 6 Soldier **XP 250**

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +10;

HP 72; **Bloodied** 36 low-light vision

AC 22; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15

Speed 5

↑ **Warhammer** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+10 vs. AC; 1d12+6 [12] damage

⚡ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 10/20; +10 vs. AC; 1d8+6 [9] damage.

↑ **Temple Crush** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Reliable, Weapon**

+10 vs. AC; 2d12+6 [19] damage, and the target is dazed at the end of the iron-eater's next turn.

Veteran Combatant

A Gnawface iron-eater can make 3 opportunity attacks a round.

Victory Eye (minor; encounter)

This feature deals an extra 1d6 damage on the next attack the iron-eater makes with combat advantage. It must apply before the end of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Skills Intimidate +9, Stealth +8

Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Equipment chain armor, heavy shield, warhammer, 2 javelins, gold helmet, copper nosering

Description This bugbear is better armed and armored than most of his ilk, with properly-fitting chainmail and a well-used helmet. He stands silent watch near the smashed entrance to the tower.

2 Tangler Beetles

Level 6 Controller **XP 250**
Medium natural beast

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision

HP 70; **Bloodied** 35

AC 20; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15

Speed 6

(standard; at-will)

; +11 vs. AC; 1d10+5 [10] damage.

⚡ **Entangling Spittle** (standard; recharge 4, 5, 6)

Ranged 5; +9 vs. Reflex; target is immobilized (save ends)

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 10 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 14 (+5) **Int** 1 (-2) **Cha** 8 (+2)

Description This beetle, the size of a small cart, has a glistening black carapace and a horn-like protrusion above its head. Mandibles as long as a man's arm scythe the air as it shifts position.

RECHARGING, PART I

The tangler beetles' *entangling spittle* recharges every other round.

Dire Stirge

Level 8 Lurker **XP 350**
Small natural beast

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision

HP 72; **Bloodied** 36

AC 22; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 17; see also *bite*

Speed 2; fly 6 (hover)

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+13 vs. AC; 1d6+1 [4] damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape) and takes ongoing 10 damage until it escapes. A dire stirge doesn't make attack rolls while grabbing a target and gains +5 bonus to AC and Reflex defenses.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Skills Stealth +12

Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)

Con 12 (+5) **Int** 1 (-1) **Cha** 4 (+1)

Description This orange-colored, four-winged beast has an elongated proboscis like a mosquito and four thin appendages that terminate in claws.

1-2 Opportunity

When the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the secret door, you see a room that has been blackened by fire, although the blaze has been extinguished. Charred support beams creak ominously beneath the tread of what sounds like a small army walking around on the floor above you.

Development: This was a secret storage chamber for the guardsmen. The fire devouring the tower started here, but Loggat managed to put it out.

With a DC 17 Athletics check, a hero can dislodge a support beam, bringing down the entire ceiling. This collapses area 1-3b into this area, destroying the staircases to area 1-4b. This kills the bugbears (and vampire spawn) in 1-3b and deactivates the murder-holes in 1-3a.

Up to two other heroes can assist with the Athletics check. A clever hero would use a rope to pull down the beam.

If a hero is in this area during the collapse, they take 3d10+5 [21] damage. The collapse completely chokes this area, so heroes can't climb from here, through the ruined area 1-3b, and into 1-4b.

Alternately, any close or area effect with the fire keyword that goes off in that room re-starts the blaze, and 1 round later the ceiling collapses.

I-3a Fire Team (EL 8, 1,750 XP)

As the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The stairs lead to a large chamber, partitioned by a stone wall. To the north, part of the ceiling has collapsed, leaving blazing timbers and blackened stone in two large piles.

Shouting furiously, four bugbears gesticulate toward a fifth, who chants and makes an arcane gesture with a wand. A bolt of blue energy leaps from the wand and fizzles out on the flame, dampening it only slightly.

Development: Loggat, nominally assisted by three skullsplitters and a basher, has been putting out fires throughout the tower, trying to make it a proper stronghold for his brother, Harggat.

If the flames are extinguished here, remove the smoke from area 1-4a and 1-5.

Fortifications, Part II: The bashers in area 1-3b are manning murder-holes in the walls, making a fortification.

When the party sees the murder-holes, read the first paragraph below; when they detect the crew [Delaris does automatically], add the second paragraph.



The eastern-most wall has a series of apertures, like arrow slits but slightly wider. These are fortifications called murder-holes, through which defenders can attack from relative safety.

Large shapes move behind the murder-holes...this tower is well-defended!

Murder-holes

Level 5 Obstacle Fortification

XP 200

Crew: Gnawface bashers in area 1-3b.

Fortification (Superior Cover): Five murder-holes attack each round on their initiative.

Perception

N/A: The character notices the murder-holes.

DC 25: The character notices that there are figures on the other side of the murder-holes.

Initiative +5

Passive Perception +14

Trigger

A creature enters a square within reach of a murder-hole, or is in reach on the murder-hole's initiative.

Attack

Standard or Opportunity Action **Reach 2** (Longsp

Targets: Each murder-hole attacks one creature within its reach.

Attack +8 vs. AC

Hit 1d12+3 [9] damage

COUNTERMEASURES

- Heroes can collapse the weakened floor which the bugbear minions are standing in, killing them and destroying the fortification.
- A hero can use Stealth to avoid notice.
- Crawling heroes cannot be attacked.
- A hero can ready an action to attack the fortification (AC 13, other defenses 10, hp 10). When destroyed, the murder-holes make one less attack (although any given murder-hole can still attack).
- A hero could destroy a 5-foot section of the wall in which the murder-holes are set (AC/Reflex 10; 60 hp; resist 5 all). This exposes area 1-3b and destroys the fortification.

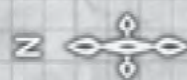
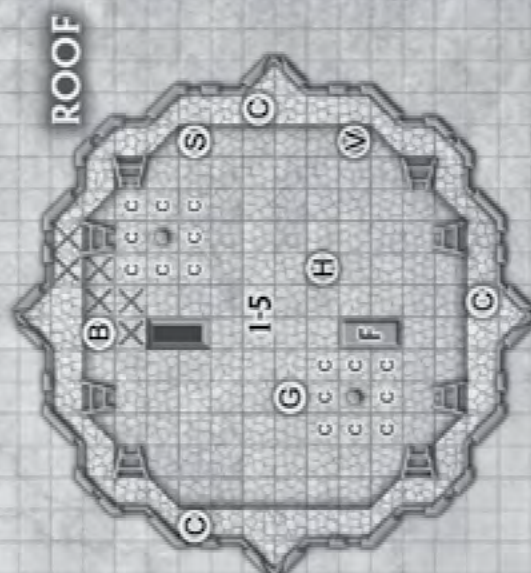
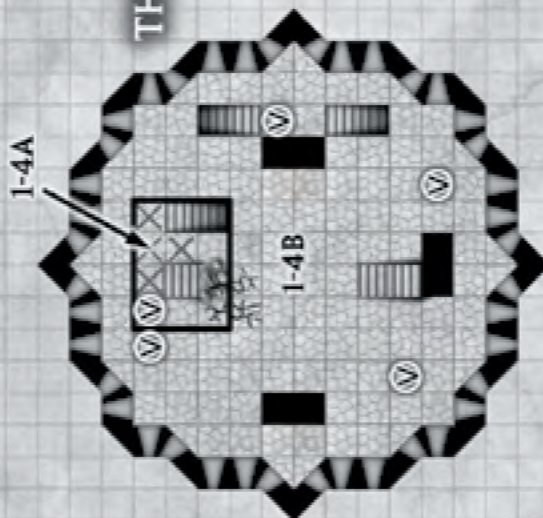
Treasure: The skullsplitters wear copper noserings (20 gp each), and Loggat wears a silver nosering carved with idealized snowflakes (110 gp).

Terrain: Columns are blocking terrain. Note the smoke squares (see Areas of the Map, above)

In this area – and ONLY this area – the squares of rubble (collapsed, burning timbers) are actually hazards.



SECOND LEVEL



1 square = 5 feet

2 Blazing Timbers

Level 5 Blaster

XP 200

Hazard

Hazard: Two squares of rubble per hazard (four total) are on fire.

Perception

N/A: A hero sees the hazard automatically.

Other Skill

Dungeoneering DC 15: The hero realizes that the ceiling is unstable, and fire, force, or thunder effects in that area may cause further collapse.

Trigger

A creature enters or begins its turn in the hazard's aura.

Attack

Opportunity Action

Aura 1

Targets: Creature in aura

Attack +8 vs. Reflex

Hit 1d10+4 [9] fire damage

COUNTERMEASURES

- If a square of the hazard takes 10 points of cold damage, that square is deactivated.

Loggat's starting position is marked with an "L" on the map; the skullsplitters are marked with an "S" and the Gnawface basher with a "G."

Tactics: The skullsplitters and Loggat all try to withdraw near the murder-holes, hoping to catch the party with them. They engage the party at range (making use of cover from the partition wall) if the heroes are reluctant to close with them.

If necessary, Loggat uses *aggressive reposition* to draw heroes into melee near the murder-holes.

Once melee begins, the skullsplitters use *shifty feet* to set up flanking positions and use *predatory eye*. Note that the skullsplitters deal 2d6 [7] damage with *predatory eye*. The Gnawface basher assists the skullsplitters as best it can.

Loggat only uses *exhalation of ice* if it means he won't catch any other bugbears; he saves it until he can catch two or more heroes. He uses his *wand of shield* the first time it would make a difference in getting hit or not. He only uses his dagger if he's out of other options.

Loggat, Bugbear Icecaller

Level 8 Controller

XP 350

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

HP 88; **Bloodied** 44

AC 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19

Speed 6

↑ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 1d6+1 [4] damage

⚡ **Aggressive Reposition** (standard; at-will) ♦

Arcane, Psychic

Ranged 5; +10 vs. Will; 1d8+5 [9] psychic damage, and Loggat slides the target up to 2 squares (crit: 13+2d6 [7] damage).

⚡ **Ray of Frost** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Arcane, Cold**

Ranged 10; +10 vs. Fort; 1d6+4 [7] cold damage, and target is slowed until end of Loggat's next turn (crit: 10+2d6 [7] damage).

✧ **Exhalation of Ice** (standard; encounter) ♦

Arcane, Cold

Close burst 1; +10 vs. Ref; 3d8+5 [18] cold damage (crit: 29+2d6 [7] damage).

Wand of Shield (immediate interrupt, when struck by an attack; daily) ♦ **Arcane, Force**

Loggat gains +4 to AC and Reflex defense until the end of his next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Skills Intimidate +12, Stealth +14

Str 12 (+5)

Dex 16 (+7)

Wis

Con 16 (+7)

Int 18 (+8)

Cha

Equipment wand of shield +2, silver nosering

Description The bugbear points his wand at you, murmuring arcane formulae beneath his breath. His hands and face are painted with swirling white and blue pigments.

3 Gnawface Skullsplitters

Level 6 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +11; low-light vision

HP 70; **Bloodied** 35

AC 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16

Speed 7

↑ **Mace** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 1d10+3 [8] damage.

⚡ **Throwing Hammer** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +9 vs. AC; 1d8+3 [7] damage.

Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)

This creature deals an extra 2d6 [7] damage on the attack it makes with combat advantage. It must act before the end of its next turn.

Shifty Feet (move; recharges when bloodied)

This creature shifts 4 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Skills Intimidate +10, Stealth +14

Str 18 (+7)

Dex 18 (+7)

Wis 16 (+6)

Con 14 (+5)

Int 10 (+3)

Cha 10 (+3)

Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 throwing hammers, copper nosering

Description With inhuman speed, this bugbear spins to face you, twirling his mace in one hand. His oiled leather armor makes no noise as he shifts his stance to lunge forward.

Gnawface Basher

Level 5 Minion

XP 50

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 17; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14

Speed 6

↑ **Longspear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 8 damage.

Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)

This creature deals an extra 1d6 [3] damage on the next attack it makes with combat advantage. It must apply this bonus before the end of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+4)

Con 15 (+4) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, longspear

Description These bugbears bear clear bite-marks on their faces, one is missing an entire cheek. Clearly these burly warriors are no stranger to combat.

1-3b Defenders (EL <1, 250 XP)

If the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The moon-shaped chamber is featureless aside from two doors leading upward and five murder-holes set into the wall.

Development: Ideally, the party never enters this area, but the description is included for the sake of completeness.

The farkers were placed here on guard duty after the party took the tower. If the party doesn't engage these farkers by the time "The Darkest Day" event occurs, the farkers spawn rise and slay the bugbears before moving to the roof.

Use the stats from area 1-3a for the bashers.

Equipment: The bashers each wear a copper nosering (20 gp).

If the party manages to engage the bashers, they charge forward and try to flank with their fellows.

1-4a Smoky Staircase

If the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This area is little more than a winding staircase choked with smoke. The floor near the western staircase is heavily cracked, and that staircase – which would provide rooftop access – is partially collapsed.

You hear sobbing and cries to the gods for help coming from the roof.

Development: The fire in area 1-3a weakened the timbers supporting the floor and staircase.

Getting to the roof requires covering a height of eight feet. Possible ways to do this are...

- a *levitate* spell
- leaping from the crumbled stair to the lip of the stairwell [Delaris, Tasia, Vyrkol make it automatically; Balgrun and Nestiro need a DC 30 Athletics check (halved with a running start)]
- using a rope to climb to the roof (DC 10 Athletics (climb) check)
- giving an ally an alley-oop (DC 14 Endurance check)

Intentionally Difficult: Some heroes are almost intentionally difficult. No matter the plight of the captives right above their heads, some heroes are surely going to try to hack through the wall to get to the archers.

If they do, point out that they can hear the captives calling for help. If they persist, the wall has the following stats:

Weakened Masonry Wall: AC/Ref 5, Fort 10; hp 50; resist 5 all; Break DC 30

Beginning the Fight: As the heroes move from this area to 1-5, Harggat and his cronies attack the isolated characters. As soon as the first character makes it to the roof, roll for initiative.

Additionally, if the heroes start bashing down the wall, the bugbears on the roof are going to hear them. The farkers move from their starting positions and fire on the heroes from above; grant the farkers a +2 circumstance bonus to their attack rolls to represent their advantageous position.

Terrain: Note the squares of smoke (see Areas of the Map, above).

1-4b Archers (EL 7, 1,500 XP)

If the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This large area takes up most of the tower's third floor. The exterior walls of the tower are riddled with arrowslits manned by several bugbear crossbowmen. Twin staircases lead to a lower level, while a single stair leads toward the roof but is blocked by a trapdoor in the ceiling.

A 15-by-20 section of the room has been walled off.

Development: Ideally the party never reaches this area. In order to do so, they'd have to hack through the wall in area 1-4a or bust the trapdoor in area 1-5.

There are eight Gnawface farkers in this room. Use the stats from area 1-5 if the party somehow ends up fighting them.

The trapdoor is not locked.

Once "The Darkest Day" event is triggered, the vampire spawn in this area rise up and slaughter the bugbears, working their way to the roof. There is no need to narrate or play through this bloodshed.

Tactics: If the party ends up fighting these farkers, the bugbears concentrate their fire on a single hero at a time, usually the one with the biggest melee weapon [in order: Vyrkol, Tasia, Delaris, Balgrun, Nestiro].

I-5 Hostages (EL 9, 2,050 XP)

As the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

At last you've reached the roof of the burning guard tower, which provides an impressive view of the surrounding farmland, the city of Ramsgate to the southwest, the Bitterstone Hills to the northwest, Lake Tilliman to the south, and Polzoi Mire due west.

To your surprise, you see that the Ramsgate militia has already taken positions in the surrounding farms, but are pinned down by crossbow fire from the tower's arrow slits.

Groups of farmers, serfs, and laborers have been tied to two flagpoles. You see human, halfling, and half-elves, their faces painted with fear and – at seeing you – a shred of hope.

Five bugbears stalk the roof: three crossbowmen at the ramparts, a warrior taunting some captives, and a massively large one with a gold nosering...clearly the leader of the strangler cult, Harggat. He smiles and gestures toward another creature standing nearby...a skeleton of unwholesome size, with four overlong arms grafted to its ribcage, each clutching a scimitar.

The bugbear says in accented Common, "You like new toy? Elziba good with gifts!"

Development: Harggat has been shouting down to his minions to stop looting and reform to repel the Ramsgate militia.

The run-down skeletal tomb guardian is indeed a "toy" given to Harggat by Elziba Caulwik, the vampire crone pulling the strings.

Each of the farmer-folk is loosely tied to a flagpole; fear keeps them more in place than their bonds. They are minions, and helpless with dread.

Two combat rounds after both Harggat and the skeleton are dead, "The Darkest Day" event triggers (see Coda, below). Note this means the party will not have an extended rest, and not recovered their encounter powers.

Treasure: Harggat wears a small sack containing four amber gems (100 gp each). Another small sack near the ledge contains eleven lumps of gold shaped like flower petals (100 gp each) and 170 gp. The farkillers wear copper noserings worth 20 gp each.

Terrain: Flagpoles are blocking terrain. It costs 1 square of movement to cross the elevation line between the rampart and the tower roof.

Unlike other staircases, the stairs leading to the ramparts are not difficult terrain.

The battlement merlons grant a +5 bonus to saving throws made to avoid being moved over the edge by forced movement.

Captives neither block line of sight nor provide concealment; they recoil and cringe from bugbears, and won't sacrifice themselves to save the party (they're not heroes, the PCs are).

Gnawface farkiller crossbowmen are marked "C" on the map, and the skeleton tomb guardian is marked "S." Harggat is marked with an "H," the Gnawface basher with a "G," and the "C"s on the map represent captives.

ADDING SOME SPICE

If the GM wishes, some of the captives can be family and/or friends of the party [Nestiro's parents and two brothers are here, as are two fisherman friends of Tasia].

Tactics: The farkillers remain more or less in position and fire on the party. They like to use *lung shot* on heroes in melee with their chieftain.

The tomb guardian lumbers into melee with the closest hero. It closes to be adjacent with the hero, but note the threatening reach 2. The guardian attacks that hero or she is dead or outside of reach, when it selects a new target.

Harggat and the basher team up with the skeleton, flanking the party, making full use of combat advantage. Harggat prefers to his morningstar. When bloodied, he rushes to the captive and strangles them, refreshing himself with saliva.

If Harggat is dead and a farkiller is reduced to 10 or less, it attempts to flee down the stairs to area 1-4a (but may get slain by vampires).

Otherwise, all creatures fight to their destruction.

3 Gnawface Farkillers

Level 5 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +11;

HP 52; **Bloodied** 26 low-light vision

AC 17; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14

Speed 6

↑ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d12+5 [11] damage

⚡ **Crossbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d10+5 [10] damage. This creature can shift 1 square either before or after this attack.

⚡ **Lung Shot** (standard; encounter) • **Weapon**
Requires crossbow; +9 vs. AC; 2d10+5 [16] damage. If the target is weakened (save ends).

Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)

This creature deals an extra 1d6 [3] damage on the next attack it makes with combat advantage. It must apply this bonus before the end of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Skills Intimidate +10, Stealth +12

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)

Con 16 (+5) **Int** 12 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+2)

Equipment leather armor, battleaxe, crossbow, 20 bolts, copper nosering

Description This bugbear cradles his crossbow jealously, and peers at you with barely-disguised hatred.



Harggat, Bugbear Strangler

Level 8 Lurker

XP 700

from natural humanoid

Initiative +12

Senses Perception +6;

HP 128; **Bloodied** 64 low-light vision

AC 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20; see also body shield

Resist 5 necrotic; 5 poison

Saves +2

Speed 7

Action Points 1

Morningstar (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

AC; 1d12+5 [11] damage.

↑ **Strangle** (standard; sustain standard; at-will)

Requires combat advantage; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d10+5 [10] damage, and target is grabbed (until escape). A target trying to escape the grab takes a -4 penalty to the check. Harggat can sustain the power as a standard action, dealing 1d10+5 [10] damage and maintaining the grab. Harggat can choose to deal no damage with this power, even if he maintains it.

Body Shield (immediate interrupt, when targeted by melee or ranged attack against AC or Reflex)

Requires grabbed victim; the victim is now the target. This power can't be used to redirect attacks made by the grabbed victim. Harggat can only use this power once per round.

Deathcut Armor (immediate reaction, Harggat is struck by a melee attack; daily)

Attacker takes 1d10+2 [7] necrotic damage.

Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)

This creature deals an extra 1d6 [3] damage on the next attack it makes with combat advantage. It must apply this bonus before the end of its next turn.

Sadistic Glee (immediate reaction, when a grabbed victim is slain)

Harggat regains 10 hp. If the grabbed victim was not a minion or another bugbear, he instead spends a healing surge (if he has one left) and regains 32 hp.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Intimidate +11, Stealth +15

Str 18 (+8)

Dex 18 (+8)

Wis 14 (+6)

Con 16 (+7)

Int 10 (+4)

Cha 14 (+6)

Equipment deathcut leather armor +2, morningstar, rope garrote, gold nosering, sack of gems

Description This bugbear has massively-muscled forearms and calloused hands. Leather straps around his biceps make him seem even more powerful than he probably is. A length of rope dangles from his wrist, and a bloodied morningstar has been tucked into his belt.

Run-Down Skeletal Tomb Guardian

Elite Level 8 Brute **XP 700**

Medium natural animate (undead)

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +11;

HP 208; **Bloodied** 104 **darkvision**

AC 23; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 18

Immune disease, poison

Resist 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Saves +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

↑ **Twin Scimitar Strike** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Reach 2; this creature makes two scimitar attacks against the same target: +11 vs. AC; 1d8+4 [8] damage (crit 1d8+12) [16]. This also holds true for opportunity attacks.

↑ **Cascade of Steel** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
This creature makes two twin scimitar strike attacks (four attacks total).

↑ **Sudden Strike** (immediate reaction, when an enemy in reach shifts; at-will) • **Weapon**
This creature makes a melee basic attack against the enemy.

Threatening Reach

This creature can make opportunity attacks against all foes within its reach (2 squares).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+6)

Con 16 (+7) **Int** 3 (+0) **Cha** 3 (+0)

Equipment 4 scimitars

Description This unholy creature looks like a human skeleton with four arms, each gripping a razor-sharp scimitar. Its bones are splashed by blood from the militia it has already slain this day.

Gnawface Basher

Level 5 Minion **XP 50**

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 17; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14

Speed 6

↑ **Longspear** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 8 damage.

Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)

This creature deals an extra 1d6 [3] damage on the next attack it makes with combat advantage. It must apply this bonus before the end of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+4)

Con 15 (+4) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, longspear

Coda

The Darkest Day (EL 6, 1,375 XP)

Two rounds after both Harggat and the run-down tomb skeleton are destroyed, the GM should trigger this event. Note that this means the party will not have an extended rest, and not recovered their encounter powers:

From the west, deep in the Polzoi Mire, a spear of black energy surges into the sky, seeming to strike the sun and spread like a stain over its surface, turning it to a dark star.

Twilight reigns though you know it to be mid-day. Pure daylight strikes the Slumbering Hills and the far shore of Lake Tilliman, but for miles centered on the lance of unholy light still emanating from the swamp, there is no sun.

And in the absence of light, dark things stir. Through farmlands, corpses wrapped in funerary shrouds sit up. rise to devour the living, and the militia goes down screaming.

Even from this distance, you hear the populace of Ramsgate their cries. More corpses must have been “seeded” there.

Your hometown is under attack, and the militia has been by the burning of the farms. Elziba Caulwik’s web of ve drawing tight, and to foil it you must head into the marshes.

Development: The Yenbrue clan has completed the and summoned a fraction of their dark god to blacken

A DC 25 Arcana (identify ritual) check recognizes the being a powerful but very limited summoning ritual with that information who is also trained in Arcana a second DC 25 Arcana check to know that the power summoned here is the Devouring Star, Aubaridan god-creature from beyond the outer spheres.

Feeding: If the party destroyed all vampires before triggers, the above read-aloud text ends the scenario. the mentioned vampire spawn came from areas off-

If not, all non-destroyed vampire spawn rise and come the tower...the nearest, greatest concentration of war

Rather than track each individual vampire spawn should...

- The vampire spawn stand up, which starts initiative count; all vampire spawn (now gain a surprise round
- Activate any undead on the same map member of the party
- Half of the remainder arrive on their initiative round 2
- The last half arrive on their initiative of round 3

Vampire spawn arrive on rounds 2 and 3 having spent a move action. They do not take damage when passing from 1-4a to 1-5. For cinematic spice, the GM can have them scaling the sides of the tower, bubbling up out of the trapdoor, or leaping up from the broken staircase.

Tactics: All spawn simply rush the party, trying to surround a single hero and bring them down. They want to remove any threats before feasting on the terrified captives.

If no party members are evident (either hiding or invisible), they turn on the captives.

0-20 Vampire Spawn Fleshrippers

Level 5 Minion **XP 50**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +4, darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic

Speed 7, climb 4 (spider climb)

↑ **Claws** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+11 vs. AC; 5 necrotic damage (7 necrotic damage vs. a bloodied target)

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

(+5) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+4);

(+5) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 14 (+5)

Description This creature looks like a villager who has gone wild, but its pale skin, black nails, and gnashing fangs mark it as something more.

0-3 Vampire Spawn Bloodhunters

Level 10 Minion **XP 125**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +6, darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 25; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22

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

Speed 7, climb 4 (spider climb)

↑ **Claws** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+16 vs. AC; 6 necrotic damage (8 necrotic damage vs. a bloodied target)

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Str 14 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 12 (+6);

Con 14 (+7) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 14 (+7)

Description This monster resembles a villager in only the most basic aspect. Its black eyes, bloodstained talons, and gore-filled mouth betray its true nature.

**THUS THE HEROES
RESCUE THE CAPTIVES
IN THE BURNING TOWER!**

WRAPPING UP

This adventure is continued in Chapter Three: *Marsh of the Miscreants*, wherein the characters venture into the nearby swamp in a desperate race to restore the sun before marauding vampires can wipe out their hometown of Ramsgate!

FURTHER ADVENTURES

This scenario can springboard into other adventures.

- With the Ramsgate militia decimated, lawlessness seizes the city, and the heroes are hired to quell the ambitions of the Assassin's Guild.
- With the farms burned, Ramsgate has to import foodstuffs from other communities. The supply trains are going to need guards, especially once the Red League bandits get wind of the caravans.
- Harggat's Gnawface tribe was forced out of the Bitterstone Hills by unusual giant activity. Any captured bugbears can tell the heroes about a cloaked figure that speaks with a buzzing voice who guides the hill giants.

CHAPTER THREE: “MARSH OF THE MISCREANTS”

Marsh of the Miscreants is designed for five characters of 7th level. While the characters can be of any basic class, a party prepared for physical combat, willing to look for clues, trained in Arcana, and able to think creatively will fare best. See the “Scaling Information” section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group’s unique style of play.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

A dark energy radiating from this swamp has shrouded the sun, turning day into night and allowing undead to roam free in the nearby city of Ramsgate. The heroes have learned that the pariah Yenbrue clan are behind this abomination, though their strings are pulled by Elziba Caulwik, the crone of Tanglethorn Manor. They arrive in the mire hoping to restore the sun’s glory and end Elziba’s reign of terror.

GAME MASTERS SECTION

ENCOUNTER TABLE

SCALING INFORMATION

Marsh of the Miscreants is designed as an adventure for 5 characters of 7th level. The adventure, however, can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels. When adjusting to module to suit your game, consider the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (5th level or lower): Remove two levels from Whult Yenbrue in area 1-1, and from the foulspawn hulk, the mudboys, and the jaw mutant in area 1-2. Remove one level from the youngkin in area 1-2. In area 1-4, remove three levels from the aspect of Aubaridan Ahktar. Reduce the Perception (spot) check to find the clue in area 1-2 to DC 25.

Adjust the treasure accordingly.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 8th level): Add two levels to Whult Yenbrue in area 1-1, and add one level to all creatures in area 1-2. Add one level to the aspect of Aubaridan Ahktar in area 1-4.

Adjust the treasure accordingly.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The adventure begins at the culmination of Chapter Two: The Burning Tower, as the heroes approach the Yenbrue clan compound to save Ramsgate from a plague of vampires

If players did not complete Chapter Two prior to running *Marsh of the Miscreants*, the GM could adapt one of the following hooks to get the characters started:

- The Yenbrue’s sun-shrouding device will open a permanent gate to the realm of A Ahktar, allowing the god-thing to manifest. Sages in town recognize the threat and hope the heroes to stop them.
- The heroes, while traveling through the swamp, have become trapped by the otherdimensional mist. In this scenario, the Dandossa Apparatus manufactures the mist, and the heroes must destroy it to escape the swamp.
- Between their abominable practices and the proliferation of ripol trees, the Yenbrue have corrupted the swamp, and the local fey have been driven off or destroyed.
- The Yenbrue, inbred and aberrant, lack the ability to innovate. In order to complete their plan, they stole the Dandossa Apparatus, a collector of arcane instruments and curiosities. A collector wants the device back and does not know how the party accomplishes this.

BACKGROUND STORY

The Yenbrue were once a noble family of Ramsgate, rivaling the Kalworth family today. They were always eccentric and saw fit to send their children abroad for their education. A hundred-eighty years ago, one Vulgamur Yenbrue returned from an archeological dig in the sands of the old A Empire, bringing peculiar tales of buried monasteries, dark things that dwelt there, and the “Devouring Spirit” was worshipped in its crumbling halls.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	30	C	Whult Yenbrue, snail mutant	6
1-2	32	C	3 mudboys 3 youngkin Foulspawn hulk Jaw mutant	9
1-3	35	P	The mist barrier	Special
1-4	36	C	Vulgamur Yenbrue Aspect of Aubaridan Ahktar	10

This Devouring Star is a power that dwells beyond the mortal realms, beyond even the domains of the gods, in the outer spheres. Although not a god, it has been worshipped as such by madmen and fallen scholars throughout history. The Devouring Star craves only destruction, but offers its followers strange and dreadful knowledge from beyond the firmament in return for advancing its entropic agenda.

When it was discovered that Vulgamur practiced rites to Aubaridan Ahktar too despicable to even properly be called devilry, he was chased from the city, and the entire Yenbrue clan followed him into nearby Polzoi Mire. They have dwelt there for generations, only emerging on errands incomprehensible to sane men.

On an errand was to answer the plea of fellow pariah Caulwik, and through the blessing of Aubaridan Ahktar, the Devouring Star, she was remade into a vampire. When, the Yenbrue and Elziba have been closest. When Elziba needed to call a plague of lesser down on Ramsgate, she turned to the Yenbrue her spawn from the sun. Using a strange device, she pulled some of Aubaridan Ahktar's essence into the realm.

KNOWING THY ENEMY

Asks, a DC 15 History check knows the first and paragraphs of the Background Story.

Who that hears the term "Devouring Star" or the name "Aubaridan Ahktar" and who is trained in Arcana can make a DC 25 Arcana check to know the second paragraph of the Background Story.

A DC 25 Arcana (identify ritual) check recognizes the black magic emanating from area 1-4 as a powerful, but dangerous summoning ritual. Anyone with that information also trained in Arcana can make a second DC 25 Arcana check to know that the power partially summoned is the Devouring Star, learning the second paragraph of the Background Story. The energy effect is visible in areas 1-2, and 1-4.

MIST OPPORTUNITY

The Yenbrue clan employs a thirty-foot-high wall of otherdimensional mist to keep out intruders. In several places the read-aloud text warns the heroes to not venture into the mist. It follows that someone is sure to try, making this an opportunity for them to lose points.

A DC 20 Arcana roll made by someone trained in Arcana knows that the mist is called down from the outer spheres – it is not of this world – and touching it creates a mental link to the madness of that place. They also know that the mist is a barrier to most teleportation and clairvoyant magic (teleportation magic employed by the Yenbrue is exempt).

Any non-aberrant, living creature who enters or begins their turn in a mist square is subject to the following attack:

Otherdimensional Mist: +14 vs. Will; 3d6+5 [15] psychic damage, and the target is dominated to take single move actions further into the mist without exiting (save ends); Miss: half damage [7], and target is not dominated.

PLAYER BEGINNING

The adventure begins with the heroes approaching the lair of Whult Yenbrue. Start the adventure by reading aloud the following:

Dark magic emanating from Polzoi Mire shrouds the sun in shadow, allowing vampiric minions of the crone Elziba Caulwik to ravage your home city of Ramsgate.

Elziba's allies, the degenerate Yenbrue clan, are known as practitioners of unspeakable rites, and this perversion of nature bears their mark. By disrupting their ongoing ritual, you hope to unveil the sun, and with one stroke destroy the vampires devouring Ramsgate.

The Yenbrue marsh stronghold is ringed with an otherworldly mist, impenetrable by man or magic. Local legends claim that besting their "guardian" is the only way outsiders can get into the stronghold. They aren't clear, however, on precisely how that grants passage; you must discover this on your own.

As is often the case, time is your enemy here. Every moment you tarry, more of your fellow Ramsgaters are devoured by the undead. Furthermore, the ritual being enacted is a summoning. If you wait overlong, who knows what horror the Yenbrue will call forth.

AREAS OF THE MAP

It is assumed to be mid-day as the party approaches the Yenbrue compound, although the presence of Aubaridan Ahktar's avatar makes the light dim (not enough for concealment, however).

All squares without an elevation notation are considered difficult terrain due to the swamp's mud and standing water (creatures with swampwalk are not affected). Squares with a higher elevation are not swamp terrain. Crossing elevation marks does not cost extra movement.

All shaded squares are filled with the otherdimensional mist (see above).

I-1 The Guardian (EL 6, 1,250 XP)

As the game begins, read or paraphrase the following:

After hours of trekking through Polzoi Mire, you arrive at the large island where the guardian of the Yenbrue clan dwells.

The island is little more than a rounded hump of mud that rises only slightly above the muck. A crumbling, low wall fences in the eastern half, with access granted through the gaps or a broken archway, nearly overgrown with vines. The western half is home to a few trees whose roots have failed to anchor them to the island – they are starting to slide into the swamp.

In the center of the hummock is an enormous green-and-yellow snail shell, slightly buried in the mud.

To the north, you can see a turmoil of mist – the barrier to the Yenbrue stronghold. Beyond that you spy the lance of black energy that shrouds the sun in darkness.

Development: The party enters the map from the south. The shell is the guardian, Whult Yenbrue. Whult is resting and ignores calls, challenges, and ranged attacks, trusting in his resistance and regeneration to get him by.

He doesn't attack unless forced out of his shell by lightning or thunder damage, or unless a heroes steps onto the island.

Catching a Ride: After Whult is dead, read or paraphrase the following:

The abhorrent snail-man shudders and dies, and instantly his shell emits a pulsing green light.

A DC 23 Arcana (identify effect) check learns the following:

The shell is somehow enchanted with teleportation magic of an unusual nature. You've heard of something like this called a "translocation event." Touching the shell will warp you to another place.

It's likely that this creature could have teleported you at any time, but now that it's dead the shell is constantly active.

Any hero that touches the shell with bare flesh is instantly teleported to area 1-2, bypassing the otherdimensional mist's normal barrier. Pay attention to the heroes' actions after the battle. There's a chance they may teleport without taking a short rest.

Treasure: Buried under the single rubble square is a +2 lightning short sword and three amber gems (100 gp each).

Finding the treasure requires a DC 20 Perception (spot) check made from an adjacent square. Alternately, the treasure can be found automatically if a hero searches the rubble.

Terrain: The two pillar squares are blocking terrain; heroes cannot enter those squares. The low wall is cover terrain. The square of rubble and the trees are difficult terrain that provides cover.

Whult's location is marked with a "W" on the map.

Tactics: Whult begins the encounter prone and in his shell (this does not count as having using it during the fight); he's resting. Unless forced out, he remains that way until a hero gets on the island.

During the first rounds of combat, Whult uses *bite* (which contains his tongue) once on each hero in range to see which is most "savory"...the flavors happen to be alphabetical order of the race names [Balgrun, Delaris, Nestiro, Tasia]. Once he's to the heroes he can reach, he moves to envelop the one most that's still in reach.

As he digests that hero, his expression is pure joy.



After he's bloodied, Whult withdraws into his shell. The pregens have several ways of causing thunder or lightning damage to force him out again.

If they don't force him out, Whult remains in his shell for 10 rounds.

Whult fights to the death and won't pursue heroes off the island. Note that the swamp's difficult terrain doesn't affect him.

Whult Yenbrue, Snail Mutant

Level 6 Solo Soldier

XP 1250

Large aberrant beast (aquatic)

Initiative +7

Senses Perception +8;

HP 292; Bloodied 146

tremorsense 10

AC 25; Fortitude 23, Reflex 15, Will 17

Resist 10 acid, 10 poison; see also withdraw

Saving Throws +5

Vulnerable lightning 10, thunder 10

Speed 4 (swampwalk)

Action Points 2

Spearspear (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+13 vs. AC; 2d8+4 [13] damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). Saving throws made against this suffer a -2 penalty.

↑ **Envelop** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Acid**

Immobilized target only; +13 vs. AC; 1d10+4 [9] damage, the target is grabbed, and this creature makes a secondary attack on the same target. **Secondary Attack:** This creature attempts to swallow a Medium or smaller target; +11 vs. Fortitude; on a hit, the target is swallowed and restrained (no save) and takes 5 damage plus 5 acid damage on subsequent rounds at the start of this creature's turn. The swallowed creature may make melee basic attacks with one-handed or natural weapons. If Whult dies, any creature trapped inside him can escape as a move action, ending that action in a square formerly occupied by this creature. If Whult fails to swallow a target, the target is still grabbed, and he can attempt to swallow it on its next turn. If the target is no longer immobilized, it cannot be swallowed, although it is still grabbed.

Whult can only engulf one creature at a time, regardless of size.

Swallow (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)

Close burst 1; +11 vs. Reflex; 3d8+4 [17] damage; Miss: half damage [8]. Whult can use this power even if he's already taken an immediate action this round.

Withdraw (move; encounter)

Whult withdraws into its shell. While in his shell, he cannot take any actions, but gains resistance 10 all and regenerate 5. Lightning and/or thunder damage ignores his resistance, and forces him out of his shell.

Eyestalks

Whult Yenbrue doesn't grant combat advantage when flanked.

Extra Attack

Whult Yenbrue can take an extra standard action every round, as long as that extra standard action is a bonespear attack. This extra attack must occur after his other actions have been taken.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 21 (+8)

Dex 15 (+5)

Wis 10 (+3)

Con 17 (+6)

Int 5 (+0)

Cha 6 (+1)

Description *More snail than man, this creature's grey flesh is glossy with slime where it's not covered in marsh filth. Its legs and right arm are fused into his body, which unfolds from a yellow-and-green, spiked shell. The man's eyes are suspended above a toothless maw by veined eyestalks, and his left arm ends in a tapered mass of bone. The shreds of a silk shirt still cling to this miscreant's torso.*

I-2

Grove of Unclean Fruit (EL 9, 2,039 XP)

When the first hero appears in this area, read or paraphrase the following and give them Handout D:

The green light fades around you, and you see that you're now standing next to a statue that resembles the snail-man's shell, similarly glowing. In the cavity where the aberration's body would be is a small sackcloth doll like what a young peasant girl would own.

The statue and doll are set on a raised dais overlooking a small, but ugly, orchard. Twisted black trees rise out of the mud and stagnant water of the marsh. All trees bear lumpy, glowing fruit...the smallest of them emit a faint yellow light, the largest have fruit that bright red glare, and the rest have a steady blue radiance.

This orchard is choked by pools of stagnant water and thick marsh mud. Ruined statuary is scattered about, all of it depicting men and women of noble bearing, but defaced by tools and blurred by time.

To the east, you see an irregularly shaped, domed building. The spear of un-light that mars the sun emanates from there. A small gardener's hut of sagging masonry is the only other edifice you see. In all other directions is more of the impenetrable, black mist.

Development: The heroes enter this map adjacent to the large statue. This grove represents only a small portion of the entire Yenbrue stronghold. Throughout the complex are scattered similar statues and dolls.

When a doll is inserted into a shell, that particular shell becomes the receiving point for the translocation event, and dolls in other shells are magically ejected (in this way the dolls act like switches). Only active receiving points glow green.

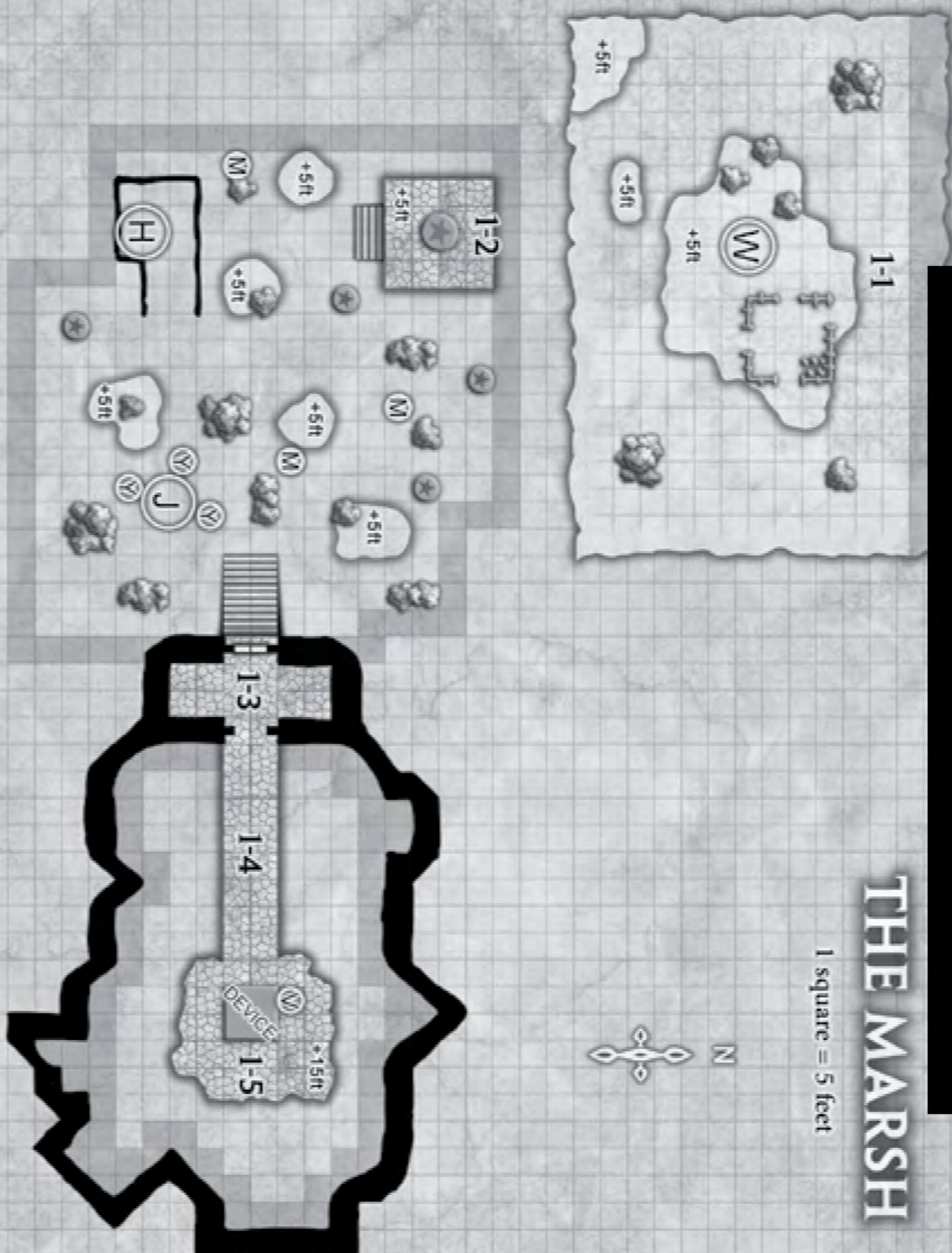
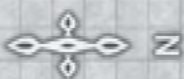
A DC 15 Arcana (identify effect) ritual would know the information in the above paragraph.

The Yenbrue cultivate the repulsive ripol trees (see Appendix B) here for sustenance and as ingredients for their forbidden magic.

THE VAMPIRE'S VENGEANCE

THE MARSH

1 square = 5 feet



The Yenbrue aren't automatically aware of the heroes' arrival. Muggo is dozing (-5 to Perception), Josa and the youngkin are distracted by idle chatter (-2 to Perception), so only the mudboys are ready...and hiding [Passive Stealth: 25; Delaris sees them within 10 squares].

The mudboys don't raise an alarm right away – they allow the party to get in the middle of area 1-2 before attacking.

Clue: The statue south of the hut has a phrase written on it in tiny Common letters:

"Y + B = E"

A hero can see the phrase with a DC 30 Perception (spot) check or a DC 10 Perception (search) check of the statue. When they see it, give them Handout E.

Clue: Muggo has a topaz gem (500 gp) as a tooth. The gardener's hut is a collection of ivory figurines including a chimera, griffon, manticores, purple worm, and more. The entire set is worth 500 gp, but each is only worth about 75 gp separately.

The deep mud grants concealment to any creature in it.

The difficult terrain that provides cover. Tree that take one square contain yellow fruit, those taking up two squares are blue fruit, and those taking up four squares are red fruit. See Appendix B for details on the benefits of fruiting adjacent to a tree.

are blocking terrain, and can be climbed with a Athletics (climb) check. Each statue is about eight feet high. The walls of the gardener's hut are also blocking terrain. Any attempt to climb those walls collapses the structure, destroying the treasure inside.

The spawn hulk is marked with an "H" on the map, the youngkin with an "J," the three mudboys with an "M," and the youngkin with a "Y." No youngkin are in trees, so it should be easy to differentiate between youngkin and a ripol tree.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

As the Yenbrue fight, they call out to each other by name, warn about flanks, cheer on critical hits, and scream when a family member is slain. It should be clear to the heroes that these miscreants – however aberrant and evil – are a family.

Tactics: The mudboys begin the encounter prone, hiding in the mud. They stand up and attack. All three concentrate on the hero farthest from area 1-3, using *mud dance* to get into position on their first round if necessary. They rarely use claw attacks, preferring to use *marshrazor* to circle their prey.

Josa tries to engage the hero closest to area 1-3, hoping to immobilize with a bite, setting up *manyjaws*. Once he's used *manyjaws* at least once, he'll try to move his grabbed target toward a red ripol tree to take advantage of its aura.

The youngkin pause to eat a red fruit before entering battle (+2 damage, not reflected in stats), then they join up with either Josa or Muggo, whichever is closest.

Muggo begins the encounter asleep, and could be the subject of a coup-de-grace (which would kill him outright with 28 points of damage).

When he wakes up, he lumbers into melee with the nearest hero also engaged with other Yenbrue. Throughout the fight, he does his best to flank with his kin, even switching to new targets and incurring attacks of opportunity if necessary. He uses *mighty clap* the first time he can catch two heroes and no Yenbrue.

All non-minion Yenbrue attempt to take advantage of the glowing red fruit when attacking. When any non-minion Yenbrue is first bloodied, he plucks and eats a blue fruit (two move actions, both incur attacks of opportunity), granting him regeneration 2 for one minute. No Yenbrue will eat more than one fruit.

All Yenbrue fight to their destruction.

Muggo Yenbrue, Foulspawn Hulk

Level 8 Brute

XP 350

Large aberrant humanoid

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +7, low-light vision

HP 110; **Bloodied** 55

AC 20; **Fortitude** 23 (26 while bloodied), **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18

Immune fear

Speed 8

Slam (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +11 vs. AC (+13 while bloodied); 2d8+5 [14] damage, or 3d8+6 [19] damage while bloodied.

Mighty Clap (standard; encounter)

Close blast 3; +9 vs. Fort; 4d8+5 [23] thunder damage, and the target is deafened (save ends).

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Deep Speech

Skills Stealth +11

Str 24 (+11)

Dex 14 (+6)

Wis 7 (+2)

Con 20 (+9)

Int 7 (+2)

Cha 14 (+6)

Equipment blue topaz gem tooth

Description This hulking humanoid has red skin with thick purple veins. He lacks hair or earlobes, and he eyes are fist-sized yellow orbs. He wears mud-stained leggings held up by a wide, leather belt and black boots. You catch a gleam of blue glinting in his mouth.

Josa Yenbrue, Jaw Mutant

Level 8 Soldier **XP 350**

Large aberrant humanoid

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +5, low-light vision

HP 90; **Bloodied** 45

AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19

Speed 6, swim 8

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+6 [10] damage, and target is grabbed (until escape). Josa cannot make bite attacks while grabbing creatures, but he can use *manyjaws*.

↑ **Manyjaws** (standard; at-will)

If Josa begins his turn with a target grabbed by his bite, he makes an attack against the grabbed creature: +14 vs. AC; 2d8+6 [15] damage. Miss: Half damage [7].

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

Skills Stealth +11

Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+5)

Con 18 (+8) **Int** 6 (+2) **Cha** 7 (+5)

Description This humanoid has bandy legs and stubby arms protruding off an egg-shaped body. Beneath beady yellow eyes is a mouth fully four feet long. The thing shrieks, and behind its needle-like teeth you see that its mouth is filled with other, smaller mouths. A tattered robe barely covers its pale body.

Deek, Kal, and Stem Yenbrue, Mudboys

Level 8 Skirmisher **XP 350**

Medium aberrant humanoid

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +11

HP 87; **Bloodied** 43

AC 24; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20

Speed 6 (swamp walk); see also *marshrazor*

↑ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+10 vs. AC; 2d6+5 [12] damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends).

↑ **Marshrazor** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Only usable in swamp terrain. This creature skates across the swamp surface (including a natural pool), shifting 6 squares and making a claw attack. On a hit, it deals an extra 1d6 [3] damage and also knocks the target prone.

Mud Dance (move; encounter)

Only usable in swamp terrain. This creature shifts 10 squares.

Mud Provides

Only usable in swamp terrain. Any effect that forces this creature to move has the distance reduced by 2 squares (minimum 0).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +13 (+15 in swamp terrain)

Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+6)

Con 15 (+6) **Int** 9 (+3) **Cha** 8 (+3)

Description This long-armed humanoid seems to be made of mud, but you see pallid flesh beneath the muck. It almost seems as if it were seeping the substance.

Izz, Nab, and Poda Yenbrue, Youngkin

Level 8 Minion **XP 88**

Medium aberrant humanoid

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17

Speed 6

↑ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 7 damage.

Family Ties

This creature gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and deals +2 damage while at least two other aberrant humanoids are within 3 squares of it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 11 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+5)

Con 14 (+6) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+5)

Description Of all the miscreants you've seen in swamp, these are the most human-looking. Baggy shirts in thick folds from their gaunt arms, as if they've received a lot of weight, and their black lips are pulled back like wires, exposing needle teeth. These creatures wear ill-fitting, patched clothing that has clearly been passed down generations.

I-3 The Mist Barrier (EL 0, 1,000 XP)

As the party enters the round building, read or paraphrase the following, and give the heroes Handout F:

Just inside the open doorway is a small, rectangular archway. Its sole feature is an archway door choked by the fam-

Above the archway is a stone ledge into which are set five obsidian tiles. Five tiles have eerily glowing white words enchanted onto their surface: "Y, E, blank, B, R, blank"

From beyond the mist you hear a faint clinking, almost like a coin purse. The source of the sun-shrouding energy is this archway.

NOTE FOR COMPETITION!

If you're GMing this module in a tournament, make a note of the time as soon as you finish reading the read-aloud text at the beginning of this area, and make a note of how much time has elapsed by the time they dispel the otherworld mist (if they do).

The team can score extra points by solving this puzzle in a timely fashion.

Development: There are words written in Deep Speech [which Nestiro speaks] on the inside of the archway: "Introduce proper light above to beget darkness. Darkness recognizes its own, and will let us pass when we teach it our name."

Noticing the writing requires a DC 20 Perception (spot) check [Delaris sees it automatically], or a DC 10 Perception (search) check. Heroes can search the interior of the arch without entering the mist-filled square.

The Puzzle: In order to dispel the black mist sealing off area 1-4, the heroes have to get all the obsidian tiles to go dark. The magic, glowing letters darken as long as they are struck by a certain colored light (or smeared with a substance that glows that certain color), as below:

B = blue, E = emerald (or green), R = red, Y = yellow

Solutions: The most obvious solution is to use the ripol fruit and/or its pus-juice. By mixing the pus-juice of yellow and blue fruit, green “emerald” light is created (hinted at about G).

light cantrip can be any color the casting wizard wishes.

sunrod sheds yellowish light.

DC 18 Arcana (identify conjuration) check knows the letters are a conjured illusion. A *dispel magic* spell vs. a Will defense of 20 destroys the letters, solving the puzzle.

By combining some pieces of thieves’ tools, a gem like the yellow ambers from area 1-1 or the blue opaz from Muggo Yenbrue’s mouth in 1-2), any light source, and a DC 25 Thievery check, the heroes can cast a colored light.

arty asks, a DC 15 Insight check realizes that the encountered so far aren’t terribly smart, and the probably several clues scattered about. A DC 25 check gathers that “proper light” has something with colors.

oes solve the puzzle, read or paraphrase the following:

st letter goes dark, you hear a sound like the inhalation, and the mist in the archway disappears.

as: Hacking through the wall is a time-honored of annoying (or desperate) players. Rather than the wall, assume it takes several minutes. When is down, the heroes will see that the mist rings area that there’s a fifteen-foot drop to the swamp below.

strated heroes may just enter the mist. If the mist’s, the hero is compelled to walk clockwise around the perimeter of area 1-4, remaining in the mist the entire time.

Rewarding Effort: Heroes that solve the puzzle earn a 200 XP bonus apiece (the above number reflects a 5-man party – adjust as necessary). Heroes that simply walk through the mist or contrive some other way to enter earn nothing.

1-4 Beneath the Devouring Star (EL 10, 2,500 XP)

As the party dispels the otherworld mist barrier, read or paraphrase the following:

The interior of the domed building is hollow. Immediately on the other side of the archway is a forty-foot-long bridge that leads to an ornate platform built on a small hillock, maybe fifteen feet above the black surface of the swamp.



The dome of this structure has a 10-foot-square hole at its apex, some fifty feet from the bridge. The hole is completely filled by a spear of black light lancing forth from a strange-looking device, all gears and levers, lenses and springs. This eight-foot-tall device is apparently the source of the stain on the sun.

A wizen figure stands near the device. From this distance you see his grey-greenish skin, faded robes, and lambent yellow eyes. He wears a golden chain and several items of jewelry.

Development: Vulgamur has labored long to construct this device that serves as a bridge between the world and the outer spheres. Using it, he was able to conjure forth enough of Aubaridan Ahktar’s essence to blot out the sun in a radius of several miles. So much of the Devouring Star’s essence was brought here that an aspect of Aubaridan Ahktar was able to manifest.

Vulgamur has been under the being’s tutelage since then, and has learned much dark lore. He now considers his deal with Elziba Caulwik over, and dreams of restoring the Yenbrue to their past “glories.”

The Device: If a hero asks, a DC 25 History or Arcana check knows that the device mentioned above is a Dandossa Apparatus; a machine that opens portals to other words, named after the wizard who made the prototype. Although constructed from brass, wood, and glass, it is also ensorcelled with dark rituals and warded against countermagic.

A DC 30 Arcana check knows that destroying the device severs the connection between this world and that of Aubaridan Ahktar. This banishes the lance of black energy, restores the sun, and dismisses the aspect (if the hero is aware of the aspect at the time of the check).

Dandossa Apparatus: 30 hp; AC/Ref 4; Fort 12; DC 20 Thievery (disable) to destroy (two standard actions)

Treasure: Vulgamur wears *fireburst cloth armor* +2. His gold chain is wonderful craftsmanship (500 gp). He also wears two gold bracelets (250 gp each) and a silver ring (100 gp).

Also on Vulgamur's person is a sheet of paper with a partial map of the Ramsgate sewer system. A storm drain entrance to the west is clearly marked. There are instructions to go south from the reservoir beneath the merchant's district toward a circle marked "Elziba's Lair" in Deep Speech.

Terrain: The device is blocking terrain. Vulgamur's starting location is marked with a "V."

Tactics: The first round of combat, Vulgamur uses *dark calling* to draw out the aspect of Aubaridan Ahktar. The aspect emerges from squares taken up by the device and acts immediately following Vulgamur.

Vulgamur attempts to remain at range from the heroes, peppering them with *acid sputum* until he can use *blood of the outer spheres*. He summons the *ur-hounds* to defend the device if he has to pull back. He uses *countermagic* at his earliest opportunity.

The first time a hero gets into melee, he activates his *fireburst armor*. Vulgamur uses his action point either to withdraw from an attacker or to finish off a hero if it looks like a single attack might make the difference.

Once the aspect is called, if one hero gets ahead of the others on the bridge, it drops the *dimensional rift* on the bridge to keep them separated. Heroes entering the rift are shunted to the swamp.

It descends to the swamp and floats across the surface toward the party. The aspect uses *void tentacles* on whichever hero has the highest Arcana modifier, or in case of a tie attacking which is closest [in order: Nestiro, Tasia, then the closest of Balgrun/Delaris/Vyrkol]. The first round it is able, it uses an action point for mind of the devourer. As soon as that

power recharges, it uses its second action point to do so again. If Vulgamur is still alive, the aspect targets the hero closest to the device with *mind of the devourer*; if not, it targets its fixated enemy.

The aspect's mind of the devourer recharges on round +2 and round +8.

All creatures fight to their destruction, although see sidebar for Vulgamur's attempt to parley.

Vulgamur Yenbrue

Level 6 Elite Artillery

XP 500

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

HP 120; **Bloodied** 60

AC 23; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

↑ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+10 vs. AC; 1d4+2 [4] damage.

⚡ **Acid Sputum** (standard; at-will) • **Acid**

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 [9] acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

* **Blood of the Outer Spheres** (standard; usable only while bloodied) • **Poison**

Area burst 1 within 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4 [14] poison damage

⚡ **Ur-Hounds** (minor; twice per encounter) •

Conjuration, Psychic

Ranged 5; a scaly mastiff is conjured, occupying 1 square within range. Every round, Vulgamur can move an urhound 3 squares as a move action. All ur-hounds last until the end of the encounter. Any enemy that ends its turn next to an urhound is subject to an attack: +9 vs. Will; 1d8+5 [9] psychic damage. Creatures can move through aspace occupied by an urhound.

Countermagic (immediate interrupt, when a creature casts a spell or prayer; encounter)

+9 vs. Will; the spell or prayer is cancelled without effect. It still counts as having been used.

Dark Calling (standard; encounter)

Vulgamur calls forth the aspect of Aubaridan Ahktar; see Tactics.

Fireburst Armor

Vulgamur automatically makes any save against or reduces fire damage.

Fireburst Armor (minor; daily) • **Fire**

Until the end of his next turn, any creature that strikes Vulgamur in melee takes 1d8+5 [9] fire damage.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common,

Deep Speech, telepathy 10

Skills Arcana +9

Str 15 (+5)

Dex 20 (+8)

Wis 16 (+6)

Con 18 (+7)

Int 13 (+4)

Cha 20 (+8)

Equipment *fireburst cloth armor* +2

Description Beneath frayed red robes is a green-grey skinned humanoid bedecked in an ostentatious display of jewelry. The glare of its yellow eyes is reflected in its gold chains and bracelets. Thick, rubbery lips mouth unspeakable curses as this creature gestures at you.

AN OFFER

The patriarch of the Yenbrue clan doesn't so much mind that the heroes have slaughtered his kin. With the power he's got now, he can make more!

When he's bloodied, he says the following:

"Enough! My loyalty to Elziba Caulwik isn't worth my life! Her lair is in the sewers of Ramsgate. Go south from the reservoir beneath the merchant's district, and beware her illusions."

Your quarrel is with her, not me. I have merely done as she asked. Destroy her and be avenged."

Vulgamur will gladly let the heroes leave, even dropping the spear of black energy (banishing the aspect) and the barrier mist around the compound. He is, however, wholly evil and plans nothing good for this region.

Aspect of Aubaridan Ahktar

Level 7 Solo Controller

XP 2000

Large aberrant beast

Devouring Presence aura 3; at the beginning of the aspect's turn, non-aberrant creatures take 10 psychic damage.

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +5;

all-around vision, blindsight 10

HP 324; **Bloodied** 162

AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 23

Resist insubstantial

Saving Throws +5

Speed fly 6 (hover, maximum altitude 1)

Action Points 2

↑ **Void Tentacles** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold**

Reach 2; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d4+5 [7] damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 cold damage and is slowed (save ends both). *First Failed Save:* Target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). *Second Failed Save:* Target is stunned instead of immobilized (save ends). Saving throws against this attack take a -2 penalty.

♦ **Dimensional Rift** (standard; sustain minor; encounter)

Range 6 within 10; wall blocks line of sight; entering rift results in an attack; +11 vs. Fortitude; 3d8+5 damage, and the target is teleported horizontally 3 squares as directed by aspect; Miss: no damage, target is teleported.

⚡ **Mind of the Devourer** (standard; recharge 6) ♦

psychic

Ranged 5; +11 vs. Will; 3d8+5 [18] psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the aspect's next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Telepathy 10

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)

Con 17 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 20 (+8)

Appearance A dark cloud shape floats into view, floating above the surface of the swamp. Its formless body is covered with red eyes, and every now and then the cloudstuff shifts into a snapping tentacle, then disappears.

THUS THE HEROES
RESTORE THE SUN!

WRAPPING UP

This adventure is concluded in Chapter Final: *Down Among the Dead*, wherein the heroes launch a raid into the sewers beneath Ramsgate to end the threat of the vampire crone once and for all!

FURTHER ADVENTURES

This scenario can springboard into other adventures.

- The heroes can discover the location of the unnamed aberration from which the ripol "trees" are harvested. By venturing to its prison – and freeing or slaying it – the heroes remove the taint of the unclean trees from the world.
- The Dandossa Apparatus is but one piece of a larger device, the Worldrender Mechanism. When the heroes destroy it, they can find plans for the master mechanism and hints of where its components are being manufactured: an arcane forge in the nearby mountains.
- At the GM's discretion, other sections of the Yenbrue stronghold can become active through the receiving point system described in area 1-2. These other areas could include the library, sleeping pits, recreation room, and larder, and would be manned by the rest of the clan.

CHAPTER FINAL: “DOWN AMONG THE DEAD”

Down Among the Dead is designed for five characters of 7th level. While the characters can be of any basic class, a party with a broad smattering of skills, able to inflict radiant damage, and accustomed to fighting in unusual terrain will fare best. See the “Scaling Information” section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group’s unique style of play.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The heroes have tracked the vampire crone Elziba Caulwik to her lair in the sewers beneath Ramsgate. They have to navigate the undead-infested darkness, ideally before the vampire crone can summon more reinforcements. Even when they face her, however, Elziba is a canny opponent, and has prepared traps and plant-monsters to thwart the heroes!

GAME MASTERS SECTION

ENCOUNTER TABLE SCALING INFORMATION

Down Among the Dead is designed as an adventure for 5 characters of 7th level. The adventure, however, can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels. When adjusting to module to suit your game, consider the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (5th level or lower): In area 1-1, remove two levels from the carrion crow swarm, skeletal guardsmen, and boneshard skeletons, and remove one level from the specter. Reduce the DCs of the skill challenge checks in area 1-2 by 2. In area 1-3, remove two levels from all monsters. For area 1-4, remove two levels from Elziba Caulwik and the chlorosmash, have the pendulum trap only attack once on its initiative [use the first number of each pair], and lower all DCs concerning the trap by two.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	40	C	2 boneshard skeletons Carrion crow swarm 2 skeletal guardsmen Specter	8
1-2	43	S	Find the reservoir!	7
1-3	44	C	Battle wight 2-4 ghouls Slashwing Venom-eye sewerlisk	7-9
1-4	46	C/T	Elziba Caulwik Pendulum blades Chlorosmash	10

Adjust the treasure accordingly.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 8th level): For area 1-1, make the specter elite (and let spectral barrage be used at-will), add one level to the boneshard skeletons and the skeletal guardsmen, then add a third skeletal guardsman. In area 1-3, add one level to the battle wight and two levels to all other creatures. For area 1-4, add one level to Elziba Caulwik, the chlorosmash, and the pendulum trap.

Adjust the treasure accordingly.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The final chapter of the adventure begins after the culmination of Chapter Three: Marsh of the Miscreants, as the heroes enter the sewers beneath Ramsgate to destroy the vampire crone, Elziba Caulwik.

If players did not complete Chapter Three prior to *Down Among the Dead*, the GM could adapt the following hooks to get the characters started:

- A sewer patrol noticed that the tunnel changed overnight. Discovering it was an incursion by undead. The survivors reported the incident to the heroes have been asked (or hired) to investigate.
- The town drunk, once a wizard, tells the heroes a tale. At the height of his power he was killed and taken into the sewers, there forced to confront an old woman in illusion-craft. He barely survived but the experience broke his spirit. He offers an appropriate reward if the heroes would avenge him.
- Several townsfolk have disappeared and are now as the walking dead. Their stench leads them to the sewers.
- The GM could use Elziba as the key villain in an urban campaign, with this module as the final encounter.

BACKGROUND STORY

Elziba Caulwik once was an old woman, the last of her line, living alone at Tanglethorn Manor. To occupy her time, she turned to alchemy and botany, and eventually grew an orchid that bore golden petals. When she tried to spend them in the city of Ramsgate, however, the superstitious townsfolk accused her of having sold her soul for wealth. She barely escaped town with her life.

In the eight years since, Elziba brooded over her revenge. She became a vampire, spawned a horde of minions, bought the loyalty of a clan of bugbears, and allied herself with a swamp-dwelling clan of foulspawn. More recently, she lured the militia of Ramsgate into a trap and shrouded the city in darkness, releasing her vampiric spawn on an unsuspecting city.

She have thwarted her every move along the way, and the final battle is about to begin.

Unfortunately for the heroes, Elziba has long prepared for this moment. She contaminated the sewer water with poisons from her necromantic and botanical experiments, and set a net of dangerous illusions throughout the city. She released an aquatic basilisk into the reservoir, and she has led a small army of undead.

PLAYER BEGINNING

The adventure begins with the heroes entering the sewers of Ramsgate. Start the adventure by reading aloud the following and giving the heroes Handout I, an updated map:

Years ago, old Elziba Caulwik came to Ramsgate with a quantity of gold, claiming she had grown it on a magic island. Accused of devilry, she escaped the townsfolk, but she thereafter her ancestral home, Tanglethorn Manor, and disappeared into the ground. She was not heard from again...

Now! The crone of Tanglethorn Manor has returned for vengeance. Through various dupes and dark magic, she lured the Ramsgate militia into a trap, leaving them defenseless against a horde of vampiric wretches who murdered her name as they killed. The undead were mostly destroyed, but the city is decimated. You have vowed that Elziba shall not escape justice again!

You have learned that her lair is beneath Ramsgate, in the sewer tunnels south of the merchant district's reservoir. The most direct route is to enter through a storm drain that empties into a nearby stream. Be warned, though: the crone expects you.

AREAS OF THE MAP

It is assumed to be dawn as the heroes enter the sewers. Unless otherwise stated, all areas are unlit and all ceilings are 15-feet-high. A DC 25 Athletics (climb) check is required to scale the walls here (DC increased due to slipperiness).

All squares containing rubble and staircases are difficult terrain. All squares containing water are hindering terrain.

Creatures entering a square of water take 2 points of poison damage and 2 points of necrotic damage. A water square is about three feet deep unless indicated otherwise.

Referring to the map, all elevations are relative to the point by which the heroes enter the map.

I-1 Sewer Entrance (EL 8, 1,800 XP)

As the game begins, read or paraphrase the following:

The predawn stillness is broken by the cawing of numerous crows wheeling overhead as you travel toward your destination. With the recent slaughter of the civilian populace of Ramsgate, the carrion fowl have had food aplenty.

In short order you reach a storm drain that leads into the antiquated sewer system beneath Ramsgate. It has been changed haphazardly over the years, rendering the official maps useless.

The drain pipe protrudes from the city's walls into a 10-foot-deep ditch of shallow, murky water. The pipe is sealed with a thick grate and oversized padlock. While the grate is encrusted by generations of filth, the lock isn't.

Development: The party enters this map from the north. There are a vast multitude of crows circling overhead, only a small portion of which actually attack the party in this encounter. Even if the heroes lob fireballs or fire arrows into the crows, a swarm forms and attacks.

The padlock is locked and the battle wight in area 1-3 carries the key.

Heroes can't see the undead unless they are in the ditch looking in and have a light source (see Terrain, below). A DC 16 Perception (listen) check hears muffled "clicking" noises, and a DC 20 Perception (listen) check hears a sound like faint moaning coming from inside the sewer tunnel [Delaris hears both automatically].

The encounter begins as soon as the undead have line-of-sight to a hero. The crows don't attack until a hero has taken damage (see Tactics, below).

Getting In: The grate and padlock have the below statistics. The lock is new; it's easier to break down the grate than shatter the lock. Creatures can coat themselves in mud to gain a +2 circumstance modifier to squeeze through the grate. The skeletons have a +2 bonus to get through the grate because they are merely bones.

Sewer Grate: AC/Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, hp 30; Break DC 20; Thievery (open lock) DC 22; Acrobatics (stunt) DC 10 (Small) or DC 15 (Medium) to squeeze through.

Terrain: The outdoors area is daylight. The first five feet of the tunnel are also in daylight, the next ten feet are shadow (meaning creatures have concealment), and the rest is unlit.

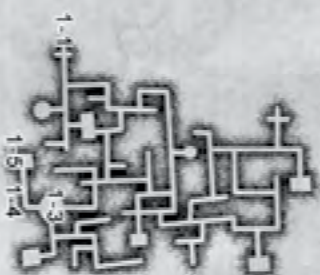
A DC 20 Athletics (climb) check is required to scale the sides of the ditch. The squares inside the ditch are difficult terrain.

The specter is marked on the map with an "S," skeletal guardsmen with a "SW," and boneshard skeletons with a "B." The carrion crow swarm enters the map from the northern edge, having spent a move action to arrive.

DOWN AMONG THE DEAD

AREA 1-2 RAMSCATE SEWERS

Not to scale.



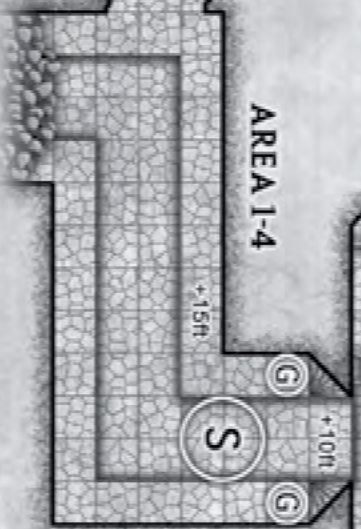
AREA 1-1



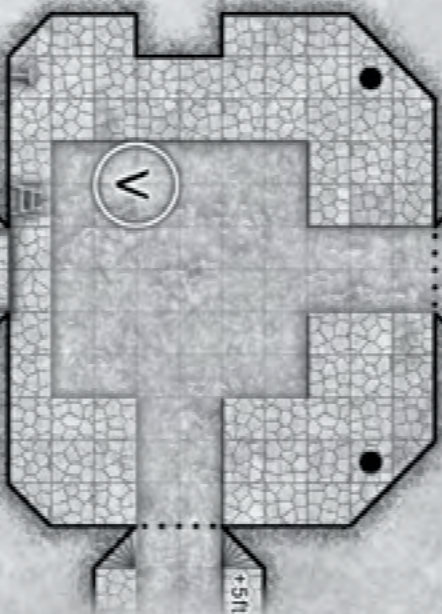
AREA 1-5



AREA 1-4



AREA 1-3



1 square = 5 feet

Tactics: As soon as the undead have line-of-sight to a hero, they attack.

The specter surges forward, phasing through the grate. It concentrates on the rear of the party, especially those not yet in the ditch. It uses *spectral barrage* as soon as it can catch two or more heroes. Afterwards, it turns invisible and sets itself up to take opportunity attacks on moving heroes or those using ranged or area powers. While invisible, its aura is still active. The specter's *spectral barrage* recharges on round +1, round +7, and round +9.

All skeletons move to the grate but have to spend a second move action to squeeze through with an Athletics (stunt) roll (see Getting In, above). Rather than rolling, assume they succeed as a result of 18 (effectively them taking 10) and move on their first attempt.

Through the grate, the boneshard skeletons engage the hero who is closest to the grate. They alternate melee first the flail, then the *boneshards*. Other skeletons are immune to *boneshard burst*, so one going off may kill others.

Guardsmen try to defend the grate. They can use spears to attack heroes at the edge of the ditch. If either the specter or a boneshard skeleton is killed, they both move to engage the party, working with other undead.

As a hero takes any amount of damage, the specter's initiative for the carrion crow swarm, drops down to join the fight. It starts within 5 squares of the hero and use the most hp so far and use *cacophony*. The swarm's *croaking* recharges on round +3 and round +8.

Being simple animals, fear and won't willingly move to them. The undead are armed with the crows. They use their powers to have an effect against the hero even if it means catching them in a close burst.

At the penalties to all defenses for the specter's *spectral chill* aura and the swarm's *croaking cacophony* stack.

The undead fight to their destruction. The crow swarms fight until they have single-digit hp left, then flee into the sky.

2 Boneshard Skeletons

Level 7 Brute

XP 300

Medium natural animate (undead)

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision

HP 97; **Bloodied** 48; see also *boneshard burst*

AC 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17

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

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

↑ **Flail** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon** +11 vs. AC; 1d10+3 [8] damage plus 5 necrotic damage.

↑ **Boneshard** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic** +11 vs. AC; 1d4+3 [5] damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

* **Boneshard Burst** (immediate reaction; when first bloodied and again when this creature is reduced to 0 hp) ♦ **Necrotic**

Close burst 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 2d6+4 [11] necrotic damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 16 (+6)

Dex 16 (+6)

Wis 14 (+5)

Con 17 (+6)

Int 3 (-1)

Cha 3 (-1)

Equipment flail

Description Sliding through the grate is a slimy human skeleton, animated by fell magic. It has splintered bone spikes strapped to its left wrist, and a flail strapped to its right. Its bones are stained brown.



Carrion Crow Swarm

Level 9 Skirmisher **XP 400**

Medium natural magical beast (swarm)

Swarm Attack aura 1; this creature makes a basic attack as a free action against each foe that begins its turn in the aura.

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +8

HP 96; **Bloodied** 48

AC 23; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 17

Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks;

Vulnerable 10 against close and area attacks

Speed 2, fly 8 (hover)

↑ **Swarm of Wings** (standard; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d10+4 [9] damage, and target is blinded until the beginning of this creature's next turn.

* **Croaking Cacophony** (standard; recharge 5, 6) ♦ **Fear, Thunder**

Close burst 5; +10 vs. Fortitude; 3d8+2 [15] thunder damage, and this creature makes a secondary attack on the target. *Secondary Attack*: +10 vs. Will; and the target takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, damage rolls, and all defenses (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** —

Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+8)

Con 16 (+7) **Int** 5 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+4)

Description The sky is dark with a dense cloud of shifting black shapes: hundreds of large crows filling the world with a frightful cacophony of croaks and caws.

2 Skeletal Guardsmen

Level 6 Soldier **XP 250**

Medium natural animate (undead)

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision

HP 61; **Bloodied** 30

AC 18; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17

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

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 5

↑ **Halberd** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d10+2 [7] damage, and the target is marked until the end of this creature's next turn; see also speed of the dead.

Speed of the Dead

When making an opportunity attack, this creature gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d6 [3] damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** n/a

Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)

Con 13 (+4) **Int** 3 (-1) **Cha** 3 (-1)

Equipment chainmail, halberd

Description The skeletal warriors still wear the remnants of Ramsgate militia uniforms.

Specter

Level 6 Lurker **XP 250**

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

Spectral Chill (Cold) aura 1; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision

HP 42; **Bloodied** 21

AC 18; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing

↑ **Spectral Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic** +9 vs. Reflex; 1d6+3 [6] necrotic damage.

* **Spectral Barrage** (standard; recharge 5, 6)

Illusion, Psychic

Close burst 2; targets enemies; +9 vs. Will; 2d6+ psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone

Invisibility (standard; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**

This creature becomes invisible until it attacks or is hit by an attack.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills Stealth +10

Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 8 (+2)

Con 13 (+4) **Int** 6 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+5)

Description A vaguely man-shaped form drifts like pale fog through the grate. Its shape eddies and ripples like a disturbed pond, and you see no features on its lurid

I-2 Sewer Exploration (EL 7, 1,500 XP)

When the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following to begin the skill challenge:

The main section of the sewer is filth-crusted and laby with slippery walkways mere inches above the slow murk. Worse, you were warned that there are webs of illusions spun throughout the tunnels. Finally, the gh fled earlier are likely trying to raise an alarm, filling with undead minions.

At the very least, you need a keen sense of direction in (Dungeoneering), a mind not prone to fancy (Insight), a soft step (Stealth) to reach the reservoir before an undead musters to thwart you.

Development: This "area" is a skill challenge that involves navigating the sewers beneath Ramsgate. Success, failure, or the degree of same determines how difficult the combat in area 1-3 is going to be.

[For competitive play, do not allow heroes to use skills not outlined below, or to use skills in a manner other than what is below. Although this directly contradicts the rules as written, it's necessary to ensure fairness for league play.]



SKILL CHALLENGE: FIND THE RESERVOIR!

Level: 7

Complexity: 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Dungeoneering, Insight, Stealth.

Arcana (DC 14): One-time only. A hero suggests a few tell-tale signs of illusions. Success grants a +2 bonus to subsequent Insight checks; failure imposes a -2 penalty to subsequent Insight checks.

Acrobatics (DC 19): One-time only. A hero offers a few pointers to keep balance on the slippery walkways. Success counts as a success; failure imposes a -2 penalty to the next Stealth check.

Dungeoneering (DC 19): A hero guides the party into the tunnel, trusting in their excellent sense of subterranean navigation. Success counts as a success; failure counts as a failure.

Perception (DC 14): Knowing that the sewer is filled with ghouls, the heroes must doubt everything they see. Success counts as a success; failure counts as a failure and each hero loses a healing surge.

Stealth (DC 19): One-time only. A hero points out a little-known fact about the senses of undead. Success grants a +2 bonus to subsequent Stealth checks; failure imposes a -2 penalty to subsequent Stealth checks.

Survival (DC 14): A hero can scout ahead, keeping an eye out for ghouls. Success counts as a success; failure counts as a failure and each hero loses a healing surge.

Travel (DC 8): One-time only. A hero tries to remember the layout of Ramsgate to determine the direction of best travel. Success grants a +2 bonus to subsequent Dungeoneering checks; failure imposes a -2 penalty to subsequent Dungeoneering checks.

There are only two ghouls in area 1-3.

If the heroes earned at least six successes, there are only two ghouls in area 1-3; otherwise, there are four ghouls in area 1-3.

The heroes must succeed at least one Dungeoneering or Insight check before they can win this skill challenge.

1-3 Reservoir (EL 7-9, 1,500 XP or 1,750 XP or 2,000 XP)

As the party resolves the skill challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

You emerge from the maze of tunnels into a cathedral-like chamber – the reservoir. The domed ceiling here bristles with small pipes funneling the sewage of the merchant district. The waste cascades thirty feet down to the surface of a square pool.

To the south is a large tunnel set about 10 feet above the floor. More filth seeps out of it, down the wall, into a small basin, and thence to the pool. A series of iron rungs set into the southern wall provide access to this tunnel. Just to the west of the rungs is a lever.

North and east are drainage tunnels, each with a raised portcullis. When the central pool gets too full, sewage sloshes over and is carried in those directions.

Development: The party enters this area from the northern tunnels. There are two ways to start this encounter: either the sewerlink gets triggered (see Tactics, below) or the party advances halfway through the room (north-to-south).

If the latter occurs, the heroes hear splashing and rough voices coming from the southern tunnel. Go around the table once and ask the heroes what they do (in terms of a combat round). At the end of that “round” the battle wight, slashwing bat, and the first two ghouls emerge from the southern tunnel, and initiative is rolled normally.

It’s important to note that the undead and slashwing aren’t hanging out in their starting positions waiting for the heroes. They are en-route to this area and arrive as the party happens to enter the mid-point of the room. Two parties (the undead and bat, and the heroes) converge on this area at about the same time.

Wrong Way! If a hero tries to go off the map down the eastern tunnel, warn them that they are heading back into the sewer and might get lost. If they persist, they get lost and start a new skill challenge (see area 1-2). Lower the DCs by 5 for this second attempt.

Treasure: Elziba has gifted the battle wight with a +3 *longspear* and a *cloak of survival* +2.

Terrain: The pool is twenty feet deep. A DC 10 Athletics (swim) check is required to swim or tread water in the pool. Like all water in the sewer, being in the pool damages most creatures (see Areas of the Map).

The lever (marked with an “X” on the map) would raise or lower the portcullises for the north and east tunnels, but it’s rusted shut. It is presented as a red herring, and a DC 30 Perception (spot) check, or a DC 10 Perception (search) check, would realize the lever is useless.

Note that undead don’t breathe, and therefore cannot drown.

The “V” centered on four squares mark the venom-eye sewerlink’s starting position; it is at the bottom of the pool. The slashwing bat starts in the four squares overlapped by the “S.” The battle wight is riding the bat, so it technically is also in all four squares. The first two ghouls start in squares marked “G.” If more ghouls are supposed to be in this fight (depending on the relative success of area 1-2), they arrive on the ghoulish initiative of round 2, having spent a move action to appear in the eastern tunnel’s mouth.

Tactics: It is important to note that both the ghouls and the battle wight can immobilize heroes, substantially increasing their lethality.

The ghouls attack the nearest hero, ideally ganging up on one. They use claw attacks until a hero is immobilized, then *ghoulish bite* attacks. They attack a single hero until he or she falls.

The battle wight guides the slashwing to just inside *soul draining* *longspear* range and attacks the heroes, most likely the one also attacked by the ghouls. If for some reason the battle wight can’t attack, the slashwing uses *flyby attack* as it retreats to the southern tunnel entrance until the battle wight can attack again.

The battle wight uses *soul reaping* as often as it can. *Soul reaping* recharges on round +5, round +6, round +8, and round +9.

If the bat and the wight become separated, the bat makes *flyby attacks* against whichever hero damaged it last. It only uses *hovering flurry* if it is in single combat against a hero.

The sewerlisk remains on the bottom of the pool until one of two things occurs: something ends up splashing or diving into the pool, or something gets killed (assume that means the sound of combat is enough to draw it to the surface). When it emerges, it attacks the heroes with *venomous gaze*. If a hero is reduced to 0 hp or fewer, it instead moves adjacent to the fallen and bites (eats) them. If a living creature (including the bat) is in the pool, it targets that creature instead.

Note that the undead are immune to poison. Also note that the sewerlisk gains a +2 to attack non-aquatic creatures that are in the pool.

All undead and the bat fight to their destruction. The sewerlisk submerges and retreats once it's reduced to single-digit hp. Assume it swims away through a submerged drainage pipe.

Battle Wight

Level 9 Soldier **XP 400**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +3, darkvision
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49

AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 23

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 cold, 5 fire, 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Speed 5

↑ **Soul draining Longspear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**

Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d10+7 [12] damage (crit: 3d8+17) [30], and the target loses 1 healing surge and is immobilized (save ends).

⚡ **Soul Reaping** (standard; recharge 5, 6) ♦ **Healing, Necrotic**

Ranged 5; affects an immobilized target only; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d8+5 [14] necrotic damage, and this creature regains 10 hp.

Mounted Veteran

The battle wight is considered to have the Mounted Combat feat and gains a +2 bonus to saving throws to avoid being dismounted (knocked prone from the saddle).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Endurance +12, Intimidate +14

Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 9 (+3)

Con 18 (+8) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 20 (+9)

Equipment plate armor, +3 longspear, cloak of survival +2, key to padlock in area 1-1.

Description Riding the bat is an undead husk of a warrior clad in platemail and bearing a barbed longspear. His weapon and his eyes both glow a pale green as he effortlessly uses his knees to guide the bat toward you, lowering his spear.

2-4 Ghouls

Level 6 Soldier **XP 250**

Medium natural humanoid (undead)

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision

HP 71; **Bloodied** 35

AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 18

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

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 8, climb 4

↑ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+13 vs. AC; 1d6+5 [8] damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

↑ **Ghoulish Bite** (standard; at-will)

Target must be immobilized, stunned, or unconscious; +11 vs. AC; 3d6+5 [15] damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills Stealth +12

Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+3)

Con 15 (+5) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Description This hairless creature is a shriveled of a human, with elongated arms and talons. Its eyes light like those of a cat as it reaches for your throat, its lips in delight.

Slashwing

Level 7 Skirmisher

Large natural magical beast (mount)

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9; blindsight 10, darkvision

HP 81; **Bloodied** 40

AC 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15

Speed 3 (clumsy), fly 8 (hover)

↑ **Wing Slash** (standard; at-will)

+12 vs. AC; 1d10+5 [10] damage, and ongoing 5 d (save ends).

↑ **Hovering Flurry** (standard; at-will)

If this creature does not take a move action when flying, it can make two wing slash attacks.

↑ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)

This creature flies up to 8 squares and makes one basic attack at any point during the movement. It does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

Seeker in Darkness (while mounted by a friendly rider of 7th level or higher; at-will) ♦ **Mount**

This creature grants its rider blindsight 10 and darkvision while mounted.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Skills Stealth +11

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 17 (+6) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 8 (+2)

Equipment saddle

Description This creature resembles a huge bat with bristling brown fur, and sharp bony blades lining the outside of each wing.

Venom-Eye Sewerlisk

Level 7 Artillery **XP 300**

Large natural beast (aquatic, reptile)

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9

HP 75; **Bloodied** 37

AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18

Immune poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic

Speed 6, swim 6

↑ Bite (standard; at-will)

+12 vs. AC; 1d8+2 [6] damage.

* **Venomous Gaze** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Gaze, Poison**

Area burst 1 within 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 [7] poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

As long as the target is taking ongoing poison damage from this attack, the target deals 2 poison damage to all creatures adjacent to it at the start of its turn.

Unaligned Languages —

Stealth +9

Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+4)

Con 21 (+8) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 8 (+2)

Description This beast resembles an eight-legged crocodile, but its snout is much shorter and its eyes shimmer like silver.



1-4

Sewer Greenhouse (EL 10, 2,500 XP)

As the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The tunnel travels south, then jogs west for a short distance before ending abruptly. It should turn south again, but it's been bricked up and there's a large opening in the wall leading west. There's a faint golden light coming from the opening.

Development: The area ahead is the greenhouse where Elziba grew the chlorosmash and is trying to recreate the golden orchid (see *Treasure of Tanglethorn Manor*). When the heroes can see into area 1-4, read or paraphrase the following:

The hole in the wall leads to a larger chamber apparently carved from the bedrock beneath Ramsgate, like a cavity in a tooth. Rough-hewn stairs to the west lead to a small balcony level – you can see dilapidated and fire-scorched tables and chairs up there. The east wall, just inside the opening, is lined with benches cluttered by the implements of alchemy.

The floor is a thick mulch, with sprouts of greenery popping up irregularly. A large pile of compost is placed next to a thornbush in the southwest corner. Centered on the far wall is a faded, full-length portrait of a handsome woman in a rosewood frame marred by fire. The figure is bent to sniff a rose held in her right hand. Despite the angle, she looks remarkably like Tasia Kalworth.

This whole scene is faintly lit by a globe of golden light hovering near the ceiling, some twenty feet above your head.

Elziba uses the light to provide sustenance to her plant creations. She can change the intensity of the light as a free action (see *Tactics*).

Paintings and Secrets: Behind the painting of Elziba is a crack that leads to area 1-5. The vampire crone travels through this when she flees combat (see *Tactics*). Not even a Small hero can squeeze through the crack. Rather than stat out the wall, if the heroes decide to hack it down, assume it takes 5 minutes. Note that the hero(es) hacking at the wall don't benefit from a short rest during this time, and therefore don't recover encounter powers.

There is a secret door on the balcony that also leads to area 1-5. A DC 30 Perception (spot) check or DC 20 Perception (search) is required to locate the door.

Treasure: The painting of Elziba is damaged, so only worth 350 gp. The large key that opens the trap control panel is sitting in plain sight on a charred table in the balcony. It is gold and weighs 2 lbs. (125 gp).

Terrain: This area is barely lit. Low-light vision and darkvision pierce it, but creatures have concealment relative to those with only normal vision and no other light sources. After Elziba quells the light, the room is in total darkness.

The rosebush is hindering terrain; anyone entering a rosebush square takes 2 points of damage from slashing thorns.

CRONE TAUNTS

As Elziba fights, she taunts the heroes. Some examples are below:

"You're the ones who slew Keldoss, Harggat, and Vulgamur? You did me a favor! Let me repay your generosity..."

"I heard the screams of Ramsgate even down here. They city died under the fangs of my children, and I danced and laughed. But it's not enough! My vengeance calls out for more blood!"

"I refused to die once already, you simpletons! What do I have to fear from you?"

(to the chlorosmash) *"Careful! I want their bones intact to replenish my skeletal warriors! Then again, 'mostly intact' will do."*

(to Tasia) *"We are the same blood, you and I! I recognize your scent. You're one of those who left and went to Ramsgate! Why do you fight your great-great-aunt, child? You will live forever if you join me. You'll be young and powerful forever!"*

There is a trap in this area. Referring to the map, note that eight rows are numbered in the main floor – these rows are attacked by the trap in a predetermined pattern.

The "C" centered on four squares marks the starting location of the chlorosmash. The "E" marks Elziba's starting location.

Tactics: As this battle is waged, keep track of what squares are illuminated by the heroes. Elziba and the chlorosmash rely on their darkvision in this encounter.

Both Elziba and the chlorosmash know the pattern of the pendulum trap, and try to avoid ending their movement in a column it attacks next. If, however, Elziba sees that the party has figured out she knows where the trap won't attack next, she willingly stands in its path. She only does this before she's bloodied.

Column 3 is never attacked, and column 5 is only attacked once. Columns 2 and 8 are attacked frequently.

The chlorosmash merely fights the hero nearest it. If it has multiple targets within reach, it prefers to attack prone heroes. The plant creature fights to its destruction.

Elziba starts combat by taking a free action to quench the golden light (putting the area in total darkness unless the heroes have a light source), then using *crone's curse* on the hero wearing the heaviest armor [in order: Vyrkol, Tasia, Balgrun, Delaris, Nestiro]. Once she's bloodied, she uses *crone's curse* again on that same hero, or the next one in order.

In subsequent rounds, she uses *darkness gaze* on a hero, then follows up with claw attacks on the same target. She uses *blood drain* at every opportunity, even drawing an opportunity attack if necessary to get adjacent to the bloodied hero. She saves one action point to use in the first round she also uses *blood drain*.

Elziba uses her second action point when she's reduced to 85 hp or fewer. She uses *second wind*, then assumes *mist form* and retreats to area 1-5 through the cracks behind the painting.

Pendulum Scythes

Level 4 Elite Lurker

XP 350

Trap

Scything blades sweep across the room in a seemingly random pattern, cutting swaths at 5-foot intervals.

Trap: Eight columns of squares in the chamber feature a scything blade. On its turn, two blades sweep through columns of squares at random, attacking all creatures occupying those squares.

Perception

DC 17: The character notices thin, shallow cuts across the mulch floor at 5-foot-intervals.

DC 22: The character notices thin slots across the ceiling of the room, corresponding with the cuts.

DC 22: The character spots the pressure plates at the room's entrance.

DC 27: The character notices the control panel behind the rosebush.

Initiative +6

Trigger

The trap rolls initiative when a creature enters one of the six squares of pressure plates at the room's entrance (marked with an X). As a standard action, a creature can trigger the trap using the control panel at the far end of the room, if it has the key.

Attack

Standard Action

Melee

Targets: All creatures in two columns of squares. Roll randomly each round to determine the columns the trap attacks [rows 2&2, 1&6, 8&2, 7&4, 2&4, 8&1, 6&4, 7&2, 8&4, 5&2].

Attack +9 vs. AC, two attacks

Hit 2d8+4 [13] damage and secondary attack.

Secondary Attack +7 vs. Fortitude

Hit Push 1 south, knock target prone, and 5 damage (save ends).

COUNTERMEASURES

- A hero with the key can spend two move actions to open the control panel and shut down the trap.
- A character who makes a DC 22 Dungeoneering check as a minor action can determine the columns of squares the trap attacks on its next turn.
- A character can ready an action to attack a pendulum blade (AC 15, other defenses 12; hp 48). Destroying a blade renders that row of squares safe from attack.
- A character can engage in a skill challenge to deactivate the control panel. DC 22 Thievery. Complexity 1 (4 successes before 2 failures). Success disables the trap. Failure causes 1d4+1 [3] blades to attack each round. The third blade attacks the same column as the second one.

Elziba Caulwik, Vampire Crone

Level 8 Solo Controller **XP 1750**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +13; darkvision
HP 340; **Bloodied** 170

Regeneration 5 (regeneration does not function while this creature is exposed to direct sunlight)

AC 26; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26

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

Vulnerable 10 radiant

Saving Throws +5

Speed 8, climb 4 (spider climb)

Action Points 2

⬆ **Claws** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Reach 5; +12 vs. AC; 1d8+5 [9] damage plus 1d6 [3] necrotic damage.

⬆ **Blood Drain** (standard; recharges when an adjacent creature becomes bloodied) ♦ **Healing**

Requires combat advantage; +12 vs. Fortitude; 3d8+5 [19] damage, the target is weakened (save ends), and this creature regains 85 hp.

⬆ **Life's Curse** (standard; recharges when bloodied)

Requires combat advantage; +12 vs. Will; the target cannot shift without Elziba's power until Elziba strikes them in melee. If Elziba is bloodied, the target instead loses a move action per round until Elziba strikes them in melee; they may lose other actions to gain move actions as normal.

⚡ **Darkness Gaze** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**

Ranged 5; +12 vs. Will; the target is blinded until the end of Elziba's next turn. Elziba can only use this power once per round.

⬆ **Mist Form** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Polymorph**

This creature becomes insubstantial and gains a fly speed of 12, but cannot make attacks. This creature can remain in mist form for up to 1 hour or end the turn as a minor action.

Second Wind (standard; encounter) ♦ **Healing**

This creature spends a healing surge and regains 85 hp. It also gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.

⬆ **Light Weakness**

This creature is dazed when in direct sunlight.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

Skills Arcana +14, Nature +13, Religion +13

Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 18 (+8)

Con 13 (+5) **Int** 20 (+9) **Cha** 24 (+11)

Description But for the pure hatred in this creature's expression, you'd almost mistake her for a helpless elderly woman. She hisses at you, revealing a mouth of with few teeth, but each one a razor-sharp fang. The power of undeath and a thirst for revenge fuels this monstrosity.

Chlorosmash

Level 9 Brute **XP 400**
Large natural animate (plant)

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +3, darkvision

HP 98; **Bloodied** 49; see also regrow

AC 21; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19

Immune poison; **Resist** 10 cold, 10 radiant;

Vulnerable 10 fire

Speed 4

⬆ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 2d8+5 [14] damage, or 4d8+5 [23] damage to a prone target.

⬆ **Big Smash** (standard; recharge 6)

Reach 2; targets Medium or smaller creature; +13 vs. AC; 4d8+5 [23] damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Regrow (first time this creature drops to 0 hp)

Make a new initiative check for this creature. On its next turn, it rises (as a move action) with 49 hp.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 21 (+9) **Dex** 6 (+2) **Wis** 8 (+3)

Con 18 (+8) **Int** 1 (-1) **Cha** 3 (+0)

Description What looked like a mulch pile shudderingly rises to a standing position, assuming a somewhat humanoid form. This creature has no arms, but features a thick vine, perhaps as wide as a halfling's waist, whipping around from where its neck would be.

1-5 Treasury Crypt

As the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This small chamber has few decorations, merely a large earthenware vase filled with petal-shaped lumps of gold and a sarcophagus with six moonstones set in a circle on the lid. There are no other creature comforts aside from a small vase with a wilted rose in the northwest corner.

The east wall is heavily cracked. Just to the south of the cracks is a door.

Development: This is Elziba's treasury. She retreats here if she's been severely damaged fighting in area 1-4. If a fight breaks out here, she follows the same tactics as outlined in area 1-4.

It is worth noting that some of the heroes may not have had a short rest (if they hacked through the wall), and thus are without encounter powers. If Elziba is here, she may have had time to recover her encounter powers, including *second wind* and *mist form*.

Treasure: The golden orchid petals are worth a total of 1900 gp. The six moonstones in Elziba's sarcophagus are worth 100 gp each.

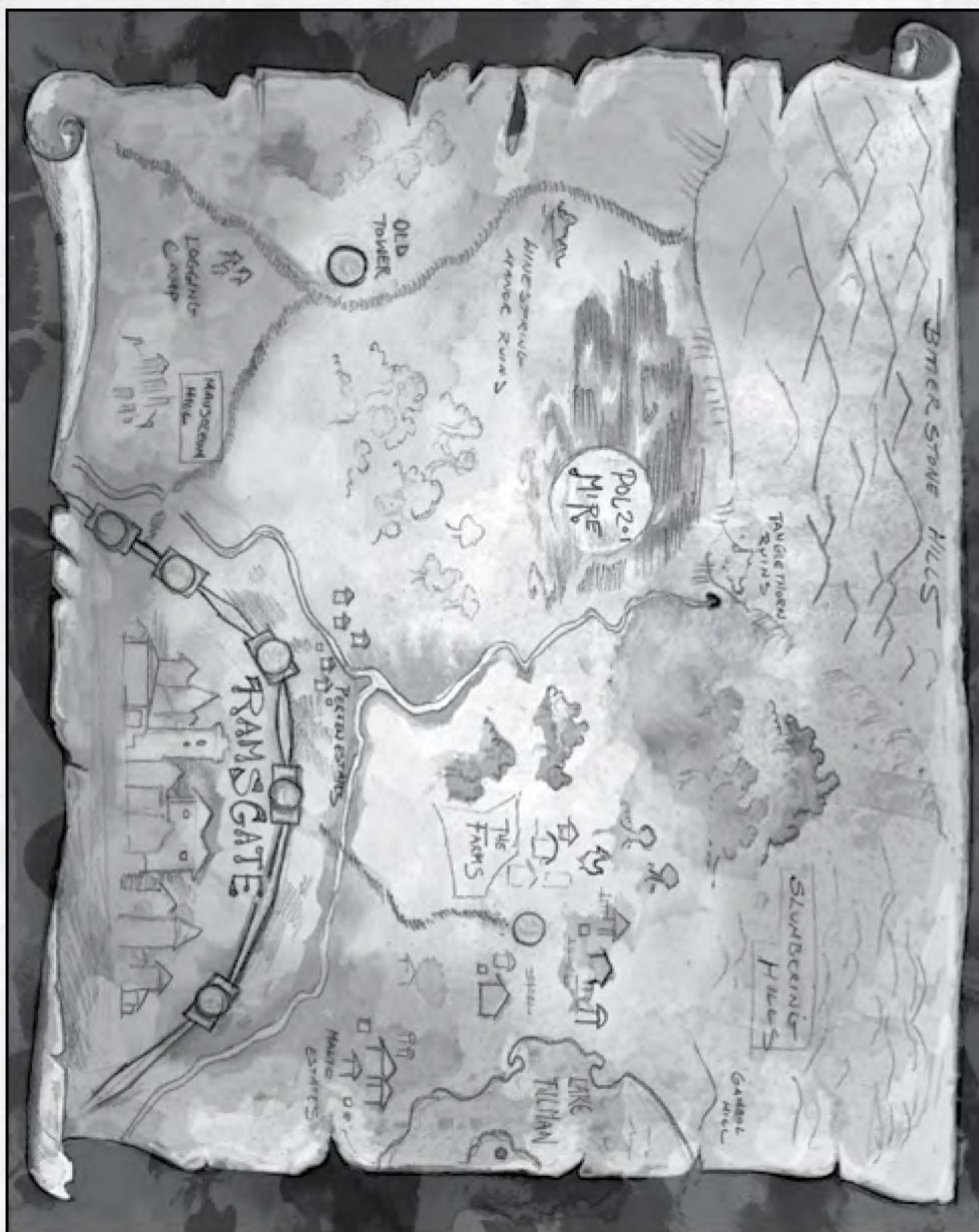
Terrain: Creatures cannot enter the squares of the sarcophagus, and it provides cover.

THUS THE HEROES DEFEAT THE VAMPIRE CRONE!

APPENDIX A: HANDOUTS



THE VAMPIRE'S VENGEANCE



HANDOUT B



HANDOUT C



HANDOUT D

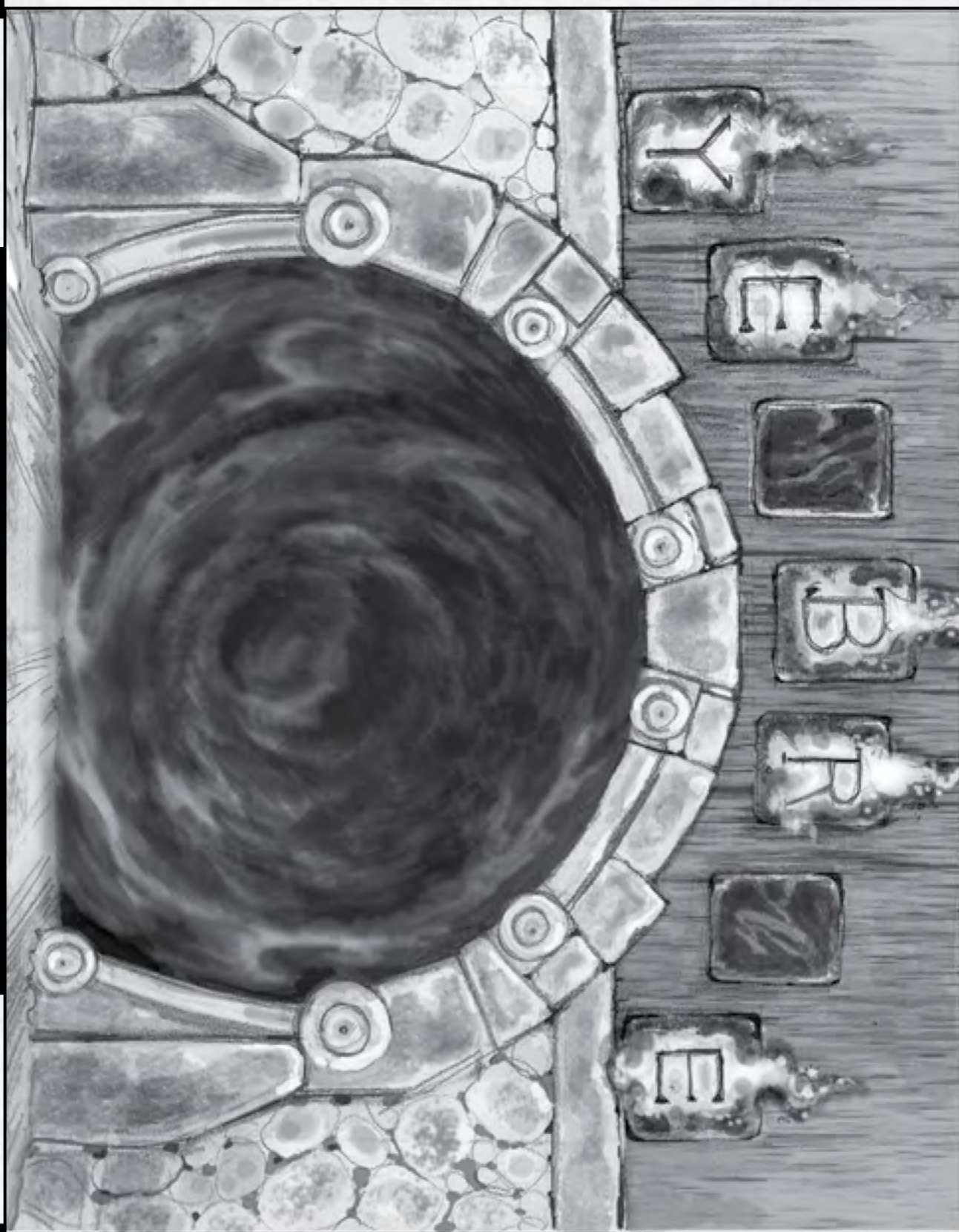


HANDOUT E



HANDOUT F

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS 66



APPENDIX B: NEW MONSTERS

Five monsters in this module first appeared in other products, as below:

- Carrion crow swarm – *Blackdirge's Dungeon Denizens*, page 101
- Dire frog – *Blackdirge's Dungeon Denizens*, page 68
- Slashwing – *Blackdirge's Dungeon Denizens*, page 25
- Spitting frogs – *DCC #58: The Forgotten Portal*, page 6
- Thornblood – *Blackdirge's Dungeon Denizens*, page 123
- One monster in this module is a “re-skinned” creature from a third-party sourcebook:
Snail Mutant – giant cone snail; *Critter Cache: Big Bugs*; page 12
- The chloroblast is an original monster.

CHLOROBLAST

By using dark magic and uncanny skill at botany, Elziba Caulwik managed to grow a natural killing machine to fulfill her desire to burn Ramsgate to the ground. The chloroblast produces its own fuel (not needing sunlight or other nutrients) and requires minimal water. It also attacks viciously, seeking to spread around as much suffering as possible.

CHLOROBLAST LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: The chloroblast is a gourd that produces so much energy it burns with a green flame. Nearly mindless, it exists to burn and destroy. Only creatures strongly affiliated with nature are immune to its searing attention. So focused are they on burning, they can reduce a victim's ability to resist flame.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Their unbridled aggression means chloroblasts are usually encountered singly. They only spare other plant creatures, and can only be encountered alongside them.

Level 6 Encounter (1200 XP)

- chloroblast (level 5 solo artillery)
- vine horror (level 5 controller)

Chloroblast

Level 5 Solo Artillery

XP 1250

Large natural animate (plant)

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +5, blindsight 10

HP 268; **Bloodied** 134

AC 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 16

Immune poison; **Resist** 15 fire

Saving Throws +5

Speed 4

Action Point 2

↑ **Tendrill Whip** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +12 vs. AC; 1d6+4 [7] damage.

⚡ **Sap Gout** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Ranged 10; +10 vs. Fort; 1d10+4 [9] poison damage, and the target's resistance to fire (if any) is reduced by 10 points (minimum 0) until the end of this creature's next turn.

The chloroblast can only use this attack once per round.

⚡ **Chloroflame Jet** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

Ranged 10; +10 vs. Ref; 2d6+5 [12] fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Retributive Slap (immediate interrupt, when damaged by an opportunity attack)

Once per round, this creature makes a melee basic

attack against the foe that damaged it.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 18 (+6)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 15 (+4)

Con 19 (+6)

Int 2 (-2)

Cha 4 (-1)

Description This is some kind of massive plant, a gourd-like body moving around on thick, whipping. From its top sprout thinner, ropelike vines tipped with elongated thorns. A semi-transparent bulb grows in of the thinner vines, glowing with a pale green flame.

CHLOROBLAST TACTICS

A chloroblast spreads its attacks around a party of making sure to hit a foe first with a sap gout before them with a chloroflame jet. Even in melee, it prefers ranged attacks instead of tendrill whip, only relying for its retributive slap, an opportunity attack, or ag completely immune to fire.

APPENDIX C: NEW TERRAIN

RIPOL TREES

This pulsing tree-thing has black bark...or skin. Glowing, knobbed fruit of dubious origin hang from its hair-like branches.

These “trees” are cultivated in places tainted by the madness of the outer spheres. They are the severed limbs of bizarre aberrations from beyond our realm. Instead of roots, they have talons that grip the soil, and the “fruit” – a lumpy, grape-sized nodule that is warm and fleshy to the touch – has more in common with a cyst.

Trees have three life ages: young, adult, and elder. At each life age, the fruit glows a different color (yellow, blue, or red) and has a different effect for those standing in the aura of the tree. Creatures in the auras of several trees are affected by the largest tree.

Yellow: reroll any results of 1 or 2 on the damage roll of an arcane power. Each die can only be rerolled once per use of the power.

Blue: gain regeneration 2 as long as the creature is not bloodied.

Red: add +2 to their melee damage. The attack roll has to be made while the creature is adjacent to the tree.

Effects of eating the fruit last for 1 hour, and has the same effect as the aura. Eating more than one ripol fruit in an hour period results in another poison attack, with a +2 to the attack and a cumulative -2 to the defense. Fixing the pus-juice creatures new colors, but no effects (although ingesting the new colored pus-juice is poisonous).

Fruit • Poison

Fortitude; target is weakened (save ends). First save: target is nauseated (save ends); making this save returns the creature to being weakened.

Ripol trees have 1d6+2 [5] fruit. Each age category bears an additional 1d6+1 fruit [adult: 10 fruit; elder: 16 fruit]. Fruit (including the pus-sap) retains its efficacy and glow for 1 minute after being plucked (this is important for area 1-3).



RIPOL TREE LORE

A character trained in Arcana can learn the following with a successful Arcana check:

DC 10: These are not true trees – they are actually the severed limbs of an un-named aberration from beyond our realm. The “fruit” are actually cysts.

DC 15: The fruit changes color as the tree matures, and each color radiates an unusual aura. Yellow fruit adds power to arcane effects, blue fruit mends wounds, and red fruit lends strength to blows. Fruit removed from a tree ceases glowing after about a minute.

DC 20: The fruit can be eaten, but it is poisonous. Consuming a fruit grants the ability of the aura for 1 hour.

DC 25: Consuming more than one fruit per day is extremely hazardous.

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