

A Combo Zero & First-Level DCC Adventure

Escape from the Shrouded Fen

by Terry
Olson



COMPATIBLE WITH

DCC RPG



All handouts mentioned in this adventure can be found in the separately printable PDF appendix. In addition, every image and map are also included for easy printing as additional handouts and judge's aids. (The PDF is included in the adventure bundle, and can also be downloaded at <http://purplesorcerer.com/fen>).



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Escape from the Shrouded Fen

By Terry Olson

*A Combo Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Adventure
For Both Zero and First Level Play*

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Bullet Point History, Background, Adventure Outline	4
Player Introduction.....	8
Rumors and Hooks	10
Conditions in the Fen.....	11
Random Events in the Fen	14
Fen Encounter Table	20
Fen Encounters.....	21-91
Interlude with Nahweeha.....	54
Beginning Act 2	68
Fog Beast as Patron	92
Appendix A: Running Act 1 as Funnel.....	104
Appendix B: Running Act 2 as One-Shot 1st Level Adventure	105
Appendix C: Encounter Statblocks and Info.....	107



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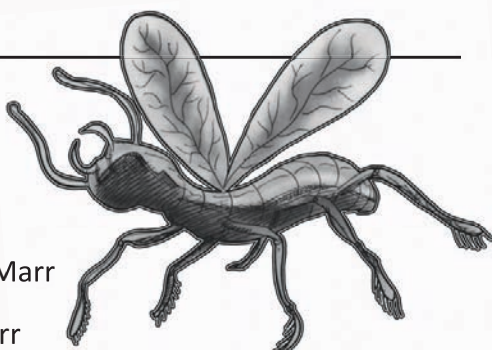
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With special thanks to the amazing Harley Stroh.

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Escape from the Shrouded Fen

Introduction

What happens when a demon dies? Oozing, scalding, deathblood floods the land, cursing it forevermore. Every seventeen years, the blood moon rises and the Fog Beast beckons villagers into the Shrouded Fen; those that follow never return. Now you have been chosen! Seeking ancient ruins, vast treasure, and arcane lore, you plunge deep into the mist-laden swamp. Plants impale corpses ravaged by man-eating birds, while specters of past victims roam the blood-cursed land. A mysterious floating portal defies entry, though the bog's hidden artifacts are rumored to provide the key. Can you solve the riddles of the swamp and escape from the Shrouded Fen?

General Remarks

Escape from the Shrouded Fen begins as a 0-level funnel, then continues on to first level play. The structure consists of an Act I, Interlude, Act II, then Epilogue. Act I is the funnel, with the subsequent interlude providing opportunity for leveling and recuperating. Act II is a level 1 swamp hex-crawl, followed by a short Epilogue where the party is rewarded and challenged to seek further adventures. The party is not forced to follow the prescribed structure, i.e., the areas of Act II are accessible during Act I, but these locales are far more deadly if encountered before the characters level up.

The adventure's milieu is a cursed, corrupted, fog-thick swamp; once PCs enter, they cannot leave unless the curse is lifted. The fog itself is dangerous, debilitating the party while strengthening the fen's denizens. There is an important NPC, the swamp hag **Nahweeha**, who can be a boon to trustful, well-behaved PCs. She has a fun augury mechanic where PCs can gain Luck if they figure out the meanings of her mystical predictions. The swamp has scripted encounters as well as random events; some of these random events include luck-based harassments by ghosts. The fen is bordered by the deadly, corrupted River Black.

The goal of Act I (the funnel) is to reach an ancient temple hidden deep in the bog. There the party can weaken the fog, so that other areas of the swamp may be explored more safely. This involves a climactic final encounter that requires both brains and brawn to overcome. Act II sees the PCs as level 1 heroes exploring the swamp, at one point facing a significant choice that should morally divide them if opposed alignments are present. The PCs must choose between either escaping with a weapon of Chaos, (thus saving their own skins and leaving the curse in place), or destroying the weapon and removing the curse, gaining access to a mysterious portal in the process.

Bullet-Point History

The fen's history is a story of the battle between Law and Chaos spiraling out of control, with the powers of Neutrality intervening to restore the Balance. A bullet-point history is presented below, followed by a more detailed background for judges interested in the whole story.

- The **Hawachen** people lived in the swamp, and worshiped the Lawful moon goddess **Kayassit**.
- **Segava**, the Chaotic sorcerer-king of the surrounding **Segavite** kingdom, broke his treaty with the swamp folk. They killed him for it.
- Segavites invaded the fen, slaughtering the Hawachen; victory seemed certain.
- **Etiyane**, the Hawachen high-priestess of Kayassit, sacrificed herself in a ritual to save her people. She inadvertently summoned the mist demon **Nabelelb**, who destroyed both warring factions.
- The Neutral nature goddess **Ildavir** sent her champion, **Selliach**, to intervene. Selliach and Nabelelb killed each other.
- As the demon died, it cursed the swamp. Its blood corrupted the flora and fauna, as well as Kayassit's temple itself, and created the dangerous fog shrouding the fen.
- Ildavir seeks a new champion, and sends her envoy, the **Fog Beast**, to choose candidates to be tested within the Shrouded Fen.
- Those who survive are put on a path to become the bearer of Selliach's demon-slaying sword, **Sophix**.

Detailed Background

Centuries ago, the valley of the Shrouded Fen was populated by the indigenous Hawachen. A lawful society, they were devoted to Kayassit, a female manifestation of the moon god **Shul**. The swamp's unique feature was the "**Swearing Stone**," a physical incarnation of Law used to bind oaths. Hawachen legends claimed that it fell from the moon itself, gifted by the goddess. Misfortune always fell to those who broke promises made at the mystical rock.

Settlers eventually encroached on the Hawachen, with border skirmishes occurring across the swamp's river. The "civilized" people's sorcerer-king, Segava, and the Hawachen high priestess, Etiyane, made peace oaths at the Swearing Stone. However, Segava wanted to seize the land in the name of Chaos, and with the help of his patron **The Hidden Lord**, he created the **Staff of Broken Oaths** to protect him from the stone's consequences of ignoring the treaty.

After Segava's betrayal, the Hawachen chose to retaliate, and broke their own oath of peace. The sorcerer-king was captured, killed, and buried (with his staff) in the swamp to remind visitors of the consequences of opposing Kayassit. With Segava's death, his generals attacked the Hawachen's smaller, inferior forces. Etiyane used a forbidden blood-moon ritual and attempted to save her people by sacrificing herself. Kayassit ignored her pleas (the Hawachen were Oath-Breakers as well), so Etiyane's sacrifice was answered by the mist demon, Nabelelb.

Nabelelb slaughtered all combatants indiscriminately, polluting the swamp with its infernal mist. Kayassit decreed that this was just punishment for defiling her Swearing Stone with falsehoods, but the nature goddess Ildavir disagreed, and sent her champion, Selliach, to confront the demon. With his legendary sword, Sophix, Selliach engaged Nabelelb in mortal combat. Selliach destroyed the demon, but died delivering the killing stroke. As the demon perished, it invoked a curse: All who entered the swamp's fen-sucked fog would be trapped there, and as long as demon-blood corrupted the land, Etiyane's offspring (her surviving daughter, Nahweeha) would witness the swamp's demise. Nabelelb's blood flowed into the temple and corrupted the heads of the interred priestesses, causing them to endlessly spew the fog shrouding the fen. The blood also corrupted the river, and the swamp's flora and fauna.

Ildavir removed Sophix to a pocket dimension, and began the search for a new champion worthy of wielding the sword. Thus, every blood moon, Ildavir sends the Fog Beast, an elemental from the pseudo plane of mist, to choose brave and clever candidates to break Nabelelb's curse, and escape the Shrouded Fen.

Adventure Outline

Act I (Zero-Level Funnel)

Primary goal of PCs is to reach the temple and weaken the fog, so that other areas of the swamp may be explored more safely.

1. Follow the Fog Beast across the River Black into the Shrouded Fen (**Area 1-A**).
2. Quick "foreshadowing" attack by ***Murderbeak***, the prime scale-shrike (**Area 1-B**).
3. Find the temple and the floating portal (**Area 1-C**).
4. Enter the temple and defeat Etiyane's ghost and her headless fog zombies (**Area 2-10**). Cleanse the fog zombies' heads of corruption; this weakens the fog shrouding the swamp for further exploration.

Interlude

Primary goal of PCs is to level-up, and to learn the history of the area from Etiyane's daughter, Nahweeha.

1. Meet the hag, Nahweeha (**Area 1-D**).
2. Learn the mist demon Nabelelb's curse.
3. Learn that Swearing Stone must be destroyed to lift curse.

Act II (Level 1 Hexcrawl)

Primary goal of PCs is to remove the swamp's curse by destroying the Swearing Stone using the Staff of Broken Oaths. This disperses the weakened fog, cleanses the corrupted river, and allows PCs to leave.

1. Party explores the swamp, possibly seeking out **Area 1-E** (Swearing Stone), **Area 1-F** (Waterfall of Tears), and **Area 1-I** (Slowdown Falls).

2. Party treks through the swamp toward the Chaos Tree (**Area 1-H**).

A. Defeat/bypass the tree and its guardians.

B. Recover the Staff of Broken Oaths from the burial chamber beneath the tree.

C. The ghost of sorcerer-king Segava offers to teleport the PCs outside of the swamp; they keep the staff, but they leave the curse intact and miss out on the portal.

D. If party chooses to stay, they must defeat Murderbeak (who attacks as they exit).

3. Party travels to Swearing Stone (**Area 1-E**) and strikes it with the Staff of Broken Oaths; both artifacts are destroyed, but a large key of wood and stone is revealed within the rubble.

A. Curse is lifted (PCs may finally leave).

B. Weakened fog completely dissipates, and swamp is restored to natural state.

Epilogue

Primary goal of party is to open the floating portal (**Area 1-C**) using their newly acquired key.

1. Inserting key teleports the party to pocket dimension where the magical sword Sophix awaits a new wielder.

2. The sword Sophix rejects PCs (for now), but PCs gain Sophix's scabbard.

3. Party is teleported back to **Area 1-C** or a place of the judge's choosing. The portal has vanished.





Player's Introduction

A cloud of gray and white vapor gathers around you, coalescing into a beast that is equal parts mist, plant, and animal. The horror possesses four legs and two arms: strong, furry, jumping legs in back, fine-haired, clawed legs to the fore. Both arms are green-vined, the four-fingered hands capped with short, pointed nails. Wet, mossy, tree-bark plates partially cover its foggy, worm-like torso. Its head is a twisted combination of moss and gray fur, reminiscent of a fanged, earless rabbit. Fog pulses around and through the creature, as if breathing, while the sounds of mosquitoes and frogs correspondingly crescendo and diminish. This is the legendary Fog Beast! It points a finger at you, and begins to fade into the fog, rapidly dissipating. A disembodied voice whispers from everywhere and nowhere, "The goddess Ildavir has chosen you to escape from the Shrouded Fen."

*You have heard the tales that each blood moon's night, the Fog Beast appears outside the fen, beckoning the chosen to enter. Rumors speak of an ancient temple with vast treasures hidden in the swamp, but those who enter never return. Many refuse the beast's summons, but suffer inexplicable misfortunes for their cowardice. You have 1 week to make your choice. Until then, foggy wisps surround you and trail your every move. There is no escape from the mark... you are **Fen-Chosen**!*

Encourage your players to decide how the Fog Beast visits them, e.g., in a dream, while working in the field, in a tavern, etc. The week the players have before the blood moon should be sufficient time for PCs to prepare, buy goods, travel, reconnoiter the region, etc. While trade and civilization once thrived near the Fen, over the centuries (or however long the judge desires) the river's corruption has slowly driven people away. The folk who remain in the area, however, know that during the upcoming blood moon, the beast will reappear outside the Shrouded Fen near **Area 1-A**, beckoning the chosen to follow it inside. They also recognize the foggy wisps trailing behind the PCs as a mark of the Fen-Chosen. (See "Additional Rumors and Hooks" below to help flesh out more of the background, if needed).

Even though the read-aloud and descriptive text say that no one has ever returned from the fen, if inquisitive PCs ask around they discover there was one brief survivor. "Bloody Earl" managed to crawl back across the stone-path bridge but died as soon as he crossed, with blood oozing from his pores.



Those PCs who ignore the Fog Beast's call, disappoint the goddess Ildavir, who had high hopes for this particular group; they permanently lose 1 point of Luck, and may return to their gong-farming existence. (See "Rumored Banes" below for optional additional consequences).

PCs may wish to satisfy their inner murder-hobo by attacking the Fog Beast. The beast fades to mist temporarily before the attack connects, and does not retaliate. If the same PC attacks again, he permanently loses 1 point of Luck accompanied by a feeling of dread. Should the murder-hobo try a third time to hurt the Fog Beast, the PC will be permanently transformed into a soul-less swamp animal, and should be considered dead beyond recovery. The gods are only so patient with those who mistreat their envoys. (The cursed PC might be scooped up by another enterprising PC and used for trap bait, general merriment, or food later in the adventure. Such is the DCC way!)

Additional Rumors and Hooks

Cautious gongfarmers may need a bit of additional motivation to enter a scary land from which no one has returned. Use the following boons, banes, and hooks to help them make the "right" decision.

Rumored Boons

- The families and descendants of those who enter the fen always seem to have good fortune (bountiful harvests, record-breaking hunts, etc.). *In game terms, the judge may allow a player whose characters die in the fen to add 1 point of Luck to each of his next batch of zero-level PCs.*
- Rumors persist that those who return from the swamp will be favored by a god, and destined for power. *In game terms, the party gains the scabbard of Sophix, and accumulates Luck according to their accomplishments. Ildavir may grant additional boons to clerics who worship her.*
- Tales say that entering the fen is the only way to cleanse the River Black, and restore life and commerce to the region. Whoever could accomplish this would be a hero to all merchants in the area. *In game terms, the players receive better prices for buying and selling.*

Rumored Banes

(Note that in-game penalties are not listed, since PCs already receive a -1 penalty to Luck for refusing to enter; see above):

- A farmer who refused the Fog Beast lost all of his livestock to a mysterious plague.
- A trapper who refused the Fog Beast would cough up mosquitoes whenever she spoke.
- A squire who refused the Fog Beast could not draw his sword without dropping it.
- A halfling who refused the Fog Beast could never successfully light his pipeweed.

Additional Hooks

- Craftsman say that the ancients that lived in the swamp mastered a now-forgotten technique of crafting wooden armor. Smiths, elves, etc., would pay a large sum for an actual suit; they just need someone to find one.
- A weapon of Chaos is rumored to have been buried in the Fen.
- An old text claims that a pure, crystallized manifestation of Law may be found in the swamp.
- A learned traveler once said that a powerful wizard donated magical trinkets to the realm's ancient inhabitants; they've never been recovered.

Entering the Shrouded Fen

The party does not have to wait for the Fog Beast's summons; they can enter any time they choose. However, **until the fen's curse is lifted, one who attempts to leave the swamp suffers 1 hp of damage per round as she bleeds out of her pores.** This damage is permanently ongoing until the PC re-enters the fen, dies, or is the recipient of a *remove curse* spell with a spell check of 32 or more.

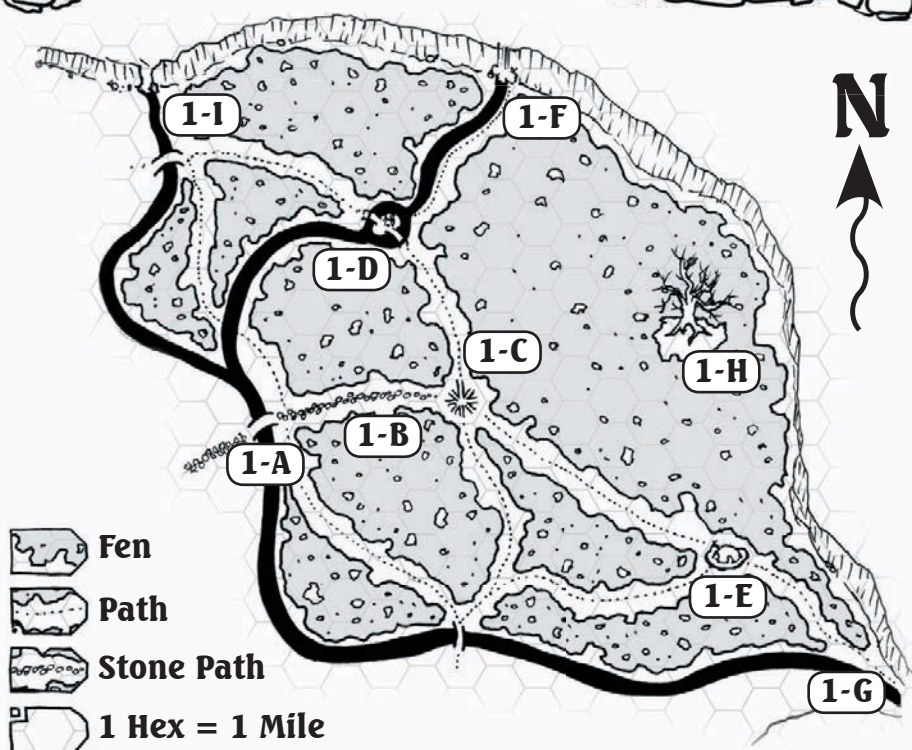
PCs who distrust the Fog Beast may choose their own way into the swamp, although such a choice could make for a short adventure.

The ochre mist is deadly, and without the support of the beast's purifying breeze (see **Area 1-A**), fen explorers receive -1d penalties to all rolls. Moreover, until the fog is weakened (see **Area 2-10**), not only do the PCs receive the aforementioned penalties, but the swamp (flora, fauna, and otherwise) receives +1d bonuses to all rolls, and random events happen more frequently (see the **Swamp Random Events Table** for more details). If the judge feels this "railroads" the PCs too strongly to **Area 1-C**, then she may impose -1/+1 to rolls, or any adjustments (including none) that she desires.

If an audacious party insists on doing it their own way, do not stop them. There will be a substantial Luck bonus in the unlikely event that

- 1-A: Entrance Bridge
- 1-B: Murderbeak's Attack
- 1-C: Temple
- 1-D: Nahweeha's Hut
- 1-E: Swearing Stone

- 1-F: Waterfall of Tears
- 1-G: God's Breath Canyon
- 1-H: Chaos Tree
- 1-I: Slowdown Falls



they succeed unaided. The fen is bordered by high cliffs and the River Black. PCs could enter the mire via the cliffs, though the cliff faces are moist and difficult to climb (e.g., see **Area 1-I**, Slowdown Falls). There are two other bridges that cross the river, though these lead into deadlier sections of the swamp via paths of dirt and rotted wood. One could try to swim or boat across the river without using the bridges, but the river is corrupted with demon deathblood and attacks any who enter it (see **Corrupted Black Ooze Table**). Finally, the PCs could follow the river SE until it is no longer corrupted (see **Area 1-G**, God's Breath Canyon), safely cross the river, and enter the swamp (though they still face the aforementioned penalties).

It should be noted that all animals in the fen, both "corrupted" and mundane, are subject to turn unholy actions by Neutral clerics. A merciful judge may remind players of this if the going gets tough.

Movement in the Fen

- Stone Path: Three 1-mile hexes per hour
- Paths (Dirt and Wood): Two 1-mile hexes per hour
- Fen without Paths: One 1-mile hex per hour

Adventurers may travel for 8 hours per day without adverse effects. A PC may add 1 hex per hour for a forced march, but this is dangerous. At the end of the forced movement, each PC must pass a Fortitude save with DC = 5+continuous hours of forced marching (DC 6 for 1 hour, DC 13 for 8 continuous hours). A failed save results in 1 hp damage. Moreover, during a forced march, subtract 2 from rolls on the **Swamp Random Events** table below, with a scaleshrike attack occurring for results 0 through 2.

Resting in the Fen

The PCs may eventually need to camp in the swamp's wilderness. If this occurs, have the unluckiest PC make a Luck check for every 8 hours of rest. If the check is failed, roll 1d7 on the **Swamp Random Events** table on page 14.

Random Swamp Encounters and Events

Roll for a random event every three 1-mile hexes, unless the party lands on a scripted encounter hex. With this being said, do not let these events drag down the game. The purpose of these events is to reinforce the fen's aesthetic while providing some entertaining, and sometimes rewarding, encounters. If an encounter feels like it is "getting in the way," then ignore it.

If the PCs have not weakened the fog as described in **Temple Area 2-10**, then roll every 2 hexes; moreover, swamp flora, fauna, etc., have +1d bonuses all rolls, while PCs have -1d penalties on all rolls. (Generous judges will make it clear that such exploration seems desperately ill-fated!)

Swamp Random Events Table

2d7*	Event
0-2	Scaleshrike Attack!
3	Speargrass Attack!
4	Spore Flowers!
5	Biting Swarm!
6	Swamp Gas!
7-9	Roll on Ghost Harassment Table
10	Broken Path!
11	Mutant Flying Termites!
12	War Trap!
13	Victim with Pouch!
14	Equipment Cache!

*2d7-2 if checked during a forced march; 1d7 per 8 hours when resting in the fen

Please note that many of these random events can be impacted by special auguries the PCs might receive later in the adventure. See **Area 1-D-1**, and the **Pencil Drop Augury Table** for more information.

Result 0-2: Scaleshrike Attack! 2d3 scaleshrikes attack the party. A scaleshrike has a feathered head with a sharp beak connected to a birdlike, scaled reptilian torso by a serpentine neck. Four powerful legs extend from the torso, ending in wicked, venom-injecting talons. Possessing wide feathered wings and a finned, horizontal, sail-like tail, it may execute a standing jump 15' into the air to initiate flight with its 20' wingspan. These Scaleshrikes look similar to **Murderbeak (Area 1-B)**, but are only half as large.

Scaleshrikes (2d3): Init +3; Atk beak-spear +2 melee (1d6), or talon rake +1 (1d4 + paralytic venom), or fetch-and-carry (special); AC 12; HD 2d4; MV 20', fly 30', jump 15'; Act 1d20; SP paralytic venom (DC 10 Fortitude save or paralyzed for 1d3 hours), fetch-and-carry (+1d to grab a paralyzed or deceased victim, may be combined with a move action), flee when half are slain; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

They retreat when half their numbers are slain. Upon their retreat, have the luckiest PC make a Luck check. If he fails (rolls over Luck score), then Murderbeak (see **Area 1-B**) swoops in to cover the retreat, leaving after 1 round of combat. Remember that if the fog is full strength, the PC rolls a d24 for the Luck check.

Result 3: Speargrass Attack! 1d4 speargrass bushes attack the party. A predatory grass plant that instantaneously grows a long, sharp, strong grass blade, the spearing grass impales prey, lifting it 20' in the air. (Though falling into the fen incurs 1d6 damage rather than the normal 2d6). The blade slowly absorbs the flesh of the victim. However, in the Shrouded Fen, a scaleshrike usually finishes the kill before that can happen. Speared PCs not removed in 4 rounds are attacked by scaleshrikes. Note that speargrass only attacks once per encounter; if it misses, it slowly retracts into the ground during the next hour. The plant gains surprise unless spotted (DC 15 Intelligence check, with for-esters, herbalists, woodsmen, hunters, etc., gaining +1d to the check). If a potential victim is not surprised, and wins initiative, he may simply step away from the slow-moving shrub to avoid being skewered.

Speargrass (1d4): Init -5 (surprise unless spotted: DC 15 Int, +1d for PCs with forest-lore); Atk grassblade +3 melee (1+slow digestion); AC 5; HD 2d8; MV 5'; Act 1d20 per encounter; SP slow digestion (1 hp damage per hour), painful climb (DC 10 to climb, but sharp edges and digestive juices make a DC 12 Fort save necessary to hang on), vulnerable to fire (+2d damage from fire), SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

Result 4: Spore Flowers! Flowers spontaneously bloom from mushrooms and spray a cloud of spores. All PCs make a DC 12 Fortitude save. Those who succeed see a shared vision of a huge yellow stone; it glows with a soft light, and suddenly shatters into tiny fragments (or a different vision of the judge's choosing). Those who fail suffer 2d3 respiratory damage. Anyone rolling a 1 on this save will explode in a shower of spores in 1d3 hours, triggering a similar spore attack, unless the original damage is healed.

Result 5: Biting Swarm! A buzzing mosquito swarm surrounds the party, causing a -1d penalty to all rolls. For each 1-mile hex traveled, the unluckiest party member makes a Luck check. If successful, the swarm moves on; if the check is failed, everyone takes 1 hp damage, and the swarm stays. A significant amount of fire, e.g., multiple lit torches, will disperse the swarm, as will 20 points of area-effect damage.

Result 6: Swamp Gas! Noxious flammable vapor bubbles up from the ground. All PCs make a DC 12 Fortitude save or take 1d6 temporary Stamina damage. If exposed to flame, the gas ignites, causing 2d6 fire damage to the party (DC 12 Ref save to avoid).

Results 7-9: Ghost Harassment! The unluckiest party member (or a random PC, if the judge prefers) makes a Luck check. Read the corresponding result below to the party, as if spoken by a ghost (either one of the Fen-Chosen, a Segavite soldier, a Hawachen warrior, or a PC who has died in the fen). Then apply the "upon success" or "upon failure" result, depending on the results of the Luck check.

Ghost Harassment Table

Luck Check	Harassment
5 or less	<i>"Seek the Waterfall of Tears for wisdom."</i> Upon success, spectral tears fall on one random PC, healing 1 hp. Upon failure, tears of demon blood fall on one random PC, causing 1 hp damage.
6-7	<i>"I buried a gem here by the path."</i> Upon success, a PC digs up a gem worth 10 gp. Upon failure, a snake bites the PC digging for the gem, then retreats back underground (DC 12 Reflex save or 1d3 damage, and hand suffers -1d to all rolls for 2d4 hours).
8-10	<i>"Take my weapon; I no longer need it."</i> Upon success, the ghost's short sword becomes real and drops to the ground. Upon failure, the ghost makes one attack with his spectral sword (+4 to hit, 1d6+2 damage).
11-14	<i>"No one has ever escaped. You're doomed! DOOMED!"</i> Upon success, the party's ears ring for 1 turn (-1d to spell checks). Upon failure, one item carried by the party (judge's choice) shatters.
15-18	<i>"You're all going to die, just like we did. DIIIEEEEE!"</i> Upon success, one random PC vomits from fear for 1 turn. Upon failure, one random PC is covered in demon blood (1d6 acid damage, DC 12 Fortitude save for half).
19+	<i>"Jump from the top of Slowdown Falls to break the curse."</i> Upon success, a random PC experiences extreme vertigo and cannot move for 1 turn. Upon failure, a random PC is lifted 20' into the air and dropped (2d6 falling damage, DC 12 Reflex save for half).

Result 10: Broken Path! Part of the path is slippery and damaged. A random PC must make a DC 12 Reflex save or take 1d6 temporary Agility damage. If a 1 is rolled for this save, then corrupted black ooze seeps up where the PC falls. Roll on the **Corrupted Black Ooze Table** (see below).

Result 11: Mutant Flying Termites! PCs disturb a mutant flying termite nest. Anyone with an exposed wooden object (staff, bow, shield, etc.) must make a DC 12 Reflex save to shield it. Failure results in permanent termite damage (-1d to attacks and damage, -1 to AC, etc.).

Result 12: War Trap! The first rank of PCs in marching order must make a DC 12 Reflex save or suffer 1d6 damage (DC 12 to find and remove). 1d3 hand axes, javelins, or short swords (judge's choice) may be salvaged from this remnant of war.

Result 13: Victim with Pouch! A somewhat-freshly-killed corpse is impaled on a 10' tall speargrass shrub. His tattered clothes hide a pouch containing a salve that heals 1d4 hp or ability damage (player's choice). See result 3 above for details on speargrass.

Result 14: Equipment Cache! The luckiest PC must make a Luck check. If successful, she notices that the corner of a rotted wooden box is poking out of the sludge. Inside is one piece of equipment (judge's discretion) that is helpful to the PCs, e.g., thieves tools, holy symbol, a lantern, a weapon, a suit of leather armor, etc.

Exploring the River Black

The River Black is comprised of viscous, corrupted black ooze, evolved from the blood of the slain demon, Nabelelb. It reeks like a rotting corpse. Roughly 30 feet wide, it does not flow, *per se*, but gurgles, bubbles, and swells. The black ooze quickly destroys most materials, so boating, rafting, etc., are not safe travel options. Roll a d7 on the table below (or choose the most appropriate entry) to determine the effects of touching the substance. Although the river and its tributaries are the primary sources of corrupted black ooze, there are other dangers in the fen (e.g., **Area 2-1**) which require rolling on this table.

Corrupted Black Ooze Table

d7	Effect
1	The PC suffers 1d4 acid damage and must pass a DC 15 Fort save or gain a minor corruption.
2	The PC suffers 1d4 acid damage, and black hands form in the ooze and pull the PC under! He must make a DC 12 Ref save to avoid the hands. Each round he is held, he must win an opposed Strength roll to break free (the ooze has +3 bonus), or roll again on this table.
3	Ooze jets shoot out, burning the PC and all within 10' of her for 1d4 acid damage.
4	The PC suffers 1d6 acid damage, DC 12 Fort save for half damage.
5	The PC suffers 1d4 acid damage, and ooze tries to seep into her leg. She must pass a DC 12 Will save or the leg becomes lame. (-10' MV, -2 to AC and Ref saves, -1d to melee attacks). The ooze may only be removed by the temple's cleansing pool (Area 2-1), the Waterfall of Tears (Area 1-F), or a 3HD <i>lay on hands</i> .
6	The PC suffers 1d4 acid damage, and ooze jets shoot at his face. He must pass a DC 12 Reflex save or the ooze sticks to his eyes, blinding him (-8 to hit, move in random direction at half speed). The ooze may only be removed by the temple's cleansing pool (Area 2-1), the Waterfall of Tears (Area 1-F), or a 3HD <i>lay on hands</i> .
7	The PC suffers 1d4 acid damage and she must pass a DC 15 Will save. If she fails, her hand bubbles black ooze and grows claws, and immediately attacks her (PC's attack bonus for 1d3 damage). She cannot control the hand, which must be bound or severed. The only cure is bathing the hand in the temple's cleansing pool (Area 2-1) or in the Waterfall of Tears (Area 1-F).

Fen Encounter Table

Area	Type	Encounter
1-A		Fog Beast beckons to bridge.
1-B	C	Attack by Murderbeak as foreshadowing.
1-C	C/T/P	Temple (Primary Funnel) Area 2.
1-D	C	Nahweeha's Hut
1-E	C/P	Swearing Stone: Bursting Boars (4), corrupted black ooze moat.
1-F	P	Waterfall of Tears
1-G		God's Breath Canyon
1-H	C/T/P	Chaos Tree: speargrass (4), scaleshrikes (5), Tree, Murderbeak
1-I	C	Slowdown Falls: Glusquitos (5) and Glusquito Larval Swarm



Area 1-A: A Bridge Over Blackened Water

An ancient stone path emerges from the grasses, leading to a crumbling bridge reaching out across the corrupted, gurgling, corpse-reeking sludge that is the River Black. The fen lies on the other side, cloaked in a yellow-brown fog which churns with swells and vortices. Appearing from the thick mist behind you, the Fog Beast passes by, slowly prowling across the bridge. On the far side it raises a vined finger, beckoning you to follow.

When a PC follows the Fog Beast into the fen, read the following.

The swamp is noticeably more humid on this side of the river. The ochre mist presses against an unseen barrier that seems to be shielding you, but cannot penetrate it. Looking back, you can neither see nor hear anything from the other side. The wispy trails that marked you as “Fen-Chosen” have disappeared.

Sight and sound are blocked in both directions: anyone on the far side of the river can no longer detect the party, and vice-versa. If a PC attempts to cross back, they begin bleeding profusely (1 hp per round, see “**Entering the Shrouded Fen**” above). Once the party gathers, read the following:

The Fog Beast expands to almost twice its girth, then exhales a steady breeze along the stone path; this parts the fog, revealing the path’s track winding deeper into the fen. The beast points in the stone path’s direction as it slowly fades away. Even after the beast has vanished the breeze does not diminish. Out of the gentle wind you discern a faint whisper: “The fog must die along with the curse... only then will you be free.” In addition to the stone path indicated by the Fog Beast, trails of dirt and rotted wood extend to the left and right.

The Fog Beast’s breeze acts as a protective tunnel. As long as PCs stay on the stone path to **Areas 1-B** and **1-C**, they are not subject to the aforementioned penalties of being in full-strength fog, nor are they subject to rolls on the **Swamp Random Events Table**. Additionally, while the party is on the stone path, the swamp is not subject to the aforementioned bonuses (e.g., in the combat for **Area 1-B**).

If a PC is brave enough to venture into the fog to explore the dirt path leading north, she is rewarded by finding a partially-eaten corpse only 30' on. **The corpse has 5 gp, a shield, and a short sword.** In order to smell the gold, a dwarf PC must ask if he smells anything; the Fog Beast's breeze disperses the odor and prevents passive detection. The south-leading path does not contain such easily obtained loot.

Area 1-B: Murderbeak's First Attack

The rocky path winds deeper into the fen, the ochre mist kept at bay by the Fog Beast's breeze. Two spectral figures materialize on opposite sides of the trail. The one on the left wears strange scale armor, textured like wood, and wields a bow shaped like a two-headed snake. He scans the party and says, "For wisdom, seek the Waterfall of Tears." The one on the right wears chainmail and shield, and holds a mace fashioned like a boar's head. He advises the party, "You are cursed to remain here; jump from the top of Slowdown Falls to escape." They both look to the yellow-brown fog above you and say in unison, "Too late." They disappear as a screeching, giant serpent-bird dives through the fog! This fearsome beast has a 40' wingspan and a feathered head with a long, sharp, murderous beak. A serpentine neck leads to its scaled avian torso, which ends in a finned, horizontal tail. Four powerful legs extend with curved, wicked talons.

The two ghosts, a Hawachen warrior, and a Segavite knight, offer advice that is true, though not necessarily wise. Seeking the Waterfall of Tears (**Area 1-F**) is only good advice if the PCs deal with the temple first; jumping from Slowdown Falls (**Area 1-I**) provides an "escape" since it kills any who attempt it. As PCs explore the swamp, they'll likely be harassed further by bound spirits (see **Swamp Random Events Table** and **Ghost Harassment Table**).

Murderbeak is a "boss" from Act II (see **Area 1-H**). Its function here is to amuse itself by terrorizing the party, and killing just a few morsels. It can feed on the party whenever it wants (or so it thinks). From a design perspective, the attack foreshadows things to come, and aids the PCs in developing a need for revenge against the beast. It is capable of executing a standing jump 20' into the air to initiate flight with its 40' wingspan.

“Murderbeak”, The Prime Scaleshrike: Init +5; Atk beak-spear +5 melee (1d8), or talon rake +3 (1d6 + paralytic venom), or fetch-and-carry (special); AC 16; HD 7d12; hp 57; MV 30', fly 40', jump 20'; Act 2d20; SP paralytic venom (DC 14 Fortitude save or paralyzed for 1d3 hours), fetch-and-carry (+2d to grab a paralyzed or deceased victim, may be combined with a move action) SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N.

The prime scaleshrike attacks until it kills 3 PCs, two of which it fetch-and-carries away to Area 1-H for later consumption. (Note who these PCs are, so that they're appropriately described in **Area 1-H**.) If Murderbeak somehow suffers more than half its hp in damage before killing 3 PCs, then it retreats with whomever it can.

If the party encounters **Area 1-B** within the Fog Beast's protective breeze, then run combat “as-is.” If the party found their own way into the fen, then remember the PC's receive a -1d penalty to all rolls, while the swamp (e.g. Murderbeak and other creatures) receives a +1d bonus.

Area 1-C: The Temple Exterior

Give the players **Handout 1 from the PDF Appendix** to help them visualize the following description. (It may help to point to different areas of the handout, and indicate direction of arrival, as players listen to the read-aloud text).

The swamp opens into a clearing occupied by a stone structure, constructed like a tear-shaped eight-pointed star. The walls are 35' tall with stairs ascending 25' to a platform contained within. The misty, ochre fog shrouding the fen seems to belch upwards from this platform, like smoke from a chimney. One of the building's corners is collapsed, from which a black, bubbling pool bleeds into the swamp. Distant echoes of combat sound from within the building.

As the party explores the temple's exterior, read the appropriate descriptions below. Once they ascend the stairs, read the following:

A 40' square platform roofs the structure, with the surrounding walls rising another 10'. Stairs gradually descend to the fen's floor from each of the square's sides, while steeper stairways descend from the

square's corners into the building itself. The ochre fog rises from one of these corners. The opposite corner is crushed to rubble. Seemingly the site of some cataclysmic event, the platform is scorched with a massive, demon-like shadow. From this shadow, black-etched trails flow down the different stairways. Humanoid silhouettes in combat poses are burned into the walls. Sounds of combat encircle the area, though the combatants are nowhere to be seen. A portal, surrounded by yellowish stones bound together with reddish wood, hovers above the platform's center. The air within the portal wavers and shimmers like a mirage. Despite the distortion, the mirage clearly outlines a floating keyhole in the portal's center.



This is the site of the demon Nabelb's death, and corrupting demon blood and arcane energies persist; sounds from the cataclysmic conflict still echo through time into the present.

The portal cannot be entered until its special key is found (by shattering the Swearing Stone with the Staff of Broken Oaths); the lock may not be picked by mundane means, though a *knock* spell with a spell check of 30 will open it. Should the party manage to unlock the portal without the key, they are teleported to Sophix (see **Epilogue**), which berates them for leaving the task unfinished before sending them back to the platform.

There are multiple points of descent into the temple. **Area 1-C-A** is a stairway leading to a locked door, though the door is very easy to pick (DC 6 using d10, no tools needed). **Area 1-C-C** is an open door with a (trapped) ladder. **Area 1-C-B** has been destroyed and flooded with demon blood (use the **Corrupted Black Ooze Table** if PCs explore). **Area 1-C-D** is a deadly "fog chimney" belching fog into the fen.

These areas are described below. Each features a steep sixty-degree stairway, easily negotiable in most circumstances despite the steepness. If something warrants a check, a DC 5 climbing check is appropriate, with 1d3 falling damage upon failure.

As an optional challenge, an experienced and sadistic judge may include the following threat, although it does require additional book-keeping and planning on the judge's part. Up to three lesser shadows are hiding within the dark, burned-in regions of the platform, and attach themselves to PCs for later ambush (judge's discretion as to when, though one of the shadows wants to escape the fen, and may wait until the PCs escape). A PC must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence check to notice a shadow attaching to him; the initial attachment requires no roll on the shadow's part. Thereafter, have the PC roll a Luck check whenever the lighting changes (e.g. entering a new room, lighting a torch, etc.); if he succeeds, he notices that his own shadow is "misbehaving." The Strength damage inflicted by these un-dead heals at 1 point per day; a PC reduced to zero strength dies. Though the Lesser Shadows take -2d damage from non-magical weapons, they suffer 1d4 damage from a half-pint vial of holy water, or a waterskin's worth of water from the temple's cleansing chamber (**Area 2-1**), or the Waterfall of Tears (**Area 1-F**).

Lesser Shadows (0-3): Init +3 (always able to surprise); Atk withering touch +2 melee (1d3 temp Str dmg); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 13, 10, 7; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP surprise (+4 bonus on first attack), incorporeal, -2d damage from non-magical weapons, un-dead traits; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +3; AL N.

Area 1-C-A

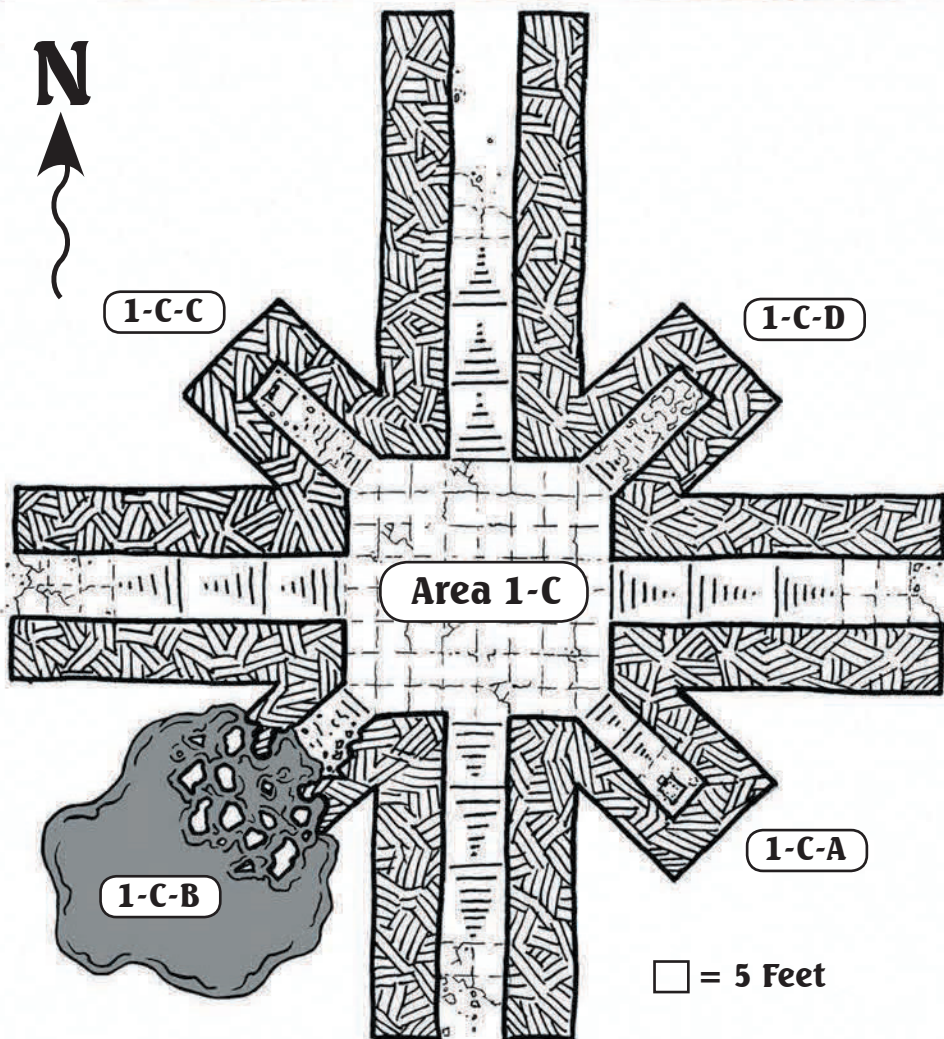
Ruined stairs descend steeply to a stone floor. The outlines of a trap door have been scoured away by some now-dried blackish liquid that once trickled down from above. A simple iron lock prevents entry, though erosion exposes the lock's inner workings. An attached iron handle should allow someone to open the door, should the lock be overcome.

The face of the lock was eaten away by the corrosive demon blood, and consequently is very easy to pick (DC 6 pick locks check, **NOTE: thieves' tools are unnecessary**). Recall that even zero-level gong farmers can attempt skills that are untrained (such as pick locks), and do so with a d10, rather than a d20. Players may opt for destroying the lock instead. The lock is easily destroyed, but any non-blunt weapon used for the task suffers a -1d damage penalty (from dulling) thereafter. The door leads to a ladder descending to **Area 2-1**.

Area 1-C-B

The walls bordering this crumbled stairway lie in ruin, as if crushed by some gigantic weapon. Black trails are etched into the stairs, which descend to a pool of bubbling black ooze, reminiscent of the River Black. The pool bleeds through the rubble forming a small pond outside the structure.

This entryway has been destroyed. The pool and pond are both full of corrupted demon blood, and a PC must roll on the **Corrupted Black Ooze Table** if exposed to the caustic tar. After exposure, further exploration of the pool by the party may attract the attention of its inhabitant, the demon-blood slime (see **Area 2-1**).



Area 1-C-C

A partially-destroyed stairway leads down to a trap door that lies open. A metal ladder descends into the structure.

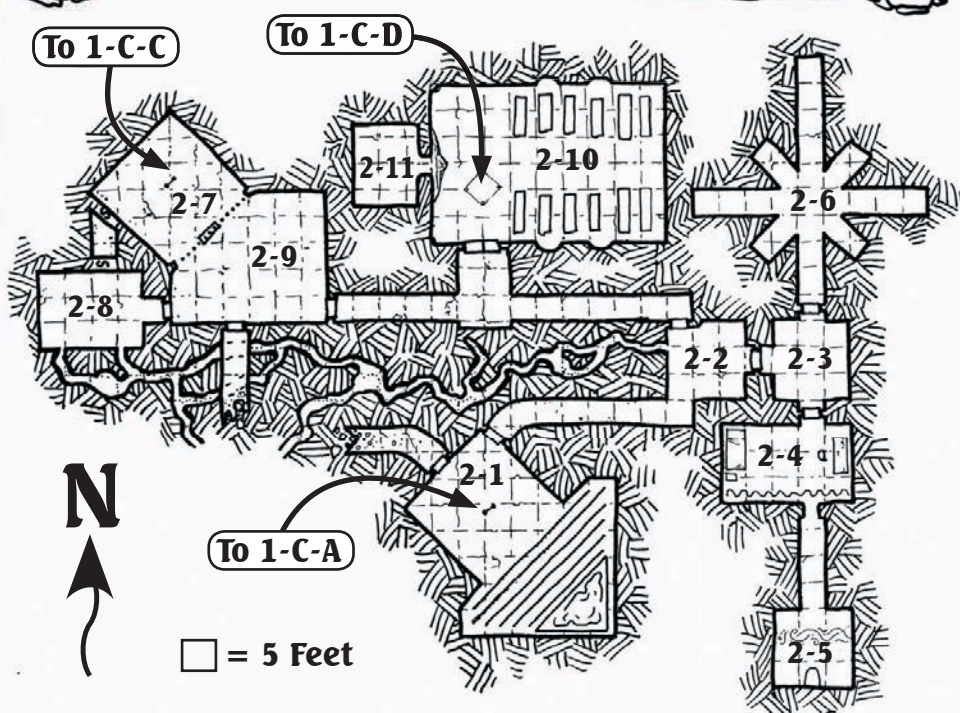
This ladder leads to **Area 2-7**. Note, however, that the ladder is trapped; see the area description for details.

Area 1-C-D

Brownish-yellow mist erupts skyward from this stairway, feeding into and thickening the fog shrouding the fen. The base of the stairs is obscured by the swirling vapor. The stairway has been blackened by a substance that likely flowed down into the chimney, long ago.

This stairway leads to a ladderless hole in the ceiling of **Area 2-10**. Dwarves smell faint hints of gold and gems (from **Area 2-11**), though a zero-level dwarf does not yet possess the skills to gauge quantity and distance. A PC entering the “chimney’s” concentrated fog experiences sensory distortion accompanied by -1d penalties to all rolls. Once the PC seeks fresh air, he must successfully make a DC 13 Fort save, or the condition persists for an hour. The hole is a shortcut to the most dangerous foe of the temple, and PCs who do not have water from **Area 2-1** or **Area 1-F** will most likely perish, having missed vital clues. Compassionate judges may wish to bar the hole’s entry with a closed metal grate that is part of the sacrificial platform mechanism described in **Area 2-10**. (Or give a lucky or sensitive PC a terrifying premonition of doom emanating from the hole).

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2-1: The Cleansing Chamber | 2-7: Temple Jail |
| 2-2: The Waiting Room | 2-8: Storeroom |
| 2-3: The Audience Chamber | 2-9: Preparation Chamber |
| 2-4: Moon Etiyane’s Chamber | 2-10: Hall of the Faithful |
| 2-5: Room of Testing | 2-11: Repository of Offerings |
| 2-6: Contemplation Chamber | |



Area 2: The Temple Interior

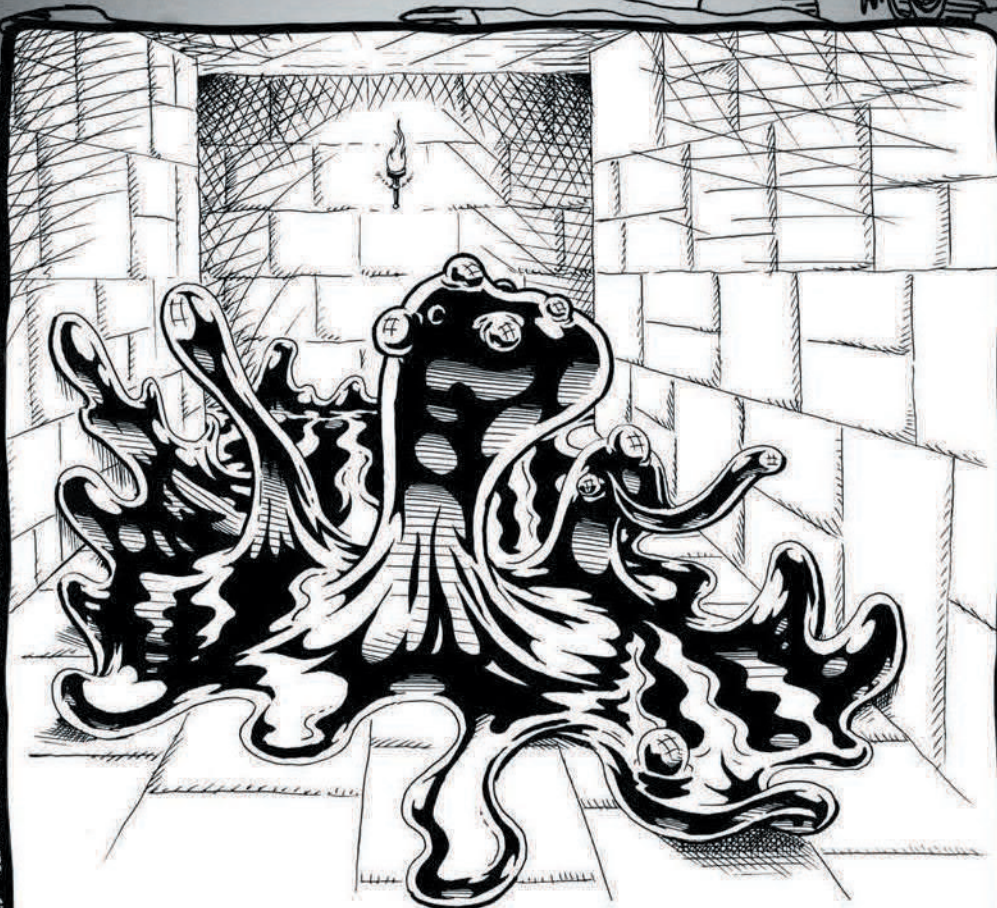
The temple ceilings are 15' high. The walled chutes that connect the trapdoors of **Areas 1-C-A** and **Area 1-C-C** to the ceilings of **Area 2-1** and **Area 2-7** have openings that are 5x5 feet wide, and walls 5 feet thick. The ladders connecting each of these areas are thus 20' long. The rooms and corridors are dark with no light sources unless explicitly mentioned (e.g., the glowing pool in **Area 2-1**).

Area	Type	Encounter
2-1	C	Demon-Blood Slime
2-2	C	Corrupted Rat Swarm
2-4	T/C	Enchanted Blanket / Swamp Snakes (4)
2-5	T/P	Arcane Field and Illusory Treasure
2-7	C	Giant Camogeckos (2)
2-9	C	Demon-Blood Slime
2-10	C/P	Headless Fog Zombie Priestess (up to 12) / Etiyane's Ghost
2-11	P	Illusory Wall

Area 2-1: The Cleansing Chamber

This square room opens into a triangular chamber, with stairs descending into a shallow pool of glowing blue liquid. An aura of peaceful stillness pervades the air. The ceiling is decorated with painted bas-reliefs of a weeping woman emerging from the moon; her tears flow across the ceiling, creating twinkling stars that shine holes through the clouds. Tattered and moldy once-white robes hang on pegs in the wall. Two doors exit the chamber and a ladder climbs to a door in the ceiling.

A character with a religious occupation/background, e.g., a beadle, recognizes this room as a ritualistic cleansing chamber, where one purifies the body and spirit. The figure on the ceiling is the Lawful moon goddess **Kayassit**, an ancient alternative manifestation of the god **Shul**. (This knowledge is noted by those passing a DC 13 Intelligence check, with religious, navigational, astronomical, and astrological character backgrounds granting a +1d bonus to the roll.)



A PC who prays, acts spiritually, etc., before bathing receives a boon (+2d bonus to next attack roll); one who bathes before praying receives a bane (-2d penalty to next attack roll). If a zero-level supplicant becomes a cleric devoted to the campaign's moon god, he receives a +1d bonus to a single spell check, once per day. A PC is only affected the first time he uses the pool; subsequent uses do not reverse a penalty or bestow additional bonuses. However, on any use, the pool's water cleanses corrupted black ooze (see **Corrupted Black Ooze Table**). Any lesser shadow from **Area 1-C** will avoid the holy pool, instead attempting to switch to a host that isn't bathing. The deteriorated white robes, which were originally donned after the ritual cleansing, currently serve no special purpose, and are sadly now mundane.

The glowing water from this pool (or, alternatively, the water from **Area 1-F**) is a necessary component to resolve the adventure's challenges: to defeat Etiyane's ghost in **Area 2-10**, to stop the generation of more fog, and to make exploration of the fen safer (see **Area**

2-10 for more details). It's unlikely that the PCs will understand the pool's importance at this stage, but the ceiling's painting of the goddess' tears clearing the cloudy sky should serve as an important hint.

The northwest door opens into a corridor ending in rubble (roughly below **Area 1-C-B**). If PCs approach within 10' of the corridor's end, a demon-blood slime oozes from the rubble and attacks. If the slime was previously subdued in **Area 2-9**, treat its HD as 1d8 per 5' square, as it is much less enthusiastic for a fight!

Demon-Blood Slime: Init -2; Atk slime-stream +2 missile fire (1d4 acid, range 15', flashback); AC 12; HD 1d12 per 5' square (1d8/5' if previously subdued); hp 6 initially; MV 5', climb 5'; Act 1d20 per 5' square; SP flashback (victim briefly sees Nabelelb's death), -2d damage from piercing or slashing weapons, crits with **Corrupted Black Ooze Table**; SV Fort +8, Ref -7, Will +1; AL C.

The slime is massive, but only uses a small portion of its body to attack the PCs. Although it is too big to kill conventionally, it retreats if it takes damage equal to its hp. It extends along the walls 5' per round until it is either subdued or extends the full length of the corridor (20'), though it will not enter the cleansing chamber. If previously subdued, it only extends 15'. The slime suffers 1d4 damage from a half-pint vial of holy water, or a waterskin's worth of water from the chamber's pool (or from **Area 1-F**). Since the slime was birthed from Nabelelb's death blood, PCs hit by the slime-stream have a psychic flashback. They witness Selliach and Nabelelb killing each other, and Nabelelb speaking its curse:

*Little moon who summons I,
with our death I defy.
Bring the mist. Bring the fog.
Change the air. Change the bog.
As my blood stays, so shall yours,
while mine corrupts as it pours.
Yours must watch until I'm through.
My curse, it cannot undo.
Until wooden worms of rod
strike the tear of a god,
Stuck in this cursed domain,
all who enter shall remain.*

Give the players **Handout 2 from the PDF Appendix**, which represents the curse being written into each of the PCs' minds. This is an infernal curse of great power; it cannot be forgotten once heard.

Note that the slime may attack again in **Area 2-9**.

Area 2-2: The Waiting Room

This chamber is 15' square, and shows various signs of erosion. Two thick wooden benches are partially eaten, as are the room's two wooden doors. On the floor near the benches sits a dented and scorched golden censer connected to a broken bronze chain. One of the stone walls is pocked with holes, debris and festering scat littering the floor before it. Suddenly you hear a rapid crescendo of squeeking and scurrying before large, pus-blistered rodents erupt from holes in the wall!

Corrupted Rat Swarm: Init +2; Atk swarming bite +2 melee (1 point of damage, DC 5 Fortitude save or die from blood poisoning); AC 10; HD 3d8; hp 13; MV 30'; Act special; SP bite 1d3+3 targets/round in 15'x15' area, treat non-metallic armor as AC 10, -2d damage from non-area attacks, crit destroys wielded wood or forces 1d10 on Minor Corruption Table; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will -1; AL C.

The corrupted rat swarm lairs in a network of small tunnels (1' diameter or less) on the other side of the western wall. These wind westward and down, eventually contacting the demon-blood slime beneath **Area 1-C-B**. These large demon-blood-enhanced rats can rapidly chew through just about anything that isn't metal (that takes significantly longer); consequently, their attacks ignore the benefits of non-metallic armor, treating it as AC 10. On a critical hit, the swarm devours a wooden weapon or shield wielded by the victim. If the victim is not wielding wood, he suffers an infected bite, and must roll 1d10 on the **Minor Corruption Table** (pg 116, core rulebook). The rats may also form symbiotic relationships with other corrupted creatures (see Bursting Boars in **Area 1-E**). Furthermore, like other "corrupted" animals in the adventure, they suffer 1d4 damage from a half-pint vial of holy water, or a waterskin's worth of water from the temple's cleansing chamber (**Area 2-1**), or the Waterfall of Tears (**Area 1-F**).

This swarm is just looking for an easy meal, so a morale check is appropriate once the swarm's hp are reduced by half. Note that a PC using a torch defensively will be ignored by the swarm; in the mind of a corrupted rat, there is no point in getting burned when there are other tasty morsels nearby!

The **golden censer** is too ruined to be useful, although it is worth 10 gp for its gold. Although now useless, the censer radiates an aura hinting that it was once a powerful tool in the war against Chaos.

Area 2-3: The Audience Chamber

This spartan 15' square room features a table with three chairs on one side, and a single chair on the other. Three of the four walls contain a wooden door. As you scout the chamber, the temperature suddenly drops as two featureless specters fade into existence in the room's center! Each glides toward the table, sitting in two of the three chairs on that side. They huddle together, seeming to whisper in close confidence, but their voices resonate from all sides. They speak Common, but their accent is unfamiliar, their words archaic.

"Why is Moon Etiyane so long in her silence? Her guidance is needed!"

"Patience. Our problems are pebbles amongst the stones she carries."

"Oh? What have thine ears heard?"

"Do ye not know of Segava's betrayal? The blood of war with the Segavites will soon flow..."

The specters fade from view as the sudden chill vanishes.

The conversation is centuries old, brought to the present by traces of arcane and infernal energies. The ghosts of the two parishioners are not aware of the party's presence. While the name "Etiyane" has been erased from history (gods rarely suffer disappointment well), the name "Segava" persists. PCs have heard the name if they pass a DC 13 Intelligence check. (Wizards' apprentices, sages, soldiers, minstrels, and any with backgrounds in military history, nobility, or the arcane, gain a +1d bonus to the check.)

Award information according to the check's result:

12-15: Segava was an ancient sorcerer-king whose Segavite kingdom conquered this land.

16-19: As above, plus Segava broke a treaty, and allegedly paid for it with his life.

20+: As above, plus Segava created a powerful magic staff that disappeared with him.

Dwarves in the chamber smell the faint scent of gold coming from **Area 2-4** (the head rest).

The PCs are visited again by the specters when exiting the chamber. Two faces appear in the door of the chosen exit and foretell the party's doom while giving a hint about **Area 2-10**. Read the following:

As you prepare to leave, two ghostly humanoid faces seem to push through the door's splintering wood. They both scream in the same spectral voices you heard before, "Unless there are tears to cry, you are going to DIE!" The faces then disappear, the door's wood seemingly unaffected by their passage.

Area 2-4: Moon Etiyane's Chamber

This simple, rectangular living chamber contains a bed, desk and chair, and a large tapestry. The stone bed is covered by a colorful blanket of interwoven snakeskins, with a golden headrest lying partially underneath. On the desk rests an assortment of items: a quill and ink, a large book, and a silver vessel resembling a bucket-sized goblet. The tapestry covers an entire wall, abstractly depicting people walking out of darkness into shafts of moonlight, falling to their hands and knees, then crawling out of the moonlight back into the darkness.

The golden headrest is valuable (50 gp); but the blanket covering it is dangerous! PCs passing a DC 13 Int check will recognize that the colorful snakeskins all belong to venomous snakes (trappers, hunters, herbalists, or any whose occupation would normally encounter swamp snakes, gain a +1d bonus to the check). The only way to safely

acquire the headrest is by removing it without touching the blanket, which possesses an ancient enchantment; if the blanket is touched by anyone or anything other than Etiyane, the bed, or the headrest, four swamp snakes slither out of the weave and attack. The snakes vanish once two of their number are killed.

Swamp Snakes (4): Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d3+venom); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 4, 4, 4, 4; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP venom (DC 13 Fort save or slow death, 1 hp per hour), snakes disappear once 2 are killed; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

There are multiple items of interest on the desk. The silver goblet-like bucket (10 gp value) is a ceremonial bathing vessel, and is ideal for transporting 4 flasks' worth of pool water from **Area 2-1**. The quill's feather is from a scaleshrike, and may be recognized as being very similar to those of Murderbeak's, though substantially smaller (**Area 1-B** and **Area 1-H**). If PCs inspect the book, inform them that it is written in an old dialect of common. A DC 10 Intelligence check is necessary to make sense of it (characters with religious or literary backgrounds gain a +1d bonus). Once the Intelligence check is passed, read the following:

The tome is meticulously written in colored inks. The opening section is titled, "Receiving the Cleansing Tears of Kayassit." There is a picture of a woman pouring water from a vessel (much like the one on the desk) into the eyes of another woman lying on her back. Another passage indicates that the cleansing pool's glowing blue water will wash away corruption. Other tenets and rituals for the lawful goddess Kayassit are discussed. Handwriting litters the margins.

If PCs thumb through the book thoroughly, they'll find that the handwriting in the margins (Etiyane's) contains a host of information; an avid reader discovers the following:

- mentions Nahweeha, a daughter on the island
- discusses the cost of breaking an oath made at the Swearing Stone
- questions various beliefs, e.g., "Why should suicide be forbidden if it serves a greater good?"
- worries that the Segavites are winning the war and killing off her people. She will sacrifice herself on the next blood moon, believing it will save them

- If the reader passes a Luck check (d20 roll less than or equal to current Luck), he discovers a passage outlining how to obtain a boon in **Area 2-1**

A crescent moon **holy symbol** for Kayassit (usable also for Shul, or the campaign's mood God) lies within the desk's only drawer. A zero-level character may use the symbol to attempt to turn unholy, but he does so with a d16, and incurs disapproval on a 1.

The tapestry covers a 3'-tall hole in the wall. Only halflings and dwarves can pass through the opening without needing to crawl. It opens into a corridor leading to **Area 2-5** (those crawling on the tapestry provide a clue about how to escape the trap found in that room).



Area 2-5: Room of Testing

The 20'-long corridor opens into a 15' square room. Against the back wall of the chamber rests a small pile of gold coins and gems spilling out of a broken chest. A nauseating corpse-stench rises from a man's decaying body draped over the gold. His hands appear covered in burns, a dagger penetrates his neck, and his longsword is noticeably still sheathed. Thieves' tools litter the floor.

This square chamber is both a trap for thieves and a test for acolytes. Five feet into room, an arcane field rises from floor to ceiling to create the illusion of treasure. Although the treasure is illusory, the thief's tools, his decaying body, and its accompanying stench, are very real.

If a PC is suspicious and wants to "disbelieve" the scene, allow the following: disbelieving the scene as-is (including the non-illusory body) requires passing a DC 18 Will save; if one states they only think the treasure is false, the DC is 13. Elves, being innately arcane, and having heightened senses, gain a +1d bonus. Astute dwarves may note that they were not told they smelled gold, even though they easily sniffed out the gold headrest in **Area 2-4**. If a dwarf announces she does not smell gold, then allow the party a +1d bonus to the save.

Anyone passing through the arcane field discovers that the treasure is an illusion, and that the thief's body is actually draped over a stone statue of a crawling baby, looking up at a crescent moon engraved on the ceiling. Engraved beneath the moon are runes, written in an old dialect of Common, requiring a DC 10 Intelligence check to decipher (characters with religious or literary backgrounds gain a +1d bonus). Once the Intelligence check is passed, read the following:

We must all be babes in the face of Kayassit.

This is a hint, both for this room and for the real treasure room, **Area 2-11**. If one attempts to go back through the arcane field, they find it impassable. Moreover, they must succeed on a DC 14 Reflex save or take 1d3 electrical damage. The only way to get back through the field is to crawl. The thief didn't figure this out, and eventually stabbed himself in the neck to end his starvation. His dagger, tools, longsword,

and leather armor are usable. He also carries a piece of parchment with some brief instructions written in modern Common, it reads:

You'll need to crawl through some kind of opening to reach the treasure. The barkscale should be there. Bring it back for appraisal.

The letter is signed with a drawing of a longsword and dagger forming a cross. Judges may use this symbol as a hook for future adventures (a guild, a buyer, etc.). Note that one does have to crawl to reach **Area 2-11**. This not-too-clever thief found the wrong treasure room.

The crawling statue is built into the floor, and is immovable without significant engineering or magical effort.

Area 2-6: Contemplation Chamber

This chamber is shaped like a tear-shaped, eight-pointed star, like the building's exterior. Rotted cushions lie on the floor in the room's center, along with a tarnished silver amulet of a catfish with large whiskers.

The room, a simple meditation area, is empty. Primarily, it acts as a red herring meant to get the party thinking and talking. However, should a PC decide to petition divine powers here, allow a +1d bonus to the check. The amulet is mundane and useless, worth 5 sp as is, 1 gp if the tarnish is polished away. Sages and expert anglers may note that the amulet depicts a famous 20' catfish known as "Whiskers."

Area 2-7: Temple Jail

This chamber features a 20' long metal ladder that runs from a 5' chute in the ceiling (that connects to **Area 1-C-C**), down to the floor where it is firmly attached. It has rungs every foot, but only the top 5' of rungs are normal; the bottom 15' of rungs have hinges on their undersides. These give way under the tiniest pressure, spitting in half and opening downward against the ladder's rails. A PC climbing down may try to stop himself from putting his weight on a false rung (DC 16 Reflex save). A failed save results in 1d6 falling damage, with a broken bone occurring on a 6 (see DCC rulebook p. 96). It is very difficult (DC 18) to detect this trap from the ladder's top, but much easier (DC 9)

from the ladder's bottom. The trap is spotted by noticing a hairline split in the rungs and hinges on the rungs' undersides. There is no way to "disarm" this ladder; the safest way to descend involves sliding down the outer rails. Climbing up the ladder's sides from the bottom requires passing a DC 12 climbing check. Once a PC reaches the bottom, or approaches from **Area 2-9**, read the following.

This room appears to be a jail, with one of the walls comprised of vertical bars. A metal ladder extends from the floor's center to a square opening in the ceiling. Two partially eaten corpses lie in the back corner, one clutching a short sword, the other, a pitchfork. The lower leg of one corpse appears to be broken at the knee. Rotting straw litters the chamber's floor.

Giant camogeckos lair here, and drop from the ceiling to hungrily attack any who "drop in" via the trapped ladder. If the party approaches from **Area 2-9**, they scamper up to hide in the 5' chute between the ceiling's opening and **Area 1-C-C**, attacking when they have the best chance of surprise. If the camogeckos are spotted (DC 14 Intelligence check), they (pretend to) flee, and attack departing PCs who do not watch their backs. The lizards have feet that can adhere to most surfaces; on a successful bite, the gecko sticks all four of its feet to its victim, enabling a +1d bonus to subsequent bites. The victim must pass a DC 13 Strength check to disengage the beast.

Giant Camogeckos (2): Init +2 (+4 with surprise); Atk bite +2 melee (1d5+gecko-grapple); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 8, 8; MV 40', climb 40'; Act 1d20; SP gecko-grapple (+1d bonus to subsequent bites, DC 13 Strength check to disengage), active camouflage (DC 14 Intelligence check to spot); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; AL N.

The corpses are treasure hunters who fell victim to the trapped ladder, and were subsequently killed by the camogeckos. The one clutching a (still functional) shortsword has ruined chainmail, partially dissolved by a black acid (corrupted black ooze). Removing the armor reveals a scrollcase tied underneath an armpit; the judge may allow a Luck check to notice the scrollcase through the rotted armor. The scroll contained within is a map detailing a route from God's breath Canyon (**Area 1-G**) to the temple. (See **Handout 4 in the PDF Appendix**).

A sentence is written beneath the temple's location, "*One must approach the deity like an infant in order to gain her riches.*" (A hint for gaining the treasure in **Area 2-11**.) The other corpse has a set of thieves' tools and a pitchfork that is somewhat damaged (1d7 damage, breaks on a fumble), but usable over the short term.

There are two exits, a secret door (DC 14 Intelligence check to find) and the locked jaildoor (DC 8 to pick). **A zero-level PC may attempt to pick the lock without lockpicks**, but incurs a -1d penalty on her d10 attempt, thus she needs an 8 on a d8. A DC 14 Strength check is necessary to bend the bars; using a crowbar (or similar tool) grants a +1d bonus to the check. A black robe hangs on the north wall in the adjacent **Area 2-9**, 5' from the bars. The robe is hung over the key ring which contains the key to the door (i.e., they are both hung on the same peg). These may be easily reached from the jail using a tool or weapon, e.g., a pitchfork. (A trick likely known to any player familiar with Saturday morning westerns...).

Area 2-8: Storeroom

This rectangular storeroom lies in ruin, with thick layers of dust coating the wall-mounted shelves. Broken glass vials and jars litter the floor, their shriveled contents strewn about. Various sharp-looking shapes and gaps between the shelves and scattered debris on the floor are smoothed over by blankets of cobwebs. One door exits the room, while another wall is riddled with small holes.

Even though the south wall shows signs of having been eaten through by rats, a corrupted rat swarm (see **Area 2-2**) does not harass the party here, unless a PC finds the rat pipe and blows it (see below), or if the judge feels the party needs another challenge. If a PC passes a DC 10 Intelligence check, she determines that (because of dust and the holes' collapsed natures) nothing has passed through the wall's holes in a long time. If the party needs to refill its ranks with more zero-level PCs, other villagers chosen by the Fog Beast can be found here, unconscious from drinking sedatives found in the supplies scattered on the floor. A secret door leads to **Area 2-7** (DC 14 Intelligence check to find).

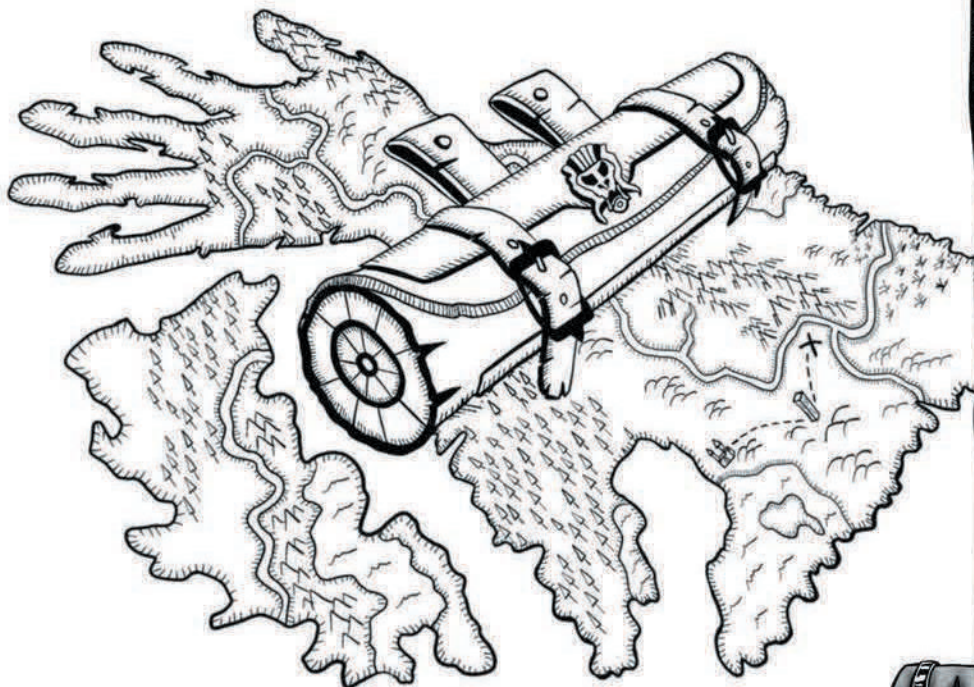
The storeroom is in shambles, but lucky PCs may find items of interest. Anyone wishing to comb through the rubble must make a Luck check. If the PC is successful, she may roll 2d7 on the list below (or the judge may choose the item). There is only one of each item, except for the poison, hallucinogen, and sedative; these may be found as many times as they are rolled!

Roll 2d7 and consult the list below:

2: Lucky Finger! A long-nailed, blackened index finger floats within this jar, preserved in some viscous amber liquid. The finger always points (like a compass) at the PC with lowest Luck. If that PC takes the digit out of the jar, he feels an urge to cut off his own index finger, and replace it with the long-nailed one. A PC following this urge finds that the new finger magically grafts to his bloody stump, and he gains 3 Luck.

3: Map! A bone scroll case contains a roll of flayed skin, which is tattooed with half of a map. The judge may determine where the other half is, as well as where the map leads.

4: Holy Water! The PC finds a 1-pint silver flask of holy water (2d4 damage to un-dead or any “corrupted” creature in the fen).



5: Hourglass! Here lies a large hourglass. Mysteriously, it never measures out the same time on any particular turn. (Feel free to create a diabolical time-mangling consequence that impacts the party in some future escapade if they choose to keep it!)

6: Rat Wax! A tin of rat wax lies in the rubble. If a PC should cover her boots with the wax, no rat (including corrupted ones) will attack the PC for the next six hours. There is only 1 dose.

7: Hallucinogen! This vial of pink liquid has tiny white swirling vortices dancing in its depths. Any who drink it glimpses a significant moment linked to his current location's past. One who drinks it while in the fen briefly sees black ooze covering the heads in **Area 2-10**, while the brown-yellow fog begins to stream from the head's eye-sockets. (Of course, the judge is free to choose any scene they prefer, such as Nabelelb speaking the curse, e.g., see **Area 2-9**).

8: Sedative! This blue viscous potion smells like lemons. Any who drinks it must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or fall into a magical sleep for 1d10 hours. The PC may be awakened with 1 hp of damage, or by saying the holy name, "Kayassit."

9: Poison! This milky white liquid emits the faint sound of a breeze when the vial is opened. Any who drinks it must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or take 1d3 damage.

10: Rat Pipe! This musical pipe is carved from a rare black wood likely unknown to the party. If a PC blows in the mouthpiece, there is no audible sound (unless one has the hearing of a rat, in which case the sound is quite painful). A corrupted rat swarm is summoned by the call and attacks the piper in 1d3 rounds (see **Area 2-2**).

11: Moonwater! A glass globe contains a light blue liquid; if exposed to moonlight (phase must be half-full or larger) for 1 hour, the liquid will glow with the radiance of a bright candle for the next 24 hours.

12: Whetstone! This whetstone can sharpen a blade to do +1d damage for one battle. It has 2d4 uses.

13: Wizard Spell! A pile of alchemical notes lies in disarray. If a literate PC examines the papers and passes a Luck check, the notes are

complete! The PC may at some point attempt to learn the 3rd-level wizard spell, *make potion*. If the Luck check is failed, the PC may still attempt to learn the spell from the incomplete notes, but with a -2d penalty to the learning check.

14: Wizard Spell! Here lies a locked metal conical flask (DC 15 pick locks). When opened, a green gas forms mystical sigils in the air that hover for 30 minutes before dissipating. A PC who inhales the sigils may attempt to learn the level-1 wizard spell, *choking cloud*.

Area 2-9: Preparation Chamber

Three rough stone tables and a barred cell occupy this chamber. The first table features a bed of nails protruding from its top. The second is gouged with a head-sized oval hole at one end. The third is drenched in old blood stains, with metal stirrups and chained restraining cuffs bolted crudely to its length. A frayed, grotesquely-shaped humanoid doll sits on this last table. Nearby, a jail cell occupies a portion of one wall, a black robe hanging just outside it. Some “tools” hang on the wall that may be useful as weapons. Three doors exit the room.

If the party approaches via the east door, have the first PC who enters make a Luck check; if successful, he notices a long tail disappear from the ceiling in the direction of **Area 2-7**, accompanied by faint scurrying (a camogecko is hiding up the chute by the opening).

Sacrifices were prepared in this chamber, and it features a meditation table (with nails), a massage table, and a table where less-willing sacrifices were “purified” with pain. PCs seeking weapons may find up to **eight knives and pokers** (1d4 damage, as dagger), a **barbed whip** (1d3 damage), a **blackjack**, and a **crowbar** (1d4, as a club). The doll on the third table is stitched in the form of man with excessive girth of both fat and muscle, grotesque and misshapen; the phrase “*for Wilbur*” is stitched on its back. Mysteriously, the doll smells like cured pork; otherwise, it is mundane.

A black robe hangs on the north wall, on a peg roughly five feet from the jail cell. The key to open the locked cell door (DC 8 to pick) hangs underneath the robe. **A zero-level PC may attempt to pick the lock without lockpicks**, but incurs a -1d penalty on her d10 attempt,

thus she needs an 8 on a d8. The jail's bars may be bent with a DC 14 Strength check; using a crowbar (or similar tool) grants a +1d bonus to the check.

The south door leads to a caved-in corridor (**region 1-C-B** is above). As in **Area 2-1**, if PCs approach within 10' of the corridor's end, the demon-blood slime oozes from the rubble and attacks. If previously subdued in **Area 2-1**, treat the slime's HD as 1d8 per 5' square, as it is less enthusiastic for the fight.

Demon-Blood Slime: Init -2; Atk slime-stream +2 missile fire (1d4 acid, range 15', flashback); AC 12; HD 1d12 per 5' square (1d8/5' if previously subdued); hp 6 initially; MV 5', climb 5'; Act 1d20 per 5' square; SP flashback (victim briefly sees Nabelelb's death), -2d damage from piercing or slashing weapons, crits with Corrupted Black Ooze Table; SV Fort +8, Ref -7, Will +1; AL C.

As mentioned, the slime is massive, but only uses a small portion of its body to attack the PCs. Although it is too big to kill conventionally, it retreats if it takes damage equal to its listed hp. It extends along the walls 5' per round until it is either subdued or extends 25' (i.e., into the chamber); if previously subdued, it only extends 15' (length of the corridor). The slime suffers 1d4 damage from a half-pint vial of holy water, or a waterskin's worth of water from the chamber's pool, or from **Area 1-F**. Since the slime came from Nabelelb's death blood, PCs hit by the slime-stream have a psychic flashback. They witness Selliach and Nabelelb killing each other, and Nabelelb speaking his curse:

*Little moon who summons I,
with our death I defy.
Bring the mist. Bring the fog.
Change the air. Change the bog.
As my blood stays, so shall yours,
while mine corrupts as it pours.
Yours must watch until I'm through.
My curse, it cannot undo.
Until wooden worms of rod
strike the tear of a god,
Stuck in this cursed domain,
all who enter shall remain.*

After the vision, give the players **Handout 2 from the PDF Appendix**, which represents the curse being written into each of the PC's minds. This is an infernal curse of great power; it cannot be forgotten once heard.

Area 2-10: Hall of the Faithful

If the double doors are seen from the hallway, read the following:

Wisps of ochre fog bleed through the cracks of the thick, side-by-side wooden doors before you. The timber is gashed with thick cuts, evidence that someone has tried, but failed, to chop through. Nonetheless, the barrier appears significantly weakened, and in some places the wooden crossbar on the other side looks to have been partially cleaved.

The double doors still stand, but a successful DC 12 Strength check will shatter the damaged wooden crossbar on the other side. If 3 people attempt to simultaneously break through (1 on each door and 1 in the middle), then they automatically succeed. A PC may decide to use a weapon to chop or bash through the door; this is easily accomplished with one swing from any medium-sized or larger weapon, though edged weapons besides axes suffer a -1d damage penalty as they are dulled. When the party has entered the room, either by breaking through the doors, or via **Area 1-C-D**, read the following:

Two-thirds of this rectangular chamber is occupied by ornately-carved stone tables. Atop each lays a female body, composed of flesh... and mist! Etched black trails radiate from an ebon-dark hole in the ceiling. They creep across the ceiling then down the walls, finally running across the floor to climb the tables and reach the bodies. Bubbling black ooze encases each woman's head, and brownish-yellow fog gushes endlessly from each eye-socket. The gouts of fog rise to escape through the maw in the ceiling.

The huge face of a woman is carved on the wall opposite the tables, her mouth opening from the floor in a silent scream. The carving's eyes cry blackish tears which slowly ooze down her face, transforming into glowing blue water as they flow before evaporating on the ground.

Between the face and the tables, just underneath the ceiling's hole, lies a dead woman in a bloody white robe. Her abdomen and wrists are cut open, apparently by the bloody crescent-shaped blade lying beside her. She rests on a platform that looks as if it was once capable of being raised through the ceiling, but the mechanism appears broken beyond repair, with ropes and chains scattered around in all directions. Her body begins convulsing as a ghostly form rises from the dead flesh, wailing and screaming: suddenly, the spectral form turns and rushes headlong at the party! As she charges, a ghostly tendril shoots sideways from her to latch onto one of the misty-fleshy bodies. With a sickening, gurgling rip, the body tears free from its head, rising headless to shamble towards you!

If there are dwarves in the party, be sure to inform them that they smell gold in the direction of the carved face of Kayassit.

At the battle proceeds, the ghost of Etiyane will raise a number of headless fog zombies. (The heads remain on the table, continuing to spew fog.) The 12 bodies will be raised at an increased rate as the battle continues:

- Round one, 1 body;
- Round two, 1 body;
- Round three, 2 bodies;
- Round four, 3 bodies;
- Round five, remaining 5 bodies.
- If the party is strong and/or the judge wishes to increase the tension, then change the zombie progression to a four round duration: 1, 3, 3, 5.

The ghost retains the profound guilt she felt as she betrayed Kayassit, having realized in her final moments the full destruction she had invited upon her people. Now addicted to the guilt, she mercilessly kills the living just to feed the lingering emotion. She cries relentlessly as she attacks the party (another hint for the players involving tears).

Etiyane's Ghost: Init +3; Atk draining touch +6 melee (1d5 + special), or fogburst +4 missile fire (1d6 + special), or domination +4 melee (special); AC 12; HD 4d12; hp 26; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP draining touch (damage done heals a headless fog zombie of Etiyane's choice), fog-



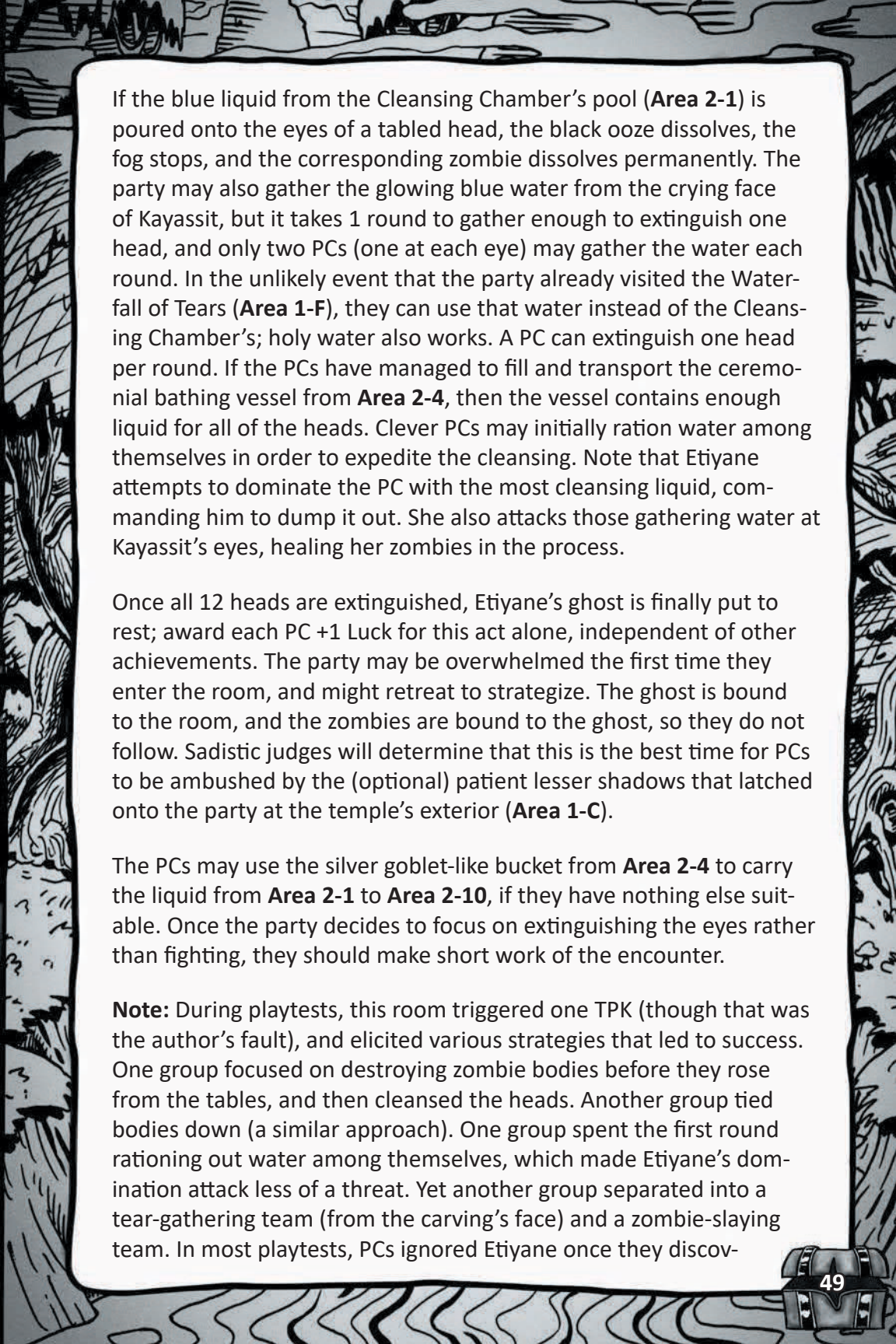
burst (Fortitude save or helplessly choke and gasp for one round, DC equal to modified attack roll), domination (DC 12 Will save or Etiyane dominates target for one round), un-dead traits, immune to non-magical weapons, crits, disease, poison, sleep, charm, paralysis, mental effects, cold damage; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3; AL C.

Etiyane has 1 action per round, and may choose from 3 attacks: **draining touch**, a direct attack in which the resulting damage heals one of the zombies for the same amount (this will not work on zombies reduced to 0 hp); **fogburst**, a ranged attack that can damage and temporarily incapacitate the target; and, **domination**, an attack in which Etiyane briefly dominates the target, which does her bidding, e.g., attacking an ally, or dumping out purifying water onto the ground (see below). Her immunities as an un-dead ghost make her a tough adversary. Moreover, if defeated by hit point reduction, she rises again the next moonrise. The only way to put her to rest permanently is to undo the temple's corruption by extinguishing the fog-spewing heads (see below). Fog zombies stop rising after her defeat.

Her guilt may be used against her by a brave PC. If a PC challenges her about what she wants, she'll respond, "*Embrace me and forgive me.*" If a PC willingly embraces her with forgiveness in his heart for one full round (and survives a domination attack to break the embrace), allow the PC to make a Personality check, assigning bonuses for role-playing, using knowledge of her past, etc. Etiyane makes a Will save against a DC equal to the Personality check. If she fails the check, she breaks off the attack, huddling in a corner of the room as if turned, ignoring the party until the next moonrise.

Headless Fog Zombie Priestess (up to 12): Init -4; Atk slam +4 melee (1d4+1); AC 9; HD 1d12; hp 6; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP vulnerable before rising (water in eye-sockets, see below), immune to sleep, charm, paralysis, mental effects, cold damage; SV Fort +3, Ref -4, Will +3; AL C.

The zombies innately sense the living, and have no need of eyes. Their un-death has made them unnaturally strong. Be sure to impress upon the PCs that the frail-looking, misty, fleshy females pack a wallop! When a fog zombie is felled, its body dissolves into mist, but regrows from its head in 1d3 turns. (Though it won't return to this particular battle).



If the blue liquid from the Cleansing Chamber's pool (**Area 2-1**) is poured onto the eyes of a tabled head, the black ooze dissolves, the fog stops, and the corresponding zombie dissolves permanently. The party may also gather the glowing blue water from the crying face of Kayassit, but it takes 1 round to gather enough to extinguish one head, and only two PCs (one at each eye) may gather the water each round. In the unlikely event that the party already visited the Waterfall of Tears (**Area 1-F**), they can use that water instead of the Cleansing Chamber's; holy water also works. A PC can extinguish one head per round. If the PCs have managed to fill and transport the ceremonial bathing vessel from **Area 2-4**, then the vessel contains enough liquid for all of the heads. Clever PCs may initially ration water among themselves in order to expedite the cleansing. Note that Etiyane attempts to dominate the PC with the most cleansing liquid, commanding him to dump it out. She also attacks those gathering water at Kayassit's eyes, healing her zombies in the process.

Once all 12 heads are extinguished, Etiyane's ghost is finally put to rest; award each PC +1 Luck for this act alone, independent of other achievements. The party may be overwhelmed the first time they enter the room, and might retreat to strategize. The ghost is bound to the room, and the zombies are bound to the ghost, so they do not follow. Sadistic judges will determine that this is the best time for PCs to be ambushed by the (optional) patient lesser shadows that latched onto the party at the temple's exterior (**Area 1-C**).

The PCs may use the silver goblet-like bucket from **Area 2-4** to carry the liquid from **Area 2-1** to **Area 2-10**, if they have nothing else suitable. Once the party decides to focus on extinguishing the eyes rather than fighting, they should make short work of the encounter.

Note: During playtests, this room triggered one TPK (though that was the author's fault), and elicited various strategies that led to success. One group focused on destroying zombie bodies before they rose from the tables, and then cleansed the heads. Another group tied bodies down (a similar approach). One group spent the first round rationing out water among themselves, which made Etiyane's domination attack less of a threat. Yet another group separated into a tear-gathering team (from the carving's face) and a zombie-slaying team. In most playtests, PCs ignored Etiyane once they discov-



ered they couldn't harm her. *Note that a TPK is almost guaranteed if the party enters through the roof (from the platform's **Area 1-C-D**), without having encountered some of temple's clues.*

The crescent shaped blade on Etiyane's body is a mundane sacrificial knife, doing 1d5 damage, but cannot be thrown.

Kayassit's face stops crying when the fog is extinguished. The party may notice that Kayassit's open mouth is roughly the same size as the concealed door to **Area 2-5**. The wall at the back of the mouth is actually an illusion. (DC 13 Will save to disbelieve). Elves, being innately attuned to the arcane and possessing heightened senses, gain a +1d bonus. If a dwarf announces she smells gold coming from the face, then allow the party a +1d bonus to the save. PCs crawling through (as they did to access **Area 2-5**) reach the treasure in **Area 2-11**. Note that at least one PC must successfully disbelieve before the party may crawl through the illusory wall.

Area 2-11: Repository of Offerings

This small 10' by 15' chamber is laden with pieces of gold, weapons, armor, and other items that appear valuable. Items that distinguish themselves at first glance include armor made from wooden scales, a bow decorated like a snake, and a silver chain and shackles!

This treasury contains offerings from those who sought the temple's help. All items are mundane unless specifically stated as magical or enchanted, and are summarized below. Although this might seem like a "generous haul" by DCC standards, it allows a party of soon-to-be level 1 PCs to properly equip themselves without needing to leave the swamp to shop for goods. If the judge wishes to add luster to the unique-looking mundane items (e.g. the mace with a boar-shaped head), he can hint that they were once items of power, but the magic (for some reason) has departed.

Note that Elfsmith's Quills are only present if there are elves in the party (again, in order to provide mithril gear at level 1 without leaving the swamp).

Armor (75% chance armor is human-sized):

- Tempered Bark Scale Armor (see below)
- 1 suit of chainmail
- 2 suits of leather armor
- 3 suits of padded armor
- 2 shields shaped like large frogs.

Weapons:

- Snake-bite Long Bow with 20 arrows (see below)
- two-handed sword with hilt carved like a lizard
- 2 silver handaxes
- longsword with a mustached dragon pommel
- 1 mace with boar-shaped head
- 1 sling made of frogs' knotted and interwoven tongues
- 20 sling stones

Miscellaneous

- 100 gp
- Small gold box (10 gp value) with See-Behind Copper (see below)
- 5 small sapphires cut as crescent moons (10gp value each)
- Moon Mirror (see below)
- 5' silver chain and shackles (40 lbs, but useful against one vulnerable to silver, worth 50gp)
- Mithril Quills (only if an elf is present, see below)
- Large waterproofed sack

Tempered Bark Scale Armor: AC +4, check penalty -3, no speed penalty, d8 fumble die, +1d to incoming fire damage. This armor features scales from a swamp tree's bark. The scales have been tempered with a process lost to history, though a clever smith may be able to reverse-engineer the method (with sufficient magical assistance). Mobility is significantly easier than wearing metal scale armor, though it provides vulnerability to fire (+1d to incoming damage). The armor is mundane, and may be enchanted.

Snake-Bite Long Bow: This longbow is colorfully decorated to look like a two-headed swamp snake (one head on each end). It is a slightly enchanted weapon that performs as its mundane equivalent, except when a natural 1 or 20 is rolled. On a natural 20 for the attack roll, the arrow transforms into a snake upon impact, causing normal damage and biting the target (DC 14 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d3 rounds). On a natural 1, the arrow transforms into a snake before being loosed, and bites the wielder (1d3 damage + DC 14 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d3 rounds).

Moon Mirror: This magical mirror has a full moon engraved on its back. If one looks into the mirror using a full moon's light, he sees a location that he's already visited, but sees it as if he is currently there. He may think of the location he wants to see. The effect lasts for only a few minutes, and may only be used once each full moon. Looking into the moon mirror during a lunar eclipse risks possession by a demon.

See-Behind Copper: A small golden box contains 1 enchanted copper disc (size of a cp). An eye is engraved on one side of the disc, and the back of a head is engraved on the other. A PC holding the disc up to her eye sees behind her, as if she were facing that way. If she keeps her other eye open (to see both ahead and behind) she must make a DC 13 Will save to avoid being stunned for 1 round; it's safest to close the other eye when using the disc. There is a base 4% chance per use that the user becomes blind; the judge should subtract the PC's Luck modifier from this base chance, so a PC with a +2 Luck modifier has a 2% chance of going blind. (Kindly judges will occasionally hint at ominous, though fleeting, blurring of vision after the PC uses the disk).

Mithril Quill: This enchanted quill only appears in the adventure if an elf is present, being a method of letting an elf have mithril gear without having to leave the swamp first. There are two per elf, one for an iron-based armor and one for an iron-based weapon. Elves will recognize that they must perform the following steps: dip the quill in their own blood; write their full Elven name on an iron-based object; "dust" the object with the quill's feather, and the iron turns to mithril as the feather disappears. The quill only works on mundane items; magical items are unaffected.

Ending Act 1, Beginning the Interlude

Once the party extinguishes the heads of the fog zombies in **Area 2-10**, the fog is substantially weakened. Read the following when the party exits the temple's interior:

Exiting the temple, you note that the ochre fog is substantially thinner. Although it hasn't completely disappeared, it feels noticeably "weaker." The platform's hovering portal of yellow stones and reddish wood, however, remains unchanged. Previously hidden by the thicker fog, and now barely visible through the mist, a distant, giant tree towers over the fen's canopy. From the swamp's floor, the Fog Beast rises from the mist to catch your eye. Bowing its mossy head, it gradually dissipates into white vapor. As soon as it has vanished completely, a hooded figure hobbles through this white cloud, chuckling and cackling with an ancient hag's voice. "That was well done," she croaks, "but the curse is not broken. Follow me, if you will. Hurry now!"

As she hobbles forward, the hag Nahweeha congratulates the party on their accomplishments. With little fanfare she reveals that she is the demon-cursed daughter of Etiyane, the priestess responsible for summoning the demon Nabelelb. She invites the party to continue back with her to her hut (a test of faith), and will reveal no more until they arrive. The party can choose to go with her immediately (the best choice, as no random swamp events are rolled where she travels), they can choose to wait and visit her later (she's not offended, but getting to her hut is dangerous), or they can choose to treat her badly (the most unwise choice, as the party will not learn that they need to break the Swearing Stone... although a merciful judge could have a ghost reveal this instead). Should the party attack Nahweeha, refer to **Playing Nahweeha** below.

This interlude portion of the adventure can be important for many reasons. The PCs should have reached first level and most likely need to recoup, rest, and heal before continuing on. Nahweeha's hut, **Area 1-D**, is ideal for this purpose, since she will host and feed well-behaved PCs for as many days as they need. However, the PCs



may rest wherever they choose (see **Resting in the Fen**, above); just remember that the fen is still cursed, and the party remains trapped within.

Going from zero-level gongfarmer to first-level reaver doesn't need to be an extended narrative; feel free to "fast-forward" over time to simulate training, meditation, learning spells, etc. The core book mentions requiring one week per spell level for learning and practice, but this need not be applied to the gongfarmer-to-wizard transition.

One can argue that initial spells emerge from dormancy with arcane experiences (the curse, the illusions, the Fog Beast, etc.) acting as a catalyst. The Fog Beast also radiates supernatural power, and may even offer itself as a patron to promising wizards and elves, but only once they've removed the fen's curse. Clerics can get their calling from experiencing the holy power of the temple, the ritual in the cleansing chamber, etc. Warriors' and thieves' skills naturally evolve and are similarly inspired. If the judge or the players insist upon each PC having a "trainer," then permit some of the swamp's ghosts (from either side of the warring factions) to fulfill that role. The point is to level up quickly, and move on to the awesome!

The second act of the adventure assumes a balanced party of around 6 first-level PCs. If there are significantly more or less, then the judge may want to scale encounters accordingly (or not!).

Playing Nahweeha

Nahweeha is a centuries old wizard kept alive by Nabelelb's curse. This is the only NPC in the adventure with whom the party will have extended social interactions, so have fun with her. Follow whatever vision, mannerism, voice, etc., that helps bring out your inner hag. Feel free to use the description below, if it is helpful:

The hag has a narrow face, squished between wrinkled ears and seemingly stretched from chin to crown by invisible hands. The center of her forehead features a large compound eye, as one might find on a giant insect, and her two "normal" eyes have the swirly gray irises of blindness. Greasy white strands of hair snake across her otherwise bald head. Abnormally long fingers extend from her hands, four on the right, and seven on the left. She hobbles as she moves, subtly dragging her right foot. Something unseen moves beneath her robe, as if a large serpent is constantly writhing around her torso. Scraps of fur, bones, and pieces of different animals hang from her numerous ratty belts.

Nahweeha has seen so many people fall to the fen's denizens that she is frankly certain the party will meet the same fate. Nonetheless, she'll do what she can to help respectful PCs, if only to break the boredom of her existence. Assuming they follow her back to her hut, she rewards them for their trust by offering her hut as a safe place to

rest. She does not make this offer if they wait to visit, and demands a price if they eventually do ask (judges' discretion, but the body of a scaleshrike may be suitable rent for a few days).

Nahweeha: Init +2; Atk dagger +2 melee (1d4); AC 13; HD 3d4+10; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP spellcasting without fail (2d8+14 spell check, see below), death throe (transfer curse); SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +8; AL N.

Spells: all spell checks are 2d8+14, *animal summoning* (Wiz 1), *color spray* (Wiz 1), *food of the gods* (Cleric 1), *invisible companion* (Wiz 2), *mending* (Wiz 1), *Nythuul's porcupine coat* (Wiz 2), *spider climb* (Wiz 1).

Nahweeha has been kept alive by Nabelelb's curse for centuries. The years have made her tough and wise, and she is formidable if angered. Because she is intricately connected with the arcane energies of the curse, her casting is flawless; she never misfires and never loses a spell. She always has her invisible companion with her, enjoying it's writhing embrace beneath her robe when it is not being otherwise useful. Her companion defends her aggressively. If the PCs should kill Nahweeha, her curse transfers to whoever delivered the death blow, be it blade or incantation. The recipient cannot remove this curse without supernatural intervention or a DC 30 *remove curse*. The curse is a simple one: the bearer can never leave the swamp as long as the curse is in effect, and when the fen's curse is finally lifted (by shattering the Swearing Stone with the Staff of Broken Oaths), *the PC dies*.

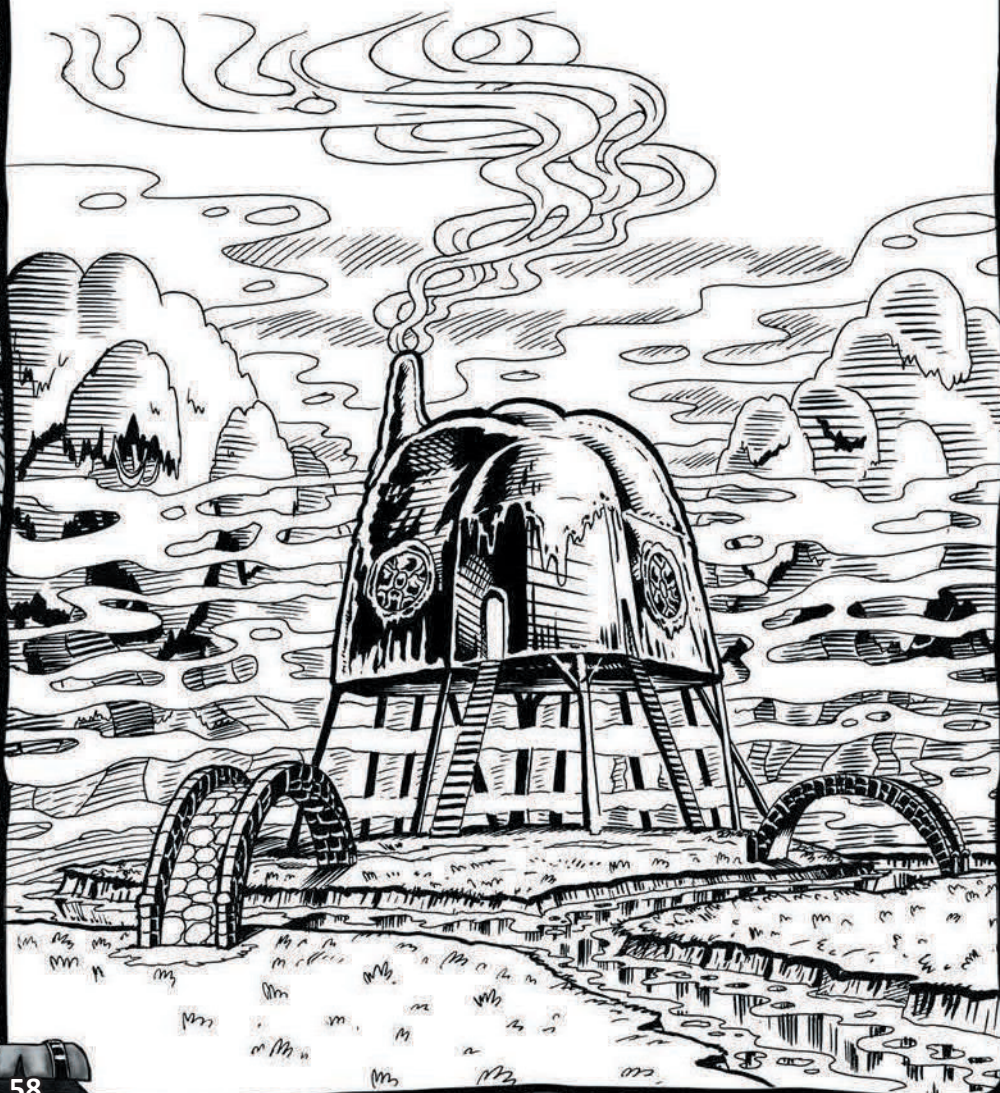
Area 1-D: Nahweeha's Hut

A large island splits the River Black's tributary here (the river looks to flow around the island and rejoin into a single stream downstream). A stone bridge arches over each of the tributary's branches, allowing access from either side. An oddly-shaped hut fashioned from wood and clay rises on stilts from the island's center, its wooden stairs climbing to two different doors. The hut's windows are curtained with crudely tanned skins. Despite the home's bizarre appearance, the smoke rising from its clay chimney brings a smile to your face. Is it madness to hope that this hut might be a place of refuge in this fen seemingly filled with nothing but death?

Although most parties will encounter Nahweeha during the interlude, not all will. Nahweeha is welcoming, and indeed does provide a place of temporary refuge, but she will not divulge too much information until the PCs have proven themselves by cleansing the temple. She is happy to show them through the swamp to **Area 1-C** (the temple); random events are not rolled if she guides the party.

Area 1-D-1: Social Room

This pentagon-shaped room has five walls. Two adjacent walls have open doorways leading to other interior rooms, though the openings



are curtained by a riot of reptilian skins. The walls flanking these two have doors leading outside. The fifth wall is adorned with a collection of bones, only a fraction of which are from creatures familiar to the you! Under your feet, a diagram is burned into the floor's center, showing the sun, moon, and animals in a twisting but interrelated pattern. Furs cover the floor around the diagram. A small, black statue of a cat snuggling up to a stack of books sits in the corner of the room.

Nahweeha holds most conversations here. She asks that PCs enter the room through the east door and depart through the west (since the moon rises in the east and sets in the west). She becomes annoyed with those who ignore this request. The cat-and-books statue is actually an urn that contains the ashes of Nahweeha's beloved previous familiar, a black cat named Suedama. PCs who carefully inspect the statue easily determine that it is an urn, and that "Suedama" is engraved on the bottom. Any who steal or damage this urn incur Nahweeha's wrath. The burnt-in diagram on the floor is the same as shown on the **Pencil Drop Augury Sheet** (see **Handout 6 in the PDF Appendix**). This room, as well as **Area 1-D-2** and **Area 1-D-3**, are lit with candles.

When the party begins conversing with Nahweeha, she'll recite Nabeleb's curse. Give the players **Handout 2 from the PDF Appendix**, which represents the curse being written into each of the PCs minds. This is an infernal curse of great power; it cannot be forgotten once heard.

*Little moon who summons I,
with our death I defy.
Bring the mist. Bring the fog.
Change the air. Change the bog.
As my blood stays, so shall yours,
while mine corrupts as it pours.
Yours must watch until I'm through.
My curse, it cannot undo.
Until wooden worms of rod
strike the tear of a god,
Stuck in this cursed domain,
all who enter shall remain.*

Certain lines in the curse outline the fen's predicament. "*Little moon*" refers to Etiyane. "*Bring the mist...Change the bog*" indicates that the persistent fog is a byproduct of the demon's presence. "*As my blood stays...Yours must watch until I'm through*" indicates that as long as the swamp remains corrupted and cursed, the blood of Etiyane, i.e., Nahweeha, will remain alive. "*My curse, it cannot undo*" forbids Nahweeha from performing curse-removing tasks; that role is reserved for the PCs. "*Until wooden worms of rod ...all who enter shall remain*" indicates that the Staff of Broken Oaths must strike the Swearing Stone in order for the PCs to escape.

The list below details additional things Nahweeha divulges in conversation with the party (how quickly this information is relayed to the party may depend on the willingness of your players to role-play interactions with her):

- Edited History: Her people, the Hawachen, lived in this swamp hundreds (or thousands?) of years ago. They were invaded by the Segavites, and the war soon turned against them. Her mother (the moon priestess Etiyane) sacrificed herself in a ritual pleading for supernatural aid to defeat the invaders. A mist demon, Nabelelb, answered the summons. The hero Selliach also appeared and slayed Nabelelb, but died from his effort.
- "Murderbeak" is a colossal bird, both extremely dangerous and vengeful. He is very protective of his flock that patrols the fen.
- Nabelelb's death blood corrupted and cursed the swamp, causing the ochre fog.
- Nahweeha is puzzled by the portal; it appeared when the Fog Beast first arrived, soon after the demon's death.
- She knows the basic geography of the region. She is willing to sketch a map if asked. (**See Handout 5 in the PDF Appendix**).
- She knows from her dreams that the Swearing Stone must be shattered, but she doesn't know how. The Swearing Stone is where her people pledged allegiance and service to the moon goddess Kayassit.

The following facts are details Nahweeha is reluctant to discuss. Unless otherwise noted, she will only reveal these topics if asked directly about them, e.g., “Where (or what) is the Staff of Broken Oaths?”

- She is kept alive by Nabelelb’s curse; she’ll die once it is broken.
- The Staff of Broken Oaths is buried with the body of the betrayer Segava, under the giant tree in **Area 1-H**.
- She admits she is lonely and would like a pupil; she favors one PC with arcane tendencies and (if honest with herself) hopes the rest of the party dies so she can focus her energies. She will attempt to sway the PC to study with her. If a PC devotes one week’s worth of devoted study to Nahweeha, the PC can attempt to learn one spell Nahweeha knows (or to transcribe the knowledge so it’s possible to learn the spell when the caster has an open spell slot).
- She fully expects that the party will be killed by the swamp’s denizens.
- She is in love with her invisible companion, though she will never willingly reveal this information. It must be obtained magically, or by other supernatural means.
- The secret room, **Area 1-D-4**, may only be entered by someone wearing her dung charm. She will never willingly reveal this fact. The information must be obtained magically, or by other supernatural means.

Unfortunately for the party, there are a few important facts that Nahweeha does not know.

- She doesn’t know that if she is killed, her fate is transferred to her killer, who will die when the fen’s curse is lifted.
- She doesn’t know that the curse can only be lifted by shattering the Swearing Stone with Segava’s Staff of Broken Oaths.
- She doesn’t know that the Fog Beast is an agent of Ildavir, or that Ildavir is testing gongfarmers and the like for a potential champion.
- She’s not aware the portal leads to Selliach’s magic sword, Sophix.

As a final source of information, Nahweeha will offer to predict the PC’s futures with her divining bone. As part of the ritual, she instructs

PCs to choose a long, narrow, pointed bone from her wall of bones to be used in the augury (see **Pencil Drop Augury Table** below). Have players drop their pencil-like “bones” on **Handout 6 from the PDF Appendix**.

Pencil Drop Augury Table

Those who wish to have Nahweeha divine their future use the **Pencil Drop Augury Sheet (Handout 6)**. Players may use anything that is long, thin, and pointed, e.g., a pencil, pen, etc. The sheet can be oriented as the player desires. The player holds the pencil perpendicular to the sheet, so that the point rests in the center of the snake’s head, then gently releases so that it falls randomly.

If the pencil’s point is closer to the judge (Nahweeha), then she uses the point end to divine the future. If the back of the pencil is closer, then she uses the back end. In either case, she uses the portion of the chart in which the pencil’s point, or end, lies. If it lies in an undefined region, then she uses the nearest boundary the pencil crosses. If the pencil drop mechanic is not convenient, players can simply roll a d14.

A luck boon can be ‘triggered’ for each augury by a particular event or condition found in the adventure. After a PC receives their augury, if they satisfy the condition associated with their forecast (and the augury is not the skull) they gain +1 Luck. Each PC (or player, if there are too many PCs) may only receive a single augury.

Do a pencil drop, or roll a d14, and consult the results below:

1: Snake

“The buried gem may bite you.” Condition: PC finds a gem or dodges the snake bite in Ghost Harassment results 6-7.

2: Bird

“The father punishes the nest-breakers.” Condition: PC realizes that Murderbeak will attack the party upon leaving **Area 1-H**.

3: Moon

“Moon’s blue on the head will stay the dead.” Condition: PC uses blue liquid from **Area 2-1** or **Area 2-10** to extinguish the heads in **Area 2-10**.

4: Boar

"The wallowing swine are rats inside." Condition: PC looks for rats to come out of bursting boars (**Area 1-E**).

5: Winged Lizard

"Only half must die for the rest to fly." Condition: PC realizes that scaleshrikes flee when half of their numbers are defeated.

6: Rat

"The clever rat knows to get hanging clothes." Condition: PC pulls down clothes from speargrass victim and finds healing salve (random event 13).

7: Mosquito

"Fire will cool the buzzing ire." Condition: PC uses fire to drive away the biting swarm (random event result 5).

8: Swamp Cat

"Do not your fortune hide, let the goddess swallow your pride." Condition: PC realizes this refers to the method required to enter **Temple Area 2-11**.

9: Deer

"The doomed deer covers his ears." Condition: When a ghost tells the party they are doomed, and the PC covers their ears (ghost harassment result 11-14).

10: Sun

"If to the stink you bring the sun, there will be none." Condition: PC realizes exposing swamp gas to fire will ignite it (random event result 6).

11: Skull

"Tread carefully, Death is watching you." Unlike the other auguries, the skull is never helpful: If the PC is saved from bleeding out, or is revived via recovering the body, he loses 2 points of Luck.

12: Ooze

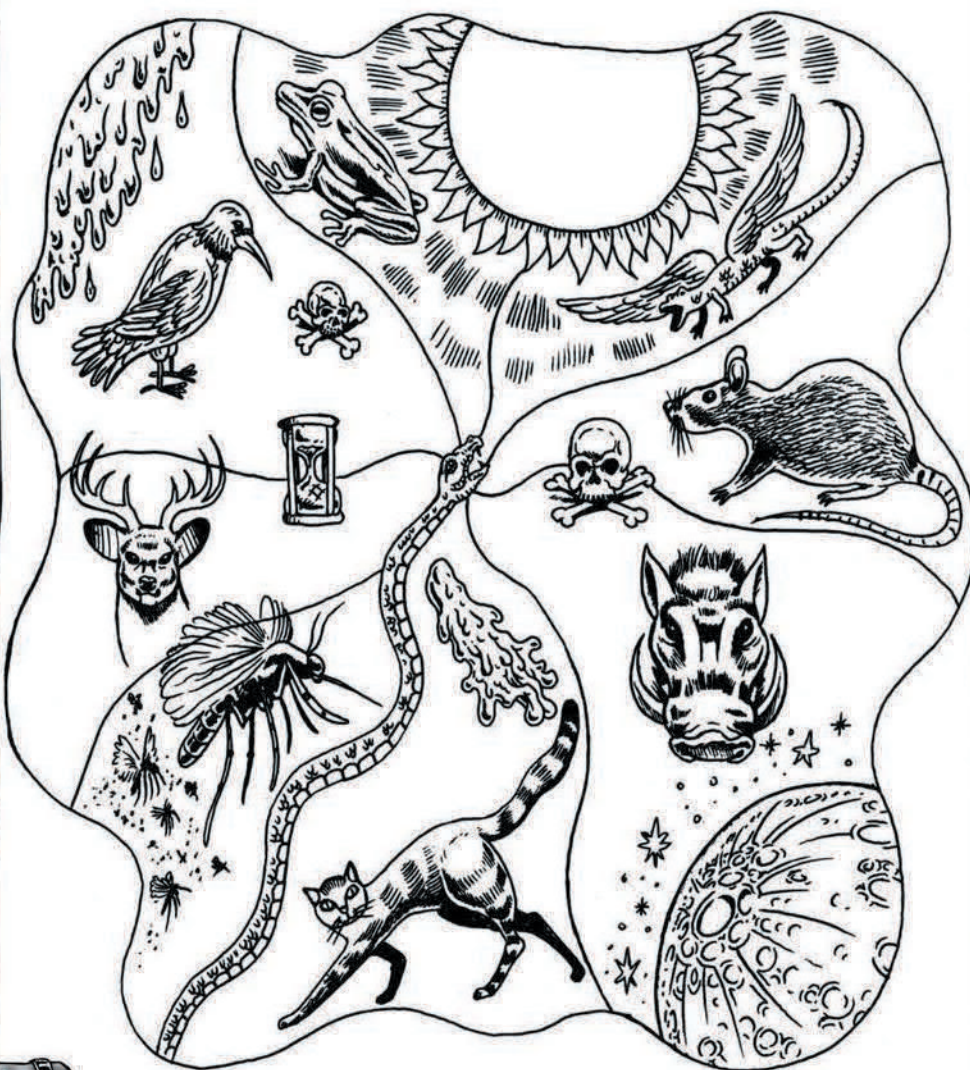
"Falling tears clean the corrupt." Condition: PC realizes that liquid from **Area 1-F** or **Area 2-10** can remove corrupted black ooze effects.

13: Hourglass

"She may perish in hours, who chokes on mushroom's flowers." Condition: The PC desires to heal someone who fails the save for random event result 4.

14: Frog

"Bugs are good, but guard your wood." Condition: The PC thinks to cover wooden items when encountering the mutant flying termites (random event result 11).



Area 1-D-2: Eating Room

This pentagonal room contains a simple clay oven. Directly opposite it is an open doorway draped with various snake skins. Warmth radiates from the oven, along with a sickly sweet smell that wafts through the room. A window in one wall is curtained with skins. Numerous wooden bowls, plates, and other eating implements litter the floor.

When Nahweeha shares food with the party, or the party eats their own supplies, she insists they meal in this room. No matter how foul the raw ingredients of her meals may be, her magic makes them palatable.

A secret door in the room leads to **Area 1-D-4**. It requires a DC 13 Intelligence check to find (allow players a +1d bonus if they take into account the rooms' shapes and the building's perimeter, and deduce that there should be another room opposite the wall). Unless the PC opening the secret door carries the dung charm (see **Area 1-D-4**), the secret door magically opens into **Area 1-D-3**.

Area 1-D-3: Sleeping Room

This five-sided room is drab and featureless, except for a padding of leaves, vines, twigs, and topping furs that cover the floor. Three walls each contain hide-curtained windows, and one wall has an open doorway, draped with the familiar reptilian skins that seem to curtain all the doors in Nahweeha's hut.

If the party trusted Nahweeha during their first meeting and followed her immediately, or if they have performed a suitable task for her, then they are allowed to sleep and rest in this room. Nahweeha also sleeps here, though her "sleep" is more of a somewhat creepy open-eyed meditation.

The secret door to **Area 1-D-4** requires a DC 13 Intelligence check to find. Allow players a +1d bonus if they take into account the rooms' shapes and the building's perimeter, and deduce that there should be another room opposite the wall. Unless the PC opening the secret door carries the dung charm (see **Area 1-D-4**), then the secret door magically opens into **Area 1-D-2**.

1-D-4: Secret Room

Note that PCs may only enter this room if they possess Nahweeha's dung charm (see below).

The hidden door opens into a small triangular room. The floor is littered with large, dome-shaped chitin shells. They are each inscribed with mystic diagrams and text.

Nahweeha wears a magic dung charm around her neck, hidden beneath her robe. She will not willingly remove it. Runes are carved in Common in the dung that read, "*To enter the triangle.*" This charm allows the bearer access to this room; without it, the secret doors magically connect **Areas 1-D-2** and **Area 1-D-3**, as previously described.

The chamber is a repository of Nahweeha's grimoire of spells: a collection of chitin shells. Each is inscribed with phases of the moon describing the optimal time for learning each spell; they grant the reader +1d to the learning check if these diagrams are followed. Each spell is written in three parts, each part scribed in a different language. Part one is written in Common, the second in the language of the Lizard Folk, and the third in the Naga's tongue. A PC may learn the spell if she knows all three languages (unlikely), or casts *read magic* or *comprehend languages*. A thief may help with deciphering the meanings (DC 15 read languages), but such aid is imperfect, and imposes a -1d penalty to the learning check. The spells contained are: *animal summoning* (Wiz 1), *color spray* (Wiz 1), *food of the gods* (Cleric 1, but written to be learned by a wizard), *invisible companion* (Wiz 2), *mending* (Wiz 1), *Nythuul's porcupine coat* (Wiz 2), *spider climb* (Wiz 1).

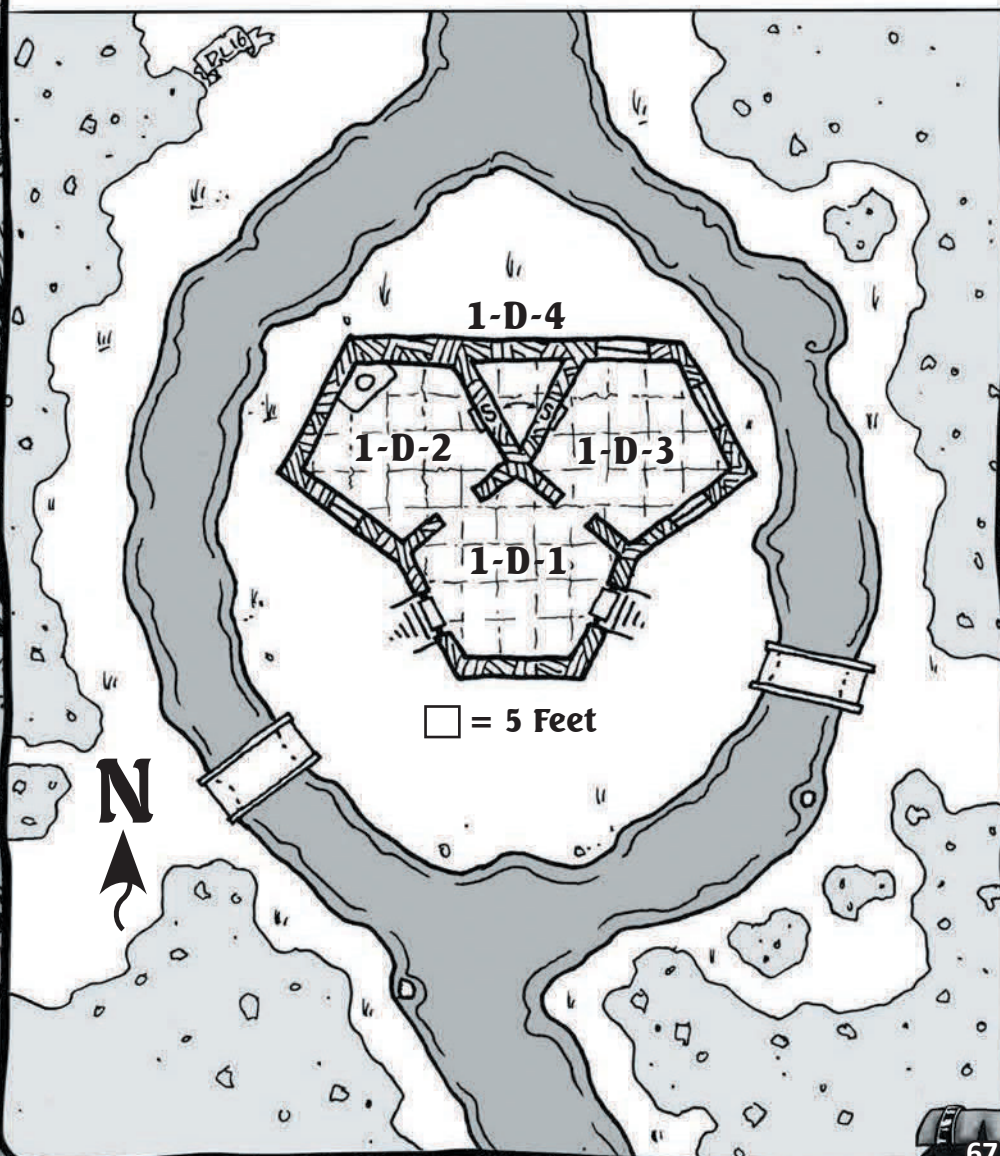
Returning After the Curse Has Been Lifted

PCs returning to Nahweeha's hut after breaking the curse find the area in ruin, with Nahweeha's body reduced to a pile of dust beneath her ragged robes. Read the following:

Crossing the purified tributary, in the island's center you discover a seemingly ancient ruin of decayed wood and broken clay piled where Nahweeha's hut once stood. Strangely, a triangular portion of the hut lies intact amongst the wreckage, as if that section of her hut was

immune to the sudden passage of time that has devoured the rest of Nahweeha's home. It looks as if one long wall once belonged to the eating room, another similarly lengthy section to the sleeping room. The remaining shorter wall once made up a section of the hut's exterior.

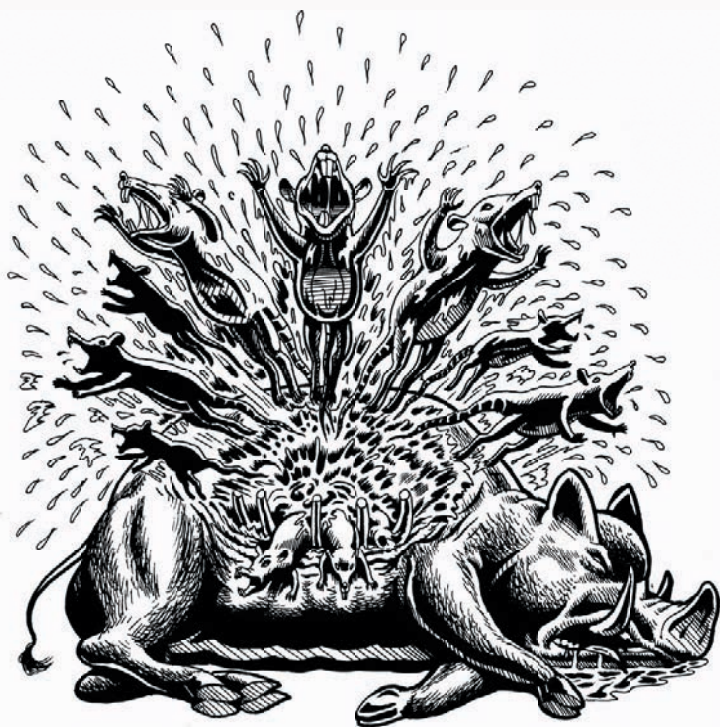
The enchantments of Nahweeha's secret room, **Area 1-D-4**, allow it to persist despite the hut's fate. Allow PCs searching the rubble to make a Luck check. If one succeeds, he finds Nahweeha's decayed remains of dust, cloth, and bone, along with her intact magical dung charm.



Area 1-E: The Swearing Stone Exterior

Three paths of dirt and rotted wood converge upon a clearing. A 25-foot tall dome-shaped building of stone sits in the middle of the clearing, guarded by a reddish black, oozy moat that resembles the River Black. Four arched passages appear to grant entrance to the building, each 90 degrees apart. A faint yellow glow radiates from within. Four giant, black-tusked boars wallow in the sludge of the moat. The beasts seem strangely bloated, their bodies undulating as if something is moving beneath their skins. Suddenly each dark head swivels in your direction: they rise as one and scramble out of the mire, squealing horrifically as they charge directly at you!

The bursting boars are incredibly aggressive, hungry, and corrupted! When one is slain, have the slayer make a Luck check; if they fail the check, a corrupted rat swarm erupts from the boar. Like other “corrupted” animals in the adventure, both boar and swarm suffer 1d4 damage from a half-pint vial of holy water, or a waterskin’s worth of water from the temple’s cleansing chamber (**Area 2-1**), or from the Waterfall of Tears (**Area 1-F**). Neither creature will enter the dome, as the lawful, radiant light of the Swearing Stone repels them.



Bursting Boars (4): Init +2; Atk tusk +3 melee (1d6); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 10, 9, 8, 4; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP charge (+1d to attack, -2 to AC until next attack), tusk-throw (on a crit, victim is thrown 10' into air and takes 1d6 falling damage), death throes (corrupted rat swarm if slayer fails Luck check); SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +1; AL C.

Corrupted Rat Swarm: Init +2; Atk swarming bite +2 melee (1 point of damage, DC 5 Fortitude save or die from blood poisoning); AC 10; HD 3d8; hp 13; MV 30'; Act special; SP bite 1d3+3 targets/round in 15'x15' area, treat non-metallic armor as AC10, -2d damage from non-area attacks, crit destroys wielded wood or forces 1d10 on **Minor Corruption Table**; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will -1; AL C.

An exceptionally devious PC may employ the rat pipe from **Area 2-8**. This causes all the swarms to burst from the boars (instantly killing them) as they charge to attack the piper. Award the piper +1 Luck for such ingenuity. Once the boars and rats are defeated, the party must cross the black moat to enter the dome. The moat is 15' wide (DC 13 Strength check for running long jump, -1d to halflings and dwarves), and 4' deep. Entering the moat, whether by falling or wading, incurs a roll on the **Corrupted Black Ooze Table**.

Dome Interior

Read the following if PCs enter the dome.

Passing through an open arched entrance, you discover that the inside of the dome is an open hemisphere, 50' in diameter. Its interior is empty, save for a huge yellow stone softly glowing in the room's center. The dirt floor is dry, and shows no signs of passage, perhaps for centuries. The ceiling is beautifully decorated, covered with a painting of a woman descending from a crescent moon, crying tears that turn into yellow stones, just like the glowing stone before you. There are three other exits from the chamber, on the left, right, and opposite sides. A 20'-long plank of wood lies against a wall.

If the PCs have already visited the temple (**Area 1-C**), they recognize that this stone (the Swearing Stone) appears to be made from the same material that bordered the floating portal on the temple's platform. Lawful PCs feel comfort here and can rest and heal at twice

the normal rate; chaotic PCs do not rest well and do not heal naturally. Note that a party that rests here only makes a Luck check once every 24 hours, rather than the usual once per 8 hours (see *“Resting in the Fen,”* on **Page 13**). The plank of wood provides an easy way to cross the moat on future visits.

The Swearing Stone is a crystalline manifestation of pure Law, and is unbreakable by mundane means. If a chaos aligned PC touches the stone, he must make a DC 11 Reflex save or take 1d4 damage. Try as they might, the PCs will not be able to break the stone; only the Staff of Broken oaths may do this. **To remove the curse of the swamp, the PCs must shatter the Swearing Stone with the Staff of Broken Oaths.**

The power of the stone is invoked by swearing an oath while touching it. Great misfortune befalls one who reneges on this obligation. If the PCs have already visited Nahweeha, they’ll likely know that this is “the Swearing Stone.” Any PC may use it to swear an oath, but the consequences depend on their alignment. A lawful PC who makes an oath of significant importance (Judge’s discretion) and keeps it, gains 1 point of Luck. If the lawful PC breaks the oath, then she loses 2 points of Luck. A chaotic PC gains 1 point of Luck if he is instrumental in getting a lawful PC to break her oath. Neutral PCs are neither positively nor negatively affected. Only 1 oath may be made per lunar cycle.

If a chaotic PC insists on trying to make an oath at the stone by enduring the damage from touching it, she takes 1 point of damage per word of the oath. If she breaks that oath in a manner that pleases Chaos, she gains +1 Luck. There is no reward for keeping the oath.

Returning with the Staff of Broken Oaths

In order to break the fen’s curse, the party must return to the dome with the Staff of Broken Oaths (from **Area 1-H**) and strike the Swearing Stone with it. This is alluded to in Nabelalb’s curse, “Until wooden worms of rod, strike the tear of a god.”

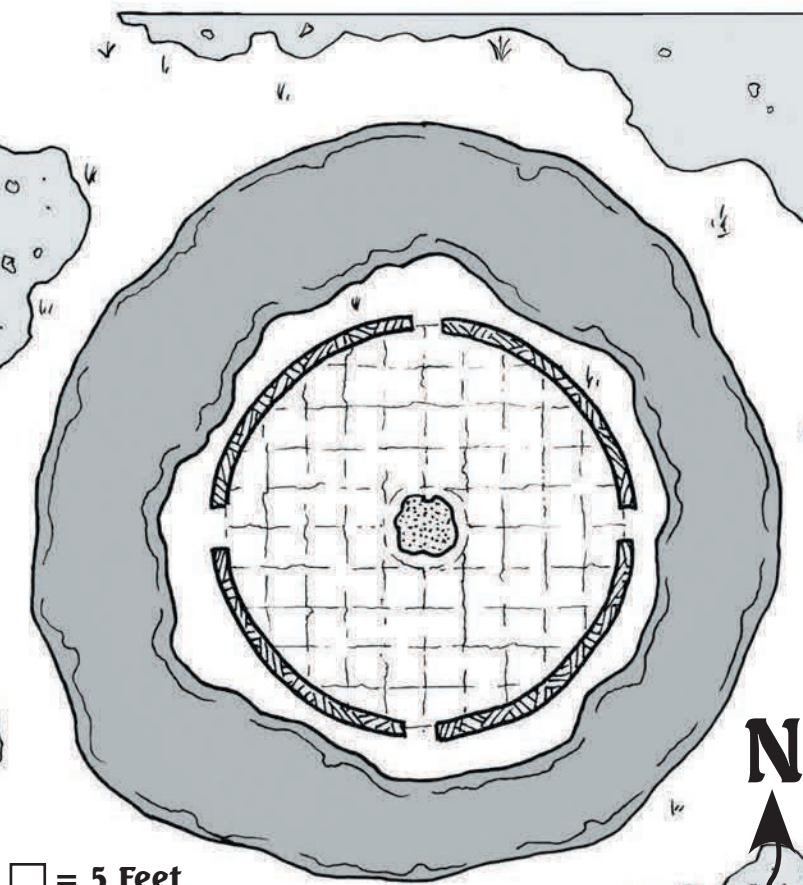
Some players of Lawful PCs, particularly clerics, may be hesitant to destroy the Swearing Stone. Likewise, some players of Chaotic PCs may be hesitant to destroy the Staff of Broken Oaths. Such awesome role-playing should be rewarded, as the judge deems appropriate. Regardless, make it clear (via a divine message, a dream, or even an

“intuitive sense”) that PCs will not be penalized for the destruction of a like-aligned artifact, because they simultaneously destroy an oppositely-aligned artifact.

Striking the stone with the staff shatters both. Read the following:

Striking the stone with the staff produces a blinding flash and thunderous boom. A concussive blast throws you backwards onto the ground. With ringing ears, your sight returns as you notice that both the staff and the stone have been destroyed, with fragments strewn everywhere. A key, made of fused reddish wood and yellow stone, hovers above the debris.

The goddess Ildavir modified both staff and stone so that the key would form from their union. It may be used to open the portal on



the temple's platform (**Area 1-C**). Note that as soon as the artifacts are broken, the curse is lifted, and Nahweeha dies, spontaneously decaying to dust. However, her enchanted amulet (allowing entry to **Area 1-D-4**) remains.

When the party exits the dome, they find that the fog has completely dissipated, and the black corrupted ooze has been replaced with normal water. Read the following:



Emerging from the stone dome, you discover that the fog has completely dispersed. The air is pure and clean, and the oozy moat has been replaced with fresh water. You are filled with a sense of freedom, intuitively knowing that you've broken the demon's curse, and are no longer bound to the swamp. Warmth radiates throughout your bodies, like a smile from the divine. You've accomplished what no others have been able to do, and your names will be remembered amongst the region's legends. Yet, you know there is one last action untaken: what to do with the key of reddish wood and yellow stone?

The PCs may leave the fen if they desire. Judges should award Luck accordingly as they see fit. If the party returns to the temple's portal, proceed to the Epilogue.

Area 1-F: Waterfall of Tears

The River Black's tributary leads to a small, seemingly fresh-water pond fed by a waterfall plunging down a moist, mossy cliff. Instead of the overwhelming roar of crashing water, you hear sobbing amidst the tiny splashes of countless tears. Crying faces briefly appear, then vanish within the cascade. On old boot sits by the pond, an abundant growth of mushrooms, leaves, and shoots growing out of it.

Many souls of Kayassit's faithful Hawachen are trapped here in the falls. They constantly lament Etiyane's summoning of Nabelelb, and the subsequent curse he inflicted upon the swamp. Any PC who drinks from the water of the falls or the pool heals 1 point of hp or ability damage (player's choice) and hears a ghostly voice whispering urgently over the sobbing (roll 1d5 or choose):

1. "Break the Staff of Broken Oaths."
2. "Our tears will wash away the unclean."
3. "Avoid Slowdown Falls."
4. "Refuse his offer."
5. "Charging the wooden giant is smart, but fighting him is not."

A PC may only receive healing and advice from the pool once per day. The spirits in the water do not answer questions, unless compelled by magic or supernatural means. The water may be used to clean off

corruption effects from the **Corrupted Black Ooze Table** at any time, with no restriction on the number of uses.

The boot is mundane, but is filled with a piece of hide from a swamp golem. The hide produces enough edible flora to provide a single meal for one person per day. Flora will not overgrow the boot, and will not begin regrowing until a meal's worth has been harvested and eaten. An alchemist or wizard who researches golem creation may pay dearly for such an item.

The cliff is slick and difficult to climb (DC 15). The exact height of the cliffs is left to the judge, but should be high enough that a fall from its heights should result in an almost guaranteed death. Those that die from a fall become waterfall-bound ghosts themselves. Regardless, while the curse is active, one cannot escape the fog by 'climbing out'.

Area 1-G: God's Breath Canyon

The River Black gains speed and diffuses into fresh water, providing a relatively safe place to cross into the fen. Cliffs come together and form a canyon through which the river continues eastward. A cool breeze blows westward from the canyon, seeming to keep the fen's swirling yellow-brown fog at bay.

God's Breath is the local name for the canyon's constant breeze that blows against the flow of the River Black's corruption. Here, PCs can cross into the Shrouded Fen with little difficulty. However, until the swamp's curse is broken, they cannot return across the river or go into the canyon without losing 1 hp per round, as detailed earlier in "Entering the Shrouded Fen."

Area 1-H: The Chaos Tree

When the PCs first enter this area, read the following:

Rising above the fen's canopy, a gigantic tree looms in the distance. Creatures appear to be nesting in the branches, but the distance is too great to be certain. Lizard-birds fly above in orderly patterns, as if patrolling the area.

Approaching the Chaos Tree is perilous. Countless speargrass shrubs form a thin, protective ring 600 feet in diameter around the tree. Even if a party uses stealth and cover to approach, speargrass attacks will alert the patrolling scaleshrikes. When the party approaches to within 300' of the tree, they are attacked by 4 speargrass shrubs.

Speargrass (4): Init -5 (surprise unless spotted: DC 15 INT, +1d for PCs with forest-lore); Atk grassblade +3 melee (1+slow digestion); AC 5; HD 2d8; hp 12, 11, 11, 10; MV 5'; Act 1d20 per encounter; SP slow digestion (1 hp damage per hour), painful climb (DC 10 to climb, but sharp edges and digestive juices make a DC12 Fort save necessary to hang on), vulnerable to fire (+2d damage from fire), SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

The speargrass likely ambushes the party with surprise, unless spotted with a DC 15 Intelligence check (foresters, herbalists, woodsmen, hunters, etc., gain +1d to the check). The plant instantaneously grows a long, sharp, strong grass blade that impales prey, lifting it 20' in the air. (Falling from the tip of the blade incurs only 1d6 damage rather than the normal 2d6). Speargrass only attacks once per encounter; if it misses, it slowly retracts into the ground for the next hour. If a potential victim is not surprised, and wins initiative, he may simply step away from the slow moving shrub to avoid being skewered.

Scaleshrikes begin attacking 3 rounds after the speargrass attack: 2 scaleshrikes on round 3, and 3 more on round 4. Scaleshrikes have long sharp beaks and feathered heads, their heads connected to their birdlike torsos by serpentine necks. (The bodies, though avian-looking, are covered in reptilian scales.) They possess four powerful legs, extending from their torsos to end in curved, wicked, venom-injecting talons. They are topped with wide, feathered wings, and tipped with a finned, horizontal, sail-like tail. Scaleshrikes may execute standing jumps 15' into the air to initiate flight with their 20' wingspan.

Unlike scaleshrike attacks in the **Swamp Random Events Table**, Murderbeak, the prime scaleshrike, will not appear in this encounter. Because these creatures are defending their nests, they gain a +2d bonus to any morale checks.

Scaleshrikes (2+3): Init +3; Atk beak-spear +2 melee (1d6), or talon rake +1 (1d4 + paralytic venom), or fetch-and-carry (special); AC 12; HD 2d4; hp 6, 5, 4, 4, 2; MV 20', fly 30', jump 15'; Act 1d20; SP paralytic venom (DC 10 Fortitude save or paralyzed for 1d3 hours), fetch-and-carry (+1d to grab a paralyzed or deceased victim, may be combined with a move action); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

With the scaleshrikes defeated, the party is free to approach the tree. When the party comes within 200 feet, read the following (be sure to incorporate the corpses of PCs that have previously been carried away by scaleshrike attacks, including Murderbeak's attack in **Area 1-B**):

A tree towers into the sky. Not "a" tree, "the" tree. Roughly 40 feet in diameter at its base, and about 300 feet tall, the wooden behemoth seems otherworldly. Long boughs lead to branches covered in spear-like needles. Corpses of countless victims, a few quite fresh, are impaled among the limbs. From nests that freckle the foliage, lizard-bird chicks peck at the bodies. A cave-like opening sits between two massive roots at the tree's base. Geysers of green gas erupt sporadically from the ground around the giant.

When the party approaches within 100 feet of the tree, its roots detect vibrations in the ground and begin to stir. Read the following:

The ground ripples as massive roots seem to writhe with malice beneath you, while above, branches thrash despite the calm. Nests, corpses, and flightless chicks begin tumbling to their deaths in a waterfall of carnage.

San'ehmr (the Chaos Tree's true name) begins its attack by showering the party with debris, corpses, nests, scaleshrike chicks, etc. Each PC must pass a DC 10 Reflex save or take 1d5 damage. Following this, roll initiative.

The party has 3 rounds to act before the slow-acting San'ehmr continues its attack. Wise PCs will enter the opening at the tree's base as quickly as possible, because fighting the tree is an exercise in futility for all but the luckiest parties. Some players may realize this, and, given their PCs' distances from the opening, may wish to run to the tree's base. Although DCC rules as written do not provide guidelines for running, the author suggests allowing PCs to move twice their

movement rate, so that 2 consecutive running actions result in moving 4x the movement rate (e.g., 120 feet/round for MV 30'). Similar to a charge, the PC suffers -2 AC until his next turn, and this penalty is applied as soon as the running begins. A PC may enter the base safely within the first three rounds. After this grace period, San'ehmr will renew its attack, and anyone entering the opening must first dodge crushing roots (DC 12 Reflex save or 2d6 damage).

San'ehmr, The Chaos Tree: Init +0; Atk root-slap +3 melee (2d5) or spear-needles +3 missile fire (1d8+1) or limb-slam +1 melee (2d12, only attack for the round); AC 16; HD 8d12; hp 66; MV 1'; Act 3d20 or 1d20; SP may attack anyone within 100', trunk is vulnerable to fire (+2d damage, ignites if takes half current hp fire damage, burns 1d8/round thereafter), crit table G/d4 ; SV Fort +5, Ref -10, Will +7; AL C.

San'ehmr is a deadly opponent. It attacks three times per round with roots and needles, and can reach anything within one hundred feet of its trunk. It may choose to attack only once in the round, using the deadly limb-slam. A critical hit from the Chaos Tree probably results in permanent physical disability (d4 on crit table G). Although San'ehmr may seem over-powered, it has a critical weakness: fire. If its trunk takes fire damage greater than or equal to half its current hit points, it ignites and takes 1d8 fire damage per round thereafter. Note, though, that using fire is risky for the PCs. Anyone making a fire attack must pass a Luck check, or else a column of green (flammable) gas erupts nearby and ignites, causing 1d6 damage to the PC.

Segava's burial place lies further on in the cave between San'ehmr's roots. The staff provides the chaotic energy that enables the tree's roots to tap into Nabelelb's corrupted blood. However, **once someone recovers the staff, it no longer lends its power to the tree. San'ehmr then becomes dormant until reawakened by arcane or supernatural means.**

PCs searching the falling debris find broken bodies, dead scaleshrike chicks, and broken eggs. Allow three d100 Luck checks (roll less than or equal to Luck score with a d100). For each success, the searcher finds an unhatched scaleshrike egg. An enterprising PC may sell the egg, train the chick, use *find familiar* to bind the chick to herself, etc.

Area 1-H-1: Segava's Burial Chamber

Dimly lit by glowing fungi, the dirty, root-bound tunnel curves as it descends, finally opening into a large, white-stone chamber. The room's shape is reminiscent of a lumpy five-pointed star, with five smaller chambers extending from a larger main area. A dim, greenish aura comes from glowing glyphs written on the main chamber's ceiling, which upon closer inspection appears to be constructed from an enormous circular slab of black stone. On either side of the tunnel's entrance, and at the junctions between sub-chambers, black pillars extend from floor to ceiling. A large iron coffin sits in the room's center.

This monument was made to warn other Hawachen of the fate of those that betray Kayassit and the Swearing Stone. The builders hid the Staff of Broken Oaths in a sub-chamber, fearing the consequences of burying it with Segava himself. The centuries of exposure to the staff has imbued the chamber with a palpable feeling of Chaos. Chaotic PCs feel special comfort here, and can rest and heal at twice the normal rate; lawful PCs are plagued with feeling of ill-omen, nightmares, and poor sleep, and do not heal naturally. (Note that a party that rests here only makes a Luck check once per 24 hours, rather than once per 8 hours).

The runes are written in an old dialect of Common, and a DC 10 Intelligence check is necessary to make sense of them (clerics and PCs with religious or literary occupations gain a +1d bonus because they recognize the liturgical, ritualistic, call-and-response structure). If a PC succeeds in deciphering the runes, give **Handout 3 from the PDF Appendix** to the players as you read the following:

*The Betrayer's head was full of lies.
Kayassit's tears wash it away.
The hand of right, mostly light,
Kayassit's tears wash it away.
His staff broke the oaths in half.
Kayassit's tears wash it away.
The hand in back, mostly black,
Kayassit's tears wash it away.
His blackest heart the law denies.
Kayassit's tears wash it away.*

*He who forsakes the Swearing Stone,
He who denies Kayassit's light,
Has no moon, and is alone
Suffering darkness, as is right.*

The runes are both a warning and a clue. In order to safely obtain the Staff of Broken Oaths, the party must take parts of Segava's body out of the coffin and put them in the correct bowls in the subchambers. The clues are as follows:

- *"head was full"*: Segava's skull goes in the bowl beneath the full moon (**Area 1-H-2**).
- *"hand of right mostly light"*: Segava's right hand goes in the bowl beneath the mostly full, or gibbous, moon (**Area 1-H-3**).
- *"staff broke... in half"*: The Staff of Broken Oaths is hidden in the room of the half moon (**Area 1-H-4**).
- *"hand in back mostly black"*: Segava's left hand goes in the bowl beneath the mostly black, or crescent, moon (**Area 1-H-5**).
- *"blackest heart"*: Segava's chest cavity (or even a rib or the sternum) goes in the bowl beneath the blackest, or new, moon (**Area 1-H-6**).

The lid of the coffin is solid iron and may be moved with a DC 18 Strength check, though four PCs working together automatically succeed. The intent is for this to be a minor challenge, not a roadblock. If there are less than four PCs, then we recommend assigning a +1d bonus for each additional PC helping, each tool employed, etc. If the bonus is +3d or more, then the PCs succeed (e.g., three PCs employing a crowbar automatically succeed). Elves take 1 hp of damage if they assist. The coffin only contains Segava's skeletal body parts mentioned in the runes: skull, right hand, left hand, and rib cage; there are no other body parts, clothes, trinkets, etc.

Each body part is etched with magical runes that refer to the ritual (in the same archaic Common): the skull is etched with, *"The Betrayer's head was full of lies;"* the right hand with, *"The hand of right mostly light;"* the left hand with, *"The hand in back mostly black;"* and the rib cage (sternum) with, *"His blackest heart the law denies."* When a body part is placed in the proper bowl, the runes begin to glow. The

runes' magic is responsible for both disabling the traps and revealing the location of the staff (see **Area 1-H-4**).

When the Hawachen faithful visited this site, they repeated the words written on the ceiling as they walked along the phases of the moon, from full to new. Water ("Kayassit's tears") used to fill the bowls, and was part of the ritual to cleanse oneself from the presence of the Betrayer.

Area 1-H-2: Full Moon

This small chamber features a chest-high stone column with a large, two-foot diameter bowl carved into the top. A painting of a full moon hangs on the wall behind the bowl.

This represents the first part of the cleansing cycle. Segava's skull should be placed in the bowl (see above).

Area 1-H-3: Gibbous Moon

This small chamber features a chest-high stone column with a large, two-foot diameter bowl carved into the top. A painting of a gibbous, mostly full, moon hangs on the wall above the bowl.

This represents the second part of the cleansing cycle. Segava's right hand should be placed in the bowl (see above).

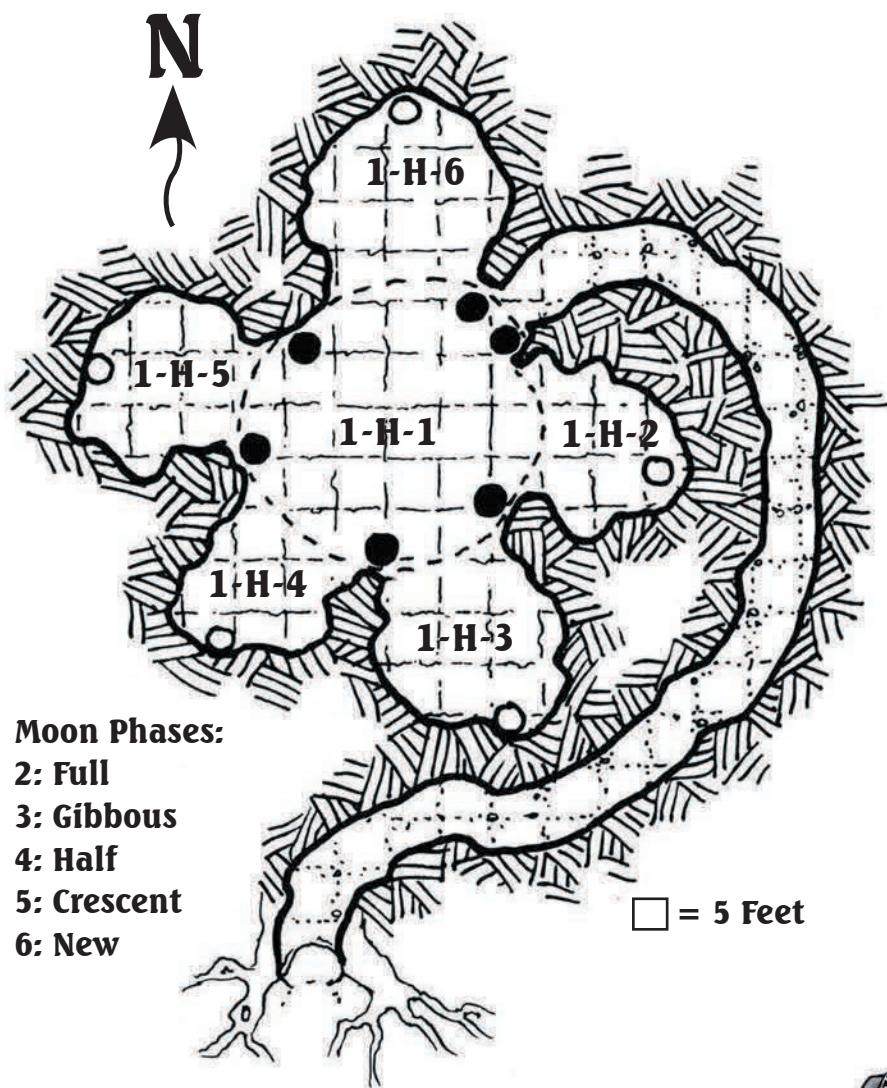
Area 1-H-4: Half Moon

This small chamber features a chest-high stone column with a large, two-foot diameter bowl carved into the top. On the wall above the bowl is a painting of a half moon.

This represents the third part of the cleansing cycle.

The Staff of Broken Oaths is hidden within the (mostly hollow) column in a cavity that extends down beneath the bowl. There are two ways to obtain it.

First, the party may simply deduce that that staff is here by testing, without properly placing Segava's bones. The column reverberates as hollow if struck, in contrast to the pillars in the other subchambers. There is a secret hatch in the bottom of the bowl that is quite difficult to find (DC 15 Intelligence check). If someone thinks to fill the bowl with water, she notices that the water within slowly drains, in contrast to the other bowls that seem to be completely water tight. Grant the PCs a +2d bonus to finding the hatch if this occurs. Unfortunately, finding the cavity by mere deduction can trigger two separate traps: one for the thief, and one for her accomplices.



The first trap is triggered if the secret hatch is opened without first being disabled (DC 13 to find and disable). A 10' long curved blade swings out of the wall and cuts the air just above the bowl, inflicting 1d10+3 damage. This trap may be detected by inspection by noting a thin slit in the wall disguised by the border of the painting. It may be disarmed by rotating the bowl ninety degrees clockwise.

The second trap is triggered if the staff is removed from the column (DC 16 to find and disable). If this trap is triggered, the columns holding up the ceiling in **Area 1-H-1** collapse clockwise, causing the ceiling to fall. Anyone in the main chamber is crushed for 4d6 points of damage. PCs may avoid damage by kneeling or throwing themselves to the floor below the level of the extremely strong iron coffin, which prevents the ceiling from falling below its height. Kind judges may allow DC 12 Reflex saves for those PCs that are close enough to other subchambers to jump out of the way. The trap may be discovered through inspection by noting the very subtle hinges that line the base of the columns in **Area 1-H-1**, along with the fact that the staff rests on a non-hollow portion of the bowl column. The trap may be disabled by inserting something long and thin (e.g., a two-handed sword) into the bowl, alongside the staff, before pulling the staff out.

The second way to obtain the staff is by far the safer course. Following the clues in the ceiling's writing, the party must simply put Segava's bones in the proper bowls. Upon the placement of the last bone, the secret hatch in the bowl springs open as the associated traps deactivate. The staff may then be removed without triggering the ceiling collapse.

When the party retrieves the staff, refer to the section **Having Obtained the Staff** on page 84.

Area 1-H-5: Crescent Moon

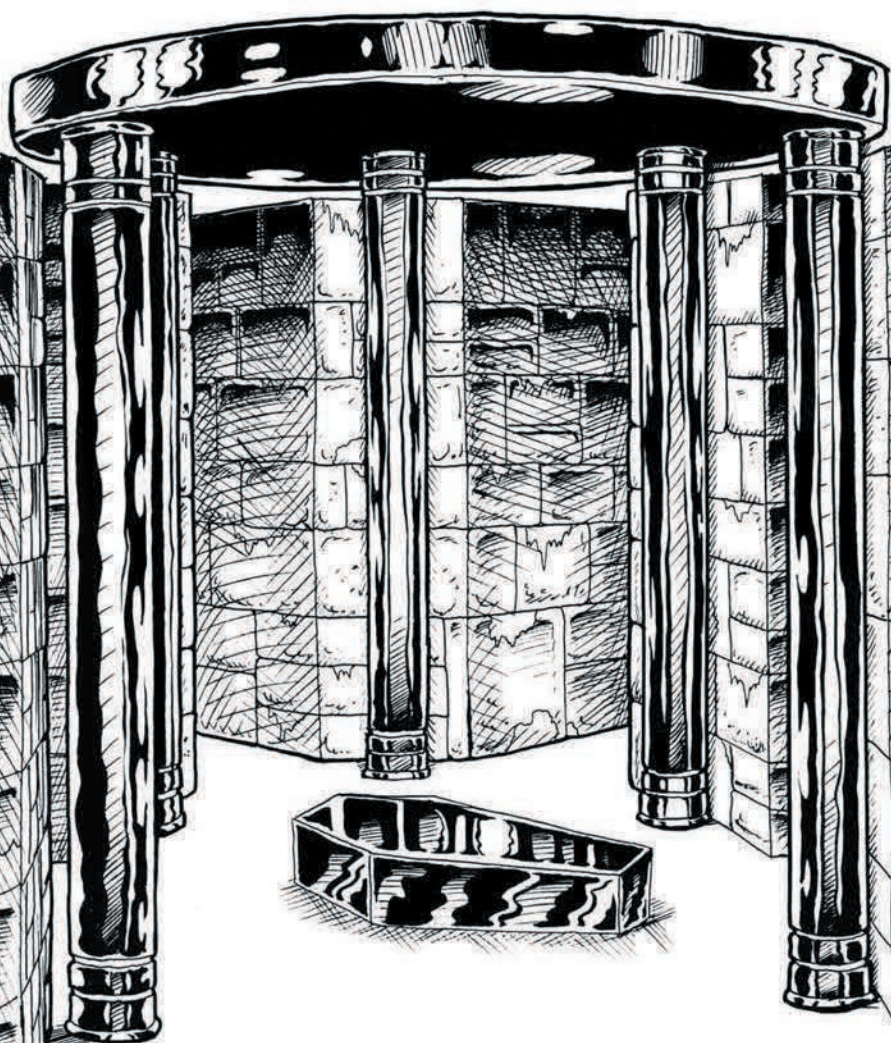
This small chamber features a chest-high stone column with a large, two-foot diameter bowl carved into the top. On the wall above the bowl is a painting of a crescent moon.

This represents the fourth part of the cleansing cycle. Segava's left hand should be placed in the bowl (see above).

Area 1-H-6: New Moon

This small chamber features a chest-high stone column with a large, two-foot diameter bowl carved into the top. On the wall above the bowl is a painting of a new moon.

This represents the fifth and final part of the cleansing cycle. Segava's chest cavity (or even a rib or the sternum) should be placed in the bowl (see above).



Having Obtained the Staff

When the party successfully retrieves the Staff of Broken Oaths, read the following:

Light visibly bends and twists near the surface of this four-foot long staff. Its reddish wood is striking and distinct, very similar to the wood surrounding the temple's floating portal. Looking like nothing less than hundreds of long, thin, intertwined wooden worms, it is difficult to tell if the staff is carved from a single rod, or built from many small pieces.

Wizards and Elves immediately sense the latent arcane power in the Staff of Broken Oaths.

Staff of Broken Oaths

- +1 magical weapon of Chaos
- The fen's ghosts (except for Segava) will not harass the staff bearer's party
- The bearer may undetectably lie once per day, and is not bound by the falsehood (e.g., any magically imposed consequence for lying is ignored).
- If the bearer is aligned with Chaos, he may attune one known wizard or clerical spell to the staff. This spell may be cast with a +1d bonus once per day. Any natural 1 rolled during a spell check results in corruption (roll 1d8: minor corruption on 1-4; major corruption on 5-7; greater corruption on 8), in addition to the corresponding results for the spell as written.
- If the Hidden Lord (a god of the Eternal Struggle, see DCC rulebook pg. 32) is the patron of the bearer, or if the bearer is one of the Hidden Lord's clerics, then the bearer receives a +2d bonus to see through deceptions (magical or mundane), as well as a +2d bonus to discover secrets. The judge may replace "the Hidden Lord" with any suitable chaotic supernatural entity from his campaign.
- Segava's ghost is immune to all effects of the staff (lies, attacks, etc.)
- Latent arcane energy slowly becomes available to the bearer as the staff and the wielder overcome challenges together (judge's discretion).

As the party prepares to leave the burial chamber, read the following:

As you prepare to leave, black smoke begins streaming from the staff, soon forming a miasmatic cloud over the iron coffin. The smoke gradually takes humanoid form, as if clinging to a body within its dark depths. An ethereal voice fills the chamber, "I am Segava, the so-called betrayer, or at least what is left of him. I have a proposition that will prove mutually beneficial if you will but listen."

Segava's spirit begs the party to use the staff to serve Chaos. He tells them that if they agree, he'll use the staff's power to teleport them out of the swamp. He also informs the party that this is the only way they can save Nahweeha from dying (true). He'll even describe the staff's powers so the PCs understand the power they hold. The choice is the party's to make. They can take the offer, keep the staff, and be teleported to safety. They thus avoid Murderbeak's revenge (see below), gaining a magical item in the bargain. The curse remains, however, and they lose access to the portal and the Scabbard of Sophix. The powers of Chaos favor this choice, but severely punish PCs who do not follow through in their subsequent service that this choice requires.

On the other hand, the party can choose to destroy the staff and stone, thus breaking the curse and gaining access to the portal. Of course, this path triggers the death of Nahweeha. The powers of Law (and any nature-related powers, such as Ildavir) favor this choice. If the party is not unified in its decision, those willing to take Segava's offer are teleported out with the staff, while the dissenters are left trapped in the fen.

In some playtests, this resulted in intra-party combat. In another playtest, a cleric decided he'd heard enough, and used *turn unholy* on Segava. If this occurs, treat Segava as a 2 HD creature with a +6 Will save modifier; he simply disappears (and does not return) if he fails his save.

The ancient rites performed on Segava as he was killed render his spirit harmless to the PCs (neither can the PCs harm him), thus a stat block is not provided. Confronting Murderbeak (see below) after fighting a spell-slinging ghost would decimate most first-level PCs. Regardless, a judge is free to write up Segava with attacks and spells if they believe he should be more "persuasive" with his request.

Of course, Segava didn't earn his title "The Betrayer" for nothing, so a judge may decide that Segava's offer isn't quite what it seems...

Murderbeak's Revenge

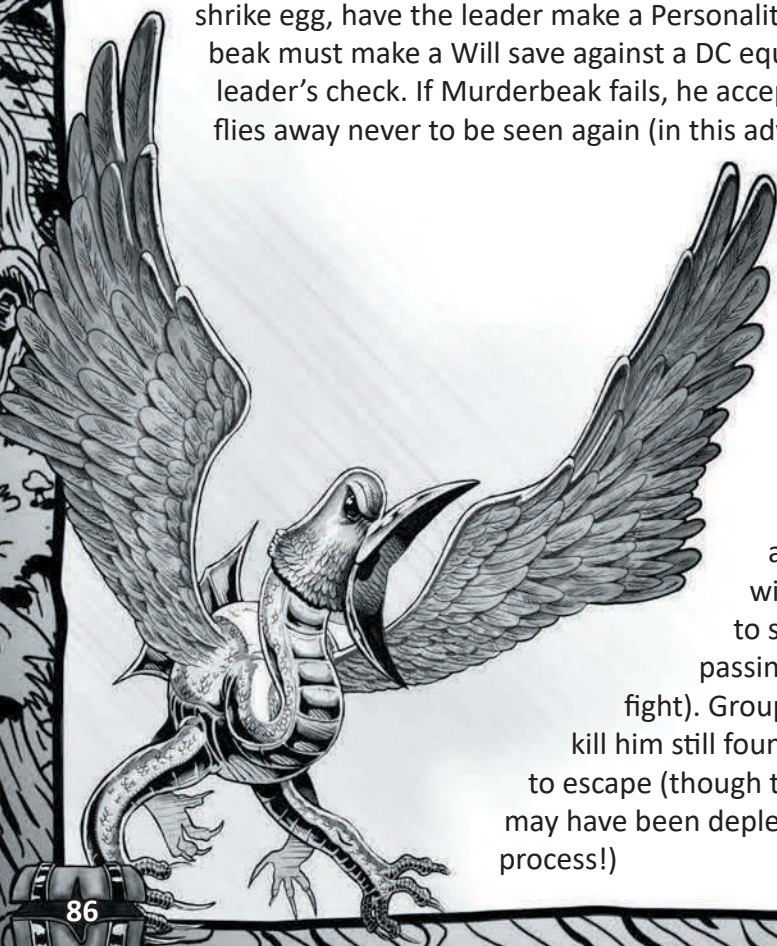
As the party exits the tree (which is inactive if they hold the staff), they are attacked by Murderbeak. The judge may need to modify the descriptive text below if the party did not encounter **Area/Event 1-B**.

Screeching with fury, the enormous serpent-bird you first encountered soon after entering the fen dives from the thinning fog, its cruel talons extended! Perhaps it seeks revenge for the destruction you have wreaked on the smaller members of its kind? Regardless, it seems bent on a single goal: the party's destruction!

Murderbeak fights mercilessly, receiving a +2d bonus to morale checks. It may execute a standing jump 20' into the air to initiate flight with its 40' wingspan. In this battle, if it successfully fetch-and-carries, it lifts the victim 80 feet in the air and drops him (8d6 falling damage).

If the party tries to bargain for their lives by using a live scale-shrike egg, have the leader make a Personality check. Murderbeak must make a Will save against a DC equivalent to the leader's check. If Murderbeak fails, he accepts the egg and flies away never to be seen again (in this adventure, at least).

A merciful judge may decide to deduct any damage done to the beast when previously encountered, though in playtests Murderbeak always attacked with full hp (due to sufficient time passing since the first fight). Groups that could not kill him still found creative ways to escape (though the party's ranks may have been depleted a bit in the process!)



“Murderbeak”, Prime Scaleshrike: Init +5; Atk beak-spear +5 melee (1d8), or talon rake +3 (1d6 + paralytic venom), or fetch-and-carry (special); AC 16; HD 7d12; hp 57; MV 30', fly 40', jump 20'; Act 2d20; SP paralytic venom (DC 14 Fortitude save or paralyzed for 1d3 hours), fetch-and-carry (+2d to grab a paralyzed or deceased victim, may be combined with a move action) SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N.

Area 1-I: Slowdown Falls

A waterfall marks this boundary of the Shrouded Fen. Fresh water surges over the high, foaming cliffs above, but quickly decelerates, becoming black and viscous as it falls. The water virtually stops at the bottom, oozing into a stagnant pool of sludge. The River Black extends southward out of the pool. Although the typical sounds of a waterfall crashing are absent, the pool glurps as tiny larvae churn the surface. On the fen side of where the falls meet the pool, a broken piece of green statuary, shaped like a fist, lies on the ground. A fierce buzzing begins to crescendo: suddenly giant mosquito-like insects with swollen abdomens fly out of the ochre fog, streaming in your direction!

Glusquitos are giant mosquitoes mutated and corrupted by the demon Nabeleb's deathblood. They initiate their attacks by firing a stick-glob from their abdomens. They then attempt to gang up on globbed victims for bloodsucking attacks. Some choose to remain on a victim for ongoing blood drain, while others disengage to attack different targets. A glusquito draining a victim may be dislodged with a successful attack, but if that attack misses, then the attacker must roll to hit the victim instead. Furthermore, like other “corrupted” animals in the adventure, they suffer 1d4 damage from a half-pint vial of holy water, or a waterskin's worth of water from the temple's cleansing chamber (Area 2-1), or the Waterfall of Tears (Area 1-F).

If the glusquito larval swarm is threatened, either by PCs entering the pond, or by outright attacking the larvae, then the glusquitos gain a +2d bonus to morale checks. The swarm is confined to the pool. Enterprising PCs may consider whether such larvae and unhatched larval eggs may be of value to a wizard/collector. This is, of course, left to the judge's discretion.

Glusquitos (5): Init +3; Atk abdominal stickglob +3 missile fire (1 + Special) or bloodsuck +3 melee (1d6+burning itch) or ongoing drain (special); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 13, 11, 11, 10, 4; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20 (stickglob once per encounter); SP stickglob (grants +1d to attack rolls for 1d3 glusquitos), burning itch (DC 10 Fortitude save or suffer -1d3 Agility, save once per day), ongoing drain (a glusquito that successfully bloodsucks a stickglobbed opponent may sacrifice subsequent attacks to automatically drain 1 hp per round; a successful attack will dislodge it); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N.

Glusquito Larval Swarm: Init +3; Atk bloodsuck +1 melee (1d3+burning itch); AC 11; HD 3d8; hp 14; MV swim 10'; Act 1d20 special; SP burning itch (DC 8 Fortitude save or suffer -1d3 Agility, save once per day), bite 1d3+3 targets/round in 15'x15'x15' volume; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

The party has most likely received ghostly “advice” (see **Area 1-B** and the **Ghost Harassment Table**) that leaping from the top of the falls will break the fen’s curse. Smart PCs will likely be suspicious of jumping from the top, since Nahweeha made no mention of it. PCs attempting to climb find the cliffs difficult and slick (DC 15). Unwise PCs that jump die and become ghosts themselves. The exact height of the cliffs is left to the judge, but they should be high enough that death upon landing is basically guaranteed. Regardless, while the curse is active, one cannot escape the fog by going ‘over the top’.

The fist statuary appears to be broken off of a man-sized statue. It is exquisitely crafted, and made from an emerald-like crystal. If not for its cracks, dents, and chips, its value would be impressive. As is, it is worth 25 gp for its material content.

As an alternative to following the Fog Beast, the party may use this area to enter the Shrouded Fen (entering the pool here does not incur rolling on the **Corrupted Black Ooze Table**). However, until the swamp’s curse is broken, they cannot return across the river, pool, or cliffs, without losing 1 hp per round, as detailed earlier in **Entering the Shrouded Fen**.

Epilogue: Ending the Adventure, Portal

With the curse lifted, the Shrouded Fen becomes a natural swamp, as it existed centuries ago. The River Black soon flows with fresh water. Corrupted animals, deprived of the chaotic corrupting powers that sustained them, quickly die. All the tormented spirits of the fen are put to rest (i.e., ghost harassment no longer occurs). The strange falls in **Areas 1-F** and **Area 1-I** return to normal, natural, waterfalls. If the PCs, by luck, brains, and/or brawn, somehow managed to remove the curse without the Fog Beast's help by entering the fen on their own terms, award them an additional +2 Luck.

When the party returns to **Area 1-C**, the temple platform, read the following:

The Fog Beast stands before the floating portal at the top of the temple's platform. The beast holds a silver medallion shaped like a large leaf in its left hand. In its right hand, it holds a long sheet of moss, on which misty runes writhe. A gentle breeze seems to blow impossibly from all directions at once.

A whisper dances in the wind, "In restoring the fen to its natural state, you have done a great service for Ildavir, and she is pleased. The goddess offers this holy symbol of her power. I, too, am pleased. If one of you with arcane talents desires to learn my art, you may, in exchange for tasks which I will require. Read these runes and seek my patronage." As the whispering voice fades, the Fog Beast begins to dissipate, soon vanishing into white mist as the holy symbol and moss sheet fall gently to the platform.

The silver medallion is a holy symbol from Ildavir. The symbol grants a neutral cleric (or one devoted to preserving nature) a +1d bonus to one spell check per day. If the bearer of the symbol is devoted to Ildavir, but not a cleric, then she may turn unholy as a neutral cleric, but with a d16 action die (with the risk of deity disapproval).

The moss sheet with wispy runes is a scroll of the spells *patron bond* and *invoke patron*, specific to the Fog Beast. The runes shift to match the language in which the reader is most literate. See the section, **The Fog Beast as a Patron** on page 92.

If the party inserts the wood and stone key from the Swearing Stone into the portal's keyhole, they are teleported to an extra-dimensional chamber that houses the sword **Sophix**. Read the following:

As you insert the key, you find yourselves instantly transported to a room shaped like an enormous leaf. The walls display paintings of solitary men and women performing deeds of martial might, though in each scene the hero's weapon is the same short sword.

One painting catches your eye. A man wielding the sword is fighting a mist demon atop the temple platform from which you came. A statue of this same man stands in the center of the room, composed of different colored stones to look surprisingly lifelike.

The statue holds an uplifted (and very real) short sword identical to the one in the paintings, pointed toward the sky. A real scabbard and belt hangs on the statue's waist. You each hear a voice in your minds, "For centuries, Ildavir has sent the Fog Beast to find one who may be worthy to wield me, Sophix,



bane of demonkind. You are the first to show promise. Selliach used me to vanquish the mist demon Nabelelb, though it cost him his life. I wonder what you might accomplish? Your success intrigues me, so you may take my scabbard. If the bearer properly devotes themselves to Ildavir and the Balance, we may speak again."

The party can remove the scabbard, but not the sword. Sophix does not respond to any inquiries.

Scabbard of Sophix

This scabbard must be used to sheath either Sophix, or a mundane shortsword; it will not endure the presence of any magical weapon other than Sophix. A short sword drawn from this scabbard is treated as magical when attacking creatures with immunities to mundane weapons. This property disappears from the weapon if another is sheathed in the scabbard. The scabbard also grants a 1d3 bonus to any roll, once per day. If the wielder is devoted to Ildavir (via worship, patron bond, etc.) then this bonus is 2d3, twice per day.

Once the scabbard is removed, a portal opens within the chamber. The portal returns the party either to the fen, or to a place of the judge's choosing; either way, the portal atop the temple platform vanishes forever, and new adventure begins!



The Fog Beast as a Patron

Deep within the phlogiston, in the three-way intersection between the planes of air, water, and the prime material, there exists the Fog Beast, a supernatural fusion of plant, animal, and pseudo-elemental mist. Able to phase between all three planes simultaneously, the Fog Beast provides patronage to wizards, elves, and elemental beings willing to further its agendas. Although it ignores minor squabbles between Law and Chaos, it tasks its agents to restore large disturbances to the Balance. A frequent enemy of Obitu-Que, the Fog Beast demands immediate action if natural areas face supernatural destruction. Few know its origins, though it serves as an envoy for both the goddesses of nature and the sea, Ildavir and Pelagia. It also allies with Yddgrrl, the world root, and Ittha, the Prince of Elemental Wind.

Those who seek patronage from the Fog Beast often wish to master mist magic. Although many supplicants serve the Balance directly, others following Law or Chaos are effective servants. A follower of the beast learns the secret bonds between plant, animal, air, and water. The week-long *patron bond* ceremony should demonstrate that the petitioner has a basic understanding of these connections. Based on the player's creativity, the judge may decide to grant a +1d bonus (or -1d penalty) to the bonding ritual's spell check.

Invoke Patron check results

1: Lost, failure, and worse! Roll 1d6 modified by Luck: (3 or less) corruption + patron taint; (4-5) corruption; (6+) patron taint.

2-11: Failure. Unlike other spells, *invoke patron* may not be lost for the day. Depending on the results of the *patron bond* spell, the wizard may still be able to cast it.

12-13: The fog of misfortune adheres to a single enemy within 60', chosen by the caster. For the next 1d3 rounds (determined secretly by the judge), this enemy has a -2d penalty to all rolls.

14-17: The cleansing breath of the Fog Beast blows upon the caster. The caster is cleansed of any natural diseases and poisons, and healed 3d3 points of hp damage, and the same amount of ability damage.

18-19: The fog of binding adheres to a single enemy within 100', chosen by the caster. This enemy must make a DC 18 Will save or be held helpless and actionless for 2d3 rounds (determined secretly by the judge). If the saving throw is made, then the enemy suffers the results of the fog of misfortune (result 12-13).

20-23: Protective, misty vines surround the caster for 3d3 rounds (determined secretly by the judge). While active, the vine shell increases the caster's armor class by +4, grants a +1d bonus to saving throws, and imposes a -1d penalty to all incoming physical damage, and a -2d penalty to all incoming fire damage.

24-27: The fog of constriction adheres to all enemies in a 60' radius sphere centered on the caster, wrapping around each opponent like a misty snake. Enemies must make a DC 24 Fort save or suffer the following: a -2d penalty to all rolls, 8 points of constriction damage per round, movement reduced by half, and grant a +1d bonus to incoming attacks. Those that make the saving throw suffer a -1d penalty to all rolls and suffer 4 points of constriction damage per round. The constricting fog lasts for 3d3 rounds (determined secretly by the judge).

28-29: Protective, misty vines surround the caster and up to 10 allies within 100' for 3d3 rounds (determined secretly by the judge). While active, the vine shell increases armor class by +4, grants a +1d bonus to saving throws, and imposes a -1d penalty to all incoming physical damage, and a -2d penalty to all incoming fire damage.

30-31: The Fog Beast sends an elemental from the pseudo-elemental plane of mist to help the caster. The elemental obeys telepathic commands from the caster and remains for 2d6 rounds (determined secretly by the judge). See pg. 411 of the DCC core rulebook for specific details on elemental traits.

Elemental, Mist: Init +7; Atk slam +9 melee (2d6+blinding fog) or mist ball +8 missile fire (1d6+blinding fog, range 100'); AC 16; HD 8d8; MV fly 40' or swim 60'; Act 1d20; SP blinding fog (Ref save DC = elemental's modified attack roll, or suffer -2d to attack rolls and spell checks for 1 round), elemental traits; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; AL N.

32+: The Fog Beast sends two major elementals from the pseudo-elemental plane of mist to help the caster. These are identical to those in result 30-31, except they have 12d8 HD and 2d20 action dice. The elementals obey telepathic commands from the caster and remain for 2d6 rounds (determined secretly by the judge). See pg. 411 of the DCC core rulebook for specific details on elemental traits.

PATRON TAINT: FOG BEAST

When patron taint is indicated for the Fog Beast, roll 1d6 on the table below. When a caster has acquired all six taints at all levels of effect, there is no need to continue rolling any more.

Roll Result (1d6)

1: Small clouds of fog envelop the caster's hands whenever she casts a spell, causing a -1d penalty to all spell checks involving fire-based spells (*flaming hands*, *scorching ray*, etc.). If this result is rolled a second time, the fog surrounding the caster's hands is permanent; this increased attunement bestows a +1d bonus to all spell checks involving mist, air, and water (*choking cloud*, *gust of wind*, Fog Beast's patron spells, etc.). If this result is rolled a third time, a 10' radius sphere of mist permanently surrounds the caster; all items within become damp, with mundane fire sources having half their normal durations.

2: The caster's body hair becomes intertwined with tiny vines. If this result is rolled a second time, all body hair is replaced by moisture-craving moss; any day that the caster does not get his moss wet, he does not naturally heal hit points, ability damage, etc. If this result is rolled a third time, the moss confers photosynthetic properties to its host. If the caster spends four hours in sunlight, then he naturally heals at twice the normal rate for that day (2 hp, 2 ability points, etc.).

3: The caster's body begins to resemble the Fog Beast; her arms' flesh and muscles are replaced with vined plant matter of equivalent strength. If this result is rolled a second time, the caster's legs become furry, gray, and very muscular (+1d bonus to any Strength check involving legs). If this result is rolled a third time, the caster loses both her thumbs (-1d penalty to anything involving gripping). The Fog Beast has no need of thumbs, after all.

4: Whenever the caster speaks, a gentle wind emanates from him. If this result is rolled a second time, then there is a chance that some of the caster's words are replaced with the sound of a breeze; he must make a Luck check for his speaking to be normal. This does not affect spell casting, however. If this result is rolled a third time, then whenever the caster speaks, a gentle wind arises that carries his words from a random direction. No sound comes from his mouth.

5: The caster's breathing is tied to the pseudo-plane of mist. When the caster inhales, a brief cloud forms about her, and quickly dissipates. If this result is rolled a second time, the caster's body becomes damp with each inhalation. If this result is rolled a third time, then the caster's body itself, and anything she's wearing, briefly become an insubstantial misty cloud when she inhales. While this presents the caster with some unique every-day challenges, it grants her +2 to AC (accounting an opponent having extra trouble timing his attacks).

6: The caster's mere presence affects the weather. For some portion of each day, there is a 1 in 7 chance of fog and/or rain, regardless of climate. If this result is rolled a second time, the chance becomes 2 in 7, and locals call him "Fogbringer." If this result is rolled a third time, the chance becomes 3 in 7, and the caster is occasionally pestered by drought-ridden peasants who plead for him to visit their crops.

PATRON SPELLS: FOG BEAST

The Fog Beast grants three unique spells, as follows:

Level 1: *Misty Mark*

Level 2: *Vapor Tentacles*

Level 3: *Fog Step*

SPELLBURN: FOG BEAST

Because the Fog Beast's magic has roots in the pseudo-elemental plane of mist, petitioners and supplicants become attuned to water and air, especially the transition between these two elements. Consequently, any caster bound to the Fog Beast who spellburns using boiling water may double his bonus for ability points burned. **Note that in all cases, the player must declare the amount of spellburn before rolling the below table's d4.**

Roll Spellburn Result (1d4)

- 1: A caustic, green mist coalesces onto the caster, burning his skin with its acidic droplets. The damage manifests as ability loss for spell burn.
- 2: The caster's blood bubbles to the surface of her skin forming a cloud of blood vapor around her body. She uses the pain to focus her arcane energies; in addition to ability damage, the caster may choose to take 1d4+CL hp damage, which is added to the spellburn bonus.
- 3: A fog snake erupts from the ground and begins constricting the caster. Roll 1d3. On a 1, the snake squeezes the caster's legs almost to the point of breaking; all spellburn damage is taken from Agility. On a 2, the snake squeezes the caster's lungs almost to the point of suffocation; all spellburn damage is taken from Stamina. On a 3, the snake squeezes the caster's arms almost to the point of breaking; all spellburn damage is taken from Strength.
- 4: A phlogiston hole appears above the caster and begins sucking moisture out of the caster's body. This rapid desiccation manifests as ability loss for spell burn.

Misty Mark

Level: 1 (Fog Beast)

Range: varies

Duration: varies

Casting time: 1 action

Save: Will vs. check

General: Servants of the Fog Beast call on mists to serve many purposes. Although the uninitiated erroneously believe that fog is meant to hide, or blind, that which lies within, the enlightened know that fog can reveal, as well as obscure. The misty mark is a glowing shell of fog that adheres to the target. At its weakest, the mark makes the target easier to hit. At its strongest, the mark binds, debilitates, damages, and conveys the target's location to the caster.

A marked target cannot hide using non-magical stealth. If a marked target attempts magical concealment (such as *invisibility* or *darkness*) then the target's spell check must exceed the Misty Mark's spell check in order for the mark to be concealed. Note that the mark is not dispelled, it is simply hidden along with the target. A target that teleports away brings the mark with her.

Manifestation (Roll 1d4): (1) cloudy violet rays emanate from the caster's fingers and coalesce upon the target; (2) the caster hurls a ball of shimmering mist that spreads over the target upon impact; (3) the caster blows forth a cone of white mist that adheres only to the target; (4) a bright yellow mist rises upward from the target's feet.

1: Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11: Lost. Failure.

12-13: The caster marks a target within 50', which lasts for 1d3+CL rounds. The target grants a +1d bonus to all incoming melee and ranged attack rolls while marked. The caster gains a +1d bonus on any subsequent spell checks directed at the marked target.

14-17: As result 12-13, but the caster may choose up to three targets.

18-19: The caster marks a target within 100', which lasts for 1d5+CL rounds. The target grants a +1d bonus to all incoming melee and ranged attack rolls while marked. The caster gains a +1d bonus on any subsequent spell checks directed at the marked target. The target suffers 1d5+CL damage from the initial onset of the mark.

20-23: As result 18-19, but the caster may choose up to four targets.

24-27: The caster marks a target within 150', which lasts for 1d3+CL turns. The target grants a +1d bonus to all incoming melee and ranged attack rolls while marked. The caster gains a +1d bonus on any subsequent spell checks directed at the marked target. The target suffers 2d5+CL damage from the initial onset of the mark, and receives a -1d penalty to all attacks and spell checks it attempts while marked.

28-29: As result 24-27, but the caster may choose up to seven targets.

30-31: The caster marks a target within 200', which lasts for 1d5 plus CL hours. The target grants a +1d bonus to all incoming melee and ranged attack rolls while marked. The caster gains a +1d bonus on any subsequent spell checks directed at the marked target. The target suffers 3d5+CL damage from the initial onset of the mark, and receives a -1d penalty to all attacks and spell checks it attempts while marked. The caster knows the general direction and distance of the marked target at all times, without having to see it.

32+: The caster marks a target he can see (even through a scrying device), which lasts for 1d3+CL days. If the target is not visible, then the caster must have some element of the target's body (blood left on a sword, a tooth, a scrap of fur or hair, etc.). The target grants a +1d bonus to all incoming melee and ranged attack rolls while marked. The caster gains a +1d bonus on any subsequent spell checks directed at the marked target. The target suffers 4d5+CL damage from the initial onset of the mark, and receives a -1d penalty to all attacks and spell checks it attempts while marked. The caster knows the general direction and distance of the marked target at all times, without having to see it.

Vapor Tentacles

Level: 2 (Fog Beast)

Range: Self

Duration: varies

Casting time: 1 action

Save: none

General: As the Fog Beast's body is partially mist, so too is that of an advanced servant. The caster channels matter from the pseudo-plane of mist to create one or more vapor tentacles that she may use as

arms and legs, or to create a defensive shell of countless tiny tentacles. While the spell is active, the vapor tentacles can be withdrawn into the body, and extended later, if desired. The maximum length, strength, and durability of the tentacles depend on the spell check result. Larger offensive tentacles may be damaged by spells and magic weapons; they have the same AC as the caster, and suffer a penalty of +1d per damage die from incoming fire attacks. Smaller defensive tentacles do not suffer damage, and last the entire duration.

A caster attacking with the tentacles must concentrate during the round (DCC core rulebook, pg 106). If a caster loses concentration, he may not use the tentacles to attack on his next combat turn. The action dice for multiple tentacles follow the die chain: d20 for the first tentacle, d16 for the second, d14 for the third, etc. The caster may add his spell check bonus, instead of Strength, for melee attacks with vapor tentacles. Note that creatures from the elemental planes of air and water are immune to the vapor tentacles' attacks. Vapor tentacles count as magic weapons toward those creatures with immunity to mundane attacks.

Manifestation: See below.

1: Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11: Lost. Failure.

12-13: Failure, but spell is not lost.

14-15: The caster grows 1 vapor tentacle for 1d3 rounds. The tentacle may extend up to 5' from the caster, has 1d6+CL hp, does 1d6 damage, and may lift a maximum of 20 pounds.

16-19: The caster's body is covered with countless tiny vapor tentacles, each of which randomly extend and retract defensively. These provide a +1 AC bonus for 2d3 rounds.

20-21: The caster grows 2 vapor tentacles for 2d3 rounds. Each tentacle may extend up to 10' from the caster, has 2d6+CL hp, does 1d8 damage, and may lift a maximum of 40 pounds.



22-25: The caster's body is covered with countless tiny vapor tentacles, each of which randomly extend and retract defensively. These provide a +2 AC bonus for 1d3 turns. The caster receives a +1d bonus to any Reflex save. Falling damage is 1d4 per 10'.

26-29: The caster grows 3 vapor tentacles for 1d3 turns. Each tentacle may extend up to 10' from the caster, has 2d8+CL hp, does 1d10 damage, and may lift a maximum of 60 pounds. The caster gains a +1d bonus to jumping, climbing, grappling, and Strength checks when employing the tentacles.

30-31: The caster's body is covered with countless tiny vapor tentacles, each of which randomly extend and retract defensively. These provide a +4 AC bonus for 2d3 turns. The caster receives a +2d bonus to any Reflex save. Falling damage is 1d3 per 10'.

32-33: The caster grows 4 vapor tentacles for 1d3 hours. Each tentacle may extend up to 15' from the caster, has 2d10+CL hp, does 1d12 damage, and may lift a maximum of 60 pounds. The caster gains a +2d bonus to jumping, climbing, grappling, and Strength checks when employing the tentacles.

34+: The caster grows 5 vapor tentacles for 2d3 hours. Each tentacle may extend up to 20' from the caster, has 2d12+CL hp, does 1d14 damage, and may lift a maximum of 80 pounds. The caster gains a +2d bonus to jumping, climbing, grappling, and Strength checks when employing the tentacles.

Fog Step

Level: 3 (Fog Beast)

Range: varies

Duration: varies

Casting time: 1 action

Save: varies

General: Learning the secret of the Fog Step is a sign of mist-mastery for all servants to the Fog Beast. While the Fog Beast performs this innately, the Fog Step takes considerable arcane effort for others. The

spell enables one to trace a path from his current plane, to the pseudo-elemental mist plane, then to somewhere else. The mist plane is used as a bridge, and the effects of “passing through” are unpredictable.

When one fog steps, his body takes additional time to fully cross over from the mist plane. During this time, the body is “mist-linked.” The caster may cast normally, and is affected by magic normally. However, since the caster is only partially physically present, a DC 15 Reflex save must be made for the caster to physically interact with another, or for another to physically interact with the caster (e.g., a melee attack). The caster may add his Fog Step spell check bonus to this save. In addition to the locations corresponding to different results below, the character may be attacked in the mist plane while mist-linked. A mist-linked PC has the same movement rate, but hovers just above the ground rather than touching it directly.

Manifestation: Roll 1d3: (1) a misty portal appears in front of the caster, which disappears once he steps into it; (2) The caster’s body becomes a humanoid-shaped cloud, that condenses down to a single droplet and disappears; (3) misty vines erupt from the ground, entwining the caster and swelling until he is completely covered. When they dissipate, he is gone.

1: Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11: Lost. Failure.

12-15: Failure, but spell is not lost.

16-17: The caster disappears, reappearing at a location she sees within 100’ in any direction. The caster is mist-linked for one round after the step.

18-21: The caster may trade positions with any target she sees within 150’. Willing targets are automatically transported, while unwilling targets must make a Will save versus the spell check. The target is mist-linked for 1 round, and the caster is mist-linked for 1d3 rounds.

22-23: The caster is almost in two places at once, as her body rapidly alternates between two locations and the mist plane. She may

choose any two places within 200' of each other, and must either see the locations, or have visited them previously. The effect lasts for $1d3+CL$ rounds, and she is mist-linked for the duration. Her action dice for a given round may be divided between places, e.g., a level-5 wizard may use her d20 action at location A and her d14 action die at location B. Note that she is susceptible to attack at both locations, as well as the mist plane.

24-26: For the next $1d3+CL$ rounds, the caster is mist-linked. During this time, the caster can move to any place he can see, or can picture in his mind (limited to his current plane). Additionally, he may trade positions with any target he can see within 300'. However, rather than sending the target to only his former position, the caster may send the target to any position he has fog-stepped to during this casting. Willing targets are automatically transported, while unwilling targets must make a Will save versus the spell check.

27-31: The caster forms a large conduit to the mist pseudo-plane, large enough to transport local rain clouds or fog, with "local" meaning contained in a 6-mile hex. The caster may fog step to any location he can see, or has visited in the past. He may bring the current cloud cover with him and leave it in the mist plane; he may also bring cloud cover from the mist plane to replace the weather of his destination hex. The type of weather is determined by the caster, but it must consist of clouds (rainy or not) or fog. The effects of the spell last for $1d5+CL$ hours, and the caster is mist-linked during this time.

32-33: The caster forms a temporary sanctuary. She may fog-step herself and up to $2d5+CL$ allies to a comfortable, livable pocket plane within the pseudo plane of mist. She and her allies may remain for CL days to recuperate, strategize, etc., before traveling to a location known to the caster, on any plane. All travelers are mist-linked for 1 day in their destination.

34-35: The caster is almost in three places at once, as her body rapidly alternates between the locations and the mist plane. She may choose any three places known to her, on any plane. The effect lasts for $2d3$ plus CL turns, and she is mist-linked for the duration. Her action dice for a given round may be divided between places, e.g., a level-10 wizard may use one d20 action at location A, another at location

B, and her d14 action die at location C. Note that she is susceptible to attack at all three locations, as well as the mist plane.

36+: The caster forms an elemental tether between the mist plane and her current location. She becomes mist-linked and must concentrate (see pg 106 in the DCC core rulebook) for a number of rounds to summon an elemental of air, water, or mist. One round of uninterrupted concentration results in an 8 HD elemental, with two or three uninterrupted rounds yielding 12 or 16 HD elemental, respectively. See pg 411-412 of the core rulebook for details on elementals; the mist elemental is described in the Fog Beast's invoke patron results. The caster remains mist-linked for 2d6+CL rounds, and may only summon one elemental during this duration. The elemental will obey mental commands of the caster.

Appendix A: Act 1 as a One-Shot Funnel

Although *Escape from the Shrouded Fen* is written to be played over multiple sessions, it may be modified to be used as a funnel for a 4-6 hour one-shot for an exhibition game, convention session, etc. While a judge could simply run Act 1 as written, players may feel cheated if they extinguish the heads in **Area 2-10**, but discover that this isn't enough to lift the curse. The players' experience may be significantly improved with the following suggested modifications.

- Do not waste valuable time with character generation. **Have pre-generated zero-level PCs ready to go.** These may be quickly produced using the Purple Sorcerer website's 0-level Party & Tourney Generator: http://puplesorcerer.com/create_party.php.
- **Move quickly from the Introduction to Area 1-A.** Most 1-shot players will understand that if they don't accept the quest, then there may be no game. Of course, you can improvise and transition to using the adventure as an open hex crawl, albeit a deadly one, if players prefer it.
- **Omit the floating portal in Area 1-C.** Its backstory and employment are not necessary, and may be even cumbersome, for a 1-shot.

- **Make extinguishing the heads in Area 2-10 the criterion for eliminating the fog and lifting the curse.** If PCs hear the curse (from touching the Demon-Blood Slime, etc.) then omit the line, “Until wooden worms of rod strike the tear of a god.” The judge may even consider withholding **Handout 2 in the PDF Appendix** (the printed curse), as it is not essential.
- When the heads are extinguished in Area 2-10, describe the fog as completely disappearing rather than becoming weaker. **When the party exits the temple, do not read the “Ending Act 1” section; instead, paraphrase the curse-lifted section Area 1-E, omitting the key:** *Emerging from the temple, you find the fog completely dispersed. The air is pure and clean, and the oozy pond has been replaced with fresh water. You intuitively know that you’ve broken the demon’s curse, and are no longer bound to the swamp. A warmth radiates within your bodies, like a smile from the divine. You’ve accomplished what no others have been able to do, and your names will be remembered among the region’s legends.*

Appendix B: Act 2 as a Level 1 One-Shot

Although *Escape from the Shrouded Fen* is written to be played over multiple sessions, it may be modified to be used as a 4-6 hour first-level one-shot adventure for an exhibition game, convention session, etc. In order to complete the session in the allotted time, the adventure must start with the PCs trapped in the swamp. The judge must quickly summarize the PCs’ experiences “up to now.” In other words, the judge must give the “TLDR” version of Act 1. We provide a usable example below. Act 2 may be essentially run as written, though the epilogue (including the portal at Area 1-C and the key produced from shattering the Swearing Stone) may not be needed, and may actually add too much adventuring to fit in the time window. The players’ experience may be significantly improved with the following suggested modifications.

- Do not waste valuable time with character generation. **Have pre-generated first-level PCs ready to go.** These may be quickly produced using the Purple Sorcerer website’s Upper Level Character Generator: http://puplesorcerer.com/create_upper.php.

- For Clerics, Wizards, and Elves, create pregenerated spell lists using the Purple Sorcerer website's Sorcerer's Grimoire: <http://purplesorcerer.com/grimoire.php>.
- Assume the PCs had previously found **Area 2-11** and let them divide the treasure/equipment among themselves before the adventure begins. Having a pre-written list (or index cards to hand out to PCs) is ideal for this purpose.
- **Use the following introduction before beginning the adventure in Area 1-D:** *Chosen by the Fog Beast, you entered the Shrouded Fen knowing that none before you have ever returned. The rumors of ancient treasure and secret knowledge were too strong to resist. The Fog Beast said that you could not leave the swamp until you cleared its thick ochre fog and removed a curse. Deep within, you found a temple that was belching fog into the swamp. A demon had been slain there, and its black blood flowed into both the temple and the fen. Entering the temple, you discovered it had been devoted to an ancient lawful moon goddess, Kayassit, and that its high priestess, Etiyane, killed herself in some forbidden ritual. Defeating headless fog zombie priestesses by purifying their demon-blood-corrupted heads, you put Etiyane's ghost to rest, stopped the temple's fog production, and significantly weakened the existing fog so that you could further explore the fen. Exiting the temple, you encountered an old hag who revealed herself to be the high priestess' cursed daughter. She invited you to her hut so that you could recuperate. Now that your wounds have healed, you're ready to explore the Shrouded Fen and remove its curse.*
- Start the party in Nahweeha's hut and play Act 2 as written, but eliminate encounters as necessary to keep things moving. **Random swamp encounters and ghost harassments are good candidates for partial elimination.**
- Try to have at least 90 minutes remaining when the party reaches Area 1-H.
- When the party shatters the Swearing Stone in Area 1-E, omit the presence of the key.

Appendix C: Encounter Statblocks and Info

For quick reference, every beastie stat block is listed below:

Biting Swarm: A buzzing mosquito swarm surrounds the party, causing a -1d penalty to all rolls. For each 1-mile hex traveled, the unluckiest party member makes a Luck check. If successful, the swarm moves on; if the check is failed, everyone takes 1 hp damage, and the swarm stays. A significant amount of fire, e.g., multiple lit torches, will disperse the swarm, as will 20 points of area-effect damage.

Bursting Boars: Init +2; Atk tusk +3 melee (1d6); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 10, 9, 8, 4; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP charge (+1d to attack, -2 to AC until next attack), tusk-throw (on a crit, victim is thrown 10' into air and takes 1d6 falling damage), death throe (corrupted rat swarm if slayer fails Luck check); SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +1; AL C.

Corrupted Rat Swarm: Init +2; Atk swarming bite +2 melee (1 point of damage, DC 5 Fortitude save or die from blood poisoning); AC 10; HD 3d8; hp 13; MV 30'; Act special; SP bite 1d3+3 targets/round in 15'x15' area, treat non-metallic armor as AC 10, -2d damage from non-area attacks, crit destroys wielded wood or forces 1d10 on Minor Corruption Table; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will -1; AL C.

Demon-Blood Slime: Init -2; Atk slime-stream +2 missile fire (1d4 acid, range 15', flashback); AC 12; HD 1d12 per 5' square (1d8/5' if previously subdued); hp 6 initially; MV 5', climb 5'; Act 1d20 per 5' square; SP flashback (victim briefly sees Nabelelb's death), -2d damage from piercing or slashing weapons, crits with **Corrupted Black Ooze Table**; SV Fort +8, Ref -7, Will +1; AL C.

Etiyane's Ghost: Init +3; Atk draining touch +6 melee (1d5 + special), or fogburst +4 missile fire (1d6 + special), or domination +4 melee (special); AC 12; HD 4d12; hp 26; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP draining touch (damage done heals a headless fog zombie of Etiyane's choice), fogburst (Fortitude save or helplessly choke and gasp for one round, DC equal to modified attack roll), domination (DC 12 Will save or Etiyane dominates target for one round), un-dead traits, immune to non-magical weapons, crits, disease, poison, sleep, charm, paralysis, mental effects, cold damage; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3; AL C.

Giant Camogeckos: Init +2 (+4 with surprise); Atk bite +2 melee (1d5+gecko-grapple); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 8, 8; MV 40', climb 40'; Act 1d20; SP gecko-grapple (+1d bonus to subsequent bites, DC 13 Strength check to disengage), active camouflage (DC 14 Intelligence check to spot); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; AL N.

Glusquitos: Init +3; Atk abdominal stickglob +3 missile fire (1 + Special) or bloodsuck +3 melee (1d6+burning itch) or ongoing drain (special); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 13, 11, 11, 10, 4; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20 (stickglob once per encounter); SP stickglob (grants +1d to attack rolls for 1d3 glusquitos), burning itch (DC 10 Fortitude save or suffer -1d3 Agility, save once per day), ongoing drain (a glusquito that successfully bloodsucks a stickglobbed opponent may sacrifice subsequent attacks to automatically drain 1 hp per round; a successful attack will dislodge it); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N.

Glusquito Larval Swarm: Init +3; Atk bloodsuck +1 melee (1d3+burning itch); AC 11; HD 3d8; hp 14; MV swim 10'; Act 1d20 special; SP burning itch (DC 8 Fortitude save or suffer -1d3 Agility, save once per day), bite 1d3+3 targets/round in 15'x15'x15' volume; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

Headless Fog Zombie Priestess: Init -4; Atk slam +4 melee (1d4+1); AC 9; HD 1d12; hp 6; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP vulnerable before rising (water in eye-sockets, see below), immune to sleep, charm, paralysis, mental effects, cold damage; SV Fort +3, Ref -4, Will +3; AL C.

The zombies innately sense the living, and have no need of eyes. Their un-death has made them unnaturally strong. Be sure to impress upon the PCs that the frail-looking, misty, fleshy females pack a wallop! When a fog zombie is felled, its body dissolves into mist, but regrows from its head in 1d3 turns. (Though it won't return to this particular battle).

Lesser Shadows: Init +3 (able to always surprise); Atk withering touch +2 melee (1d3 temp Str dmg); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 13, 10, 7; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP surprise (+4 bonus on first attack), incorporeal, -2d damage from non-magical weapons, un-dead traits; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +3; AL N.

Murderbeak, The Prime Scaleshrike: Init +5; Atk beak-spear +5 melee (1d8), or talon rake +3 (1d6 + paralytic venom), or fetch-and-carry (special); AC 16; HD 7d12; hp 57; MV 30', fly 40', jump 20'; Act 2d20; SP paralytic venom (DC 14 Fortitude save or paralyzed for 1d3 hours), fetch-and-carry (+2d to grab a paralyzed or deceased victim, may be combined with a move action) SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N.

Mutant Flying Termites: PCs disturb a mutant flying termite nest. Anyone with an exposed wooden object (staff, bow, shield, etc.) must make a DC 12 Reflex save to shield it. Failure results in permanent termite damage (-1d to attacks and damage, -1 to AC, etc.).

Nahweeha: Init +2; Atk dagger +2 melee (1d4); AC 13; HD 3d4+10; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP spellcasting without fail (2d8+14 spell check, see below), death throee (transfer curse); SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +8; AL N. Spells: all spell checks are 2d8+14, *animal summoning* (Wiz 1), *color spray* (Wiz 1), *food of the gods* (Cleric 1), *invisible companion* (Wiz 2), *mending* (Wiz 1), *Nythuul's porcupine coat* (Wiz 2), *spider climb* (Wiz 1).

San'ehmr, The Chaos Tree: Init +0; Atk root-slap +3 melee (2d5) or spear-needles +3 missile fire (1d8+1) or limb-slam +1 melee (2d12, only attack for the round); AC 16; HD 8d12; hp 66; MV 1'; Act 3d20 or 1d20; SP may attack anyone within 100', trunk is vulnerable to fire (+2d damage, ignites if takes half current hp fire damage, burns 1d8/round thereafter), crit table G/d4 ; SV Fort +5, Ref -10, Will +7; AL C.

Scaleshrikes: Init +3; Atk beak-spear +2 melee (1d6), or talon rake +1 (1d4 + paralytic venom), or fetch-and-carry (special); AC 12; HD 2d4; MV 20', fly 30', jump 15'; Act 1d20; SP paralytic venom (DC 10 Fortitude save or paralyzed for 1d3 hours), fetch-and-carry (+1d to grab a paralyzed or deceased victim, may be combined with a move action), flee when half are slain; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

Speargrass: Init -5 (surprise unless spotted: DC 15 Int, +1d for PCs with forest-lore); Atk grassblade +3 melee (1+slow digestion); AC 5; HD 2d8; MV 5'; Act 1d20 per encounter; SP slow digestion (1 hp damage per hour), painful climb (DC 10 to climb, but sharp edges and digestive juices make a DC 12 Fort save necessary to hang on), vulnerable to fire (+2d damage from fire), SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

Spore Flowers: Flowers spontaneously bloom from mushrooms and spray a cloud of spores. All PCs make a DC 12 Fortitude save. Those who succeed see a shared vision of a huge yellow stone; it glows with a soft light, and suddenly shatters into tiny fragments (or a different vision of the judge's choosing). Those who fail suffer 2d3 respiratory damage. Anyone rolling a 1 on this save will explode in a shower of spores in 1d3 hours, triggering a similar spore attack, unless the original damage is healed.

Swamp Snakes: Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d3+venom); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 4, 4, 4, 4; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP venom (DC 13 Fort save or slow death, 1 hp per hour), snakes disappear once 2 are killed; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

War Trap: The first rank of PCs in marching order must make a DC 12 Reflex save or suffer 1d6 damage (DC 12 to find and remove). 1d3 hand axes, javelins, or short swords (judge's choice) may be salvaged from this remnant of war.



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