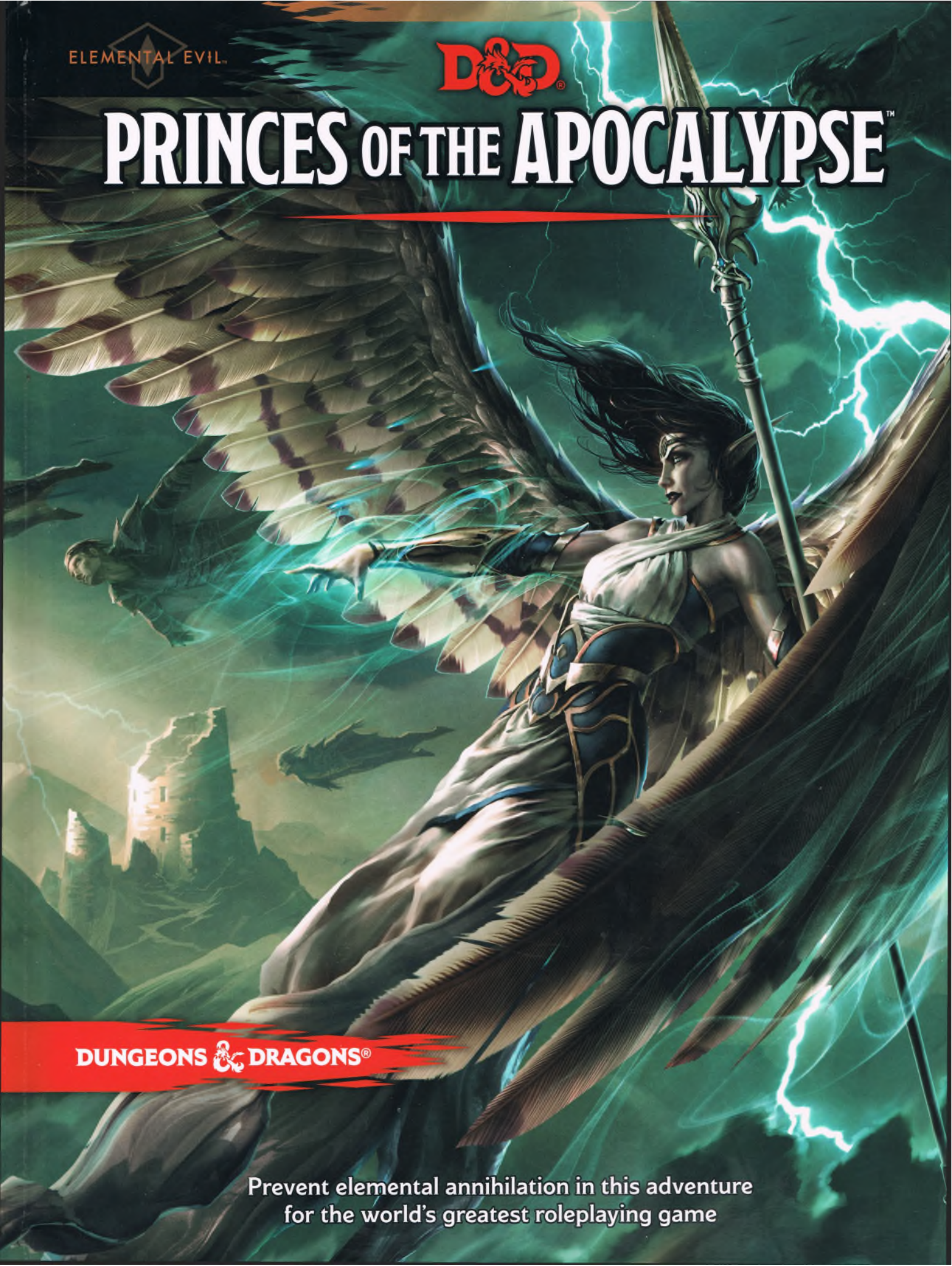

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Foreword

Adapting a classic is never an easy job. It was a simple choice to follow the *Tyranny of Dragons* story arc with a successor to the classic adventure *The Temple of Elemental Evil*. The hard part was deciding how exactly to do that.

We faced an important decision early on in creating the concept for this campaign. In addition to the original 1985 adventure, there was a sequel released in 2001, a novelization, a computer game, and a variety of supporting articles and mentions strewn across dozens of books. We could build another sequel or simply reprint the original adventure with updated stats.

A simple reprint felt like a disappointing option. *The Temple of Elemental Evil* is available as an ebook, and the conversion from the first edition rules to fifth edition is fairly straightforward. I highly recommend it as one of D&D's earliest and best dungeons.

Instead, we decided to consider Elemental Evil as a cosmic threat. As creatures of the planes, the elemental princes can reach almost any of the many worlds of D&D. What would happen if the forces of evil turned their gaze to Faerûn? How would this classic D&D threat play out in the world of the Forgotten Realms?

Simply posing that question kicked off a groundswell of ideas and concepts. It pushed us to think of elemental evil as a power beyond that of the original adventure.

The results of that exercise are held within this book. The forces of elemental evil, much like the D&D game, are a dynamic, living thing. Read on and witness their latest scheme.

Mike Mearls
January 2015

Disclaimer: Wizards of the Coast urges adventurers to remember that not all rock creatures are earth elementals. A talking rock that controls boulders is a galeb duhr. A talking rock wearing jewelry is a dao. A silent rock that's resistant to non-adamantine weapons is a stone golem. A rock with wings is a gargoyle. A rock without a K is a giant bird. A rock that sits there and does nothing could be just a rock or a balor disguised by an illusion. In all cases, proceed with caution.



ON THE COVER

Aerisi Kalinoth, the air prophet, unleashes the Cult of the Howling Hatred on the Dessarin Valley. A defiant Harper wizard named Zelraun Roaringhorn stands against her in this tempestuous scene illustrated by Raymond Swanland.

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Chapter 1: Rise of Elemental Evil

A terrible threat gathers in the North. Throughout this region of the Forgotten Realms, savage marauders bring destruction. Monsters are on the prowl, preying on flocks, rampaging through croplands, and attacking homesteads and travelers. In settlements, discord and suspicion grow. Sinister strangers lurk in the shadows, whispering about how everything is soon to change. This year brought an unseasonably warm and stormy spring. Tales spread of flooding, windstorms, wildfires, and tremors.

These troubles have a source known to few in the North: Elemental Evil. Servants of this malevolence gather in the Sumber Hills and spy on the Dessarin Valley, drawn by a force they can't explain. Dabbling in dangerous lore, these fanatics seek to master elemental magic and unleash its destructive power everywhere. And they are further along in their plans than most people in the North realize.

Four elemental cults grow in power in the Sumber Hills, claiming abandoned keeps that connect to an underground fortress once part of an ancient dwarven kingdom. Within those chambers are the remnants of a temple built by drow worshipers of Elemental Evil.

Each of the four cults venerates a powerful entity of air, earth, fire, or water: a Prince of Elemental Evil. Like their princes, the four cults are rivals, yet they all serve a mysterious force they call the Elder Elemental Eye.

A prophet gifted with a powerful elemental weapon leads each cult. Those weapons—*Windvane*, *Ironfang*, *Tinderstrike*, and *Drown*—were the catalysts for the creation of four elemental nodes, places where the Elemental Planes connect to the Material Plane. The cults draw elemental creatures through the nodes, and they use elemental magic to create *devastation orbs* capable of ravaging the countryside. They've been testing these magic weapons, bolstering the cults' ranks, and infiltrating various communities, all directed by visions the prophets receive from the Elder Elemental Eye. In time, each prophet hopes to entice his or her elemental prince to pass through the node and wreak devastation on the Dessarin Valley and beyond.

Using This Book

Princes of the Apocalypse presents an epic campaign against the forces of Elemental Evil that can occupy you and your players for many months. Characters who are at least 3rd level can dive right into the main adventure. A party of 1st- or 2nd-level characters should start with the mini-adventure in chapter 6.

This chapter provides the background of Elemental Evil's appearance in the campaign, and a synopsis of the adventure. The four elemental cults, which serve as the primary foes of the campaign, are also described in this chapter. Although the cults are all linked by their hunger for power and proclivity for destruction, each has its own leader and preferred methods. Further, this chapter offers guidelines for starting and running the adventure.

Chapter 2 explores the Dessarin Valley, the setting for this adventure (and many others, if you wish). The Dessarin River, one of the mighty waterways of the North, runs through a barely settled frontier region a few days' travel from the great city of Waterdeep. A handful of small towns and outposts are scattered through the region, linked to more populous lands by ancient roads and the broad river. The heart of this area, the Sumber Hills, has become the stronghold where the elemental cults build their bases of power.

Chapter 3 begins the adventure in earnest. In this chapter, the characters learn that trouble has taken root in the Dessarin Valley and that evil forces are on the loose. By exploring, the characters find the first outposts of the four elemental cults—the so-called Haunted Keeps.

In chapter 4, the characters discover that the four cults occupy a sprawling dungeon complex beneath the Sumber Hills. The temples serve as the base for the cultists' insidious attacks against the Dessarin Valley.

Chapter 5 describes the ancient caverns beneath the temple complex and the altar dedicated to Elemental Evil. From these caverns, passages lead to four elemental nodes, places where forces from Elemental Planes have established a foothold in the world. Within each node, a portal to one of those planes grows in intensity. The characters must destroy the cults there before the Princes of Elemental Evil are unleashed upon the world.

Chapter 6 presents adventures that are secondary to the main storyline. Use them as you see fit. Some are especially useful if you start the adventure with 1st-level characters.

Chapter 7 details NPCs, new monsters, and new magic items.

Appendixes A and B contain new material for players to use in creating their characters for the campaign. Appendix C provides advice for adapting this adventure to other D&D campaign settings.

Adventure Background

The threat of Elemental Evil surfaces in different worlds of the multiverse whenever the force known as the Elder Elemental Eye tests its strength. In its current incarnation, Elemental Evil arises in the Sumber Hills. The scattered towns and isolated homesteads of this frontier now face a dire threat. If the forces of Elemental Evil can't be defeated before they grow, madness and destruction could spread unchecked through the North.

The presence of Elemental Evil in the Sumber Hills goes back thousands of years, when a sect of renegade drow discovered the extensive caverns beneath the Sumber Hills and claimed it as their territory. These dark elves venerated a terrible god of primordial evil, and they built a shrine to this nameless power. In time, the ancient drow cult faded away (or was wiped out), and the place known as the Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye was forgotten for centuries.

The dwarves of Besilmer were the next folk to discover the site. Besilmer was a realm of pastures and cropland. The dwarves established an underground stronghold called Tyar-Besil beneath the Sumber Hills to defend against the trolls and giants that plagued the region. The dwarves discovered the ancient drow hold and its temple below their own delvings. They lacked the strength to clean out the ruins, so they abandoned their deeper excavations. Trolls and giants soon broke the realm of Besilmer, and the remaining dwarves abandoned the place altogether.

Over the years, adventurers occasionally stumbled across the buried stronghold of Tyar-Besil and the drow vaults below it. Few made any lasting record of their explorations, and their names are forgotten. But in the year 893 DR (using the Dalereckoning calendar, about 600 years before the present day), a band of adventurers called the Knights of the Silver Horn found the place and commenced an exploration of the ruins. The adventurers came back to Tyar-Besil again and again, and when they decided to establish strongholds and tame the territory, they raised their keeps over each of the known access points leading to the ancient dwarven ruins. The adventurers feared something in the deep caves below the Sumber Hills, and they intended to set a permanent watch over the area.

History didn't cooperate. A generation or two after the Knights of the Silver Horn established their strongholds, an orc horde swept through the North, and the keeps were overrun. For centuries they stood empty.

Locals came to know them as the Haunted Keeps, and various monsters occasionally occupied the ruins.

The abandoned keeps and the dwarven stronghold beneath them might have been forgotten forever, but a few years ago a drow named Vizeran DeVir returned to the ancient Fane of the Eye. A renegade drow wizard of great power, DeVir was no servant of Lolth; like the forgotten sect that created the temple long ago, he devoted himself to the nameless power of the Elder Elemental Eye. His beliefs led to his exile from drow society, but his faithfulness to this dark power did not go unrewarded. Guided by visions, Vizeran DeVir created four mighty weapons imbued with Elemental Evil: the spear *Windvane*, the dagger *Tinderstrike*, the trident *Drown*, and the war pick *Ironfang*. He left these weapons on the altar of the Elder Elemental Eye for their fated bearers to discover.

Within the last few months, each of the four elemental prophets was driven to seek out the ancient altar by dreams or visions. One by one, Aerisi Kalinoth, Vanifer, Gar Shatterkeel, and Marlos Urnrayle claimed their weapons and became the leaders of their respective cults. The four prophets established themselves in the ruins of dwarven Tyar-Besil and occupied the Haunted Keeps that guard access to the vast dungeon. Lunatics, outlaws, power-hungry villains, and monsters of all description began to trickle into the valley, drawn by the dark call of Elemental Evil. Meanwhile, the prophets experimented with their new toys, nurturing the seeds of elemental nodes that grew larger every day and testing their powers to create ever-larger natural disasters.

After thousands of years, the seeds of Elemental Evil once again sprout beneath the Sumber Hills. Whether anyone can expose these sinister plots and put a stop to them remains to be seen.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins when the characters arrive in the town of Red Larch, a small settlement on the western side of the Dessarin Valley. Strange rumors and ominous signs have the townsfolk concerned, including reports of bandit attacks on the roads, piracy on the Dessarin River, and monster sightings too close to town. But the mystery that has keen observers of the region most concerned is the disappearance of a delegation traveling overland from the city of Mirabar to Waterdeep. The delegation stopped in the tiny village of Beliard, where the members mentioned their intent to visit sacred dwarven sites before continuing on to Goldenfields. They were last seen at the west end of the Stone Bridge, turning south to proceed overland through the heart of the Sumber Hills. It has now been almost a month, and the delegation never showed up at Goldenfields or any other outpost.

Powerful factions have good reason to worry about the missing delegation. The Harpers are concerned about a noted dwarf historian who was part of the delegation. The Emerald Enclave wants to know what happened to a pouch of magical seeds one of the delegation members was bringing to Goldenfields. Even the Zhentarim are interested in trying to improve their relations with Mirabar by helping to solve the mystery. Whether the characters set out to search for the missing delegation or choose to investigate another lead, they soon find clues that lead them to the Haunted Keeps in the Sumber Hills. All of these are now occupied by strange new sects masquerading as harmless societies or reclusive orders, but these outposts serve Elemental Evil.

When the characters infiltrate or defeat these disguised groups of cultists, they discover that each Haunted Keep guards a passage leading to a huge dungeon beneath the Sumber Hills, the new Temple of Elemental Evil. Here, the elemental cults have established themselves in the ruins of an ancient dwarven stronghold. They are building up their strength as they work to master elemental power. The characters come up against the elemental prophets and confront one of the four cult leaders, whose identity depends on which part of the temple the characters explore first.

Even as the characters delve into the elemental temples, their successes provoke retaliation. The elemental prophets dispatch bands of cultists armed with *devastation orbs*—essentially bombs of elemental energy created from the elemental nodes—to unleash natural disasters throughout the Dessarin Valley, punishing everyone for the characters' interference.

Despite fierce opposition in the various elemental temples and the retribution of the offended cults, the characters succeed in rescuing some of the Mirabar delegates and driving out some or all of the cults from their newly established bases in Tyar-Besil. Unfortunately, other members of the delegation remain missing, and various other leads and mysteries remain unresolved. Worse yet, it quickly becomes clear that the elemental cults are on the brink of unleashing unthinkable disasters.

As an elemental apocalypse grows nearer, the characters discover passages leading from the cult-controlled territory in Tyar-Besil to the far older (and more dangerous) caverns known as the Fane of the Eye, dug long ago by drow. Here they find the evil altar dedicated to the Elder Elemental Eye, where the characters confront another of the elemental prophets (again, the prophet they fight depends on which part of the dungeon they explore first). They also find passages leading into the ultimate sanctums of the cults: the elemental nodes known as the Black Geode, the Howling Caverns, the Plunging Torrents, and the Weeping Colossus.

In the last stage of the adventure, the characters face the daunting task of pursuing the remaining two elemental prophets into their places of power. The most powerful and dedicated followers of each of the four cults guard these sanctums, which are infused with elemental energy and warped into strange reflections of the Elemental Planes. At the heart of each elemental node, the characters find a great portal that serves as a conduit from its associated elemental plane. Here the remaining cult leaders make their stands, and here the characters face the overwhelming power of the Princes of Elemental Evil. Victory might seem doubtful against such opponents, but clever and resourceful characters

can find ways to destroy the portals instead of trying to slay these dire beings.

With the portals shut, the elemental nodes revert to normal, and any surviving cultists scatter to the four winds. Their stronghold is destroyed and their leaders are dead; Elemental Evil is defeated in this world for now.

Elemental Cults

Elemental Evil perverts the natural elements, limiting them to aspects of destruction. This force wants to gain the power to tear down everything—morals, social structures, governments, the laws of nature—and reduce existence to a more elemental state, tainted with conflict and madness. Elemental Evil uses mortal servants as a means to this end.

These hateful principles take two primary forms in the world. The first is corruption. Elemental Evil tempts the broken, the wronged, and the wicked with the power to strike back. It represents the worm in the apple, a hidden corruption that grows stronger over time as the natural order decays. Secret cults spring up, institutions are debased, and the fundamental laws governing the seasons begin to weaken. As Elemental Evil grows stronger, its corruption grows into the second form: madness. Cultists sink into insanity, lashing out at everything around them or destroying themselves in elemental cataclysms. Ruin rules as the forces of nature become instruments of destruction. A world in which Elemental Evil triumphed would exist only as an everlasting war of raging elements.

Elemental Evil appears in different worlds throughout the many ages. This sinister force—the Elder Elemental Eye—is well hidden in Faerûn. Individuals remain susceptible to its call: those lured by the promise of power, those who know only hate in their hearts, those whose minds are broken and therefore open to insinuation and dark whispers. These are the servants of Elemental Evil, and they can cause immeasurable harm if they aren't exposed and rooted out.

Although destruction is the unifying principle of Elemental Evil, beings that serve this dark force don't necessarily adhere to that goal. Only the most unbalanced minds seek destruction for its own sake. Instead, the servants of Elemental Evil seek power through the destructive might of one of the elements of air, earth, fire, or water. This is the origin of the four elemental cults that together compose the worship of Elemental Evil.

The cults operate independently of each other. Each believes that its favored element is the most powerful and most worthy of worship. Rank-and-file members of the air cult sneer at the idea that anyone could see something worth worshiping in elemental earth, fire,





or water. Members of the other cults feel the same way about any cult but their own. Only the best-educated or most magically gifted members understand that a unifying principle underlies each elemental cult. Even then, they believe that their element should reign supreme.

Despite these different goals and varying methods, the elemental cults are linked to each other by forces they don't fully understand. From world to world and age to age, the cults of Elemental Evil have risen again and again. Each time, the cultists of elemental air, earth, fire, and water are joined to the same dark fate.

Throughout the adventure, characters have ample opportunity to see the symbol associated with each of the four cults. They could figure out how the four symbols connect to form a fifth symbol: that of the Elder Elemental Eye.

Cult of the Black Earth



The earth cult worships the implacable strength and unyielding resistance of elemental earth. Cultists seek the power to destroy the works of civilization with landslides, sinkholes, or mighty earthquakes, thus demonstrating the true power of elemental earth and the futility of resistance. Earth cultists see mines, quarries, and tilled fields as insults imposed upon the living rock and soil. They believe the earth thirsts for the blood of those who don't venerate it before all other powers and beings.

The Cult of the Black Earth appeals to those who draw their fortunes from the earth—directly or indirectly. In areas where the influence of Elemental Evil takes hold, animals and monsters that live or burrow in the ground accept the cultists as allies. Creatures such as ankhegs or bulettes, normally too stupid and ravenous to be trained, submit to the will of the Black Earth. The monsters allow themselves to be herded or ridden into battle against the enemies of the cult.

The Sign of the Black Earth. The symbol of the earth cult signifies purpose and stability. Cultists sometimes identify themselves with a hand gesture: they make a triangle by touching the thumbs and forefingers of both hands together.

Tactics and Philosophy

The Black Earth cult is the most defense-minded and patient of the four elemental cults. Earth cultists admire stoicism, endurance, and unyielding resolve. They are deliberate and slow to act, careful to consider their plans and gather their strength before beginning any new enterprise. Once earth cultists resolve to act, they

are inflexible, grinding their way forward through any obstacle or unforeseen development. They are single-minded in the extreme, and most earth cultists have little use for social niceties. They see common courtesy as a way for the weak to put limits on the behavior of the strong, and they scorn empathy or friendship as weakness.

In battle, Black Earth cultists are brutal and straightforward. They overpower foes with direct assaults, although if they have the opportunity to undermine defenses or attack from below, they unhesitatingly put their skill at tunneling and mastery of burrowing monsters to good use. They are unflinching in the face of death. Surrender is never an option.

Earth cultists live and work underground. They craft weapons from stone or iron and "bathe" themselves in sand or dirt to feel close to their favored element. Black Earth initiates know the secret of creating armor from magically shaped stone, and even their robes include stone pauldrons or masks.

Prophet of Earth

A medusa named Marlos Urnrayle leads the Black Earth cult. He wields the elemental weapon *Ironfang*, a war pick infused with the power of Ogrémoch, the Prince of Evil Earth. Marlos is vain and cruel, an extreme narcissist who delights in surrounding himself with objects of beauty and luxurious comforts. Beneath this sneering self-assurance lies a bitter being who loathes himself and holds everyone around him in contempt.

Marlos began life as a human aristocrat, born into a wealthy Cormyrean family. He squandered his family's wealth on endless self-indulgence, seeking more questionable forms of entertainment through the years. The Urnrayle estate became known as a place of outrageous masquerades, bizarre banquets, and grotesque orgies. Marlos required his guests to don ugly or monstrous masks, thus ensuring that no one's beauty would outshine his own.

As he aged, Marlos turned to magic to preserve his fading beauty. After searching for years, he found a ring that contained the stolen vitality of a lovely fey creature. As long as he wore the ring, his imperfections vanished and no one could resist his physical charms—until the day the ring transformed Marlos into a medusa. The horror of his fate drove Marlos mad. He fled his ancestral home, taking his collection of masks with him.

After years of wandering and hiding in one ruined estate or another across the Western Heartlands, Marlos felt drawn to the desolate Sumber Hills by troubling dreams and visions. A long stairway beneath a ruined monastery brought him to an ancient cavern with a hideous altar, upon which lay a war pick of iron. When the medusa claimed *Ironfang*, his purpose finally became clear to him. He established his lair in the dungeon nearby and began building the Cult of the Black Earth.

Traits. Unlike many of his followers, Marlos is genteel and well-spoken. He delights in witty banter and pointed repartee, although he is quick to make a cutting remark or jest at someone else's expense. Marlos takes pleasure in mocking others, especially if he can do so in a clever or elegant way. Marlos's previous life had been a constant search for pleasure, but the only thing that now stirs his loveless soul is refined cruelty. He can be driven to fits of blind, unreasoning jealousy if he is outshone by another urbane and attractive individual.

Enemies and Allies

The Black Earth cultists are highly suspicious of the Cult of Howling Hatred. They believe that the air cultists are mercurial, unreliable, and generally out of touch with reality. The earth cultists respect the strength and ferocity of the Eternal Flame followers, but also find them maddeningly inconstant. Black Earth cultists ally most often with the Crushing Wave, since they admire the patience and pragmatism of the water cultists.

Cult of the Crushing Wave

Cultists of the Crushing Wave worship the awesome power of water, from the surging tides and deadly maelstroms of the sea to the raging torrents of rivers in flood and the rock-crushing power of ice and glaciers. Crushing Wave cultists see all living creatures as nothing more than trapped water that could one day be free to return to the seas or skies in a new form. The seas and deep waters are eager to reclaim the parts of themselves currently held in the blood and bodies of living creatures, and it is the duty of Crushing Wave initiates to return nonbelievers to the primal waters by drowning them or shedding their blood.

The Crushing Wave cult appeals to those who live in or near bodies of water, as well as to those who appreciate subtlety and inevitability. Wicked sea creatures such as aquatic ghouls and merrows are friendly toward water cultists. Even non-sentient predators such as sharks or octopuses understand that water cultists are allies to be aided or masters to be obeyed.

The Sign of the Crushing Wave. Water cultists use a simple hand sign to identify one another when a token of recognition is required: crossing the forefingers and overlapping the thumbs to create an X-shape linked by a line across the bottom. It stands for water's eternal surge and retreat, a cycle of unending change.

Tactics and Philosophy

Crushing Wave cultists are almost as patient and stoic as the followers of the earth cult. They understand the value of outlasting formidable foes and slowly eroding their defenses. However, they are far more flexible and opportunistic in their overall philosophy than the earth cultists are. Like a flood that seeks the weak point in a levee and then bursts through with ever-growing strength, water cultists are quick to sense an opening and then act to exploit it. This philosophy of pragmatism and opportunism means that the Crushing Wave is the most mercenary of the four elemental cults. Water cultists eagerly seek out rich prizes and use their ill-gotten loot to develop their schemes.

In combat, Crushing Wave cultists excel as skirmishers. They value mobility and opportunism, rarely making a stand in one place for long. Instead, they

feign retreats, regroup, and launch new attacks, wearing down their foes like storm-driven waves eating away at a sandy beach. Almost all water cultists are excellent swimmers skilled at fighting in water, so they look for opportunities to surprise their enemies by using bodies of water to slip around or through defenses.

Because the cultists see water as the wellspring of all life and purpose, they spend as much time in or around it as possible. Many cult hideouts are located near large bodies of water, and those that aren't feature hidden pools or wells in which cult members can immerse themselves. Water cultists prize water-breathing magic and seek it out for no other reason than to spend hours meditating underwater. Few cultists gain any profound insights from these exercises.

Prophet of Water

The former sailor Gar Shatterkeel leads the Crushing Wave cult. He wields the elemental weapon *Drown*, a trident imbued with the essence of Olhydra, Princess of Evil Water. Gar is a sullen man who says little, letting his actions speak for him. He believes he has been wronged by the world and hates all people except those as broken and unfortunate as himself. Gar also despises weakness in others.

Gar was born in a poor fishing village in the Nelanther Isles. At a young age, he lost his family to a sahuagin attack. The sea devils slaughtered almost everyone he knew. A Tethyrian merchant galley conscripted the young orphan into service, and Gar was forced into a brutal indentured servitude that was barely better than being enslaved. His unwilling service came to an end when pirates attacked the merchant ship. During the fighting, Gar was knocked overboard. For days he survived by clinging to the ship's wreckage, until a shark ripped off his left arm. Death seemed imminent, but a powerful current arose and bore him away from the hungry predator. Within an hour he was cast upon the shores of the Sword Coast.

Gar believed that the current that had saved his life was an elemental sent by the sea. From that day forward, he devoted himself to the ocean, teaching himself its secrets and learning powerful water magic over years of lonely wandering. He despised all other people, remembering only his harsh treatment by the merchant crew and the brutality of the pirates. But in time he became aware of a call to a higher purpose, impelling him to find other examples of human flotsam and teach them about the power of the sea.

Gar's visions led him to the secret waters beneath the Sumber Hills. He found a hidden cavern temple, on whose altar lay a powerful magical trident. Sensing its power, Gar took up the weapon and began to call his cult to join him in the Temple of the Crushing Wave.

Traits. Gar is covered in barnacles, and he wears an artificial arm in the shape of a crab's claw over the stump of his left arm. He never uses two words when one will do, and he believes that anyone addressing him with courtesy is either insincere or subtly mocking him. The water prophet's primary motivation is retribution; the world has been cruel to him, and he intends to make everyone else suffer as he has. He longs to be near the ocean again and is distressed by the fact that the driving force behind his visions keeps him so far from the sea.

Enemies and Allies

The followers of the Crushing Wave detest the Cult of the Eternal Flame. They find the fire cultists to be hostile, short-tempered, and unforgivably rash. The Howling Hatred cultists aren't as hostile, but they are likewise given to sudden impulses and are unreliable. The water cultists get along with the Cult of the Black Earth. The earth cultists are deliberate and dependable, if perhaps too inflexible for their own good.

Cult of the Eternal Flame



The followers of the Eternal Flame cult worship the destructive power of fire in all its manifestations. They seek the power to burn away the "corruption" of both civilization and nature with volcanic eruptions, forest fires, heat waves, and droughts, creating a wasteland of ash and cinders ruled by fire alone. Eternal Flame cultists believe the world and all its peoples are wicked and malformed, and they consider it a sacred duty to "purify" everything around them by reducing their surroundings to smoking cinders.

The Eternal Flame appeals to those drawn to destruction for its own sake. Creatures of elemental fire are most likely to take up this reckless philosophy; even non-intelligent fire monsters sense the reckless lust for destruction lurking in the hearts of fire cultists and consider Eternal Flame believers to be their allies.

The Sign of the Eternal Flame. The symbol of the fire cult is reminiscent of a bowl-like brazier with a burning flame. Fire cultists sometimes identify themselves with a symbolic hand sign: holding one hand in a fist, thumb up, and laying the other hand over the fist as if to cover the bowl but allow the flame to show. Members of the cult can also be identified by their burn scars.

Tactics and Philosophy

Fire cultists are impetuous, hot-tempered, and violent. They aren't mindless savages; their impetuousness also encompasses fiendish inventiveness and a drive to devise new tools for their mad cause. They are masters of fire and forge, taking captives to work in their infernal foundries. Fire cultists see conquest and enslavement of the weak as necessary steps in bringing about the chaos they intend to unleash on the world.

In battle, fire cultists launch sudden, overwhelming assaults. They throw themselves into reckless attacks with no regard for their own lives, seeking to cause as much damage as possible before falling. They are fearless and would rather die fighting among a mob of enemies than retreat a single step.

Followers of the Eternal Flame cult surround themselves with the largest fires they can create. Their favorite tactic involves using magic to open volcanic fissures or vents and channel flows of molten rock. Widespread arson and deliberately set forest fires are acceptable alternatives. Most fire cultists believe that something important and beautiful should be set on fire every day, or else they're just not doing their part.

Fire Prophet

Through all-consuming ambition and a desire to punish all who ever thwarted her dreams, the tiefling Vanifer has risen to leadership of the Eternal Flame cult. Beneath her refined exterior is a steel edge of scorned pride. And underneath her hard pride lies a desire for murder and mayhem. Vanifer harbors a fierce hatred for all who think themselves superior to her, and she stops at nothing to make them see her as a figure to be feared and respected.

Vanifer was born and raised in the crushing poverty of Calimport's poorest quarters, armed with only her cunning intelligence. In her youth, she learned to dance for coin and slowly worked her way up from the wine sinks of the laborers' districts to the elegant chambers of the city's nobles. She mastered minor fire magic to distinguish herself from other dancers and incorporated flame into her routine. Her talents grew, and soon she caught the eye of a pasha and became his concubine. But even as she enjoyed the gifts he lavished on her, Vanifer hated the pasha for seeing her as a mere trophy. She left before long, robbing the pasha of a small fortune in jewelry and setting fire to his palace.

Vanifer fled to Zazesspur, but her former master's agents soon found her. She fled again to Baldur's Gate, taking up residence in the poor neighborhood known as Little Calimshan. There she opened a school of dance and discovered that her gift for fire attracted other sorts of students. She became the leader of a cult of fire worshipers. There she remained until a few months ago, when dreams and visions impelled her to seek out a lost dungeon in the North. On the altar of a forgotten temple she found the dagger *Tinderstrike*, imbued with the power of Imix, the Prince of Evil Fire. Armed with this powerful weapon, Vanifer resolved to establish a new chapter of her cult beneath the Sumber Hills.

Traits. Vanifer is an extraordinary manipulator. She collects allies and followers with her wiles, using them as she needs and discarding them the moment they lose their usefulness. It's a testament to her natural talent that many of her victims are pathetically eager to bask in the glow of her attention again if she discovers she needs something else from them. While Vanifer puts on the airs of a rich noble, she despises those raised with great wealth, and her sensibilities favor the coarse. Vanifer is ambitious above all else, and as undisputed master of the fire cult, she intends to make the Eternal Flame the strongest and most feared cult of all.

Enemies and Allies

Eternal Flame cultists detest the followers of the Crushing Wave. They see the water cultists as slippery and untrustworthy, perhaps even cowardly—after all, the Crushing Wave retreats quickly from opposition and seeks the path of least resistance before committing its strength. The earth cultists are stolid and courageous, but maddeningly slow to act. The cultists of the Howling Hatred share the fire cult's impulse to act swiftly and show many of the same qualities of inventiveness and creativity in the service of Elemental Evil.

Cult of the Howling Hatred

The followers of elemental air call themselves the Cult of the Howling Hatred. They worship the destructive power of wind and storms, believing that those who venerate elemental air gain the power to punish those who have wronged them. More so than the members of the other cults, air cultists see their beliefs as a means to an end. Destruction for its own sake isn't particularly interesting, but destruction as an expression of personal freedom or to earn things wrongfully denied? That's a different story.

The Cult of the Howling Hatred appeals to those who deal in perceptions over facts: illusionists, spies, and assassins, for example. Predatory or fierce winged creatures of any kind, even non-sentient monsters that would otherwise resist training, perceive the air cultists as allies and cooperate with them. Hippogriffs, griffons, and giant vultures are frequently used as air cult steeds.

The Sign of the Howling Hatred. The symbol of elemental air is an inverted triangle with three branching lines above it. Some believe it stands for the funnel cloud of a tornado, while others see it as the superiority of winged creatures over the ground. Some maintain it is an ancient rune that stands for the elemental lord Yan-C-Bin. Whatever their interpretations, the air cultists use the symbol as a secret password of sorts. By touching the thumbs and little fingers together and closing the rest of the fingers into a fist, an air cultist forms an inverted triangle that is a mark of membership in the cult.

Tactics and Philosophy

Howling Hatred cultists are clever, impulsive, and creative. They usually see themselves as smarter, quicker, and more capable than others they meet. Howling Hatred cultists dislike open battle. They prefer to work in secret, using stealth and illusion to gain their ends with a minimum of force. Tactics of deception and ambush provide the air cultists with opportunities to prove themselves smarter and more resourceful than their opponents. The wind doesn't blow down a castle, but flows around and through it. Infiltration and indirect attack are clearly superior tactics.

Air cultists seek out high places for their strongholds wherever possible, although they value subterranean spaces with wide chasms or lofty vaults. Places where flying is possible are mandatory. The followers of the Howling Hatred understand that sometimes they must put secrecy above other considerations.

Prophet of Air

The moon elf Aerisi Kalinoth leads the Cult of the Howling Hatred. Tall and slender, with illusory wings that gently fan the air, Aerisi speaks to her people in a whisper that sounds clearly in the ears of all in her presence. Aerisi regards her followers not as cultists, but as her noble subjects. Before them she is prophet and queen. Musicians and courtiers amuse and flatter her, and warriors mounted on hippogriffs serve as her knights.

Aerisi grew up in an enchanted castle in a remote part of Faerie, surrounded by tales, histories, and tomes of magic. She passed her early years playing games, practicing enchantments, and imagining herself as one of the avariel (winged elves) from her storybooks. Her parents sheltered her from the conflicts of Faerûn, and she came of age with a tender and fragile disposition.

Eventually her parents decided it was time for their daughter to engage in elven society, and they brought her to the hidden city of Evereska. Her parents then realized their grave mistake. In pampering and sheltering their daughter, they had raised not a young lady but a spoiled child. Accustomed to having all she desired, the princess erupted into tantrums whenever she was denied her slightest whim, and the moon elves of Evereska could hardly endure her.

Aerisi felt powerless among the moon elves. Although she had become a skilled enchanter in Faerie, her people were resistant to such charms. In her dreams she began to envision herself as one of the winged elves from her storybooks. She wished to control the wind and go wherever she liked, and to punish those who offended her. The childlike fantasies of her youth became dark visions where she ruled the storms and the air itself. She dreamed of an old mystic with brown skin and white hair, who promised to teach her all she desired to know—a vision of Yan-C-Bin, the Prince of Evil Air. Aerisi turned her study to elemental air, learning the secret of flight and escaping Evereska to follow the deluded visions of her dreams.

Aerisi's visions led her to a strange altar in a cavern beneath the Sumber Hills, where she acquired the spear *Windvane*. Driven by Yan-C-Bin, she dubbed herself a queen and set out to find followers to rule. Her enchantments helped fill the ranks of the Cult of the Howling Hatred with initiates hopelessly devoted to her.

Traits. No one can deny Aerisi's grace, but she also possesses a violent temper that reveals itself whenever she is denied what she wants. Aerisi is prone to flights of fancy and impulsive decadence. She doesn't see herself as evil because she lacks the capacity to empathize with anyone else. Those who worship and please her are good, and those who defy her are wicked and must be punished. Her wish to lash the world with storms and destruction is, at its root, a temper tantrum against the elven society that dared to impose its strictures on her.

Enemies and Allies

The cultists of the Howling Hatred find the Black Earth cultists to be coarse, rude, unimaginative, and stubborn to the point of stupidity. Most offensively, the earth cultists are bluntly unimpressed by the Howling Hatred cult and its achievements. Followers of the Crushing Wave are more flexible and inventive, but they are crass mercenaries and likewise too pragmatic to appreciate the finer points of the air cult's philosophy. The Eternal Flame is the best of the lot, since the fire cultists share the decisiveness and creative energy of the Howling Hatred cult, even if they are overly proud and aggressive.

Symbol of the Elder Elemental Eye



Running the Adventure

When you prepare to DM this adventure, several tools are at your disposal for a strong start and smooth play.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure is designed for 3rd-level characters, but see the "Starting the Adventure" section for more options. When the players create characters, encourage each of them to choose adventure-specific hooks from the list below and align with a faction (see "Factions" below). Doing so ties the characters more to the fight against Elemental Evil.

The following descriptions detail motivations associated with specific parts of the adventure. Fulfilling the goal specified by an adventure hook earns the character inspiration, as described in the hook's entry.

Best Served Cold

The character must find and defeat Windharrow, the minstrel who attends Aerisi Kalinoth. Windharrow can initially be found in area A4 of the Temple of Howling Hatred. Most members of the air cult know that he stays near Aerisi. The character earns inspiration for reaching the air temple and again for defeating Windharrow.

Dangerous Information

It's a race against time—the character overheard cruel bandits planning a raid and intends to stop them. The bandits report to someone named Grimjaw in a place called Rivergard Keep. The character earns inspiration for defeating the villains in the "Reaver Ambush" encounter in chapter 3 and again for defeating Jolliver Grimjaw.

Dangerous Secret

The character has been assigned to infiltrate the mysterious druids of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon and discover their true plans. The circle supposedly knows ritual magic unknown to other druids. The character earns inspiration for discovering the truth behind the Rite of the Wicker Giant and again for finding the fire gate in the Weeping Colossus.

Dark Omens

The signs and portents are clear: nature is out of balance. Terrible disaster is drawing closer with every passing day. To restore the balance of nature, the character must destroy the four elemental nodes. The character earns inspiration for each portal the party closes.

Defeat the Skyriders

Vicious raiders mounted on hippogriffs have laid waste to several small hamlets and merchant caravans, and the character has sworn to stop them. Clearing the Howling Hatred cultists out of Feathergale Spire earns the character inspiration, as does obtaining a flying mount.

Feathergale Rebel

The character has been sent to retrieve a Waterdhavian noblewoman. Savra Belabranta is currently guarding the front gate of Feathergale Spire. The character earns inspiration by persuading her to abandon the cult and return home, as well as for clearing the spire of air cultists.

The Fugitive

The character is on the trail of a ruthless murderer, Bastian Thermandar. Bastian is an important member of the fire cult and can be found in the Temple of Eternal Flame. The character earns inspiration for reaching the fire temple and again for defeating or killing Bastian.

Hired Hand

Homesteaders who were kind to itinerant workers are now missing. The character sets out to have revenge and to rescue any survivors. Defeating the kenku in area A2 of the Temple of Howling Hatred earns the character inspiration, as does rescuing Bero Gladham in area A12 of the air temple or Nerise Gladham in area N17 of the Howling Caves.

Madman at Haunted Keep

The character knows that unsavory sorts have occupied Rivergard Keep, and that there's a secret way into the castle. Using the secret entrance earns inspiration, as does clearing the Crushing Wave cultists out of Rivergard Keep.

The Mud Sorcerer

Months ago, the character was robbed by a genasi who killed several innocent bystanders. Now it's time to find Miraj Vizann and make him pay. Vizann can normally be found in area B8 of the Temple of Black Earth. The character earns inspiration for reaching the temple and again for defeating Miraj.

Ominous Dream

The character has seen the earth prophet, Marlos Urnrayle, in dreams and knows that Marlos is a dangerous villain who must be stopped. The character earns inspiration for gaining access to the earth temple and again for defeating Marlos.



Recover Your Sword

Thugs associated with the water cult broke into the workshop where the character apprenticed, murdered the master smith, and stole the beautiful sword she'd made. The character earns inspiration for defeating Jolliver Grimjaw and again for recovering the sword in area C14 of the Temple of the Crushing Wave.

Rescue Your People

Raiders from the fire cult have abducted people the character feels responsible for protecting. They must be rescued at any cost. The captives are held in area E11 of the Temple of Eternal Flame. The character earns inspiration for reaching the temple and again for getting the captives to safety.

Seeking Revenge

Fire cultists torched the character's home or razed a defenseless village. The character is sworn to stop them. The character earns inspiration for defeating Lyzzie Calderos in area E29 of the Temple of Eternal Flame and again for defeating Vanifer.

Settle a Score

Marauders in stony armor robbed the character's friends or family and left the character for dead. Now it's time to even the score. The character earns inspiration for defeating the Black Earth cultists in area M9 of the Sacred Stone Monastery and again for defeating Hedorm in area B14 of the Temple of Black Earth.



Shatterkeel's Trail

Months ago, Gar Shatterkeel destroyed the character's ship by conjuring a powerful storm. Dozens of sailors died, and now the character intends revenge. The character earns inspiration for reaching the water temple and again for defeating Gar.

Standing Offer

Months ago, the character served as a guide for a band of mysterious pilgrims who set out to reoccupy the Sacred Stone Monastery. The character's mission is to infiltrate the group and discover their intentions. The character earns inspiration for successfully joining the earth cult at the monastery and again for surviving an encounter with Renwick, the lich in area M16 of the monastery.

Strange Map

An ancient map has come into the character's possession, showing the location of a forgotten dwarf stronghold beneath the Sumber Hills. The character earns inspiration each time he or she discovers one of the four temples in ancient Tyar-Besil.

Suspicious Fellow

The character becomes suspicious of Thurl Merosska, a knight of the Feathergale Society, and decides to investigate. Thurl is normally found in Feathergale Spire. The character earns inspiration for defeating Thurl and again for discovering the Temple of Howling Hatred.

Undercover

The character is tasked to break up a smuggling and piracy ring on the Dessarin River headquartered at Rivergard Keep. The character earns inspiration for successfully joining the water cult at Rivergard Keep and again for capturing or killing Shoalar Quanderil.

Walked Away

The character was briefly recruited by the fire cultists but never took up arms with them. Now the character wants to stop the villains before they give all mercenaries a bad name. The character earns inspiration for clearing out Scarlet Moon Hall and again for reaching the Temple of Eternal Flame.

Factions

Factions are like political parties, religious organizations, or secret societies. Players can choose a connection to one of five factions: the Harpers, the Order of the Gauntlet, the Emerald Enclave, the Lords' Alliance, and the Zhentarim. All five factions have their own reasons for opposing the spread of Elemental Evil. However, none fully comprehend the gravity of the threat at the adventure's start.

You can make the characters' connections to their factions as complex as you like. The Harpers and the Emerald Enclave operate on personal relationships, so the characters might have met their contacts before



the adventure starts. The Lords' Alliance and the Zhentarim, on the other hand, have an elaborate system of pass phrases and secret signs that identify their agents to one another.

The first visit to Red Larch is a good time to establish these protocols and give each character some face time with a faction contact. (See the "Important Red Larchers" section of "Red Larch" in chapter 2.) Such contacts can't promise the characters specific resources or reinforcements, but they're friendly faces who know the lay of the land and can offer guidance. They can pass messages to higher-ups; however, any reply is slow in coming.

As the characters further explore the Dessarin Valley, they meet other NPCs affiliated with various factions. The factions also become more helpful as they start to recognize the cults are a dangerous, destructive force.

The Harpers

A scattered network of spellcasters and spies, the Harpers advocate equality and covertly oppose the abuse of power, magical or otherwise. Agents operate in secret and emphasize stealth and subtlety, or at the very least discretion. Bards and wizards are their most prominent members.

Harpers operate in small cells throughout the North. One is based in Triboar: Darathra Shendrel, the Lord Protector, belongs to the faction, and Harper agents can find welcome at the Home of the Boars.

Another cell in the prosperous trade center of Yartar monitors traffic in the Dessarin Valley and the actions and policies of the city's Waterbaron. The Harpers work to maintain the balance of power between the various groups competing to influence the city.

In the Sumber Hills, the Harpers warn travelers and adventurers to stay clear of Rundreth Manor and the Dark Lady who dwells there. Harpers also watch the ruined Halls of the Hunting Axe.

The Order of the Gauntlet

This faction is primarily a military organization made up of paladins, clerics, and monks. Members of the order are faithful and vigilant seekers of justice who protect others from the depredations of evildoers. They exact swift retribution against those who violate the law.

Atop a high crest in the Sumber Hills stands Summit Hall, home to the Knights of Samular. This venerable order of paladins of Tyr strives to promote justice in the savage North. The Order of the Gauntlet hopes to expand its influence in the region by joining the Knights to its cause.

In the western Sumber Hills, the order has little political influence. It hopes to correct this weakness by establishing alliances with local leaders who share its goals, such as the Waterbaron of Yartar. The order is even pursuing negotiations with fringe organizations.

The Emerald Enclave

This widespread group of wilderness survivalists preserves the natural order while rooting out unnatural threats. Many of the Enclave's members are barbarians, druids, and rangers. Some wander the untamed lands while others make their homes on the outskirts of towns and villages, where they help to protect travelers from the dangers of the wild.

The enclave's greatest stronghold in the region is the fortified farm and abbey to Chauntea called Goldenfields. Abbot Ellardin Darovik is a senior agent of the Emerald Enclave. In the High Forest to the east lies Shadowtop Cathedral, another of the enclave's meeting places.

The Lords' Alliance

The Lords' Alliance is a shaky compact of aggressive political powers concerned with mutual security and prosperity. Fighters and sorcerers are prevalent among alliance agents, and they are often glory hounds seeking personal recognition. Most agents are lawful or neutral; in the courtly circles of the lords, those who don't follow the rules seldom last long.

Trade along rivers and roads links the cities of the Lords' Alliance, so its operatives eliminate threats to that trade as soon as they appear.

Located at the confluence of the Dessarin and Surbrin rivers, Yartar is a prosperous center of commerce. Various groups vie to control its wealth and influence its trade. The Waterbaron of Yartar, Nestra Ruthiol, is a member of the Lords' Alliance, and her decisions affect the politics of not only her city but the other cities of the region.

The Zhentarim

This shadow network seeks to expand its influence and power base throughout Faerûn. Its members coerce, persuade, or buy their way into every major area of influence. Rogues and warlocks fill the Zhentarim's ranks, but the faction recruits any who can conduct its business without too many moral reservations.

Zhentarim operatives might be found in any settlement, but in the North the organization is based in the Bargewright Inn. Zhentarim mercenaries and spies meet within its many private chambers. The Black Network disguises its ownership of the inn to avoid unwanted attention. The organization also has a vested interest in maintaining the prosperity of Yartar.

Minor Factions

A number of minor factions also seek influence in the Dessarin Valley: the elves of the High Forest, the Hand of Yartar, the Knights of Samular, and the Uthgardt tribes.

Elves of the High Forest. The High Forest once sheltered three great elven realms beneath its boughs. Many tribes of wood elves—and a few moon elves—still protect the ruined monuments to their golden age. Few beyond the borders of the High Forest know much about these elves; they have no single leader and make little contact with the outside world.

The wood elf Morgwais, known as the Red Lady or the Lady of the Wood, seeks to unite the disparate tribes through the *Caerilcarn* ("Council of the Wood"). Her aim is to resurrect the ancient kingdom of Eaerlann, and she has made steps in that direction by allying various elven settlements. As yet, though, only a few elves believe in her vision, and they are spread far apart over the eastern reaches of the forest.

The Emerald Enclave is friendly to the elves of the High Forest. However, Morgwais has a troubled history with Turlang, a treant leader of the enclave in Shadowtop Cathedral.

The Hand of Yartar. The famous chronicler Volo once said that everyone in Yartar is after money or power—preferably both—in as short a time as possible. The Harpers, the Lords' Alliance, and the Zhentarim compete within the city. The local thieves' guild, the Hand of Yartar, vies for a larger piece of the action, but infighting has kept the guild from having much influence.

Within the guild, a new and deadly group is flourishing, comprising ambitious young female thieves and assassins. They are masters of disguise and infiltration, impersonating officials and commoners alike in order to steal, bribe, and murder.



The Hand of Yartar might work with the Zhentarim when it's convenient for both parties.

The Knights of Samular. This order of paladins dedicated to Tyr has pursued justice across the North for over five hundred years (see chapter 3 for more information). Its founder, Samular Caradoon, built Summit Hall in the Sumber Hills as a training monastery for the order. Young men and women across the North travel to Summit Hall so that they might learn from its aging heroes.

The Lady of the Hall, Ushien Stormbanner, is sympathetic to the Order of the Gauntlet.

Uthgardt Tribes. For over a thousand years, the barbarian humans of the Uthgardt tribes have roved the North, holding to ancient customs of ritual and

taboo. They are notorious for their hatred of magic, disavowal of any gods but their own, and hostility to anyone not of their tribes. Most in the North consider Uthgardt to be little better than orcs. Two tribes are the most troublesome to folk of the Dessarin Valley: the Tree Ghosts and the Elk. See chapter 2 for more about the Uthgardt.

Starting the Adventure

If the characters are 1st level, use the adventures at the start of chapter 6 to get them to 3rd level, at which point they're ready for the main adventure (which begins with "The Missing Delegation" in chapter 3). You can also skip the introductory adventures in chapter 6 and begin playing the main adventure with 3rd-level characters.

If you previously ran *Lost Mine of Phandelver* (the adventure in the *D&D Starter Set*), players can use characters from that adventure in *Princes of the Apocalypse*. In this case, the characters are likely to be 5th level, a fact you need to account for when considering encounter difficulty in the adventure. Such characters also have no existing motivation to pursue the cults of Elemental Evil. As experienced adventurers, though, they might find the mystery of the Mirabar delegation to be all the incentive they need. Ideas for relocating the party to Red Larch include the following:

- Gundren Rockseeker asks the characters to escort a wagonload of valuable ore from the newly reopened Wave Echo Mine to Bethendur's Storage in Red Larch, where it should be picked up by a caravan bound for Secomber. The dwarf has heard that the market for platinum ingots is quite good in more easterly lands and anticipates a tidy profit.
- After receiving a vision, Sister Garaele of the Shrine of Luck decides to become intendant at the Allfaiths Shrine in Red Larch. She asks the characters (especially any prospective Harper) to accompany her and make sure she reaches the shrine safely.
- Halia Thornton hears rumors about an important delegation that has gone missing somewhere in the Dessarin Valley. She asks a Zhentarim character to investigate the situation on behalf of the Black Network. The story came to her from a trapper who'd heard it in Red Larch, so she suggests that the character should begin there.

The journey from Phandalin to Triboar is about 225 miles eastward along the Triboar Trail. Another 200 miles south along the Long Road takes characters from Triboar to Red Larch.

Preparing for Play

Players feel more immersed in the setting when their characters' backgrounds, bonds, and faction choices come to life at the table. Once your players make their characters, make a list of key story elements that you can refer to throughout the course of the adventure. Include locations and NPCs important to each character's faction and background. As the characters become more involved in aspects of the adventure, keep this list up to date.

Using Monster References

Throughout the adventure, each encounter presents monster names in bold. This is a visual cue pointing you to look up the monster's stat block. If a monster comes from chapter 7, you should find a parenthetical note telling you to look there. Finding no such note, you should head for the *Monster Manual.*

Using the Side Treks

In addition to the core narrative, *Princes of the Apocalypse* presents a number of short adventures as side treks. Side treks provide players with a change of pace. You need not run side treks in order or at all. Let the natural course of the campaign and the players' interests dictate when or if a side trek becomes available. You can find the side treks in chapter 6.





Chapter 2: The Dessarin Valley

The rise of Elemental Evil in Faerûn begins in the Dessarin Valley, a lightly settled region of caravan towns, isolated homesteads, and uninhabited wilderness just a week's journey from Waterdeep. Nothing of note to the wider world has happened here for hundreds of years. The frontier long ago receded farther northward, leaving behind a quiet backwater littered with ruins. These days, the Dessarin Valley has little in common with the popular conception of the Savage Frontier. Winters are hard here, but the hordes of orcs and other hungry monsters are a long way off from these parts.

If the Dessarin Valley isn't quite as wild and lawless as it once was, it's still lightly settled territory that serves as a route to distant lands. Residents in places such as Red Larch or Triboar boast that their humble settlements are "the Gateway to the North." Through these lands pass hundreds of caravans and keelboats each year, linking the great ports of Waterdeep and Neverwinter with places such as Everlund, Mirabar, or Silverymoon. The steady caravan traffic breathes life into the towns of this area, supporting businesses in the settlements along the Long Road. Inns cater to travelers anxious to sleep safely within sturdy walls and enjoy good food by a warm fire instead of camping by the side of the road.

In addition to catering to caravans and travelers heading to or from the far North, the Dessarin Valley is a breadbasket for the hungry populations of Waterdeep and Neverwinter. The farms and pastures of the area produce grain, livestock, poultry, apples, and hops, then ship them downriver (or drive them down the Long Road) to the coast. Few people become rich from farming, but farmers in the region do well for themselves provided the weather cooperates. (That's one reason why the unusual weather lately has been a concern.)

History

Most people who live in the Dessarin Valley have no idea of its long history. Old-timers nodding sagely by the hearths of the local taprooms sometimes observe, "These lands, they have old bones." Most locals have no idea of how right they are.

While some truly ancient ruins in this area go back to the days of the first great elf kingdoms, none of these figure into the story of this adventure. The earliest realm that does is the shield dwarf kingdom of Besilmer, which was founded nearly six thousand years ago in −4420 DR. Its existence is so far back in the mists of history that only a handful of non-dwarf sages have even heard of it. Most people of the Dessarin Valley don't know Besilmer at all, but they are familiar with two of its works: the engineering marvel known as the Stone Bridge (described later in this chapter) and the crumbling ruins known as the Halls of the Hunting Axe.

The realm of Besilmer was something rare: a dwarven kingdom built on the surface, with its strength measured in fields and pastures. It prospered for a time but was plagued by trolls and giants. The dwarves were obliged to build a stronghold underground, carving out the fortress-city of Tyar-Besil a century after Besilmer's founding. Unfortunately for the dwarves, the realm collapsed after its king and founder died in battle. Most of the surviving dwarves sought safer lands. The dwarven city beneath the Sumber Hills was abandoned by −4160 DR and then forgotten.

Tyar-Besil slumbered in darkness for many long centuries, occasionally discovered and occupied by monsters or ambitious miners, only to be abandoned again. It came to light again in 893 DR, when a group of adventurers who called themselves the Knights of the Silver Horn discovered the ruins. Over the next six years they returned again and again, eventually founding strongholds of their own to safeguard the hidden entrances to the sprawling dungeon.

Time in the Realms

The people of the Forgotten Realms number the years by the Dalereckoning calendar, which is abbreviated "DR." Years are also given names, which are drawn from the writings of a great seer from long ago. The adventure is set in 1491 DR, the Year of the Scarlet Witch.

Each month consists of three ten-day long weeks called tendays. People refer to tendays the way people in other worlds refer to weeks.

The knights had some success in clearing small domains in the wild Sumber Hills, but only a few years later the powerful orc realm of Uruth Ukrypt arose nearby, and the Dessarin Valley became a battlefield. Trouble followed on trouble: the Orcfastings War, the First and Second Trollwars, and finally a series of vicious drow raids. By the year 942 DR, human settlements in the Dessarin Valley had been all but wiped out, and the Knights of the Silver Horn were no more. Their strongholds crumbled into ruin and became known in later years as the Haunted Keeps. Eventually, no one remembered who built them or why.

The current wave of settlement in and around the Dessarin Valley began after 1000 DR, coinciding with Waterdeep's growth from a warlord's stronghold into a major city. The first small outposts that would grow into places such as Red Larch and Triboar were carved out of a wild and untamed land. People resettling the Dessarin Valley found the remains of "kingdoms of old" scattered here and there throughout the area.

Current Events

Minor issues are nothing unusual in the Dessarin Valley. Bands of savage humanoids from the Sword Mountains or the Evermoors occasionally raid here. Human barbarians known as the Uthgardt roam these lands, and the more aggressive tribes can be very dangerous. Bandits sometimes gather in the lonelier parts of the vale to waylay caravans traveling the Long Road or the Kheldell Path. Every now and then reckless or unlucky adventurers manage to stir up some ancient curse in the ruins scattered around the area. Constables of valley settlements are usually up to the task of restoring the peace.

Six months ago, an insidious new threat began to grow in the area, unsuspected by the locals or any passing adventurers. Dreams and visions drew four elemental prophets, one by one, to the Fane of the Eye beneath the Sumber Hills. Each prophet began to gather like-minded followers. Strangers trickled into the Dessarin Valley in ones or twos. Some were already cultists of Elemental Evil, eager to build a place where they could openly practice their vile rites. Others were brutal thugs, power-hungry dabblers in forbidden magic, or fanatics lured by the call of evil. At first the cultists valued secrecy above all else, but as their numbers grew and they established their strongholds, they turned their attention to expanding their hold on the Dessarin Valley.

The presence of so many malefactors has caused a spate of banditry, kidnappings, murders, and raids. The cultists have also upset the weather in the region. All of these occurrences continue to worsen over the course of the adventure until the characters locate and clean out the four elemental cults in the Temple of Elemental Evil.

Red Larch

Red Larch has been an important stop on the Long Road for two centuries now. Named for a distinctive stand of red larch trees that were cut down when the hamlet was founded, Red Larch became a settlement in the first place thanks to a drinkable spring that fed

a sizable pond ideal for watering horses, oxen, and pack mules.

An east-west trail meets the Long Road at the pond, running west to the logging community of Kheldell and east to Bargewright Inn and eventually Secomber. Another trail leads to quarries in the Sumber Hills and to ruins of stone keeps long ago left to monsters and outlaws (the Haunted Keeps).

In recent years, new quarries have been opened on the northwestern edge of town. So far these have yielded up great slabs of marble much prized in Waterdeep for facing large new buildings and repairing older edifices. Red Larch is also a center for stonecutters quarrying slate on the fringes of the Sumber Hills.

While Red Larch remains prosperous, dark omens are appearing. The heart of the Sumber Hills has become far more dangerous, with monsters lurking seemingly everywhere (no one goes into the hills berry-picking or hare-hunting these days, though Red Larcher children traditionally did so daily in summer and fall). Banditry is on the rise, and the weather seems to be getting more severe and more unpredictable. Several Red Larcher shepherds have seen strange figures watching them from distant hillsides in the wild fields east of town where they have traditionally grazed their flocks. Quarry workers used to cut by torchlight when orders were backing up but do so no longer, shunning the pits by night. They are spooked by rumors of dark-robed figures in stone masks lurking in the darkness beyond the torchlight. The townsfolk fear that dangerous times are at hand, but no one seems to know what to do about it.

Important Red Larchers

The inhabitants of Red Larch have become so frightened by the recent "dark doings" that rather than showing typical frontier reticence, they helpfully babble about everything they've seen and heard. Most hope to convince adventurers to investigate and put an end to the current troubles.

Important Red Larchers include the following NPCs:

- **Eldras Tantur** is the local blacksmith (area 9). He's an opinion setter in town.
- **Endrith Vallivoe** is a merchant who sells all sorts of goods from his shop (area 22). He is a Harper contact.
- **Haeleeya Hanadroum** is the owner of the bathhouse (area 15). She is an Emerald Enclave contact.
- **Helvur** and **Maegla Tarnlar** are clothiers (area 7). Both are Lords' Alliance contacts.
- **Harburk Tuthmarillar** is the Constable of Red Larch, a stern, honest guard commander and judge. He lives and works in area 11.
- **Imdarr Relvaunder** is a priest of Tempus in the Allfaiths Shrine (area 1). He is a contact for the Order of the Gauntlet.
- **Kaylessa Irkell** is the proprietor of the Swinging Sword inn (area 2). She hears much from her fellow Red Larchers and shares it.
- **Mangobarl Lorren** is the town's baker (area 8). He is a Zhentarim contact.
- **Marlandro Gaelkur** is an unsavory local barber (and counterfeiter) who runs a useful secondhand shop (area 17) where Red Larchers gather to gossip.

The Believers

A dozen of the Red Larch town elders have a secret: They belong to a secret society that calls itself "the Believers." It isn't quite a cult, although it has special ceremonies and rites passed down for generations. It isn't quite a civic organization, despite the fact that some of the wealthiest and most powerful people in Red Larch are members. The members of the Believers use their secret association to guide town affairs, plot against business competitors, and sometimes take care of people who cause problems when it becomes clear that "something must be done" for the good of the town.

The Believers formed years ago when local miners discovered a secret underground chamber beneath the town. Strange things happened in the chamber, such as heavy stones levitating and moving about when no one was around (this is described in chapter 6, in the "Tomb of Moving Stones" adventure). The miners began using the chamber to honor those who died in quarry accidents and to appease Beshaba, goddess of misfortune and accidents. The Believers gather secretly at the tomb once every nine nights to see if any stones have moved—and if any have, they covertly meet the next night to discuss what the movements mean, and what is to be done. They keep the tomb and its strange secret to themselves.

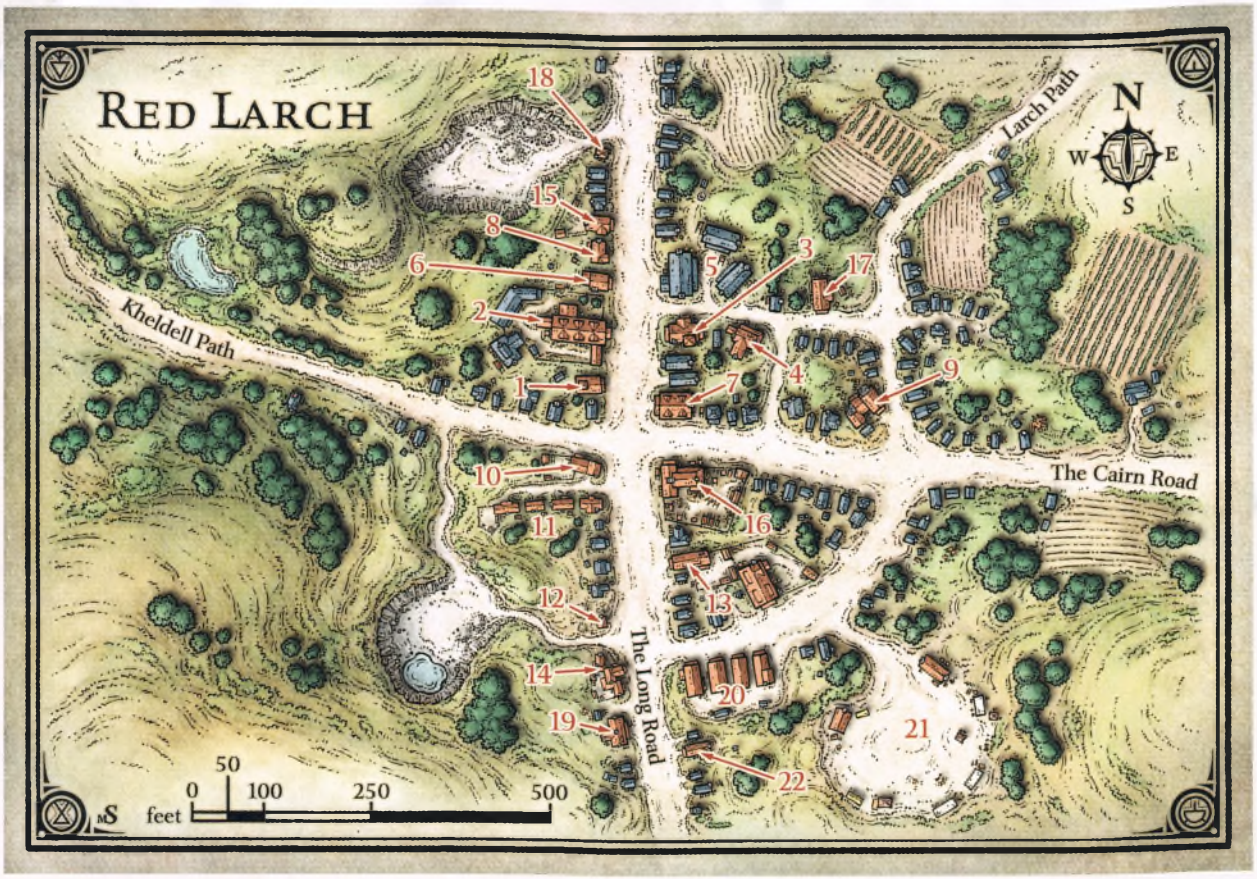
The Believers have no knowledge of Elemental Evil. However, the Cult of the Black Earth discovered their secret and became interested. A Black Earth priest named Larrakh came to Red Larch to steer the group toward the worship of elemental earth. The cultists intend to take over Red Larch through the Believers, but there are other, more important tasks beneath the Sumber Hills that are keeping them busy. The time is not yet right.

Adventure in Red Larch

Red Larch serves as the starting point for two different adventure narratives in this book. The clues and rumors provided by the NPCs in Red Larch depend on which phase of the adventure you are currently running. If you prefer to start the adventurers at 3rd level and dive into the Elemental Evil plot immediately, begin with the "Rumors of Evil" clues. If you wish to start the adventurers at 1st level, begin with the "Trouble in Red Larch" rumors. When the party finishes the "Trouble in Red Larch" adventures, they reach 3rd level, and they're ready to move on to the "Rumors of Evil" clues and events.

Trouble in Red Larch

When the characters arrive in Red Larch, a few minutes of conversation with any NPC reveals that the townsfolk are concerned about strange events. Asking around about what's going on in town or points the party toward the following NPCs:



- Outlaws are lurking out on the Cairn Road, but Constable Harburk (area 11) hasn't found anything.
- Minthra Mhandyvver's granddaughter Pell (area 13) saw a ghost by an old tomb not far from town.
- The Tarnlar children (area 7) are telling wild tales about plague out by Lance Rock.
- Kaylessa Irkell, the owner of the Swinging Sword Inn (area 2), thinks the town's troubles might have a common source.
- Quarry workers at Mellikho Stoneworks (area 18) say that mysterious figures wearing stone masks watch them when they work at night. The workers now refuse to stay in the quarry after dark.
- Workers at Waelvur's Wagonworks (area 16) have been talking about suspicious activity around the workshop. They can be found drinking in the Helm at Highsun (area 3) most evenings.

Speaking with the NPCs involved in these rumors provides the characters with several leads to adventure opportunities in Red Larch. These adventures are presented in chapter 6. "Into the Wilderness" describes several encounters located near town. "Lance Rock" describes an adventure site near the distinctive landmark a few miles outside of town; an insane necromancer who styles himself a "lord" has taken up residence there. Finally, "The Tomb of Moving Stones" presents an old dungeon-like mine chamber underlying part of Red Larch. This is the secret guarded by the Believers, although it has also attracted the attention of the Cult of the Black Earth.

The Sinkhole. If the adventurers find their way to the Tomb of Moving Stones on their own, allow them to explore the site whenever they find it. If the adventurers don't find the tomb or explore other sites nearby first, the tomb's secret is revealed by the appearance of a large sinkhole in town. The sinkhole opens up shortly after the characters return to Red Larch from Lance Rock or other explorations in the area; see the adventure in chapter 6 for more details.

Elemental Cult Spies

The spies for the elemental cults in Red Larch (Justran Daehl, Ghileeda, and Iraun Thelder) aren't formidable combatants and are unwilling to fight adventurers. They pass information by slipping notes to or arranging brief conversations with cult messengers passing through town. Most of these messengers are human bandits from the local gangs of cult marauders, dressed in unmarked garments.

If confronted, the cult spies deny involvement in any wrongdoing and try to bluff their way out of trouble. A spy caught red-handed weeps and begs for mercy. Some might claim to have been under a spell, hoping to gain sympathy. Caught spies reveal only what's necessary to save their own skins.

Rumors of Evil

Red Larch is full of rumors about the missing delegation from Mirabar. It was a large, well-armed party, and the fact that it seems to have come to grief is quite newsworthy. When the characters sift through idle

speculation and gossip to find credible leads, they turn up the following possibilities:

- Brother Eardon, a priest of Lathander staying in the Swinging Sword (area 2), says the Mirabarans passed through Beliard.
- A caravan guard in the Helm at Highsun (area 3) says the Mirabarans passed through Beliard.
- Endrith Vallivoe (area 22) recently came by a beautiful book in Dwarvish and has been showing it off. It looks old and important.
- Larmon Greenboot, a shepherd, says he found strange new graves out in the Sumber Hills. He hangs around Gaelkur's store (area 17).
- When the characters return to Red Larch after leaving to investigate one of the other leads, they hear that Thorsk Thelorn, the wagonmaker (area 5), has had some strange new customers lately.

To find out how these NPCs know what they know, the adventurers must question the key characters. These conversations should suggest several ways to begin the search for the delegation from Mirabar. Continue with the "Early Investigations" encounters in chapter 3 when the adventurers decide which lead to follow.

Red Larch Locations

Here follow brief descriptions of important locations in town. Buildings shown on the map that don't have a number and a description are houses, sheds, or outbuildings. They belong to farmers who till plots close to town, shepherds who keep herds in nearby pastures, and workers or servants employed by the larger businesses.

Many of the locations in town feature information about the "Trouble in Red Larch" storyline (for 1st-level characters) or the "Rumors of Evil" storyline (for characters ready to investigate the cult of Elemental Evil). Just ignore the leads and clues that aren't relevant to the part of the adventure you're running now. You can assume that the Believers decide to keep a low profile as long as adventurers are asking questions about the missing delegation from Mirabar, or that the delegation hasn't arrived in the area yet if the adventurers begin with the local troubles.

1. Allfaiths Shrine

On the west side of the Long Road, just south of the inn's stable yard, stands what looks like a grand stone mansion. Two wide wooden doors painted with the symbols of many gods stand open day and night. Inside is a plain chapel with a stone altar.

The Allfaiths Shrine is a wayside shrine used by many faiths and owned by none. Priests shuttle out from Waterdeep in pairs for month-long stays. Each pairing includes priests of two different faiths arranged by Waterdhavian temples. The most frequent combinations are Sune and Selûne, Tymora and Lathander, and Tempus and Oghma. The visiting priests dwell in two simple stone rooms at the back of the temple. They bring their own vestments and holy items and take them away again when their duties end.

Key NPCs. Right now, Imdarr Relvaunder (male Damaran human **priest**), a follower of Tempus, and Lymmura Auldarhk (female Tethyrian human **acolyte**), a devotee of Sune, are serving at the shrine. Imdarr is a stern man who is keenly interested in news and rumors and visitors. He's also an ally of the Order of the Gauntlet, occasionally passing messages and sending reports on local events to the order. Lymmura is a sympathetic ear and guide to all. She has been coming to the shrine for decades, has officiated at the marriages of many couples, and is widely loved and trusted in Red Larch.

2. The Swinging Sword

One door north of the Allfaiths Shrine stands the Swinging Sword. The inn is a three-story stone structure, crowned by a steep slate roof that bristles with many chimneys. A signboard juts out over the door, hanging from chains. It's a ten-foot-long carved wooden scimitar emblazoned with the inn's name in red paint on both sides. An inn yard with stables and outbuildings lies behind the building.

The Swinging Sword is welcoming and luxurious by the area's rustic standards. Each room boasts a hearth, warm draperies and tapestries, and running water (provided by rooftop cisterns). Now run by the Irkell family from Waterdeep, the inn has become a popular stopover for wayfarers in the Dessarin Valley. The topmost guest floor is given over to dormitories where travelers can "sleep cheap" in rooms shared with up to six guests, but the lower floors are divided into pleasant suites of guest rooms, each with its own garderobe. There's also a dining room on the ground floor.

The Sword has one recurring problem: kitchen fires. The one-story kitchen annex at the back of the inn, currently out of commission, was initially built with poorly drawing chimneys. Right now, cooking is rudimentary and done out in the yard, on grills flanking the bread ovens. The dining room is mainly used for drinking, with "the Helm" (the tavern across the road) currently providing the best meals in town travelers can easily buy.

While the Helm at Highsun is the place to hear Red Larchers unwind, the Swinging Sword is the polite social hub and neutral meeting ground of Red Larch.

Key NPCs. The proprietor of the Swinging Sword is Kaylessa Irkell (female Illuskan human **commoner**). She is the fortyish matriarch of her family and a pleasant, sturdy woman. She is increasingly worried about "what's gathering in the dark" in Red Larch and brings up her concerns with any likely adventurers who stop by (see "Kaylessa's Tale," below).

Kaylessa's staff are uniformly attentive and good at their work. However, two have secret masters. Ghileeda (female Tethyrian human **commoner**), a maid, secretly reports to Justran Daehl at the Helm for the Cult of the Crushing Wave. The one-eyed stablemaster Iraun Thelder (male Tethyrian human **guard**), a onetime mercenary warrior, is a spy for the Cult of the Howling Hatred. Iraun is entirely passive; he just reports what his normal duties show him.

Kaylessa's Tale. Kaylessa is friendly to any adventurer who seems likely to tarry in the vicinity, because she believes every monster that is slain makes Red Larch that much safer. If the characters don't approach her, Kaylessa tells them of recent disturbances near Red Larch. She's heard many tales about fogs that persist in the Sumber Hills even in bright sunlight, and sudden gusts of hot wind sweeping west out of the hills where breezes have always been cold. There have been more violent sights, too, such as sudden bolts of lightning stabbing up from the hills into a clear sky. "Fell magic," Kaylessa terms it, though she admits this was an opinion shared with her, and she's seen none of this herself.

Kaylessa has also noticed some Red Larchers looking both frightened and furtive, and tersely turning aside innocent queries. If pressed, she names Mellikho the stonecutter (area 18) and Luruth the tanner (area 19).

Rumors of Evil. Among the guests at the Swinging Sword is Brother Eardon (male half-elf **acolyte**), a follower of Lathander, god of the dawn. Brother Eardon roams across the small towns of the North, serving as a messenger and itinerant priest. He recently came from Beliard by way of Westbridge, and he can confirm that the delegation from Mirabar was in Beliard two tendays ago when he left. He is surprised by the fact that the dwarves have not turned up yet, since he thought they intended to stop in Red Larch soon.

Trouble in Red Larch. Kaylessa has a theory about the source of Red Larch's recent troubles: it's all related to an evil presence at Lance Rock. She says neither the constable nor the town elders have helped her, so she offers the characters 50 gp to investigate Lance Rock and make sure no sinister forces are lurking there. (See "Lance Rock" in chapter 6.)

3. The Helm at Highsun

Right across the Long Road from the Swinging Sword Inn stands a ramshackle two-story tavern. Rusty metal grills cover its small, dirty windows. The tavern's name is very clearly printed in large, simple letters on both sides of a jutting wooden sign. Atop the sign is a rusting, oversized adornment: a warrior's bucket helm with two eye slits (actually an upside-down washtub).

Inside is a large, dimly lit, wood-paneled taproom. An open-tread wooden staircase climbs to the upper floor, which is just as dim and darkly paneled as the taproom. Across the back of the taproom is a long bar with three



copper candle-lanterns hanging over it, and a stair leading down to the cellars.

The Helm at Highsun is where locals relax, gossip, flirt, tell jests and "war stories" of their working days, and get drunk. It's not a place for refined dining. A dozen servers work shifts at the Helm; most nights, two cover the ground floor and one waits on guests on the upper floor. The staff at the Helm don't gossip, but they direct anyone who questions them to other patrons they think might talk about a particular subject. A gift of a drink loosens most tongues.

The Helm gets rowdy from time to time, but the staff is ready for ordinary drunken fisticuffs. Behind the bar are three stout and well-used cudgels, and an old cloak used as an improvised stretcher to lug drunks outside (and sometimes thrown over the heads of brawlers so they can be clubbed down).

Key NPCs. The Helm is run by the jovial but grasping Garlen Harlathurl (male Tethyrian human **commoner**). He is a cynic bitter from failed Waterdhavian mercantile ventures, but he has turned out to be an attentive tavern-keeper. He has two partners: one has retired to Waterdeep, and the other is the cellarer of the Helm, the gruff and rotund Justran Daehl (male Tethyrian human **bandit**). Justran is secretly a spy for the Cult of the Crushing Wave.

Rumors of Evil. One of the tavern denizens is a very drunk and argumentative caravan guard named Zomith (female half-orc **guard**). She recently quit a caravan that came from Beliard through Westbridge, arriving in Red Larch two days ago. The caravan continued south without Zomith, but she can confirm that she brawled with Mirabaran guards from the missing delegation about fifteen days ago. She couldn't care less what happened to them, but she had nothing to do with their disappearance.

Trouble in Red Larch. Stannor Thistlehair (male lightfoot halfling **commoner**) is a carpenter who works at Waelvur's Wagonworks (area 16). Stannor is a sneaky and unpleasant fellow, but if bribed to talk (10 gp would do the job), he tells the characters that he's seen his boss Ilmeth Waelvur disappear into a hidden tunnel in the back of the work yard. He's also seen other people sneak in after dark and follow Ilmeth to wherever they go, although everyone else shows up hooded or masked.

4. Mother Yalantha's

This three-story, dilapidated boarding house has many balconies and outside staircases. Inside, the place is a warren of narrow, creaky-floored passages that snake around small rooms made of flimsy partition walls. However, the atmosphere is cheerful, if generally noisy.

Key NPCs. The boarding house is the home of its owner and proprietor, the rail-thin, pipe-smoking "Mother" Yalantha Dreen (female Tethyrian human **commoner**). Mother Yalantha lives in a cramped ground-floor room at the very back, and most of the other twenty rooms are occupied by transient laborers. However, there are usually four or five rooms that can provide an overflow for the inn if the need arises.

All of the residents have seen (or claim to have seen, at any rate) "brigands" lurking around Red Larch at night, not to mention monsters ranging from snake-headed rats to ghostly dragons that faded away when approached. (If you're looking for NPCs to deliver more fanciful and outrageous rumors, the denizens of Mother Yalantha's boarding house are perfect.)

Trouble in Red Larch. Six of the guests staying here are watchers for the Cult of the Black Earth (equivalent to **bandits**). They are the stone-masked folk who have been watching over the quarry by night, and the so-called Bringers of Woe who appear in area T7 of the Tomb of Moving Stones (they rush down to the tunnels when they hear that adventurers have discovered the hidden chambers). They don't admit any involvement and aren't foolish enough to hide their masks at the boarding house.

5. Thelorn's Safe Journeys

Three huge sheds stand here in a triangle, surrounded by sturdy wooden wagons at all stages of assembly. The first is a workshop full of busy woodworkers, the second is a storage area for parts such as wheels and axles, and the third houses a dozen finished wagons for sale. The foremost wagonmaker in this region, Thelorn's is now run by two grandsons of the founder. It is a busy, always-bustling place that works day and night (three shifts of workers) because making wagons of top quality takes time. The quality of Thelorn's wagons is well known throughout the region, with the result that workers here have to toil flat-out to keep up Thelorn's long-decreed "dozen spare wagons in stock, ready to go."

No one here is interested in gossiping during shift time. There is a no-nonsense, pride-in-craft atmosphere, and many of the workers are experts who can do top-notch work with astonishing speed. Watchful children armed with skillets to bang as alarms guard the sheds every moment of the clock.

Key NPCs. The burly Thorsk Thelorn and the taller but thinner Asdan Thelorn (both male Illuskan human **commoners**) are the bosses here. They are fair, hard-working men who pay well to keep good workers.

Rumors of Evil. If the characters ask Thorsk about strange customers, the busy wagonmaker recalls an Amnian merchant heading north on the Long Road who stopped for a wagon repair. His goods were marked by a strange symbol, like a bowl. The Amnian merchant paid Thorsk well and talked about a big gathering of druids he was heading to, hoping to sell kegs of beer and various trinkets. Characters who question Thorsk can get directions to Scarlet Moon Hall (see chapter 3).

6. Chansyrl Fine Harness

The pungent smell of tanned and oiled leather fills this crowded workshop, and the walls display leather saddles, reins, yokes, and harnesses for working beasts of all sizes. Stylish leather jackets, longcoats, caps, boots, leggings, bracers, belts, baldrics, and full leather armor are also in stock in all sizes.

Owned by its founder's granddaughter, who oversees a skilled staff of three full-timers and two part-timers, Chansyrl's is considered the best Red Larch harness-maker by caravan merchants. For some, it's the reason

they come to Red Larch. Chansyrl's is a steady supplier for many a settlement up and down the Long Road.

Key NPCs. Phaendra Chansyrl (female Tethyrian human **scout**) wears carved and stamped leather armor of her own making as a sort of walking advertisement. With the sharp knives, awls, and punches she wears in custom sheaths at her belt and strapped to her arms and legs, she looks like an adventurer. She has idle dreams of traveling the North and slaying dragons, but she is far more interested in building a mercantile empire and outgrowing Red Larch someday.

Phaendra has heard many tales of brigands and monster sightings and mysterious stone-masked watchers by night, but she ignores them, attending to her work. She sharply advises others to do so, too.

7. Helvur Tarnlar, Clothier

Tarnlar's is the only place to buy quality clothing for a hundred miles around. The square two-story building stands at the intersection of the Long Road and the Cairn Road. Its signboard is painted with the images of a well-dressed lord and lady, one on each side of the board. Ornate scrollwork iron bars protect the windows.

The Tarnlars used to be wagonmakers, but due to competition, the family changed trades two generations ago. The Tarnlars reinvented themselves as vendors of sturdy but fashionable clothing to appeal to the merchants and travelers making use of the Long Road. After all, cloaks and boots wear out just like wagon wheels, and anyone trudging for tendays on the road in raw spring weather or bitter winter cold soon comes to value warm garments very highly indeed.

The clothing, boots, and accessories are all fine, warm, and sturdy, even though few Red Larchers can afford to buy them for everyday wear. The Tarnlars live in a comfortable apartment above their garment shop.

Key NPCs. Helvur Tarnlar (male Tethyrian human **commoner**) is a snob by the standards of Red Larch. He puts on airs of gentility, haughtily explaining to customers that "This is how aristocrats wear their boots in Neverwinter," or "Hats such as this are all the rage in Silverymoon," even though he has never been to those places. He refuses to speculate about local events, saying, "Tarnlars do not deal in gossip!" However, Helvur puts aside his pretentiousness and unwillingness to share information for any member of the Lords' Alliance. He directs most inquiries to his wife Maegla.

Maegla (female Tethyrian human **commoner**) is the true talent in the family. She is a sharp businesswoman who has an eye for good merchandise. She is also the mother of four bold and adventurous children. She also helps those who serve the interests of the Lords' Alliance.

Trouble in Red Larch. The Tarnlar children (two boys and two girls, aged seven to ten) are eager to befriend and follow adventurers as a possible escape from their everyday chores. A couple of tendays ago, the Tarnlar children were out berry-picking in the direction of Lance Rock when they met a grizzled dwarf prospector who warned them away from Lance Rock "because there's plague there." Maegla has no idea what they're talking about, but the children can provide directions to the ravine the dwarf warned them about (see "Lance Rock" in chapter 6).

8. Lorren's Bakery

This aromatic, tidy building's ovens and mixing bowls are in use day and night. The bakery has a hanging sign consisting of a carved and painted wooden round loaf the size of a small cart.

The bakery always has fresh round loaves and buns for sale. Its specialty is cheese-topped buns with melted mushroom cheese from outlying local farms.

Key NPC. The thin, energetic proprietor, Mangobarl Lorren (male Chondathan human **thug**), thrives on gossip and can spin many wild tales. Few are true,



and none of the secrets are his own. He is a staunch, discreet ally of the Zhentarim and a useful source of no-questions-asked aid to anyone of that faction. Lorren doesn't volunteer this information, but some of his distant relatives have Zhentarim connections, and he's always willing to help the Black Network.

Trouble in Red Larch. Mangobarl heard about Pell Mhandyvver's scare at the Haunted Tomb (see the "Haunted Tomb" encounter in chapter 6) and went to look for himself. He saw a goblin near the spot, and figured that a gang of the creatures had moved in and rigged a "haunt" to scare off intruders. He tells any Zhentarim character that it might be worthwhile to talk to Minthra Mhandyvver (area 14)—treasure could be hidden in the tomb, and it shouldn't be left to a band of goblins.

9. Tantur Smithy

Both ends of this soot-stained building are massive stone blocks that rise into tall, wide chimneys. The din of forge hammers rings out late into most nights. Eldras Tantur (male Turami human **thug**) has been Red Larch's blacksmith for a decade and a half and has taken only a handful of days off work in all that time. Eldras and his children—a strapping son and two strong daughters—are skilled smiths who can make almost anything that requires no specialized alloys or treatments. They can temper swords and reinforce armor, and they often repair tools and weapons.

The Tanturs rarely emerge from their smithy. They work all day long every day filling endless orders for hasps, hinges, locks, and chains, plus hardware for wagons such as cotter pins, bolt rings, wheel rims, and wheel hubs.

Key NPCs. Eldras is a plain-dealing sort who knows almost nothing of the current mood and troubles in Red Larch, since he's so rarely away from his forge.

His wife Laefra, who orders metals via the merchants she deals with, hears much of the troubles, but she tells Eldras and their children none of it. Life is better undarkened by such matters, she figures.

10. Drouth Fine Poultry

This largest of the two Red Larch poultry shops is ever-bustling thanks to thriving local farms and the endless appetite of communities along the Long Road. Two or three wagonloads of skewered capons in casks of oil depart this establishment daily, to be finished over far-off hearths.

The one-story building is long, narrow, and nondescript on the outside, but the name of the business is painted above the double entry doors (wide enough for a wagon). Inside, feathers drift in the air. Cages and casks sit at the street end of the building, followed by two brick cooking-hearths, long and bloodstained cutting tables, and a plucking area in the back. The feathers are heaped in open handcarts that are taken away for washing and eventual sale as pillow stuffing.

Key NPC. The proprietor and owner, Nahaeliya Drouth (female Tethyrian human **commoner**), has built up her business by becoming a trusted supplier to inns across the valley. She prefers not to know about "the dangers of the wilderlands" and "such nonsense as dark magic." Nahaeliya inherited the business from her father, who was a respected town elder, but she hasn't yet been approached for membership in the Believers.

11. Jalessa Ornra, Butcher

Next door to Drouth's Fine Poultry stand four identical single-story stone buildings, running back from the street in a line. The front building has a painted sign of a ham being carved by a cleaver, accompanied by no words. This is the workplace and shop of Jalessa Ornra (female Illuskan human **commoner**), Red Larch's butcher. The second building is her smokehouse, joined to the shop by an underground cold-cellar where meats are stored. The third building often has wash hanging by clothesline outside, and is the home Jalessa shares with the town's constable, Harburk Tuthmarillar (male Tethyrian human **veteran**).

Red Larch doesn't have a jail or court. The shop is the closest thing. Harburk employs four trusties, who bunk in the fourth building. The trusties are assistant constables (human **guards**) who also work for Jalessa as cutters and preservers, brining and salting meat, then sealing it into small kegs for shipment or storage.

Harburk and his trusties discuss matters of law enforcement and peacekeeping while butchering. They've also been known to hang drunks by their belts from meat hooks to sober up.

Key NPCs. Harburk and his trusties are some of the busiest people in Red Larch, because they work as butchers in addition to shifts keeping the peace in the town. Harburk is known for napping instead of taking a full night's sleep.

Harburk hasn't quite figured out that he has four elemental cults on his doorstep. He knows there are evil and secretive groups in the Sumber Hills—the rumors can't *all* be false—but he isn't sure just what is out there. Adventurers who could go investigating where he dares not would be a godsend.

Trouble in Red Larch. Harburk has heard tales of banditry on the Cairn Road south of town, and he knows of several potential hideouts. He doesn't have the time to wander around the countryside on what he thinks is a wild goose chase, but he provides eager new adventurers with directions to one or two likely spots. See the "Bears and Bows" encounter in chapter 6.

12. Dornen Finestone

This plain square building is always coated in a gray-white shroud of rock dust. It's the business office of the busy Dornen quarry, run by Elak Dornen (male Tethyrian human **noble**). The office displays samples of cut stone as well as "raw" samples from the quarry. Records of orders and old employment rolls are neatly sorted in cabinets behind a wooden counter. Dornen is a hard master to some twenty workers, and he insists on keeping careful records.

Key NPC. The Believers have no formal leader, but if they did, Dornen would be it. He is a longstanding member who serves as the deciding vote on questions about who to induct into the secret group and how to use their collective influence to arrange business in

Red Larch. He is a stern and inflexible man, and he enjoys the power he gains from bending other Believers to his side.

Trouble in Red Larch. Dornan is an eager convert to the message of the Black Earth priest Larrakh. He sees a day coming soon when he and the other Believers openly take power. If bothered by nosy adventurers, Dornan tells them he's heard stories of a lost treasure and mysterious villains lurking in Tricklerock Cave (see the "Bloody Treasure" encounter in chapter 6).

13. Ironhead Arms

Three years ago, an old sellsword and caravan guard by the name of Feng Ironhead decided to settle in Red Larch and open a shop dealing in arms and armor, both new and used. Over a long career of shepherding caravans and pack trains from one end of the North to the other, Ironhead (male half-orc **veteran**) decided that there was money to be made by keeping guards-for-hire and mercenaries supplied with decent, affordable gear.

Key NPCs. Ironhead is a surprisingly genial half-orc. He has a little skill at weapon and armor repair and sometimes fixes up used gear for resale. His true talent is a keen eye for ordinary weapons and armor that can stand up to hard use and bad weather. Ask him which of his battleaxes is best, and Ironhead offers an honest (and accurate) answer. He isn't a very good businessman and barely breaks even, but he doesn't seem to care.

14. Mhandyvver's Poultry

This wooden building grew haphazardly for many years, shooting out single-story wings and annexes untidily in all directions. The interior looks like a barn or attic, with exposed beams and posts. Pens with live chickens fill most of the odd corners and halls of the building, leaving only a narrow aisle down to the back, where the Mhandyvvers live. Their rooms are separated from the chicken pens by a workroom with cutting benches and a central hearth.

Mhandyvver's is the less impressive of the two local poulterers, but is a favorite with Red Larchers. Kindly old Minthra "Minny" Mhandyvver (female Tethyrian human **commoner**) and her three grown children sell chickens live or roasted and preserved in oil, pickled chicken livers, and eggs both fresh and pickled.

Key NPC. Minny has the demeanor of a kindly old dodderer, but she is sharper than she appears. Among other things, she knows that a group of town elders (including Elak Dornen, Ilmeth Waelvur, and Albaeri Mellikho) belong to a secret club and pull many strings in town. She thinks that the Believers are harmless, but shares what she knows if adventurers she comes to trust ask for her advice.

Trouble in Red Larch. Recently, Minny's adventurous young granddaughter Pell had a frightening encounter with a "ghost" near a long-forgotten tomb a short distance outside of town. Minny has ordered the girl to stay away, but she wonders what Pell saw, and she thinks that someone ought to "make sure it's safe." The directions Pell provides lead to the "Haunted Tomb" encounter in chapter 6.

15. Haeleeya's

Originally from Amn, Haeleeya Hanadroum (female human Tethyrian **commoner**) operates a bathhouse and dress shop in her large, well-appointed home. Half-barrels planted with aromatic herbs and flowers flank the entrance, and the windows are decorated with flower-filled window boxes. Inside is a tidy room that functions as a dressmaker's shop and fitting room. Beyond two sets of doors are bathing chambers that emanate pleasant smells and warm dampness.

Unlike Tarnlar's down the street, Haeleeya's caters to local women seeking dresses for special occasions; she makes few garments for men. The bathhouse is a steadier business, since many of the older women of Red Larch visit the baths regularly to trade gossip.

Key NPC. Haeleeya hears all the gossip shared in the baths, but she keeps her own counsel, unless the inquirer is affiliated with the Emerald Enclave. When Haeleeya was young, she became lost in the wilderness. An Emerald Enclave ranger rescued her, and she's been a friend to faction members ever since.

16. Waelvur's Wagonworks

Ilmeth Waelvur (male Tethyrian human **bandit**) operates a cheaper alternative to Thelorn's Safe Journeys, making and selling replacement wheels and axles for wagons. The workshop is a cluttered, untidy shed surrounded by dozens of wagons shrouded in worn canvas tarpaulins. A crudely hand-lettered sign over the wide main door proclaims this to be "Waelvur's Wagonworks." Ilmeth spends most of his time repairing wagons and making heavy-duty wagons and sledges for the local quarries.

Inside, half a dozen wagons stand in various stages of assembly, surrounded by stools, ladders, and benches. Wooden pillars support a loft that is an open latticework of boards, serving as home to some birds and storage for scores of wooden wagon wheels. Ilmeth employs half a dozen laborers who drink heavily as they work. Everything here is far messier but far cheaper than Thelorn's.

Key NPCs. Ilmeth is a hard-drinking, sullen man who cares nothing for the troubles of others. He is one of the Believers, and he hopes to use the group's influence to run the Thelorns (his hated rivals) out of business. An old cellar door in the back of his cluttered work yard actually covers a tunnel leading to area T1 in the Tomb of Moving Stones (see chapter 6).

Trouble in Red Larch. The halfling Stannor Thistlehair, one of the workers here, has spotted Ilmeth and the other Believers sneaking in and out when no one is supposed to be around, but Stannor is unwilling to say anything if questioned here for fear that Ilmeth might overhear him.

17. Gaelkur's

This seedy wooden building serves as Red Larch's used tools and goods shop, its barber, and an unofficial second tavern for locals. Inside is a cluttered shop full of lounging customers—most of them men in no particular hurry to be waited on—with old hair clippings trodden underfoot on the sagging board floor. Marlandro Gaelkur (male Tethyrian human **commoner**) is the shopkeeper and barber. In addition to providing grooming, he deals in used (and sometimes shady) items with no questions asked.

Gaelkur's true trade is unsuspected by other Red Larchers. He runs the shop as a front for his counterfeiting business. Gaelkur coats cheap coins (or simple iron plugs) in thin plating of more valuable metals, then marks them appropriately with stamps and dies of his own making.

Key NPC. Marlandro is a skilled engraver and was once a jeweler's assistant in Baldur's Gate, making mountings for stones and entire rings. He counterfeits only when the shop is shut up and he's alone, but most days and much of every night, Red Larchers drop by to talk. Lately every wild tale of odd and suspicious things that have been seen locally seems to come up for discussion.

Rumors of Evil. Larmon Greenboot (male Tethyrian human **commoner**), a local shepherd, can be found at Gaelkur's. He has been telling and retelling the story of finding mysterious freshly dug graves in the Sumber Hills (see "Rumors in Red Larch" in chapter 3).

18. Mellikho Stoneworks

A sign set on two posts in a scrap of weedy lawn out front of this small house reads "Mellikho Stoneworks." The quarry pit begins just behind the house, which serves as the business office and the home of the quarry owner, Albaeri Mellikho (female Tethyrian human **commoner**). Mellikho herself oversees the work in the quarry, cajoling and cursing the sweating stonecutters here.

A hidden tunnel in the quarry pit leads to area T9 in the Tomb of Moving Stones (see chapter 6). Mellikho and the other Believers know about the secret entrance in the quarry, but the stonecutters working here do not (it's well disguised as a "collapsed" and abandoned storage tunnel).

Key NPC. Albaeri, a pot-bellied and usually jovial whirlwind of a woman, is one of the Believers. She is worried about the moving stones in the hidden chambers below Red Larch being more active lately, but she is reluctant to share her concerns with strangers.

Trouble in Red Larch. When orders for her stone are backed up, Mellikho usually has her stonecutters work a night shift by torchlight. Over the last month or two, they've been scared off by mysterious dark-robed figures wearing stone masks, who watch them from the shadows.

The masked watchers are actually members of the Black Earth cult who work as laborers in the town's harness shops or warehouses; they are staying in Mother Yalantha's boarding house. Mellikho is in on the plan to scare off her own stonecutters; the Believers use the quarry to meet with Larrakh, the Black Earth priest hiding out in the Tomb of Moving Stones.

If the characters visit the quarry and begin asking questions, Albaeri Mellikho claims that rumors of strange watchers are overblown. She then suggests that if the characters are looking for something to test their mettle, there is a legendary treasure that is said to be hidden in Tricklerock Cave, and provides directions. (This leads to the "Bloody Treasure" encounter in chapter 6.) She knows the cave is dangerous and hopes that the characters get themselves killed there, putting an end to awkward questions, but tries to pass off her suggestion as a "helpful" rumor.

Crumblecake

To the average citizen of Waterdeep, Red Larch is known only for crumblecake, a local specialty. This much-maligned but hearty food is useful on the trail: baked loaves of turkey and wildfowl scraps, nuts, and chopped roots and greens, mixed in a chickpea mash. It is bland at the best of times, but badly made crumblecake tastes terrible.

19. Luruth's Tannery

This former warehouse reeks with an eye-watering, throat-closing stench that obliterates all other smells within a bowshot of the place. Inside are stretching racks, cutting tables with sharp knives and scraps of tanned hide, a back room of finished leather ready for sale, and six huge, open-topped vats containing various foul-smelling, caustic liquids used in tanning.

The proprietor is Ulhro Luruth (male Chondathan human **commoner**). He can't smell a thing, thanks to years of working in tanneries. He and his five loyal, terse assistants live and work here.

Key NPC. Luruth is one of the Believers. He knows he's not supposed to talk with outsiders about the secret society, but he's not too bright and might assume that questioners know more than they do.

20. Bethendur's Storage

Four identical, well-built warehouses stand here in ground covered in raked gravel and cinders. The moment anyone sets foot past the sign that says "Bethendur's Storage/Rent Space by tenday, month, or year," a tall, smiling man emerges to meet them. This is Aerego Bethendur (male Tethyrian human **noble**). He is assisted by three burly clerks and porters, who are former mercenary **thugs.**

Aerego asks no questions, so anything can be stored here. Stored items that don't move or burst out of their containers are left strictly alone, though crates that begin to smell of death are taken out back and opened. If they contain dead bodies (rare, but it happens), Aerego burns them without a word to the constable or anyone else.

Key NPCs. Aerego is a Believer, although his attendance is spotty and he is beginning to wonder what exactly the mysterious priest Larrakh (see "The Tomb of Moving Stones" in chapter 6) has in mind for Red Larch.

21. The Market

This muddy, well-used field is ringed with outhouses and rings of stones that have obviously been used as cook-fires or trash burn sites many times in the past. Once a tenday, it's crowded with wagons from nearby farms. Farmers drive in from homesteads miles away to sell all manner of in-season produce, cheese, cider and cider vinegar, and last year's pickled beets in jugs.

On the other nine days of the tenday, only one Red Larcher is here, a half-orc named Grund. Grund (male half-orc **thug**) is the village simpleton. He ekes out a living by making pickles in vats at the end of the field.

Key NPC. Grund is a happy, dim-witted sort. The other vendors all pilfer from his open pickling vats, and he cheerfully lets them. He's easy comic relief when encountered here, but the adventurers meet him in more unpleasant circumstances in area T3 of the Tomb of Moving Stones (see chapter 6).

22. Vallivoe's Sundries

Aside from the bewildering profusion of doors, barrels, rotting old furniture, and tools leaning against its outside walls, this building looks like a private home. A small, faded sign on the front door reads "Vallivoe's Sundries." Rooms are crammed to the rafters with new wares and used items of all sorts.

Endrith Vallivoe (male Tethyrian human **commoner**) is a retired caravan merchant who sells new and used goods: furniture, lamps, carpets, mirrors, weapons, shields, helms, and a little bit of everything else. Almost anything might be available to buy here, buried under heaps of other stuff, and Vallivoe carries a good running inventory in his head. He's the only vendor in town selling blank books and parchment.

Key NPC. Endrith is a shy, scuttling little man who employs a small army of local children. He's heard most of the rumors and monster sightings, but doesn't know—and doesn't want to know—what's really going on. However, he watches and listens attentively. He is friendly toward the Harpers and shares all of what he sees and hears with any Harper who asks. He is a useful, loyal informant and contact, though he's not really cut out for any derring-do.

Trouble in Red Larch. If one or more characters seem interested in helping the town with its recent troubles, Endrith says, "I don't know if it's relevant, but I overheard someone say that they saw a skull pinned to a tree with a black arrow, like some kind of dire warning or ill omen. It was a half day's walk along the Larch Path, then about four miles east into the hills." If the characters investigate this lead, run "The Last Laugh" encounter in chapter 6.

Rumors of Evil. Endrith bought a strange old book from a passing merchant just a couple of days ago. The book is a beautifully illuminated manuscript written in Dwarvish. Endrith doesn't read Dwarvish, so he doesn't know what is in it; a character who can read the words can tell that it's a genealogical history of the dwarf clans of Mirabar. If asked how he got it, Endrith explains that he bought it from a peddler passing through town. The peddler told Endrith that he bought it from a shady keelboat skipper in Womford, who had somehow come by a dozen similar books. (If the characters investigate, this leads to the "Womford Rats" encounter in chapter 3.) Endrith is willing to sell the tome for 50 gp, although he lets a Harper have it for 25 gp.

Scandal and Rebuilding

If you run the "Tomb of Moving Stones" adventure in chapter 6, the exposure of the Believers leads to some big changes. Even if the Believers can avoid a murder investigation, the folk of Red Larch are scandalized to learn that many of their most respected fellow citizens were part of a secret cabal. This discovery launches a whirlwind of gossip, innuendo, and recrimination.

The other citizens of Red Larch shun the Believers for the next several months, and the Believers turn against one another. Many retreat into seclusion. Leadership of Red Larch passes to Harburk, but he's too busy as constable. After a month, Jalessa Ornra becomes Red Larch's mayor. She's liked and known for common sense, so the townsfolk rally around her.

The townsfolk pitch in to cover the sinkhole and shore up walls and ceilings against future cave-ins.

Exploring the Valley

At the beginning of the adventure, the player characters know they are up against a mysterious threat. Something isn't right in the Dessarin Valley. To find out what exactly threatens these lands, they must leave Red Larch and venture out into the wider vale. Much of the early action of the adventure involves visiting different sites in and around the valley, solving problems and digging up clues that can lead the party to the Haunted Keeps—and then on to their confrontation with the elemental cults and the discovery of the temple complex below the Sumber Hills.

Travel

It can take a full tenday for a slow-moving group—say, a merchant caravan—to trudge from Red Larch to Triboar. The Dessarin River is an obstacle to any group without a boat, since no crossing can be found between Ironford and the Stone Bridge.

When the player characters set out to travel to another location, they either know how to get there or they don't. All settlements are known sites—it takes only a few minutes of asking around to get sufficient directions to another town. Likewise, the Dessarin River and Stone Bridge are well-known landmarks. Feathergale Spire is known to anyone in Red Larch. Rivergard Keep is known to some people in Bargewright Inn and Womford. Summit Hall is known to anyone in Beliard and Womford. The Halls of the Hunting Axe site is known to anyone in Beliard. Characters from the area or drawn here by a particular hook might know these locations.

All other sites are unknown, so the characters need to find such locations. For more on wilderness travel, see chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Random Encounters

Most of the Dessarin Valley is wilderness in which wildlife is abundant and monsters common.

Frequency. Check for a random encounter in the morning, afternoon, evening, and midnight. Roll 1d20; an encounter occurs on an 18 or higher.

Range. Place an encounter at a range that fits the story you want. Every encounter need not be a confrontation. Some encounters can foreshadow their onset or allow the characters to choose to avoid them.

Difficulty. During chapters 3 and 4, use the "Early Travels" random encounter table. During chapter 5, use the "Later Travels" table. At any point during travel on or very near the Dessarin River, use the "River Travels" table. Roll 1d12 + 1d8 to determine what the adventurers run into.

Asterisks. Encounters marked with an asterisk have explanations that appear after the tables.

Early Travels

Day	Night	Encounter
2	—	Aarakocra scouts*
—	2	1d4 + 1 **jackalweres**
3	—	Knights of Samular*
4	3	Pilgrims*
—	4	1d2 **owlbears**
5	5	Elk tribe hunters*
6	6	1d3 **ankhegs**
7	7	1d3 + 1 **bugbears**
8	8	1d4 + 1 **orcs**
9	—	Dwarf miners*
10	—	Caravan*
11	—	Homestead*
12	9	Air cult scouts*
13	10	Water cult marauders*
14	11	Earth cult robbers*
15	12	Fire cult raiders*
16	13	1d4 + 1 **gnolls**
17	—	Shepherds*
18	14	1d6 + 2 **wolves**
19	15	1d3 **ogres**
—	16	1d2 **gargoyles**
—	17	1d3 + 1 **ghouls**
20	18	1d2 **perytons**
—	19	1d3 **wights**
—	20	The Watchful Knight*

River Travels

Roll	Encounter
2–3	Aarakocra scouts*
4–5	Air cult skyriders*
6–9	River pirates*
10–14	Keelboat*
15–16	1d4 **merrow**
17–18	2d4 **ghouls**
19–20	1 **water elemental**

Later Travels

Day	Night	Encounter
2	—	Aarakocra war band*
—	2	2d6 **jackalweres**
3	3	1d3 **manticores**
4	4	1d3 + 1 **trolls**
5	5	Elk tribe hunters*
—	6	1d8 **will-o'-wisps**
6	—	Knights of Samular*
7	—	Homestead*
—	7	1d2 **ghasts** and 1d4 + 2 **ghouls**
8	8	1d4 + 1 **gargoyles**
9	9	Air cult skyriders*
10	10	Water cult raiders*
11	11	1d6 + 2 **bugbears**
12	12	Fire cult war band*
13	13	Earth cult marauders*
14	14	2d4 **ogres**
15	—	Caravan*
—	15	1d4 + 1 **wights**
16	16	2d4 **mephits***
17	—	Dwarf miners*
—	17	1d3 **vampire spawn**
18	18	1d3 **elementals***
19	19	1 **bulette**
20	20	1d2 **hill giants**

Aarakocra Scouts. These 1d4 + 1 **aarakocra** attack those who appear to be elemental cultists. Otherwise, the aarakocra might be helpful.

Aarakocra War Band. A war band consists of 1d6 + 3 **aarakocra** and an **air elemental**. They interact like the scouts, above.

Air Cult Scouts. A group of scouts for the air cult consists of 1d4 + 1 **hurricanes** in *wingwear*. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics and *wingwear* description.

Air Cult Skyriders. One **Feathergale knight** leads 1d4 **skyweavers**. They all ride **giant vultures**. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics

Caravan. A caravan consists of a merchant and his or her entourage heading for the nearest settlement. The group consists of 1d4 + 2 **guards**, 2d4 **commoners**, and the caravan leader (a **spy**).

Dwarf Miners. A band of dwarf miners consists of 1d4 + 1 shield dwarf **scouts** and a pugnacious leader (a shield dwarf **thug**).

Earth Cult Marauders. A band of marauders for the earth cult consists of 1d4 + 1 **Black Earth guards**, a **Black Earth priest**, and 1d4 − 1 **ogres**. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.

Earth Cult Robbers. These earth cult robbers stake out spots to waylay passersby. The group consists of 1d4 + 1 **bandits** and 1d4 **Black Earth guards** (see chapter 7).

Elementals. A small group of elementals wanders freely. Roll a d4 to determine the type of elementals: 1, air; 2, earth; 3, fire; 4, water.

Elk Tribe Hunters. This group includes a **berserker** and 1d4 + 1 **tribal warriors**. They are hostile (see "The Uthgardt Tribes" section at the end of this chapter).

Fire Cult Raiders. The fire cult sends out raiders that include 2d6 **Eternal Flame warriors** and an **Eternal Flame priest**. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.

Fire Cult War Band. A war band of the fire cult consists of 1d6 **Eternal Flame warriors**, an **Eternal Flame priest**, and 1d3 **hell hounds**. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.

Homestead. The party discovers a homestead. Roll a d6 to determine the race of the people there: 1–3, Tethyrian human; 4, Illuskan human; 5–6, halfling. A homestead consists of 1d6 adult **commoners** and 1d6 – 1 noncombatant children. Residents might provide friendly adventurers with food and shelter.

Keelboat. A river trader's keelboat carries 1d4 + 4 **commoners** (the sailors), 1d4 **guards**, and a captain (a **spy**). They are willing to offer passage to adventurers heading in the same direction.

Knights of Samular. This armed patrol consists of 1d4 **veterans** and 1d4 **guards**. They hail from Summit Hall and offer a hearty "Well met!" to the characters.

Mephits. Several mephits travel in a pack. Roll a d6 to determine the mephit type: 1, dust; 2, ice; 3, magma; 4, mud; 5, smoke; 6, steam.

Pilgrims. A group of pilgrims includes 2d6 **commoners**, 1d4 + 1 **guards**, 1d4 **acolytes**, and a **priest** bound for a holy or special site. They're happy for company.

River Pirates. A keelboat carries 2d4 **bandits**, 1d4 **thugs**, and a pirate captain (a **bandit captain**).

Shepherds. A group of shepherds watch over herd animals. Roll a d6 to determine the shepherds' race: 1–4, human; 5–6, halfling. The group consists of 1d4 **commoners** and 1d2 leaders (**scouts**).

The Watchful Knight. Once, this **helmed horror** stood watch in the common room of the Inn of the Watchful Knight in Beliard. It chooses one character at random, advances to within 5 feet, then studies the target for several seconds. If attacked, it fights back, retreating after it loses half its hit points. Otherwise, it follows the chosen character for 1d3 days, guarding its temporary master in combat. At the end of that time the helmed horror wanders off again.

Water Cult Marauders. A marauder gang of the water cult consists of 2d6 **Crushing Wave reavers**, a **Crushing Wave priest**, and 1d2 **fathomers**. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.

Water Cult Raiders. A group of raiders from the water cult includes 2d6 **Crushing Wave reavers**, a **Crushing Wave priest**, and a **one-eyed shiver**. The leader is a **Dark Tide knight** mounted on a **giant crocodile**. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.

Valley Sites

The Dessarin Valley has been a well-used highway into the heart of the Sword Coast North for an age upon an age, and it has seen the ravages of many orc hordes, the rise and fall of a dwarven kingdom, frequent bands of brigands, and much more. Adventurers exploring the Sumber Hills and vicinity might visit many sites of interest as they trek across the valley.

Amphail

Amphail lies on the Long Road, about three days' ride north of Waterdeep. The town is named after Amphail the Just, one of Waterdeep's early warlords, who is said to haunt the surrounding hills in spirit form, frightening away monsters. Horses are bred and trained here, rich Waterdhavians maintain secluded estates in the hills, and farmland is plentiful. Stands of dark duskwood and spruce trees are everywhere.

In one corner of the town square stands the Great Shalarn, a black stone statue of a famous war stallion bred in Amphail long ago. Gelded by a prankster, the rearing horse is often painted bright colors by high-spirited locals. Children are allowed to hurl stones at birds perched on the statue, to keep it free of droppings. The children often climb it themselves and cling precariously to the high, tilted saddle, waving their arms and commanding imaginary armies into battle. Within spitting distance of the statue is the Stag-Horned Flagon, a cozy tavern.

Reason to Visit. Great Shalarn is a popular place to leave cryptic messages, either tucked under the statue's hind hooves or slid between the sculpted curls of its tail.

Bargewright Inn

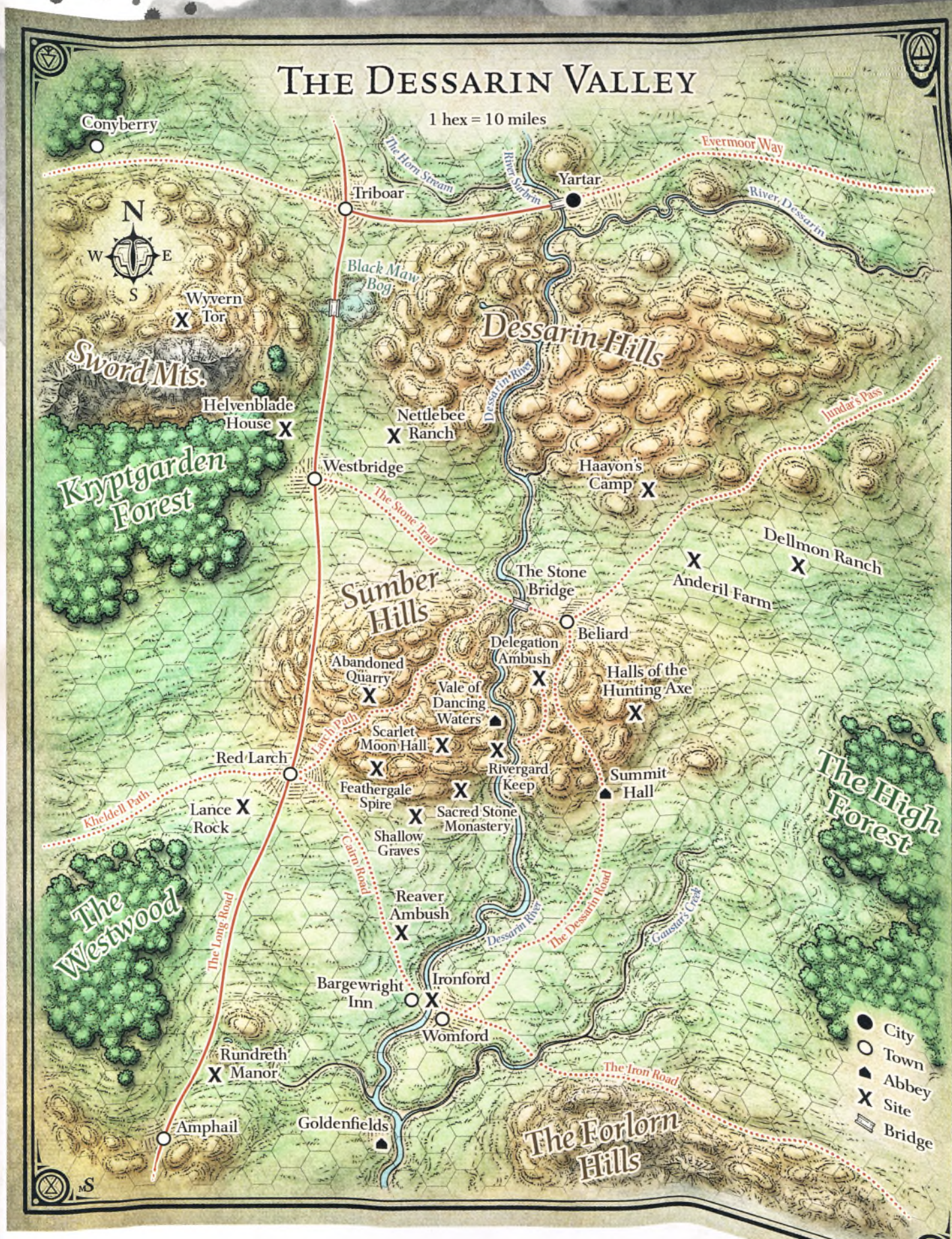
Once a hilltop wayside inn, this site has become a walled community of ramshackle, often-rebuilt wooden towers and buildings now entirely cloaking a hill that overlooks the village of Womford across the river.

Bargewright Inn reeks of manure and filthy mud. It houses blacksmiths, dealers who buy and sell horses, mules, and oxen, wheelwrights, coopers, and wagonmakers. It has inns, stables, and warehouses, and two concentric rings of high protective walls with gates that are firmly closed and barred by night. (Individuals can pay stiff fees to be raised and lowered after sunset on rope-slung chairs, but nothing beyond what they can carry can pass.)

Bargewright Inn fell under Zhentarim influence a few years ago. Any member or ally of that faction can find a discreet welcome (and few or low fees) within its walls. The Zhentarim spy on everyone, even each other (or as one merchant put it, "especially each other"). Bargewright Inn is ruled by a plutocracy of business owners, most of whom are in the pockets of the Zhentarim. The unofficial leader is Chalaska Muruin (female Damaran human **veteran**), the terse, cold-eyed "Senior Sword" and master of the gate guards.

The largest inn, The Old Bargewright, was recently rebuilt as a substantial stone structure with thick walls, secret passages, and private chambers separated from nearby rooms by sealed-off passages. Innkeeper Nalaskur Thaelond (male half-elf **spy**) keeps careful watch over who comes and goes from his inn; it's where Zhentarim meet to broker deals in commerce illicit in Waterdeep, such as smuggled goods, poisons, and certain magic.

Reason to Visit. Thaelond is the local leader among the Zhentarim and a key contact for characters with a connection to that faction. It's also where two side treks,


The Dessarin Valley
1 hex = 10 miles
Conyberry
Triboar
The Horn Stream
River Surbrin
Yartar
Evermoor Way
River Dessarin
N
W
E
S
Black Maw Bog
Wyvern Tor
Sword Mts.
Dessarin Hills
Dessarin River
Helvenblade House
Nettlebee Ranch
Jundar's Pass
Kryptgarden Forest
Westbridge
Haayon's Camp
The Stone Trail
Dellmon Ranch
Anderil Farm
The Stone Bridge
Sumber Hills
Beliard
Delegation Ambush
Abandoned Quarry
Halls of the Hunting Axe
Vale of Dancing Waters
Larch Path
Scarlet Moon Hall
Red Larch
Rivergard Keep
Summit Hall
The High Forest
Feathergale Spire
Kheldell Path
Lance Rock
Sacred Stone Monastery
Shallow Graves
Cairn Road
The Dessarin Road
Gaustar's Creek
Reaver Ambush
The Long Road
The Westwood
Dessarin River
Bargewright Inn
Ironford
Womford
Rundreth Manor
The Iron Road
City
Town
Abbey
Site
Bridge
Amphail
Goldenfields
The Forlorn Hills

"The Long Road" and "New Management," start (see chapter 6).

Beliard

One of the more pleasant-looking villages in the Dessarin Valley thanks to its many trees, Beliard is a market-moot for local cattle drovers. It surrounds the intersection of the Dessarin Road with the Stone Trail.

Beliard is home to many cattle ranchers whose herds roam the hills around it, particularly to the east. The village offers a public well, as well as a pond where harnessed horses or oxen can be driven through the water to bathe them, drive off flies, and let them drink. It's also home to a tanner, a smith, some horse dealers and trainers who keep extensive stables, and an inn: the venerable, popular, and several-times-expanded Watchful Knight. The inn was originally named for an inoperative helmed horror that stood in the common room, but the creature mysteriously vanished years ago. The innkeeper went missing shortly thereafter.

In recent years, bodyguards and mercenaries formerly active in Waterdeep and along the Heartlands trade routes retired to Beliard, and their presence makes nearby brigands reluctant to raid the village directly. Because so many big-city folk settled here, rumors persist of cached treasure buried or otherwise hidden all over Beliard, but aside from a sack of gold coins found walled away behind stones in a chimney, nothing has yet been found—nothing that has become public knowledge, at least.

Reason to Visit. Beliard was the last place anyone saw the missing delegation from Mirabar (described in chapter 3).

Cult Encampments

Two cult encampments are marked in specific positions on the regional map. These play a part in the events and cult reactions of the adventure.

Haayon's Camp

This is the camp of Haayon the Punisher, described in the "Wrath of the Elements" section of chapter 5. The camp is here only after the characters have defeated the air prophet and water prophet, or forced them to retreat from their respective temples.

Reaver Ambush

This is the camp of water cult reavers, described in the "Early Investigations" section of chapter 3. The camp is here only until the characters defeat Jolliver Grimjaw (chapter 3) or Gar Shatterkeel (chapter 4).

Goldenfields

Goldenfields is a huge walled temple-farm dedicated to Chauntea, the goddess of agriculture. Called "the granary of the North," it's the only reason many Northerners ever taste soft-fleshed fruit larger than bush berries. Waterdeep, Secomber, Yartar, and points beyond consume the temple's reliable output: carefully husbanded grains and dried, oil-packed, or salted foodstuffs preserved in vast storage cellars, vats, ricks, and squat stone grain-towers.

Now run by Abbot Ellardin Darovik (male Tethyrian human **priest**), Goldenfields is a stronghold of the Emerald Enclave. Members of that faction are as welcome here as clergy of Chauntea; many of them stay for months at a time to help with the work and the vigilant defense of the farm against insects and blights, as well as would-be vandals and plunderers. Hired adventurers patrol the walls and the land immediately around them, watching for anyone approaching. More than five thousand people live and work in Goldenfields year round, farming more than twenty square miles of tillage in gangs of hard-working gardeners.

No guest at Goldenfields ever leaves hungry, and the farmer-priests expect that everyone should leave with "food for a tenday or more on the road, and seeds for the future beyond that."

Reason to Visit. Darovik is a useful contact for characters with a connection to the Emerald Enclave. Goldenfields is also an intended destination of the missing delegation, though they obviously never arrived.

Halls of the Hunting Axe

These monster-haunted ruins were once a grand and important city in the shield dwarf kingdom of Besilmer. The old city was a small forest of stone roundhouses, interlaced with gardens and joined by walls into one vast and sprawling building. It was surrounded by a moat fed by underground springs; splendid stone statues of heroic dwarves stood on high pedestals wherever one turned. All trace of the gigantic building is gone now except the foundations of its thickest, highest walls, which jut like lines of stone teeth from thickets of trees and creeping vines. For centuries, shards from magnificent windows of stained glass that once adorned the Halls have found their way into beautiful and distinctive glass bottles blown locally.

Stories in nearby Beliard warn of predatory creatures lurking in the extensive ruins. Despite forays by adventuring bands and dwarves determined to reclaim and explore the ruins, the halls rarely stay empty for long. As a result, travelers usually give the Halls of the Hunting Axe a wide berth.

Many dwarves and most local Harpers believe King Torhild Flametongue, the founder of Besilmer, lies entombed with his legendary greataxe somewhere beneath the Halls. (The rumor is true.) Some dwarven legends go further, saying the royal tomb was long deliberately sealed off by dwarves and that a fearsome curse befalls anyone who disturbs Torhild's rest.

Reason to Visit. Characters have a chance to explore Torhild's tomb in the "Halls of the Hunting Axe" side trek in chapter 6.

Haunted Keeps

In the southwestern Sumber Hills stand four ruined keeps built centuries ago by a band of adventurers, the Knights of the Silver Horn. According to most locals, these crumbling stone castles are haunted by

ghosts and prowling monsters. Sensible valley dwellers avoid them.

In recent years, four elemental cults have taken over the keeps. The cultists are careful to keep the curious outside their walls—or to make sure visitors who learn the truth either join the cult or never return from their visit.

Reason to Visit. These four sites are central to the adventure (see chapter 3) and places where characters confront the Elemental Evil cults directly.

Feathergale Spire

Home to the flamboyant Feathergale Society, this tall stone tower stands on a height commanding splendid views across the Sumber Hills. It can be seen from afar by anyone traversing the hills and is used as a private retreat by an elite hippogriff flying club comprised of rich Waterdhavians calling themselves the Feathergale Knights. These "knights" affect a dashing image and are given to drinking, singing, wearing fashionable clothing, and general revelry. The club is a cover for the Cult of the Howling Hatred. Cult warriors watch the surrounding area but leave travelers close to the spire alone. They want to avoid drawing attention to their activities for now.

Sacred Stone Monastery

This "keep" is actually an old stone temple built in a rocky vale at the southern edge of the Sumber Hills. It was recently reborn as the Sacred Stone Monastery, home to reclusive monks dedicated to a mysterious "Way of the Sacred Stone," which sages across Faerûn have never heard of because it's merely a cover for the Cult of the Black Earth.

The monastery is the surface stronghold of the earth cult, and it functions as the guarded entrance to the Temple of the Black Earth beneath it. All of the monks are earth cultists who are well aware of the true nature of the monastery.

Scarlet Moon Hall

Deep in the wild heart of the Sumber Hills stands Scarlet Moon Hall, the abode of the druids of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. To folk of the Dessarin Valley, this is the most mysterious of the Haunted Keeps. It stands deep in the Sumber Hills "where the worst monsters are"—and as a result local hunters, prospectors, herbalists, and woodcutters rarely go near the place.

Scarlet Moon Hall is secretly the stronghold of the Cult of the Eternal Flame, elemental fire cultists posing as druids while they seek new adherents.

Rivergard Keep

This stout castle stands on the banks of the Dessarin River. It consists of a stone keep and gatehouse linked by a curtain wall to a river tower and dock.

Rivergard is home to a mercenary band led by "Lord of the Castle" Jolliver Grimjaw (see chapter 7). The band is repairing the old castle, and reroofing is their current major task. They claim their intention is to make Rivergard Keep their base for protecting river-borne trade from monsters and bandits. In truth, Grimjaw and his followers are themselves the bandits, and Rivergard Keep is secretly the stronghold of the Cult of the Crushing Wave.

Helvenblade House

Northwest of Westbridge, on the forest's edge, stands Helvenblade House, the principal country estate of the Silmerhelve noble house of Waterdeep. It consists of a fortified manor, stables, a guest lodge, and two outlying hunting lodges connected by grass paths that enclose a food and herb garden and a small lawn. A large, lightly wooded hunting preserve extends for several miles from the manor.

The Silmerhelves visit perhaps six times a year, and the rest of the time the sleepy estate is left to the live-in staff. Helvenblade has never been overrun by bandits or otherwise put to ruin; the servants ascribe this to its protection by the "family ghost." In reality, a secretive dragon named Umsheryoth (adult male **bronze dragon**) guards the house and has been a friend to the Silmerhelves for generations.

Reason to Visit. Helvenblade House offers a respite from the machinations of the elemental cults, and the "family ghost" could prove an unusual but potent ally.

High Forest

Although much shrunken from its ancient boundaries, the High Forest is still vast and mysterious. Larger than some kingdoms, it's big enough to encompass mountains within its depths. It is home to treants of gigantic size, stags with antlers as wide across as a wagon, brown bears bigger than large sheds, owlbears, wolves, and unicorns. Woodcutters and even outlaws on the run dare visit only the verges of the High Forest. As everyone knows, those who venture too deep are seldom seen again.

In the northwestern High Forest stands Shadowtop Cathedral, a stand of towering shadowtop trees that is an important meeting-place for the Emerald Enclave. Foes of the enclave have to fight to reach it, but members can readily find aid, healing, and advice in the grove.

Reason to Visit. Shadowtop Cathedral is a key base for the Emerald Enclave. Also, characters from the Tree Ghost Uthgardt tribe call the High Forest home.

Homesteads

Scores of isolated homesteads are scattered across the Dessarin Valley, but only a few that are featured in the adventure's side treks are shown on the regional map. Additional homesteads appear on the Random Encounters tables earlier in this chapter. Not even lifelong residents of the Dessarin Valley know exactly where all the outlying farms and ranches lie, and characters traveling cross country might stumble across lonely farmhouses or outlying ranches anywhere.

Since homesteads are permanent structures, make a note on the regional map when the characters discover one at random. It should be in the same place if the party passes through again.

A homestead usually consists of a farmhouse with thick shutters for the windows and a bar for the door, a barn or two containing livestock, a feed crib, and crops

or pastures nearby. Most homesteaders are human or halfling commoners. They gladly welcome travelers (especially adventurers who look like they're trying to chase away outlaws and monsters) and are eager for news. Homesteaders can usually point the way to the nearest town or neighboring homesteads (there is usually another homestead within one or two hexes).

Reason to Visit. If the characters speak with homesteaders in the area east of the Sumber Hills, they learn that raiders in brown cloaks sacked a few farms and dragged off their inhabitants. (These captives are currently held in the slave pens beneath Sacred Stone Monastery.) In addition, three homesteads—Anderil Farm, Dellmon Ranch, and Nettlebee Ranch—are featured in side treks and shown on the regional map.

Kryptgarden Forest

Kryptgarden Forest hides many old dwarven ruins and the extensive underground city now known as Southkrypt. For centuries, this forest has been the home and hunting ground of the ancient female green dragon Claugiyliamatar, better known to many as "Old Gnawbone." She earned her nickname by her habit of gnawing on old kills, and is often seen with a mangled corpse hanging from her mouth. Other dragons rarely remain in Kryptgarden Forest for long because Claugiyliamatar drives them out.

Hunters from Westbridge used to cautiously seek game along the easternmost verges of Kryptgarden but dare not do so now, after several hunting parties disappeared. Small game remains plentiful, but larger beasts are seldom seen. Presumably, such beasts have fallen prey to Old Gnawbone.

Lance Rock

A prominent landmark near Red Larch, Lance Rock is a slender stone monolith that juts up out of the plains a few miles west of the Long Road. It stands only about 25 feet high, but the land nearby is flat and open, so it can be seen from miles away on a clear day. Lance Rock is made of granite that doesn't match any other stone nearby, and looks like it was dropped from the sky—which it was. Long ago, Claugiyliamatar, the ancient green dragon known as "Old Gnawbone," took the enormous stone from the Sword Mountains and dropped it on a rival red dragon. The red dragon's bones are long gone, and few but Claugiyliamatar know the origin of the stone.

Reason to Visit. Characters who investigate rumors of plague near Lance Rock might discover the lair of a necromancer nearby (see "Lance Rock" in chapter 6).

Neverwinter

The city of Neverwinter lies on the Sword Coast, west and north from the Dessarin Valley. Once known as the



Jewel of the North, Neverwinter was badly damaged when nearby Mount Hotenow erupted about fifty years ago. The City of Skilled Hands works furiously to rebuild itself as a wealthy trading city known for its clocks and other superbly made local items. Neverwinter's reconstruction is far from complete, however. Entire sections of the city still lie in rubble, plagued by brigands and monsters, and sinister factions scheme to take over the place.

Neverwinter is part of the league of city-states known as the Lords' Alliance. Lord Dagult Neverember rules over the city, even though he isn't the true heir to Neverwinter's crown. He supports the alliance's efforts to establish civilization throughout the North, although his primary concern is to rebuild the city and its economy.

The most direct route to Neverwinter from the Dessarin Valley is to head west along the trail from Triboar to the tiny town of Phandalin (about 140 miles), then north another 110 miles or so along the coastal road. Riders who know the way, travel light, and push hardy mounts can make the trip in as little as eight or nine days.

Reason to Visit. If the characters need the services and commerce of a big city and Waterdeep doesn't do for some reason, then Neverwinter is the next best choice.

Rundreth Manor

Atop a hill overlooking the Long Road less than a day's travel northeast of Amphail stands ruined Rundreth Manor. This large stone mansion, now roofless and overgrown, is home to a mysterious and terrifying figure known far and wide as "the Dark Lady." Locals warn everyone to stay well away from the ruins.

The truth of the tale is that the "Dark Lady" is a female adult black shadow dragon named Nurvureem, who has established her lair in the caverns beneath the manor. Her favorite shape is a beautiful female drow. In this form, Nurvureem lures adventurers into the manor and stalks them. She sometimes poses as a drow captive of a dragon, desperate to avoid being eaten and willing to pay with her treasure to be rescued. The Harpers have learned her secret, and do their best to spread stories of the Dark Lady to scare off curious or foolhardy adventurers. They warn fellow members to approach Nurvureem with extreme caution.

In recent months, Nurvureem has been pestered by elemental cultists looking for potential bases. By leaving their shredded corpses on the road for all to see, she hopes to make it clear to the cultists that they should leave Rundreth Manor alone.

Reason to Visit. A side trek in chapter 6 takes place at Rundreth Manor, and the characters have a chance to confront the Dark Lady and perhaps find common cause against the cults.

Stone Bridge

This gigantic stone archway (two miles long and four hundred feet high) comfortably spans the widest spring flood of the Dessarin River. It is a sacred site of pilgrimage for many dwarves. Long ago, the dwarf god Moradin appeared atop the Stone Bridge to rally dwarves of the Ironstar clan against a horde of orcs. The founder of Besilmer, King Torhild Flametongue, died fighting a hill giant atop the Stone Bridge. (He is entombed within the Halls of the Hunting Axe.)

Built to connect those parts of the dwarven realm of Besilmer on both the western and eastern banks of the Dessarin, the Stone Bridge is made of smooth, fused hard granite. It is only six paces wide and lacks railings or barriers, so anyone atop it is at the mercy of the wind, particularly in winter.

Reason to Visit. The Stone Bridge is the only crossing of the Dessarin River between Ironford and Yartar; travelers and caravans frequently use it (with care).

Sumber Hills

The Sumber Hills are windswept badlands sparsely covered in dry grass. Many of the hills have exposed rock faces or steep escarpments. While the hills are dry, countless tiny streams rise from hidden springs (usually clean and drinkable), then flow down to join the Dessarin River, which bisects the hills.

Most locals only think of the wilder, higher hills west of the river when they hear "Sumber Hills," because it's there that once had rich quarries and good hunting. Some hunting lodges and keeps owned by wealthy Waterdhavians or adventurers remain—and in recent times have become homes to bandits and monsters. Those who quarry the Sumber Hills for building stones and gravel often trade tales of finding gemstones and rich veins of ore in the hills—but for the most part, these persistent tales have never been more than talk.

In the last few years, the infamous "Haunted Keeps" in the western Sumber Hills have all been reoccupied. Sightings of strange beasts and menacing figures have increased, too.

Reason to Visit. The characters likely traipse all over the Sumber Hills in chapter 3 of the adventure as they seek out the Haunted Keeps.

Summit Hall

Summit Hall was established long ago as a fortified monastery by the Knights of Samular, an order dedicated to Tyr, god of justice. A paladin of Tyr named Samular Caradoon founded the order and its monastery. A tomb within the monastery contains Samular's remains as well as the phylactery of his brother, Renwick Caradoon, who dwells in the Sacred Stone Monastery (see "Haunted Keeps" above) as a lich.

Lady Ushien Stormbanner (female Tethyrian human **knight** of Tyr) oversees Summit Hall. Veterans, many of them scarred and grim, train novices and instruct them in the moral "Rule of the Knights" (an extensive series of "in this situation, a knight shall do this" guidelines). Life here is very regimented. The occupants of Summit Hall grow their own food and keep perpetual watch over nearby lands. They are always ready for battle, and fully armed and armored if encountered outside their walls.

Reason to Visit. Characters who track the Mirabar delegation from Beliard find that the delegation never



reached Summit Hall. The site where elemental cultists attacked the delegation lies only a few miles away. Later in the adventure, characters affiliated with the Order of the Gauntlet can turn to the Knights of Samular to recruit guards for locations they've cleared or other "off camera" needs for low-level soldiers.

Triboar

The town of Triboar stands where the Long Road meets the Evermoor Way, a well-used caravan road that runs east to the city of Yartar. Triboar is the chief rival to Yartar, and the two communities compete for the trade of the Dessarin Valley.

The current lord protector is a good-natured Harper and ex-adventurer named Darathra Shendrel (female Tethyrian human **knight**), known for the excellent wine she makes. Darathra enacts and modifies local laws (known as "The Lord's Decree"), which are then enforced by "The Twelve," a dozen mounted **veterans** drawn from the militia to serve in a tenday cycle.

Triboar is a horse-market for a dozen nearby ranches that turn out trained draft horses, riding mounts and ponies, and pack mules. Blacksmiths, harnessmakers, and wagonworks flourish in town. In addition, a number of guides operate from Triboar. They take merchants and other travelers all over the Sword Coast North (typically for stiff fees). Many of these guides are retired adventurers who know the North well.

A half-elf adventurer named Gervor and his companions went missing recently. The adventurers were staying in town, and locals expected them to return tendays ago. In addition, two important merchants from Waterdeep, Kharloss and Jarlee, are overdue. (Gervor is currently a prisoner in area B14 of the Temple of the Black Earth, while the two Waterdhavians were captured by fire cultists on the Long Road. They are currently held in area W6 of the Weeping Colossus.)

Reason to Visit. Any Harper can readily find refuge and aid in the Home of the Boars, a lodge on the outskirts of the town. Darathra is a key contact for characters affiliated with the Harpers. The Zhentarim has spies in the town as well, and its agents might contact the characters in the course of "The Long Road" side trek in chapter 6.

Vale of Dancing Waters

Called Tyn'rrin Wurlur in Dwarvish, this narrow gorge carries a trio of creeks down to the Dessarin River in cascades of water. The vale is on the west side of the river and found at the end of a secret trail leading south from the Stone Bridge.

Long ago, the vale was the site of the summer palace of King Torhild Flametongue of the dwarven kingdom



of Besilmer. In time, it became a sacred place where dwarves come to worship their gods. Some legends among the Stout Folk say the cellars of the ancient palace hide riches of the royal treasury of Besilmer. (Actually, the palace collapsed long ago, but the shrine survives.) Recent sightings of monsters and roving bands of marauders in the Sumber Hills have alarmed the shield dwarf priests who tend the shrine. They worry that enemies might find the way to the hidden vale.

Reason to Visit. The Order of the Gauntlet has allies among the dwarves here, and the characters might be asked to check on them in the "Vale of Dancing Waters" side trek (see chapter 6).

Waterdeep

The City of Splendors is a bustling city on the Sword Coast. A rider from Red Larch can reach Waterdeep in seven days, three if he or she changes horses often and dares to ride by night. Some merchants have termed Waterdeep "the best supply center in the world," with the largest collection of superb craft workers, experts, useful contacts, and potential hirelings to be found anywhere. Others warn that it represents a huge army of potential enemies for those who aren't careful—and everyone agrees that its busy streets are full of spies.

Waterdhavian noble families and guilds hold tremendous political and economic sway up and down the Sword Coast, but within the city itself, true power lies with the Masked Lords of Waterdeep—individuals who convene secretly and whose identities are largely unknown. The public face of this ruling body is the Open Lord of Waterdeep. The current Open Lord, Laeral Silverhand, has held the position for only a few months, and many of the city's nobles and guildmasters are vying for her attention and conspiring to wrest power away from her office, while taking advantage of the transition to dispose of unwanted rivals. This kind of political chaos is "business as usual" for most city residents.

Reason to Visit. Characters who need rare items, sage advice, or other services found only in large cities might say "we're going to Waterdeep."

Westbridge

A village strung out along the Long Road between Red Larch and Triboar, Westbridge is home to the Harvest Inn, which stands on the west side of the Long Road facing the wagon road from the Stone Bridge. The inn is run by the affable Herivin Dardragon (male halfling **commoner**), a curly-haired collector and reseller of paintings and statuettes of questionable taste.

The town is full of rumors about the disappearance of Oric and Lathna, siblings who were abducted by raiders from a homestead a short distance outside of town. (They are currently serving in the kitchens of Rivergard Keep.) Herivin Dardragon is also worried about one of his regulars, a female shield dwarf prospector named Wulgreda. She has not stopped by in a long time (and is a prisoner in the Temple of the Black Earth).

Reason to Visit. Westbridge is a target when the cultists take revenge for the characters' actions.

The characters probably come to Westbridge in the aftermath of the "Dire Tidings" counterattack in chapter 4, or after the "Counsel of Despair" event in chapter 5.

Westwood

A tangled and varied forest cloaking the eastern foothills of the Sword Mountains, these woods are home to a shrine to Mielikki, several woodcutters' camps that are often taken over forcibly for a season or a few months at a time by bandits, and a few overgrown ruins of the ancient elven kingdom of Rilithar.

Recently, a roving band of Elk tribe barbarians (see "The Uthgardt Tribes" below) have come to Westwood. They forcibly evicted bandits from the innermost woodcutters' camps, then camped there themselves to explore and hunt in Westwood.

Reason to Visit. The Elk tribe and the adventurers have common enemies: the elemental cults. Although characters will be hard-pressed to win the barbarians' trust, they can pry useful information out of them. The Elk hunters know the Sumber Hills well and can provide simple, landmark-based directions to two cult strongholds: Rivergard Keep and Scarlet Moon Hall (though they don't know the names of these locations).

Womford

This tiny village has a dock on the Dessarin River for shipping the grain from its grist mill. It is also the local supply and market for the surrounding farms from which the grain comes. Aside from the mill, the village consists of a handful of granaries and a larger handful of cottages, several of which house tiny local shops. According to old tales, the village was known as Ironford until a dragon was slain nearby. Passers-by began to call the settlement "Wyrm Ford," a name subsequently corrupted, thanks to the thick local accent, into "Womford."

Womford is a center of thinly disguised cult activity thanks to its location on the Dessarin. River pirates and smugglers allied to the water cult frequently put in at the town's dock. Ruffians and thugs seem to take over the village whenever a keelboat is tied up at the dock. In fact, some locals have thrown in with the smugglers—three young ne'er-do-wells named Gorm, Herek, and Shadnil sailed off a month ago to join up. (They are now servants in the kitchens of Rivergard Keep.)

Womforders lock and bar their doors and shutter their windows at night, for fear of the "Womford Bat," a nocturnal predator that snatches folk it can catch outside after dark. One villager named Darreth vanished only steps from his own front door a tenday ago. (He was actually abducted by water cultists, and is now a captive in area F21 of the Fane of the Eye.)

Reason to Visit. Characters who try to trace the origin of the mysterious book during their investigations into the missing delegation might come to Womford and deal with the Womford Rats, as described in chapter 3.

Yartar

This fortified city commands the most northerly wagon bridge over the Dessarin River. A walled citadel on the west bank of the river connects to a bridge wide enough to accommodate two wagons with room to spare, connecting the Evermoor Way into and through Yartar. The road leads east to Everlund and Silverymoon, and west to Triboar and eventually Waterdeep via the Long Road.

Yartar is prosperous and increasingly crowded, so buildings have been torn down and taller ones built—four stories high in some instances.

A Waterbaron who rules for life leads Yartar. The current Waterbaron is the shrewd, farseeing Nestra Ruthiol (female Tethyrian human **noble**). Yartar is part of the Lords' Alliance, and Ruthiol considers that membership vital for its survival and prosperity. She knows that Harpers and Zhentarim are well established in the city, but her path only crosses with theirs when the wellbeing of Yartarrans is at stake.

The elemental cults have begun abducting Yartarrans who won't be missed—poor people and drunkards, mostly—and smuggling them out of the city. These missing Yartarrans are currently being held in area A12 of the Temple of Howling Hatred (see chapter 4).

Reason to Visit. The "Dark Dealings in Yartar" side trek (chapter 6) brings the characters here. More broadly, characters affiliated with the Lords' Alliance can readily receive support in Yartar, and Harpers and Zhentarim can get aid, too, if they're discreet and know how to contact an agent in town.

The Uthgardt Tribes

Most of the human barbarians in the vicinity of the Dessarin Valley belong to the various Uthgardt tribes. They take their name from Uthgar, a great hero-chief who conquered much of the North many centuries ago before ascending to godhood. Each tribe venerates its own particular totem animal and protects its own sacred sites, known as ancestral mounds. Some Uthgardt are relatively settled and trade with the civilized folk of the area, while others are aggressive raiders who pillage any caravan or homestead they come across.

The major tribes in the vicinity of the Dessarin Valley include the Elk, Gray Wolf, Griffon, and Tree Ghost. The Gray Wolf and Griffon tribesfolk are known as fierce warriors, but they rarely wander as far south as the Sumber Hills. The Tree Ghosts are a reclusive band that roams the High Forest; the barbarians are sometimes seen in the vales between the Sumber Hills and the edge of the forest, but they are among the more peaceful tribes and rarely trouble settlers or travelers in this area.

Uthgardt of the Elk tribe regard most of the Dessarin Valley as their territory. Small bands of Elk warriors roam the Westwood, the Sumber Hills, and the hilly land around the Dessarin and Surbrin rivers. Because they are relatively few in number, the Elk barbarians stay well away from the cities and towns in the area. However, they often attack weakly defended caravans on remote trails that are far from help. The tribesfolk generally don't harass poor working folk such as homesteaders and shepherds, although they sometimes steal sheep or other livestock if the opportunity presents itself.



Chapter 3: Secret of the Sumber Hills

The adventure starts in Red Larch, with the characters investigating the disappearance of a delegation from Mirabar. Characters are free to go wherever their information, as provided by you, takes them. Clues lead them to Haunted Keeps in the Sumber Hills. These old fortresses have become secret outposts for the cults of Elemental Evil.

The Missing Delegation

For months now, the cults of Elemental Evil have been establishing themselves in the Dessarin Valley without attracting much attention. Two tendays ago, that changed when an important delegation from the city of Mirabar disappeared in the Sumber Hills.

The delegation traveled overland from Westbridge to Beliard, crossing the Stone Bridge. From Beliard it headed south into the Sumber Hills, bound for Summit Hall. Earth cultists attacked the group a few miles from Summit Hall. The cultists took prisoners back to the Sacred Stone Monastery, paying water cultists for the use of their riverboats to cross the Dessarin River, which is how the delegation's valuables end up in Womford (see "Rumors in Red Larch"). On their way back to their base, the earth cultists skirmished with

air cultists, which accounts for the "Shallow Graves" section later in this chapter.

After their arrival at the Sacred Stone Monastery, some of the delegation members were put to work in the mines. Others were sent down to the Temple of the Black Earth (see chapter 4).

Other troubles have also surfaced recently, including some that might directly affect the characters. Tailor the introduction to work with the factions, backgrounds, and motivations in play among the characters.

The Priest's Purse. If you began this campaign with the introductory adventures in chapter 6, remind the players about the trade bars, minted in Mirabar, that the party found in the possession of Larrakh in the Tomb of Moving Stones.

Adventure Start

Red Larch is a little town on the Long Road, a few days' travel north of Waterdeep and south of Yartar. It's a way station for caravans coming to or from the cities of the North, with only one inn, the Swinging Sword.

An important delegation from the city of Mirabar disappeared in the nearby Sumber Hills. The whole town is also abuzz with news and rumors of fierce raiders, roaming monsters, suspicious strangers, and unseasonable weather.

The five factions know about the overdue delegation and are concerned enough to send agents to investigate. Characters affiliated with these factions are contacted and asked to help out. Tell each player in private why his or her faction is concerned about the missing delegation. The exact reasons for each faction are described as follows:

Harpers. The delegation included a renowned shield dwarf historian named Bruldenthar, who was transporting his collection of manuscripts to Waterdeep. The Harpers don't want the sage or his books to fall into the wrong hands.

Lords' Alliance. Three important diplomats from cities in the alliance were leading the delegation: a moon elf from Silverymoon named Teresiel, a shield dwarf from Mirabar named Rhundorth, and a human noble from Waterdeep named Deseyna Majarra. The diplomats are important, but each also carries one part of a secret, coded document that must be recovered at all costs.

Emerald Enclave. The moon elf Teresiel had in her possession a pouch of magical seeds she was taking to the abbey of Goldenfields, not far from Red Larch. When planted, these seeds are supposed to grow into a magical grove.

Order of the Gauntlet. The delegation was also transporting the body of a knight who was killed fighting orcs in the Spine of the World. The knight was to be interred with honor at Summit Hall, the chapter house of an order called the Knights of Samular. It lies in the southeast Sumber Hills.

The Zhentarim. The Zhentarim aren't particularly concerned about the delegation for its own sake, but they see an interesting opportunity here to rescue the missing delegates and win the gratitude of the leaders of Mirabar. Accordingly, a Zhentarim character wants to prove the good faith of the Black Network by lending a helping hand.

Nonfaction Start. Characters who aren't attached to the five factions can search for the missing delegation on their own initiative or might be motivated by their personal calls to action. The mystery of a missing delegation might not seem to be directly connected to whatever personal goal the character brings to the adventure, but then again, it just could be the lead.

Character Advancement

This adventure assumes that the characters begin this chapter at 3rd level. Some of the Haunted Keeps are tougher than others. Feathergale Spire is designed for a 3rd-level party, Rivergard Keep works best for a 4th-level party, Sacred Stone is designed for a 5th-level party, and Scarlet Moon Hall should challenge a 6th-level party. Each outpost the characters overcome should advance them at least one level.

Rumors in Red Larch

Red Larch is described in detail in chapter 2. Characters who take the time to talk to locals might gain a lead or learn something useful. The best places to hear the latest rumors about the missing delegation are the town tavern (the Helm at Highsun), the common room of the town inn (the Swinging Sword), or the store (Gaelkur's).

Rumors. An evening of asking questions in and around Red Larch reveals the following rumors.

- The Mirabar delegation was last seen in the town of Beliard. This information comes from a caravan guard in the Helm at Highsun and an itinerant priest of Lathander in the Swinging Sword who just came from Beliard.
- A dozen beautiful old books written in Dwarvish showed up in the cargo of a shady keelboat skipper in Womford. Characters hear this fact from Endrith Vallivoe, a local shopkeeper drinking in the Swinging Sword, who bought one of the books from a merchant recently arrived from Womford.
- Four new graves—simple rock cairns, really—have appeared on a windswept hilltop in the Sumber Hills, a few miles outside of town. The shepherd Larmon Greenboot found them, and he has no idea who would have been buried out there in the last few days. Larmon hangs around Gaelkur's. He can guide the characters to the site where he found the graves, but he insists on waiting until morning.
- An Amnian merchant heading north on the Long Road stopped in Thorsk Thelorn's workshop for a wagon repair. His goods were marked by a strange symbol, like a bowl. He paid Thorsk well and talked about a big gathering of druids he was heading to, hoping to sell kegs of beer and various trinkets. If the characters mention the Amnian merchant to Thorsk, they can get directions to Scarlet Moon Hall.

Early Investigations

Armed with a lead or two from their inquiries in Red Larch (and perhaps with clues from their personal calls to action), the characters can begin their search. Ask the players where they want their characters to go and continue with "Beliard," "Shallow Graves," or "Womford Rats," as appropriate.

Controlling Information. To find a Haunted Keep, the party must develop a lead by following events in the adventure, employing scrying magic, or methodically searching the Sumber Hills.

Some or all of the player characters might begin the adventure already in possession of useful information because of the adventure hooks in chapter 1. Key clues from these hooks include the following:

- Best Served Cold: The character hears from tavern patrons in Red Larch that a band of minstrels called the Windwyrds performs at Feathergale Spire. The character knows the spire's location.
- Dangerous Information: The character knows where the Reaver Ambush encounter takes place (see "Cult Reprisals" later in this chapter) and can go there to intervene.
- Feathergale Rebel: The character knows the location of Feathergale Spire.
- Madman at Haunted Keep: The character knows the location of Rivergard Keep.
- Standing Offer or Strange Map: The character knows the location of the Sacred Stone Monastery.
- Suspicious Fellow: The character knows the location of Feathergale Spire and heard that Thurl Merosska can be found there.
- Undercover: The character knows the location of Rivergard Keep and that Jolliver Grimjaw is in charge.

Anyone in Red Larch can provide good directions to Feathergale Spire if the characters ask about the place. It's a well-known site. It's fine if the characters decide to follow up on one of these leads instead of investigating the missing delegation.

Beliard

Check for random encounters during the journey to Beliard (see chapter 2).

> Orchards and large cattle ranches surround the little town of Beliard. Large stockyards lie on the east side of town, and stone warehouses along the Dessarin Road indicate the regular caravan traffic that passes through.

Everyone is talking about the travelers from Mirabar and wondering what happened. A dozen theories make the rounds, but most make no sense. If the characters sort through the gossip look for those who spoke with the Mirabarrans, they unearth the following leads:

- Neshor Fleurdin, proprietor of the Watchful Knight inn, spoke with the delegation leaders and learned they planned to head south on the Dessarin Road. They intended to visit Summit Hall next, returning the body of a knight slain in the North.
- Senya, a server at the Watchful Knight, noticed a strange monk who wore a golden mask observing the Mirabarrans closely while they stayed at the Watchful Knight. The monk left a few hours before the delegation set out and hasn't been seen since.
- A cattle drover met the delegation on the Dessarin Road about ten miles south of town, a few hours after they left. Later that day he saw a group of five warriors in sky-blue armor and white cloaks, flying on giant vultures. The aerial riders flew overhead and turned south, heading in the same direction as the delegation. Eann, a cattle drover drinking at the Watchful Knight, tells this tale to anyone who listens.

If the characters ask about warriors on flying monsters or giant vultures, they gain an additional rumor:

- Halrud Ponden, the townmaster and chief lawkeeper of Beliard, looks nervous as he tells the characters about warriors in blue armor and white cloaks flying on monsters or giant vultures have been seen near Feathergale Spire, not far from Red Larch.

Nothing more comes to light about the strange monk in Beliard. The characters have to keep looking.

The Dessarin Road

If the party follows the trail south from Beliard toward Summit Hall and Womford, they come across the spot where the delegation from Mirabar was attacked. No one else found it because it's off the road. Only in the last day or two have natural scavengers returned to the area, since the lingering aura of elemental magic kept them away until now.

> The Dessarin Road leads south through the barren Sumber Hills. You don't meet any other travelers this day, but you find evidence that the trail supports traffic—wagon ruts and mule droppings prove that people come this way on a regular basis. You find nothing else until you are about fifteen miles south of Beliard, when you spot a cloud of ravens and vultures circling a mile or so west of the trail.

If the characters investigate, they find the remains of a pitched battle between the earth cult and the delegation from Mirabar.

> In a small dell a mile off the road, you find the remains of a battle. A dozen dead soldiers lie on the ground, dressed in black surcoats bearing the emblem of a red axe. Most appear to have died from battle injuries, although some lie in small craters or jumbles of broken rock. Abandoned and looted wagons lie nearby. A couple of broken trunks sit on the ground by the wagons. Two rock cairns—one large and one small—stand atop a hillside nearby.

Characters native to the North recognize the red axe design as the emblem of Mirabar. Non-native characters recognize it with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies the craters and rock jumbles as the effects of powerful earth-based magic. None of the Mirabar delegates are here, but almost all of their escorts were killed.

The large cairn contains the bodies of five dead bugbears. They are dressed in black leather armor with a strange triangular symbol on it (the earth cult symbol). The small cairn contains the body of a human woman in monk's robes, with a strange golden mask shaped like a snarling gargoyle face (a Sacred Stone monk killed in the fight). The mask is made of gilded tin and not particularly valuable.

Tracks. A character studying the tracks in the area who makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check learns that a large group of about thirty bugbears and Medium humanoids wearing boots headed west into the hills. The trail leads several miles to the banks of the Dessarin River in the middle of nowhere, but gouges in the bank show where several keelboats landed.

Shallow Graves

The shepherd Larmon Greenboot in Red Larch leads the characters to this site if they ask. The characters might also stumble across the site while traveling in the Sumber Hills near Red Larch.

> On a barren hilltop a few miles from Red Larch, you find four freshly dug shallow graves. The earth scraped out for the holes is piled nearby, although hastily gathered stones cover the graves. The faint smell of death hangs in the air, and several vultures circle overhead.

If Larmon is with the party, he explains that he grazes his sheep in a nearby vale, and he passed by this spot less than a month ago. There were no graves present on his previous visit. He found them just a couple of days ago and has no idea who might be buried here—none of the folk of Red Larch are missing, and he doesn't know of anyone else out this way. The hills are mostly uninhabited.

Grave Occupants. If the characters excavate the graves, they find one male dwarf dressed in artisan robes (a smith from Mirabar), one female human warrior dressed in a red surcoat with a black axe (the symbol of Mirabar's army), one male human warrior dressed in a black cloak with strange stony armor (an earth cultist), and one male human in a white robe with black feathers at the shoulders (an air cultist). All died from arrow wounds or crushing blows, and the earth cultists who won the battle buried the fallen on both sides because they believe everything should ultimately be consumed by the earth.

What's Around? If any of the characters make a serious effort to study the surrounding area, they find a confused collection of tracks, a few broken arrows, a discarded javelin, and a tattered gray cloak.

> You have a good view of the surrounding hills from this vantage point. Several miles to the west you can make out the tiny outline of Red Larch, and the thin dark line marking the Long Road. Perhaps two miles to the north, you see a slender old tower circled by large birds. Nothing else is around here.

If asked, Larmon identifies the tower in the distance as Feathergale Spire. All he knows about the place is that "knights out of Waterdeep come up here sometimes, riding on flying monsters." He adds, "They keep to themselves."

Summit Hall

The party might discover that the delegation for Mirabar was headed for Summit Hall and travel there directly, without following the Dessarin Road from Beliard. (This is most likely if a character belonging to the Order of the Gauntlet insists on going directly to Summit Hall.)

> This small stronghold stands on a hilltop in the southern region of the Sumber Hills. It consists of a stone hall surrounded by a fifteen-foot wall with a sturdy wooden gate. Stables, a tower, barracks, and storage buildings are enclosed within the protective wall. A banner flying an emblem of a crossed torch and sword flutters overhead.

Summit Hall is home to about a dozen Knights of Samular, an order of long-suffering Tyr worshipers who have been reenergized by their god's return. They host another dozen young aspirants-in-training, and about fifteen servants and artisans to help maintain the place.

The most senior knight is a human woman of sixty years named Ushien Stormbanner, an ally of the Order of the Gauntlet. Ushien is happy to meet with any adventurers that turn up on her doorstep. She tells the characters that the delegates from Mirabar never showed up at Summit Hall, and that her warriors searched the area and didn't find them (both true).

The Golden Mask. If any of the characters mention monks in golden masks or show Lady Ushien the mask of the monk from the cairn in the Dessarin Road site, Ushien recognizes it. She can tell the characters that the masks are worn by the monks of the Sacred Stone order. She doesn't know much about them, but she can tell the characters that the monks have taken over one of the old Haunted Keeps. She provides directions to the Sacred Stone Monastery.

Womford Rats

> Womford is a tiny settlement on the banks of the Dessarin River, south of the Ironford Bridge. A dilapidated dock juts out into the river, and three keelboats are tied there. A large mill sits on the riverbank, with several big granaries nearby and a handful of small, run-down cottages.



Most of the townsfolk are intimidated by the thugs who run their criminal trade from their keelboats. Questions about, "Is anybody selling books around here?" or "Where do we find the river boats?" quickly lead the party to the docks.

Two of the three keelboats are crewed by **commoners** (ordinary river sailors). The third belongs to a gang of water cultists: the genasi **Shoalar Quanderil** (see chapter 7), his servant Pike (a halfling **thug**), and two **bandits** loyal to the genasi. The cultists' keelboat is 30 feet long. The middle 10 feet feature a small deck house, with a forecastle at one end and an open stern at the other. The holds are crammed with ordinary provisions, marked with the water cult symbol.

Roleplaying Shoalar

Shoalar appears jovial, but he has a biting sense of humor and tends to laugh at people rather than with them. If questioned, he denies any knowledge of books or delegates from Mirabar, but he is lying. Characters who present themselves as fellow rogues or potential recruits might be able to persuade him to admit that he "ferried unsavory passengers across the river a couple of tendays ago, and how they paid was no worry of mine." Characters who threaten or act suspiciously trigger an attack from Shoalar and his crew.

Treasure

Shoalar wears a leather belt pouch containing 10 gp, three small malachites (10 gp each), and a *potion of healing*. A trunk in the deckhouse contains five tomes written in Dwarvish (historical accounts of the old kingdom of Delzoun), each worth 30 gp. A large chart on a table in the deckhouse marks the location of Rivergard Keep with a hand-drawn water cult symbol.

Cult Reprisals

The cults of Elemental Evil don't wait passively for a band of heroes to systematically eliminate each cult's surface outpost. Even if the characters destroy one of the Haunted Keep outposts completely and eliminate all possible witnesses, the elemental prophets gain glimpses of the threat facing them through dreams, visions, and portents. The Elder Elemental Eye warns the prophets of danger and impels them to respond.

You have four reprisals to choose from: "Tremors," "Skyriders," "Reaver Ambush," and "Fiery Fangs." Let player interest and your own sense of pacing dictate which reprisal to use.

- If a character has the Dangerous Information adventure hook (see chapter 1), run "Reaver Ambush" when the character resolves to travel to the attack site and stop it.
- Choose one reprisal to run after the characters visit the first locale (Beliard, Dessarin Road, Shallow Graves, Summit Hall, or Womford Rats). "Skyriders" and "Reaver Ambush" are good choices because they point to lower-level Haunted Keeps (Feathergale Spire and Rivergard Keep, respectively).
- Choose a second reprisal to run after the characters visit the first of the Haunted Keeps. This is a good opportunity to point the characters toward the air or water keeps—whichever one the characters haven't explored yet.
- Choose a third reprisal to run after the characters visit the third of the Haunted Keeps.

Tremors

While the characters explore the Sumber Hills, they experience first-hand the strange phenomena and dangerous monsters plaguing the area. Use this reprisal any time the characters travel between towns or search the hills for sites of interest.

You are trudging along through the barren countryside when you hear a low, distant rumbling. A moment later, the ground beneath your feet begins shaking. The tremor is strong enough to start small slides of pebbles from the hillsides and cause shrubs and brush to wave from side to side, but then it subsides. A moment later, horrible insect-like creatures as big as horses begin to burrow out of the ground!

The insect-like monsters are two **ankhegs**, hungry for flesh. The creatures haven't specifically been sent by the earth cult to attack the characters, but the local evil influence of the cult makes events such as the tremor and the ankheg attack almost commonplace in the Dessarin Valley.

Skyriders

Nosy heroes asking awkward questions in the towns nearby gain the attention of the Howling Hatred cult. The air cultists send a group of aerial raiders to eliminate the characters, or at least to give them a good scare. This encounter can occur any time the characters are away from a settlement.

A strange, croaking cry from somewhere above catches your attention. You spot a trio of huge, winged shapes gliding toward you—giant vultures! Each bird carries on its back a warrior in dull blue armor with a dirty white cloak.

The attackers include one **Feathergale knight** and two **Howling Hatred initiates** (see chapter 7 for both), each mounted on a **giant vulture**. The riders prefer to keep their distance and make ranged attacks. They are also protective of their mounts. If a vulture is reduced to half its hit points or less, its rider disengages and retreats. If any two riders are killed or retreat, the third flees.

Treasure

None of the riders carry treasure, but one of them has a map tucked into his boot. (Whichever villain the characters defeat has the map—the characters should find it.) The map shows a crude sketch of the Dessarin Valley and marks a place called "the Spire" a few miles east of Red Larch. It also depicts a strange arrow-like symbol by the site (the air cult symbol).

Reaver Ambush

If the characters learned about this attack from the Dangerous Background adventure hook, they know that a band of raiders intends to ambush a caravan on the trail between Red Larch and the Ironford Bridge, a few miles from Bargewright Inn. They can find the villains camped just out of sight from the trail. Otherwise, the characters can encounter this camp any time they travel along one of the roads or trails in the area.

A small, carefully banked cooking fire smolders in the middle of this haphazard encampment. Half a dozen battered old tents and crates of provisions are scattered around, along with racks on which pieces of smoked fish are curing. Several fierce-looking human warriors are hunkered down in front of their tents, tending to their gear or quietly conversing.

The camp is occupied by one **Crushing Wave priest**, two **Crushing Wave reavers**, and five **bandits** (statistics for the priest and the reavers appear in chapter 7). If the characters have the advantage of foreknowledge and successfully sneak up on the villains, they can surprise the water cultists. Otherwise, the cultists assume that any strangers are enemies and attack. If all the Crushing Wave members are killed, surviving bandits try to flee or surrender.

Development

Captured Crushing Wave cultists refuse to talk, but captured bandits aren't as fanatically close-mouthed. The bandits reveal that they signed on with the "mercenaries" at Rivergard Keep and now work for Jolliver Grimjaw. They can tell the characters how to find the keep.

Fiery Fangs

The fire cult is less concerned with maintaining appearances than the other elemental cults. When Vanifer or her lieutenants receive word that a band of adventurers is trying to ferret out the cult, they send a pack of three **hell hounds** after the party. The hounds need only get the scent of the characters through spilled blood or discarded items. This encounter can take place wherever the characters are at the time, whether traveling between sites or ostensibly safe at an inn.

If the characters encounter the hell hounds in the wilderness, the hounds appear a short distance behind the characters, following their tracks and baying with eagerness. If the characters are resting at an inn, they're interrupted by screaming and barking coming from the inn's common room, where the pack breaks through windows and terrifies the staff. (It's all the better if the characters are eating a meal there themselves).

The monsters single-mindedly pursue the characters and fight until one is killed and a second is reduced to fewer than half its hit points, whereupon the surviving hounds flee. A mysterious bowl-like symbol (the symbol of the fire cult) marks the iron collars of the hell hounds. Thorsk Thelorn in Red Larch can connect the symbol to a mysterious gathering of druids in the Sumber Hills he heard about from a passing merchant and provide directions to Scarlet Moon Hall.

Feathergale Spire

In the Sighing Valley stands Feathergale Spire, the Haunted Keep inhabited by the Feathergale Society, Waterdhavian aerial-mount enthusiasts who have pretensions of nobility. They call themselves Feathergale Knights.

Secretly, the knights are dedicated to Yan-C-Bin. They occupied the keep when the air cult established itself in the dwarven ruins beneath the Sumber Hills. The knights serve the cult as lookouts, messengers, spies, and a first line of defense.

Spire Approach

When the characters visit the area, use the unique environment and its weather to add atmosphere. During the day, azure sky encompasses the tower and gusty winds buffet it from all sides. The wind sighs through rock formations in the canyon. At night, the wind calms to a breeze, and light fog settles over the canyon. The spire then appears to float among the stars on a sea of clouds. The summits of the hills rise above the fog like islands in that sea.

You can initially describe the keep as follows:

> Feathergale Spire rises from a pillar of rock high into the air, the tallest point for miles. Built from white limestone and embellished in marble, the spire resembles a gleaming sword that pierces the sky.
>
> The gatehouse faces the opposite cliff, its drawbridge the only apparent point of entry. Tall, wide windows encompass the bottom level of the tower, absent only upon the gatehouse side.
>
> A circle of open stalls rings the tower's foundation where it meets the rock. Above each stall, the sculpture of a hippogriff in flight leaps from the tower's base.
>
> Beneath Feathergale Spire to the east, a wide gusty canyon yawns through the hills.

A steep trail leads to the drawbridge over Feathergale Moat and to the keep's main entrance (area S2). Characters who approach along the floor of the canyon (the Sighing Valley, described later in this chapter) can scale the stone pillar on which the spire stands. It is 400 feet from the pillar's base to the lowest level of the spire (area S1), and each level of the spire is 20 feet higher than the level below it. Flying characters can enter the spire from the pinnacle or through one of the windows in the courtyard gardens.

Two **Feathergale knights** (see chapter 7) patrol the pinnacle (area S11) at all times, taking flight on **giant vultures** to meet attackers. One knight is stationed in the front hall (area S2) with two **Howling Hatred initiates** (see chapter 7). In daylight, the pinnacle knights have an excellent vantage point. They are likely to know of the characters' approach long before the party arrives.

The knights' reaction depends on how the party chooses to enter the spire. Peaceful visitors who approach openly are welcome. Those who sneak in or assault the spire meet the full defenses of the keep.

Spire Features

The refurbished spire has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. Ceilings are 18 feet high.

Defenders. The spire is described as it is when the characters arrive. At that time, four Feathergale Knights and their giant vulture mounts are away until that evening's feast (see the "Knight's Quest" section).

Doors. Interior doors are made of wood banded with iron. Most have no locks but can be barred. It takes a successful DC 20 Strength check to break open a barred door.

Floors. All floors are made of white stone.

Light. Due to its many windows, Feathergale Spire is brightly lit during the day and dimly lit at night. With the reinforced shutters closed, the light becomes dim during the day and dark at night.

Locks. Any locks require thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check to open.

Treasure. Feathergale Knights keep their wealth locked in chests in their cells. Each knight also has 2d10 gp in mixed coinage and minor valuables.

Windows. Oversized windows on the ground level allow light and air to pass easily into the tower. They stand 3 feet from the ground and are 6 feet tall and 8 feet wide. Smaller windows, about half the size of the larger ones, are on levels 2 and 3. Shutters reinforced with iron bands permit the windows to be shut and barred. A barred window is like a barred door.

Feathergale Moat

> A gap of twenty feet separates the ledge where the path ends from the closed drawbridge on Feathergale Spire. The space between the cliff's edge and the gatehouse drops several hundred feet to the bottom of the canyon. Near the ledge, a brass bell hangs from a wooden post.

At the bell's ring, a female human **Feathergale knight** (see chapter 7) named Savra Belabranta opens a small window near the gate, welcomes the characters, and courteously asks what brings them here. Savra lowers the drawbridge to allow friendly visitors entry. If the characters accompany her, go to the "Knights' Quest" section.

S1. Stable Level

> A circular landing surrounds the central shaft of a spiral staircase. The landing is piled with supplies and bales of straw. Radiating from the landing are twelve stalls with straw-covered floors. A harness, riding crop, and saddle hang in each stall. Swinging wooden doors cap either end of each stall, one leading from the tower to the stall and the other from the stall to the open air.

The round room in the center of the spire serves as a storeroom. It is filled with supplies. Any gear from the *Player's Handbook* you want the characters to have can be found here. The knights are willing to sell items at a ten percent markup.

When the characters arrive, four **hippogriffs** and two **giant vultures** occupy the stables, each in its own stall, and one **Feathergale knight** (see chapter 7) stands watch and tends the creatures. The hippogriffs and vultures are aggressive toward strangers that enter their stalls unless a knight introduces the newcomers. Knight disguises can fool the creatures, but only at a distance.

The latches on the stall doors are fastened at multiple points on each door, so it takes two actions to open each door.

S2. Front Hall

> The entrance is a thirty-foot-long hall of white stone. At the opposite end of the hall are two twelve-foot-tall doors like those of the entry gate.
>
> An eagle carved from a massive timber hangs from the far side of the ceiling, suspended on strong chains. Slender wings of steel sweep close to its sides. Its head is also fashioned of steel.

One **Feathergale knight** (Savra when the characters first arrive) and two **Howling Hatred initiates** keep watch in the entry hall. See chapter 7 for their statistics.

Friendly Entry. If Savra has allowed the characters in, she tells the characters that they have excellent timing. She invites them to join the knights' feast this evening, commemorating the tenth year of the Feathergale Society. Savra leads the party through the tower to meet her captain, Thurl Merosska, in area S11.

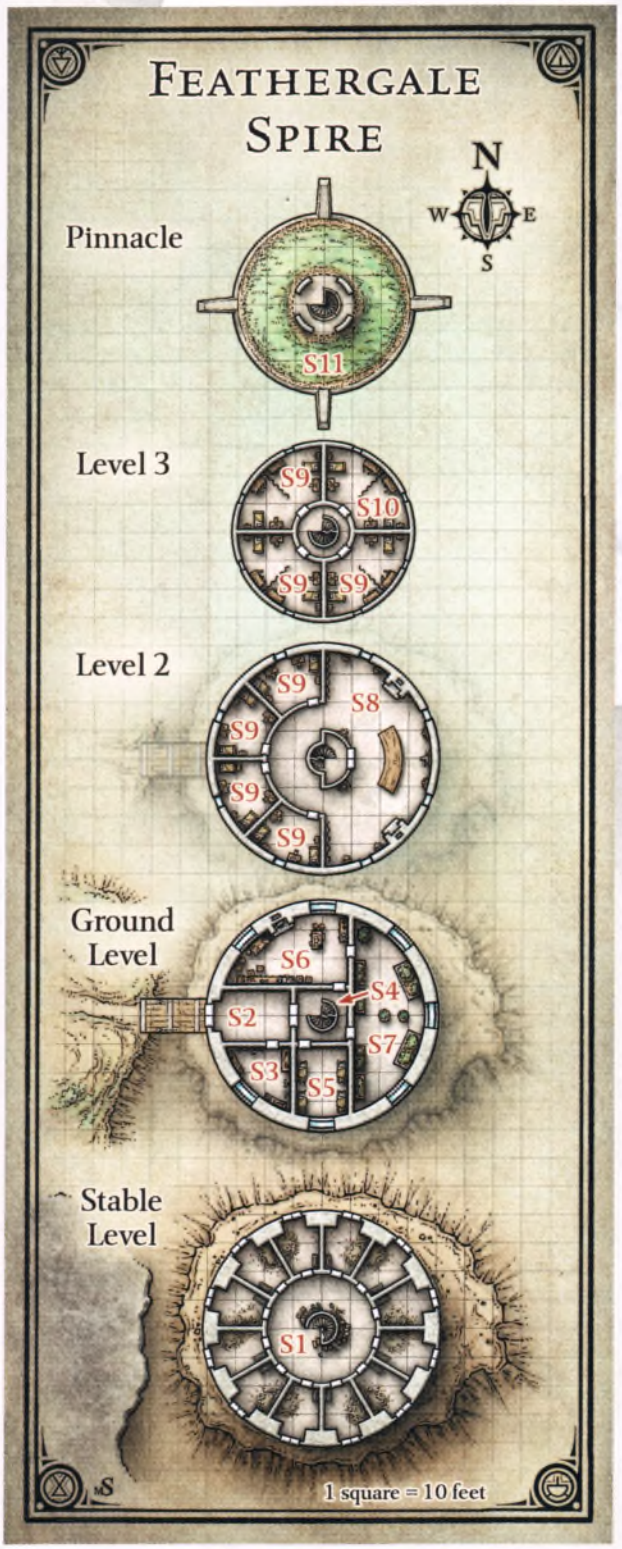
The Eagle. The eagle is a battering ram. If released using a lever near the doors to area S4, the ram attacks an area that starts at the doors to area S4, extending 30 feet along a 5-foot-wide path in the center of the hall. Each creature in this area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 bludgeoning damage. Those who fail the save by 5 or more are swept along with the ram, pushed out of the hall onto the drawbridge, and knocked prone. The eagle resets when it swings back, locking back into place and resetting its activation lever.

S3. Weapons Locker

The Feathergale knights stow weapons and armor here under lock and key. The weapon racks currently hold four longswords, four suits of scale mail, four shields, four helmets, four longbows, and four quivers of twenty arrows each.

S4. Central Stairs

A single spiral stair runs through the tower's center, with landings at each floor. The stairs have a handrail along the outer edge.



S5. Initiate Dormitory

Howling Hatred initiates, priests, hurricanes, and skyweavers sleep in this room on four double bunks. Most cultists spend their days in other parts of the spire.

S6. Kitchen

In this kitchen, sacks are heaped along the walls, and a small pile of vegetables is spread on a table. A huge, steaming cauldron stands at the center. Two wooden paddles and two knives hang on a rack next to a brick oven. Four wall shelves hold a dozen loaves of bread.

Four **Howling Hatred initiates** (see chapter 7) stand around the cauldron inhaling the steam wafting from it. The initiates are trying to "inhale—and become—the steam." These cultists also serve as kitchen staff.

S7. Solarium

A bright room occupies the east quarter of this floor. Flowers and shrubs of many varieties grow in a labyrinth of planters. Spidery red and purple plants grow suspended in baskets in mid-air. Robed humans water the plants.

Three **Howling Hatred initiates** and one **hurricane** (see chapter 7 for both) tend to the plants, contemplate philosophy, or train in this room. .

Several barrels of fresh water are located around the perimeter of the room.

S8. Great Hall

This great hall spans half the diameter of the tower. Between the overlarge windows, tapestries depict scenes of gallant knights on flying hippogriffs, fighting dragons and jousting with one another among the clouds. High on the walls are the mounted heads of griffons, wyverns, owlbears, and manticores. A long, curved table set for a feast stretches between the hall's twin hearths.

When the characters first arrive, two **Feathergale knights** (see chapter 7) who aren't occupied with other duties or rest are found here. At night, the tower's servants sleep here after the knights have retired for the evening.

S9. Knights' Cells

This chamber contains two beds, a fireplace, a closet, two chests, and a small tapestry on the wall.

Each knight's chest contains valuables worth d100 gp, and a feathered cloak.

S10. Merosska's Apartment

This chamber contains a bed, a fireplace, a closet, a writing desk, a chest, and a small tapestry on the wall.

On the desk, in a cylindrical leather case, is a letter to Thurl Merosska from Aerisi Kalinoth, written by her minstrel Windharrow. It reads as follows:

Merosska,

We are pleased to hear about the outcome of your altercation with the Black Earth cult, and we praise you for the capture of one of their prisoners. This noblewoman from Waterdeep has an interesting tale to tell, and we shall enjoy interrogating her further. Keep a close watch on the Sacred Stone Monastery. I want to know what our enemy is planning next.

Your beloved queen,
Aerisi Kalinoth

Treasure

In addition to clothing and personal effects, the chest contains 320 gp in a sack, a *potion of heroism*, a scroll of *beast bond*, and a scroll of *skywrite* (see appendix B for descriptions of both spells).

S11. Pinnacle

At the apex of the tower, the stairs terminate at a round stone gazebo that continues upward in a needle-like minaret. Beyond this enclosure, a small lawn grows upon the top of the tower. Four paths paved with white stones point the directions of the compass, each path ending in a pointed stone crenellation. At the pinnacle's edge is a spyglass on a tripod, pointed downward.

From this vantage point, the Feathergale Knights possess a supreme view of all that transpires in the nearby canyon and the Sumber Hills beyond.

Two **Feathergale knights** (see chapter 7) and their **giant vultures** are stationed here. Every hour, one of them patrols the air around the spire. The other patrols the tower. They watch for danger and fellow knights sent on errands. When the characters first arrive at the spire, **Thurl Merosska** (see chapter 7) is here as well, gazing west toward Red Larch.

Shrine to Elemental Evil. Here in the high open air, the cultists gather to worship Yan-C-Bin. They sacrifice their enemies, first marking them with the sign of Yan-C-Bin and then throwing them off the pinnacle. In the Sighing Valley, area C2, scavengers swiftly remove evidence of the knights' dark deeds.

Spyglass. Those who gaze through the spyglass without moving it first see a hooded figure enter the concealed door in Knifepoint Gully (area C3).

Knights' Quest

Savra Belabranta escorts the characters through the spire and up to the pinnacle where Thurl Merosska surveys the territory. Briefly describe any other rooms or inhabitants of the tower the characters observe on their ascent. When the characters reach the pinnacle, read the following text:

> The commander of the Feathergale Knights is a well-built male human in his early fifties. Embossed feather patterns ornament the plates of his armor, and his kingly cloak boasts a feathered mantle. He smooths his white-blond hair into place, then bows low before you as if he were only a lowly courtier.
>
> "Welcome to Feathergale Spire, retreat of the Feathergale Society. I am Thurl Merosska, the lord commander."

Thurl Merosska offers the hospitality of the tower, inviting the characters to a feast in honor of the society's tenth year. Merosska especially shows favor to nobles, knights, members of the Lords' Alliance, and members of the Order of the Gauntlet.

If the characters wish to interview Merosska now, they can do so. He might answer questions on the following topics:

- The Feathergale Society, an "elite" group of aerial-mount enthusiasts from Waterdeep
- The origins of Feathergale Spire (see chapter 2)
- Doing one's duty for the realm
- Hunting and hawking
- Hippogriffs, giant vultures, and other aerial mounts

If the characters mention elemental cults, read the following text:

> Thurl's face darkens. "Great evil lurks among these hills," he says. "Depraved cultists led by wretched monsters. But let us speak of such matters after the feast has warmed our blood."

Thurl allows the characters to rest in the tower until it is time to begin the feast. If the characters join the feast, read the following text:

> Clad in the finest garments of velvet brocade, the knights feast at a curved table in the great hall, where twin hearths blaze. Thurl Merosska sits at the head of the table.
>
> "Honored guests," he says. "Tell us of your adventures in the Sumber Hills. Let us aid you in any way we can."

The knights use the feast to learn about the characters and how much they know about the elemental cults. Applauding bravery and offering toasts, the knights listen to the characters' stories and share anecdotes. When you decide it's time, read the following:

> The doors to the great hall fly open and a sentry from the pinnacle shouts, "Manticore! It's on the move!"
>
> At this announcement the Feathergale Knights rise as one, the feast before them unfinished.
>
> "We should take this opportunity to slay the monster," Thurl says. From his finger he removes a feather-patterned golden ring set with a garnet and holds it aloft, saying, "A prize for the one who brings me the beast's head!"

Merosska asks the characters to join four of his knights in the manticore hunt. He offers to lend them hippogriffs for the task. If the characters agree, go to the "Manticore Hunt" section. Those who decline the invitation can stay at Feathergale Spire and rest, or explore the tower.

Treasure

Thurl's ring is worth 250 gp. Thurl also carries 3d10 gp and 2d6 pp in a pouch.

Manticore Hunt

Four Feathergale Knights join the characters on the hunt. To start, read the following text:

> Four Feathergale Knights assemble at the pinnacle, each mounted upon a giant vulture. The moon illuminates the misty canyon below Feathergale Spire. In the far distance, a single shard of darkness moves, flitting in and out of the mist. Then the shadow sinks beneath the bank of clouds, lost again from sight.

The manticore hunt takes place in the skies above the Sighing Valley (see the accompanying map).

Visibility

Vision is limited to 100 feet within the canyon because of the fog and night sky. The manticore, hippogriffs, and giant vultures know the canyon well enough to avoid running into the cliffs.

Hunting the Manticore

The knights ride giant vultures and stay together as a group. Characters can join the knights' group, form their own group, or split up into multiple groups. A character or knight who moves more than 100 feet away from the rest of his or her group becomes a separate group.

Finding the Manticore. At the end of each minute spent searching for the manticore, have each group of hunters in the canyon roll a d20, adding 1 for each character or knight in the group. Any group that rolls a total of 18 or higher comes within 100 feet of the manticore. Any and all groups that find the manticore can engage it in battle.

If the knights find the manticore first, they blow their horns so that other groups can pinpoint the knights' location and join the battle in 1d6 rounds.

Battling the Manticore. The giant vultures and hippogriffs are faster fliers than the manticore, and the manticore knows it. Once it is found, the manticore fights until it has no targets to attack, using its action

every round to make three Tail Spike attacks. If there are no characters present, assume that one knight is injured and the manticore's hit points are reduced by 8 at the end of each round of battle. A knight that is injured leaves the hunt. When no more knights remain, the knights are out of the hunt. If the manticore has nothing to attack, the battle ends and it flies off. Remaining groups can try to search for it again.

The manticore has twenty-four tail spikes. When it runs out of spikes, it does nothing other than fly away from its pursuers on its turn. At the end of each of these turns, have all characters and knights in the battle make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. If all of their checks fail, the manticore gets away, though groups can try to search for it again.

Manticore Lost. If 10 consecutive minutes pass and neither the knights nor the characters find the manticore, it returns to its lair (area V9).

Conclusion

After the manticore hunt, a few courses are open for furthering the story.

The Party's Fate. Thurl decides what to do with the characters. If they've been polite, Thurl tells the characters the location of the Sacred Stone Monastery. He suspects the reclusive monks could be harboring evil and wants them investigated. If the characters have been rude or proven themselves to be enemies of all the elemental cults, the knights try to kill the characters later that night. Fighting all of the knights and cultists at once is a deadly encounter, but the villains aim to capture the characters first, and then hurl them from the top of the spire (area S11). The aarakocra in area V8 come to the characters' aid in that event.

If the characters defeat their attackers, surviving knights flee on hippogriffs and giant vultures. They lead pursuers past the griffon roost at area V7. Surviving cultists retreat to the Temple of Howling Hatred via Knifepoint Gully (area V3).

Savra's Revelation. If a character makes a strong impression on Savra and the party is on good terms with the knights, Savra looks for an opportunity to pull that character aside. Delighted with the character's deeds, Savra confides that the Feathergale Knights have a secret mission to master elemental air to annihilate Waterdeep's enemies. Savra offers to meet with Thurl to request he recruit the character into the Feathergale Knights. In doing so, she unwittingly reveals part of the knights' secret.

Indoctrinated by the air cult, Savra's heart and mind belong to Yan-C-Bin. If the characters defeat the cult and destroy *Windvane*, Savra is freed from prince's influence and returns to her senses.

Sighing Valley

Sighing Valley is actually a wide canyon consisting of a deep gorge through which a small river flows. Rock spires rise from the canyon floor, and when the wind blows past these natural structures it makes a sighing—and sometimes a howling—sound.

Features

Fauna. Wild **goats** are common in the canyon.

Fog. At night, fog fills the canyon, limiting visibility to 100 feet. Beyond that range, creatures and objects are heavily obscured.



Light. The canyon is brightly lit during the day, and light varies at night from dim to dark.

Walls. The canyon walls are 200 to 400 feet high.

V1. Feathergale Spire

See the "Feathergale Spire" section.

V2. Dead Rocks

A **giant vulture** picks at the gruesome remains on the rocks. The giant vulture attacks the characters only if provoked. Six **blood hawks** circle overhead, attacking any other creature that comes near the kill. After half an hour, the vulture flies away and the blood hawks swoop in.

Among the dry, days-old gore lie shattered bones. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the bones belong to a humanoid creature. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character discovers rusty stains among the rocks and bone fragments indicating that many more humanoids have died here.

V3. Knifepoint Gully

> A narrow fissure in the canyon wall leads through a gully choked with pale brush and shrubs. A swift breeze passes through the fissure. At the end, a dark, jagged crevice awaits.

Carved into the crevice at the end of the gully is a stairway that leads down to the Temple of Howling Hatred (see chapter 4). Three **hurricanes** (see chapter 7) watch the entrance for intruders.

V4. The Lost River

> A river courses through the canyon, winding around tall spires and through the base of a plateau. Coarse green shrubs huddle along its banks.

A **gnoll pack lord** and three **gnolls** forage among large rocks west of the river. During the day, when the sky is clear, they use their longbows to take shots at characters. At night, they huddle behind the rocks, gnawing on fish from the river.

Treasure

The gnoll pack lord carries a severed human finger with a gold ring (worth 25 gp) worn on it.

V5. Howling Plateau

> This high rocky plateau rises from the center of the canyon. A river cuts through the canyon bottom, passing through it to the other side. The wind on the plateau keens and moans, alternating its pitch with the force and direction of the wind.



A creature standing atop Howling Plateau can see the whole canyon, but not the surrounding lands.

V6. The Lost River

> The river that runs through the canyon sweeps close to the canyon's eastern wall. To the west, the ground is covered with rocky spires and wild brush.

Four **gnolls** and four **hyenas** forage here. During the day, when the sky is clear, the gnolls use their longbows to take down distant targets.

V7. Griffon Roost

A mated pair of **griffons** occupies a cliff cave about 150 feet from the canyon floor. The griffons attack any horse or hippogriff that nears the lair. They slay the mount and escape with the carcass.

> This cave stinks of animal musk and damp straw. A nest of straw and twigs follows the curvature of the cave walls.

The nest holds two griffon eggs, worth up to 2,000 gp each. For each day without sixteen hours of incubation, each egg has a ten percent chance of spoiling.

V8. Aarakocra Camp

In a depression on a ridge near the canyon floor, five **aarakocra** have set up a watch post hidden with brush.

They have seen grim pilgrims proceeding into and out of Knifepoint Gully (area V3), and they witnessed the recent sacrifice from Feathergale Spire. Certain that the forces of Elemental Evil has taken hold in the canyon, they are now debating what action to take. They are willing to help characters who show an interest in confronting the evil in the canyon, and they might interfere with any attempt the Feathergale Knights make to sacrifice captured characters.

V9. Manticore Lair

A pool fills the center of this deep cave, born from a natural spring beneath the rock and flowing outward into the river. Long stalactites hang above the pool, surrounding a natural central pillar. Water drips from the stalactites into the pool, echoing throughout the cave. Some of the debris here looks like leftovers from an old camp, including four old crates.

Two **manticores** lair here. Only one manticore is present at a given time, with the other one out hunting. If a manticore died in the "Manticore Hunt" event, the other is here.

Treasure

The bones of six orcs litter the cave, along with signs the orcs camped here for many days. Coins scattered in the pool and around the lair total 60 cp, 26 sp, and 14 gp. The orcs also accumulated four crates of plunder that include plates, candlesticks, and silks worth 50 gp total.

Rivergard Keep

A small but strongly built castle on the banks of the Dessarin River, Rivergard Keep is one of the Haunted Keeps of the Sumber Hills. A taciturn mercenary lord named Jolliver Grimjaw and his band of sellswords occupy the keep. They are repairing the old castle and protecting trade along the river from the depredations of monsters and bandits, or so they claim. In fact, Rivergard Keep is the secret stronghold of the Cult of the Crushing Wave. Grimjaw and his followers are the very outlaws from whom they claim to be defending trade.

Investigating Rivergard

Grimjaw and his gang work with smugglers to move stolen goods on the river. They stage attacks against river boats that refuse to pay protection money, and they actively recruit thugs and monsters to join the Cult of the Crushing Wave.

When the characters arrive at Rivergard, read the following text:

A small castle overlooks the mighty Dessarin River, which is a good half-mile wide at this point. A gatehouse and keep stand atop a low bluff, but the walls are built to the water's edge. On the river bank, another low tower guards a boat basin where keelboats are moored.

The keep seems old and worn, but new timbers and shingles suggest that repairs are underway. A white banner with a blue gauntlet flies over the keep.

The front gate is closed.

What happens next depends on why the characters are here and how they approach.

Peaceful Approach

If the characters approach openly and politely ask for admittance for almost any plausible reason, the cultists welcome them. Characters who make use of inside knowledge (asking to see Gar Shatterkeel or Reash, or to sign on with Grimjaw) are considered to be either important guests or spies who know too much. If the characters use no such knowledge and are rude or provide no reasonable excuse for entrance, they are turned away.

Four **bandits** escort characters who enter peacefully through the gate (area K1). If the characters entered through the water gate (area K11), three **Crushing Wave reavers** (chapter 7) provide escort instead. The escort takes the party to the great hall (area K16), where Grimjaw interviews the characters to find out who they really are.

Aggressive Approach

Grimjaw and his cutthroats aren't expecting an attack. Characters who sneak in are challenged by anyone they meet inside. It's up to you whether fast-talking characters can stave off conflict at such a meeting.

Keep Features

The water cultists are busy repairing Rivergard, but parts of the complex remain inaccessible. For example, the upper floors of the north tower and the water tower are filled with debris. The following features are common to the keep. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Arrow Slits. In the castle walls, arrow slits are 9 feet above the ground level, 8 inches wide, and 4 feet high.

Ceilings. Most ceilings are 12 feet high.

Defenders. Jolliver Grimjaw is known as "Jolly" to his followers, as a shortening of his first name and an sarcastic comment on his demeanor. He leads bandits, who work for money rather than ideology, and water cultists. Only some of the commoner servants lack loyalty to Grimjaw and the cult.

Doors. Interior doors are made of wood. It takes a successful DC 10 Strength check to force open a locked door. Exterior doors are reinforced with iron bands and can be barred. Such a barred door requires a successful DC 20 Strength check to force open.

Light. During the day, the castle's windows and arrow slits provide bright light for all interior spaces. At night, interior spaces are brightly lit with small oil lamps.

Locks. A lock requires thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check to open.

Treasure. Each warrior in the keep carries 2d10 – 2 gp in mixed coinage and minor valuables.

Walls. The walls are 15 feet above outside ground level and 10 feet above inside ground level. A crenellated parapet faces the outside. One **bandit** stands watch on each of the four wall sections, pacing back and forth.

Raising the Alarm

If the characters are caught doing something suspicious, cultists nearby attempt to raise the alarm. When the alarm is raised, the following countermeasures happen:

- Castle denizens bar all exterior doors.
- Bandits in area K8 move to the tops of the walls, adding two more bandits to each wall section.
- The Crushing Wave reavers in area K8 head straight for the source of the trouble, arriving 1 minute after the alarm is raised.
- After 10 minutes, Grimjaw and the reavers from area K20 leave the keep and search for intruders in the castle.

K1. Front Gate

> The keep's main entrance features a two-story gatehouse attached to a round tower. Arrow slits look out onto the ground outside the gate. The gate itself is a double door of thick timbers reinforced by iron bands.

The gate is barred from the inside. It can't be forced open by any means short of a siege engine. The bar can be raised from inside the gatehouse passage (area K2) or lifted by an iron chain from the upper floor of the gatehouse (area K3).

One **bandit** stands watch on the wall section just north of the gatehouse. If he spots the party approaching, he warns the cultists in areas K2 and K3. If the characters openly approach the gate and call out, read the following text:

> Clattering sounds and muffled voices come from inside the gatehouse. Then a human warrior appears at the second-story arrow slit directly over the gate. You can't see much of him, but he wears a leather jerkin and has a black beard. "Who are you? What do you want?"

The person at the arrow slit is Holger, a **thug** who commands the gatehouse. Holger is a high-strung martinet, and no one in the gatehouse likes him. Holger decides whether to open the gate, tell the characters to go away, or order his bandits to open fire. If Holger admits the characters, he orders four **bandits** (two from area K2, two from area K3) to meet them at the gate and escort them inside.

If fighting breaks out here, characters standing in front of the gate are exposed to fire from the arrow slit in area K3 and the parapet on the wall. If the bandits in area K2 can't line up shots at the intruders, they climb the stairs to area K3 and then move out onto the parapet to join the battle.

Development

If the characters kill some or all the gatehouse guards (areas K2 and K3) and then leave Rivergard, the dead guards are replaced by troops from areas K8 or K20. If those guards are killed too, it takes Grimjaw 1d4 + 1 days to get reinforcements and replace the gate guards. During this period, the front gate remains barred but unguarded.

K2. Gatehouse

> The gates open to a thirty-foot passage leading east. A portcullis blocks the far end of the passage, but you can see the castle yard on the other side. An arrow slit in the southern wall of the passage provides defenders a way to fire on intruders who get this far.

Characters who specifically examine the ceiling notice the murder holes (see area K3). Otherwise, it takes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to discern the murder holes overhead.

Gatehouse Interior

If the characters find a way into the round tower south of the gatehouse passage, read the following text:

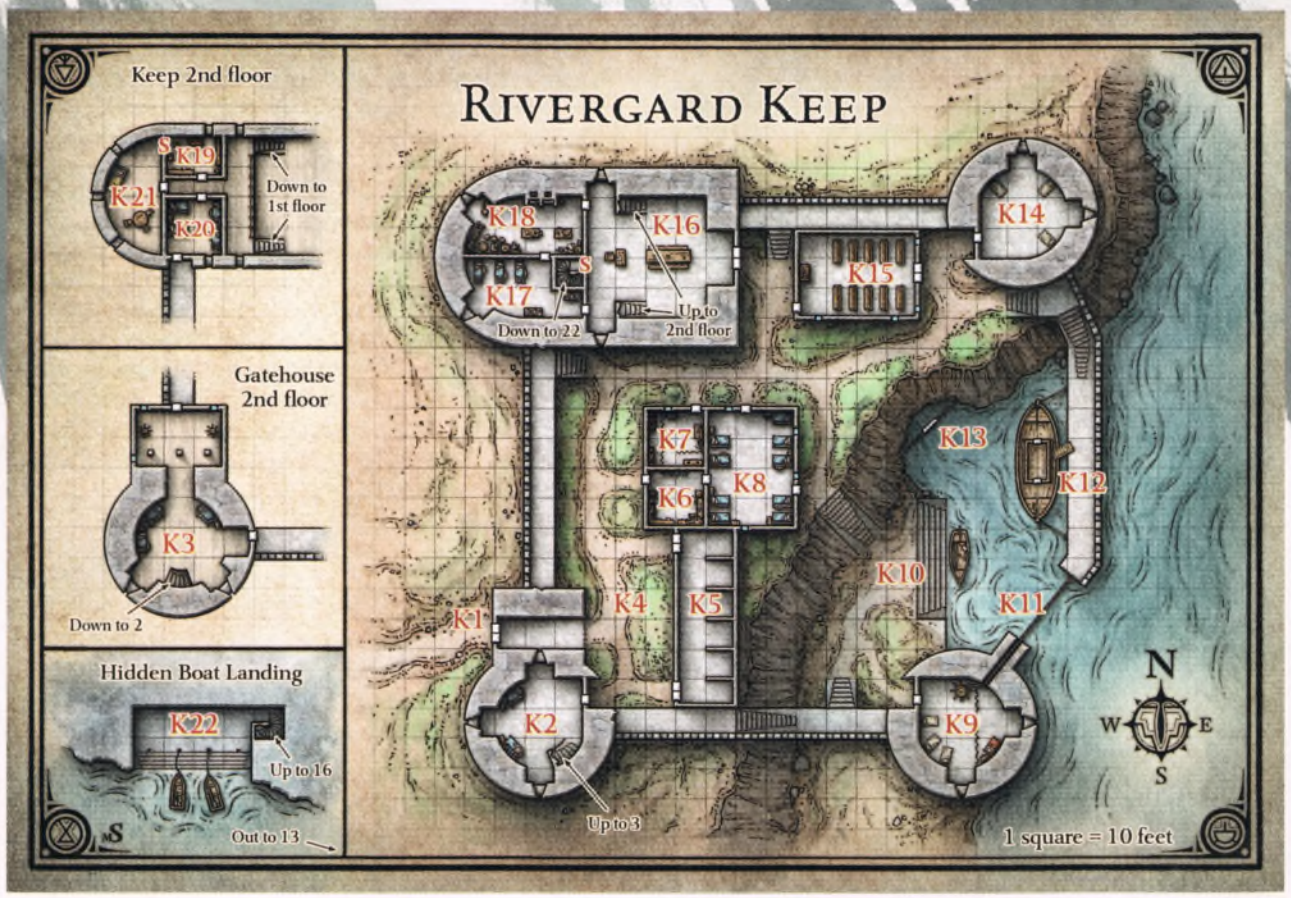
> This is the ground floor of the gatehouse tower. A door leads to the east, and stairs climb to the floor above. Arrow slits in this room offer a view of the ground outside the castle and the gate passage to the north. Two double-bunks stand against the walls.

The tower interior serves as the barracks for four **bandits**. If the gatehouse comes under attack, three move to the arrow slits, while the fourth steps into area K4 and heads toward area K8 to raise the alarm.

The stairs lead to area K3.

K3. Gatehouse Upper Floor

> This room above the castle gatehouse features doors that lead out to the tops of the walls to the north and to the east. Stairs lead down to the floor below. A chain mechanism in the northern half of the room positioned over the main gate raises or lowers the gate bars. Another controls the portcullis. Three holes in the floor, each about a foot square, look down on the passage below.



This area serves as a barracks and a defensive post. Holger, a **thug,** commands the gatehouse. Three more **bandits** have bunks here.

The chain mechanisms are easy to operate. A character has to use three actions to bar or unbar the gate, or to raise or lower the portcullis. The bandits posted in this area operate the mechanisms to let people into or out of the castle.

The stairs in this room descend to area K2. The doors lead out onto the wall sections on the south and west side of the castle.

Treasure

Holger has accumulated a tidy little hoard, mostly through "fining" the warriors under his command for minor infractions. He stores a locked wooden coffer under his bunk (he keeps the key on a string around his neck). The coffer contains 150 sp, 40 gp, a *potion of healing*, and a *potion of diminution*.

K4. Castle Yard

The area just inside the castle gatehouse consists of a small courtyard of bare dirt and tufts of wiry grass. A stable stands to the east, the gatehouse to the west, and the main yard of the castle lies to the north. The keep occupies the northern corner of the castle yard. Stone stairs near the keep lead up to the top of the wall.

As the characters move around the castle yard, it's easy to see (and be seen by) any or all of the four **bandits** standing on the wall. They pay no attention to people inside the walls who act like they're supposed to be there.

Bluff. A steep bluff of earth and loose rock on the eastern edge of the castle yard leads down to the boat basin and landing. Carved into the bluff is a 20-foot-long staircase.

Random Encounters. Characters lingering in the castle yard are likely to encounter various denizens of Rivergard going about their business. Check for random encounters once per 5 minutes during the day or once per 15 minutes at night. Roll a d20; if the result is 18 or higher, a random encounter occurs. To determine the encounter, roll a d6 and consult the following table:

d6	Encounter
1	1d3 **commoners** (see area K17)
2	1d4 **bandits** (see area K8)
3	1d3 **Crushing Wave reavers** (see area K20)
4	1d3 **giant rats**
5	Drosnin and her guards (see area K15)
6	Reash and his guards (see area K9)

The commoners are helpful, especially if they realize the characters plan to take on the Crushing Wave cultists. If they think the characters are cultists, the commoners hurry past with their eyes averted. All other groups challenge the characters if the party looks like it might not belong here.

K5. Ruined Stable

This old stable is in bad shape. Most of the roof has caved in, and rotting debris fills the interior. Six horse stalls line the back wall.

The cultists haven't bothered to repair the stables yet, since they have little need for mounts here.

K6. Armory

Weapon racks along the walls of this armory hold spears. Barrels full of crossbow bolts and arrows stand near the doors. Open chests in the middle of the room contain suits of leather armor. The most unusual items in this armory are the shields—they are made of beaten copper and fashioned into the shape of horseshoe crab shells.

The room contains twenty spears, ten shortswords, five scimitars, five light crossbows, four hundred crossbow bolts, two hundred arrows, fifteen suits of leather armor, and eight shields shaped like horseshoe crab shells.

K7. Bathhouse

Two big wooden washtubs occupy the middle of this room, and a row of curtains along the west wall provides privacy for several privies.

K8. Barracks

Nine double bunks fill this barracks, each with a pair of footlockers tucked underneath. Doors exit to the north, west, and east.

This area is home to twelve **bandits** and four **Crushing Wave reavers** (see chapter 7). At any given time, four of the bandits stand watch as sentries on the outer wall, and two of the Crushing Wave reavers are on duty in area K16. The remaining eight bandits and two reavers linger here. They spend most of their time gambling, dozing in their bunks, tending to their gear, practicing in the yard just outside, or starting pointless quarrels with each other.

At night, most of these warriors are asleep in their bunks, but the cultists post a watch in this room throughout the night. At least two bandits remain awake and armed at all times. Sleeping cultists sleep through their first turn of any combat that takes place here, then awaken and arm themselves during their second turn.

Development

If the characters convince Grimjaw that they are here to join up, they are assigned bunks in this room (only two of the bunks are empty, so the characters might need to share). Little camaraderie exists in the barracks—most of these cultists are sullen, boastful, or ill-tempered, and they bully new recruits.

K9. Water Tower

The upper floor of this tower looks deserted, but the ground floor is still in use. Curtains hanging across the eastern half of the room wall off someone's private quarters, and several straw pallets lie on the floor near the door. A capstan stands against the north wall, with a heavy chain disappearing through a pipe to the northeast. The river laps just beneath the arrow slits of the tower.

Three **Crushing Wave reavers** and a **fathomer** named Reash (see chapter 7 for both) occupy this tower. Reash is in command and does most of the talking. He's a sour-faced fellow with a drooping mustache and an arrogant manner. Reash is instantly suspicious of strangers.

Reash uses the curtained area as his private quarters, while the reavers make do with the straw pallets. The fathomer's private quarters hold a folding wooden cot and a saddlebag on a table (see "Treasure" below).

Capstan and Chain. The capstan raises or lowers the chain that blocks the castle's water gate (area K11). It only takes one person to operate the capstan, but lowering the chain to allow a boat to pass requires a character to use three actions cranking.

Treasure

Reash carries a key to the grate in area K13. His leather saddlebag holds 70 gp, 12 pp, and six agates (worth 10 gp each).

K10. Landing

The keep's eastern wall juts out into the river, forming a good-sized basin in which a couple of keelboats float. A wide gap in the southeast wall provides access to the river, although it is blocked by a heavy chain. A twenty-foot tall bluff of rock and earth separates the landing and a nearby tower from the rest of the castle grounds. To the north, a wide stream flows out of a cave mouth into the boat basin. An iron grate blocks access to the stream.

Keelboats full of loot and stolen goods off-load their cargo here. The boat tied up right next to the landing is currently empty. The water in the boat basin is about 15 feet deep, although it naturally shallows near the shore.

K11. Water Gate

> The keep's eastern wall is built into the river, forming a long pier that encloses a boat basin. A heavy chain that emerges from the tower to the south stretches across the entrance.

The heavy chain raised and lowered by the winch in area K9 provides Rivergard's defenders with the ability to block boats from entering or leaving. A swimming character can easily go over or under the chain—it impedes only boat traffic.

The sentry—a bandit posted on the wall section jutting out into the river—hails characters approaching by boat. He then shouts for Reash in area K9, who moves to the arrow slit in his tower to see what's happening.

> A male human with lank black hair looks out of the arrow slit in the tower by the river. He has a drooping mustache and a sour expression. "What do you want?" he asks.

Reash decides whether to admit the party. If he does, he has the reavers in area K9 lower the chain and tells the characters to tie up their boat in area K10. He then sends the reavers to escort the characters.

K12. Moored Keelboat

> A large keelboat is moored to the inner side of the keep's east wall, floating in the boat basin. A rope ladder leads from the top of the wall to the deck of the boat, about six feet below. Hatchways lead into the boat's cabin from the bow and the stern.

This is the *Rivermaid*. The ship's water genasi captain, **Shoalar Quanderil** (see chapter 7) and a halfling servant named Pike (a **thug**) occupy the boat's cabin. Two **bandits** serve as the rest of the crew. They remain in a cramped bunkroom below the deck on the bow, which is accessed by a hatch and a short ladder.

Shoalar is a high-ranking Crushing Wave cultist, and he is well informed about events in the towns throughout the area. Unless the characters come to Rivergard early in the campaign, he is likely to recognize them from accounts of their deeds. Use your best judgment.

If Shoalar recognizes the characters, he chooses one of the following options:

- He plays dumb, invites the characters to drink and gamble, then signals his crew to launch a surprise attack.
- He plays dumb, deflects the characters to the Hall of the Scarlet Moon, and sends a bandit to warn Jolliver Grimjaw.
- He attacks immediately.

If the fight goes badly, Shoalar flees by leaping into the river.

If Shoalar Is Already Dead. If the characters already defeated Shoalar (see the "Womford Rats" section, earlier in this chapter), the genasi and his halfling servant aren't here. Instead, the master of the keelboat is a **bandit captain**.

Treasure

A locked chest in the deckhouse holds 190 sp and 95 gp. Shoalar wears a leather belt pouch containing 10 gp, three small malachites worth 10 gp each, and a *potion of healing*. In addition, the cargo hold (below the stern) is currently full of stolen goods: casks of ale, salted fish, and twelve large bundles of cured pelts (beaver and sable) worth 40 gp each.

K13. Dark Stream

> The north side of the boat basin laps against a steep, rocky bluff. From the base of the bluff, a subterranean river empties into the boat basin. The river is close to thirty feet wide, and the cave ceiling is about six feet above the water level in the middle. An iron grate blocks the stream mouth.

The iron grate has a swinging gate section secured by a simple lock. Reash (area K9) and Jolliver Grimjaw (area K16) carry keys. The stream is 10 feet deep and leads to a hidden boat landing under the keep (area K22).

K14. North Tower

This tower stands on top of the bluff, overlooking the Dessarin River and the castle harbor below.

> Filthy furs and discarded bones litter the interior of this tower. A rank animal stench hangs in the air.

Most nonhumans recruited by the cult are sent down to the Temple of the Crushing Wave (see chapter 4). However, Jolliver Grimjaw felt that he didn't have sufficient numbers to hold Rivergard against a determined attack, so he employs three **bugbears** to augment the garrison. The bugbears are bored and spoiling for a fight. They attack anyone they don't recognize, not caring if they injure or kill new recruits.

K15. Chapel

> The keep's chapel contains plain wooden pews facing a large altar at the west end of the room. No idol hints at what deity is venerated here. A crude symbol is painted on the wall above the altar, resembling an X with a horizontal bar linking the bottom limbs. Several straw pallets lie near the chapel door.

The intendant of the chapel is Drosnin, a **Crushing Wave priest**. Two **Crushing Wave reavers** serve as



her bodyguards and somewhat unwilling acolytes. (See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.) They are enthusiastic converts to the cult, but they would rather be out raiding or fighting instead of stuck in the chapel listening to Drosnin rant about the unstoppable power of the Crushing Wave. The symbol painted above the altar is the symbol of the Crushing Wave cult.

Drosnin assumes that any strangers who wander into her chapel have been assigned to her for indoctrination. Drosnin's favored technique is enthusiastic, relentless oratory. As long as the characters don't attack, she launches into an exhaustive sermon about the "truth of the deep waters" and the "great revelations" to come. The two reavers with her roll their eyes and look bored, but Drosnin keeps going and going, brooking no interruptions. Once Drosnin begins, she drones on for two hours before dismissing the party. If they attempt to leave before she finishes her sermon, or if they interrupt her frequently, she orders the reavers to keep them from leaving. She attacks if the characters ignore her commands.

If a fight breaks out here, Drosnin defends the chapel to the death. Once she falls, any surviving reavers retreat to area K14 or K16 to raise the alarm.

K16. Great Hall

The great hall becomes a banquet hall, a practice hall, or a throne room as the occasion requires.

> This room is the great hall of the keep. It is two stories high, with stone stairs on both sides of the room leading up to a stone balcony at the west end of the chamber. Heavy double doors lead east to the castle yard, while two interior doors open to the west. Arrow slits look out to the north and the south.
>
> At the west end of the room, below the balcony, a large wooden chair sits behind a wide table littered with papers and discarded plates. A second table, this one long and furnished with benches, runs down the middle of the hall. The walls are painted in green and blue, decorated with tattered banners showing nautical designs.

Jolliver Grimjaw conducts most of his business here. He is a **wereboar**, although he remains in his human form during any audience with strangers to Rivergard. Grimjaw usually remains in the hall until late in the evening, when he slips down to the riverside to hunt in boar form. He returns before dawn and sleeps in his

quarters (area K21). In the Great Hall, he is attended by a **fathomer** named Urshnora and two **Crushing Wave reavers** (see chapter 7 for both). If a battle breaks out, Grimjaw prefers to fight in his hybrid form. If the battle goes poorly, he flees through the secret door (see "Secret Door" below).

Reports. Grimjaw has little patience for administration. Various reports from gangs of bandits and smugglers throughout the area are buried in the piles of paper on the table, along with routine notes about Rivergard's supplies, boat sailings on the river, and logbooks and manifests taken from plundered ships. The bandits report exactly what loot they take, but location descriptions are imprecise: for example, "wagonload of flour, near B.," or "40 silver pieces, traveler near W." The abbreviations stand for towns in the area, Beliard and Womford.

One of these reports details caravan traffic in Red Larch. It makes note of the arrival of "a band of troublemakers" with the racial mix of the party. The letter is unsigned, but the unusual handwriting mixes block letters and script. See "The Spy's Letter" in chapter 4 if the characters investigate further.

Secret Door. A secret door behind Grimjaw's seat can be found with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The door hides a spiral staircase that descends to area K22.

Audience with Grimjaw

Jolliver Grimjaw is sullen, suspicious, and humorless. He asks very direct questions, such as "Who are you?" and "Why are you here?" If a character tries to flatter him or concoct any kind of fanciful story, Grimjaw tells the talkative character to shut up and points at someone else to answer.

After listening to the characters, Grimjaw decides among the following options:

- If the party seems unaware of the cult and annoys him, he has the characters thrown out of Rivergard.
- If the party seems unaware of the cult but offers a good reason to remain in Rivergard, Grimjaw permits the characters to stay only as long as needed, giving them bunks in area K8.
- If the party seems to know something but appears weak or dangerous, Grimjaw orders the cultists to attack.
- If the party seems to know something and appears to be important (or useful as recruits), Grimjaw allows them to stay, giving them bunks in area K8.

If the characters were escorted to Grimjaw's hall from one of the gates, their escorts are also present for during the talk with Grimjaw.

Development

If the characters leave Rivergard after killing Grimjaw or forcing him to flee, any remaining cultists abandon the keep over the next day or two. Most disperse to bandit and smuggler camps throughout the Dessarin Valley. Initiates of the cult retreat to the Temple of the Crushing Wave (see chapter 4).

Grimjaw carries a key to the iron grate in area K13.

K17. Servants' Quarters

This plain dormitory features six bunk beds and a small wooden table and chairs, as well as two large laundry tubs and several baskets full of dirty clothes and linens.

This room houses the servants who work in the kitchens and tend to menial chores throughout the castle. Three human **commoners** (Anya, Berd, and Nayreen) currently work in here. They are natives of Womford who were kidnapped by the Crushing Wave cult and brought here to take care of cleaning, cooking, laundry, and waiting on the cult warriors. All three are anxious to escape and head home, but they don't dare try. Grimjaw has already had two others flogged to death for attempting to flee.

The servants know about the secret door in area K16, but they don't know where it leads.

K18. Kitchens

Two large hearths on the north wall of this room hold kettles full of simmering stew. Washbasins and worktables with old, battered crockery stand in the middle of the room. Sacks, casks, and barrels are piled along the southern wall, and cheeses and smoked fish hang from the ceiling.

Five human **commoners** labor here. Two (Lathna and Oric) are captives who don't want to be here, but the other three (Gorm, Herek, and Shadnil) are ne'er-do-wells from Womford. These three aren't tough enough to be Crushing Wave warriors, so they've been pressed into service in the kitchens. If intruders enter in the kitchen, the would-be bandits try to slip away to warn the cultists.

Treasure

The sacks contain flour, the dozen casks hold ale (worth 10 gp per cask), and the barrels hold salted meat.

K19. Old Library

Old bookshelves line the walls of this room, but most are empty. One old shelf has been cleared and restocked with a selection of tomes. A single bunk sits under the narrow window at the far end of the room, near a small desk, a wooden chair, and a chest. The floor looks wet.

This room was once the library and parlor of the keep's lord, but Grimjaw has no particular interest in reading or entertaining. It now serves as the personal quarters of Urshnora, who is normally found in area K16. Urshnora is a **fathomer** (see chapter 7). She hates Reash (area K9), who heartily reciprocates Urshnor's ill will.

Secret Door. One of the bookshelves hides a secret door. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the door, which connects to area K21.

Treasure

Urshnora keeps a small wooden chest by her bed. The chest contains 80 sp, 30 gp, a silk pouch that holds four excellent jaspers worth 70 gp each, a scroll of *haste*, and a scroll of *wall of water* (see appendix B).

The books—a dozen in all—are worth 25 gp each. Most cover nautical topics and include charts, excerpts from ships' logs, and the like.

K20. Keep Guardroom

> Four bunk beds line the walls of this guardroom. To the south, an arrow slit looks out over the castle yard, and a door exits to the castle parapet. Another door exits to the north.

This guardroom serves as a barracks for six **Crushing Wave reavers** (see chapter 7). At any given time, two are on duty in area K16, while the other four rest here. At night, at least one reaver remains awake at all times.

If the reavers in this room hear fighting in areas K19 or K21, they quickly move to investigate and deal with any threat.

K21. Lord's Chambers

> A large semicircular room occupies the western half of this floor of the keep. Three narrow windows look out over the countryside outside the castle walls. The room's furnishings are very plain, including a hard-looking bunk, a small wooden table, and a couple of simple chairs. Several large chests occupy the room's southern corner.

Jolliver Grimjaw has no use for creature comforts, but he is very fond of his riches. The best pickings from his gangs' raids and robberies end up here, where he can see and touch them whenever he wants. Grimjaw is a **wereboar**, and he only sleeps a few hours each morning in this room.

If confronted here, Grimjaw fights furiously to defend his hoard, roaring in anger and calling for help. Any nearby cultists (see areas K19 and K20) answer his call. If the characters are discovered in this room when Grimjaw isn't here, they are immediately attacked, since the room is off limits to everyone except Grimjaw.

Secret Door. A secret door leading to the library (area K19) is hidden in the northeast corner of the room. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the door.

Treasure

Grimjaw's loot consists of 600 sp, 450 ep, and a pouch containing fifteen blue azurites (worth 10 gp each).

K22. Secret Landing

The secret stairway in area K16 descends 20 feet to this landing, which abuts an underground stream that flows east to area K13.

> At the bottom of the stairs, you find a torchlit chamber where two boats bob in an underground stream. The stream flows toward daylight to the east and leads upstream into darkness toward the west.

Six **ghouls** lurk in the waters just beyond the boat landing. They have orders to make sure that only cultists proceed to the Temple of the Crushing Wave, which lies more than two miles upstream. The ghouls attack anyone who begins rowing upstream without first standing in the bow of the boat and making the hand sign of the Crushing Wave. Spotting the ghouls in the inky water requires a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check.

All six ghouls spend their first action of any combat combining their efforts to overturn a boat and dump its passengers into the river. Doing so allows three of the ghouls to use their actions to attempt Strength checks, while three others use their actions to take the Help action. If any ghoul succeeds on a DC 20 Strength check, the boat capsizes. Some might continue to try to tip the boat later in the battle.

Conclusion

The underground stream winds for more than two miles through lightless grottos, leading to an underground lake on the outskirts of the lost dwarven city of Tyar-Besil. The characters can easily row a small boat from the Secret Landing (area K22) to the Lakeshore Landing in the Temple of the Crushing Wave (see chapter 4).

Sacred Stone Monastery

The third of the Haunted Keeps of the Sumber Hills, the Sacred Stone Monastery is where the lich Renwick Caradoon chose to make his home, discouraging other monsters from settling nearby. The former keep has been reborn as the Sacred Stone Monastery, now home to a reclusive order of mysterious monks (actually earth cultists in disguise) who spend their days in meditation and rigorous exercises of self-discipline.

Few people in the area have heard of the Sacred Stone order. No one in the region knows the truth: the monastery now serves as the surface headquarters of the Black Earth cult and guards access to the unholy vaults of the Temple of Black Earth below.

Investigating the Monastery

Unlike the flamboyant Feathergale Knights or the aggressive raiders of Rivergard Keep, the monks of the Sacred Stone Order keep a low profile. They quietly recruit monsters and kidnap travelers and isolated miners to work as slaves in their mines, but they're careful to eliminate witnesses. So far no one suspects

that "those reclusive monks" are behind the troubles. In fact, so little attention comes this way that the Sacred Stone monks hardly bother to keep their monstrous allies out of sight or to misdirect nosy intruders.

Visitors Not Welcome

Whatever story the characters are selling, the Sacred Stone monks don't want any of it. A group of strangers that knocks on the door is turned away. Insistent visitors are told, "The abbess doesn't allow visitors to disturb our meditations," and are attacked if they refuse to leave.

If the characters ask about the Mirabar delegation, the monks at the door say, "They aren't here," and turn the party away. Suspicious characters might sense that the monks are exchanging furtive glances with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) skill check.

Recruits or Members?

The Sacred Stone monks might be persuaded to let the characters in if the characters claim that they are here to join up or are already working for the Black Earth cult. Asking for Hellenrae, Marlos Urnrayle, or Miraj Vizann by name suffices as proof, as does producing something that would pique the Black Earth cultists' interest. If admitted, the characters are escorted to Qarbo so that he can decide what to do with them (see "Audience with Qarbo" in area M9).

Disguises

The Sacred Stone monks normally wear hooded robes and gargoyle masks made of gilded tin that cover their faces. If the characters acquire these articles, they can don the monks' clothing and disguise themselves. Characters disguised as Sacred Stone monks can move about the monastery without being challenged, as long as they avoid talking too much. The gargoyles in areas M8 and M14 don't attack characters dressed in Sacred Stone robes and masks. Other villains and monsters ignore the disguised characters unless they act suspiciously.

Infiltration and Combat

The denizens of the monastery know exactly who is supposed to be here and who isn't. Undisguised adventurers roaming around the halls without an escort are immediately identified as intruders and attacked.

The cultists don't have an organized response to an attack. Most of the monastery denizens are fatalistic, inclined to stand their ground and fight it out with intruders instead of trying to escape and raise the alarm. However, the cultists do respond aggressively to the sounds of fighting. When a fight begins in an area, check adjacent areas to see if any other monsters or villains are nearby. Then decide if and when such foes join an ongoing battle. This might lead to deadly combat encounters for the characters, since new opponents can rush in to join a fight that is still in progress, or arrive while the characters try to rest after a tough battle.

Monastery Features

Most of the Sacred Stone Monastery appears to be in good shape except for the eastern end of the building (areas M16 and M17), with its crumbling walls and heaps of rubble. The following features are common to the monastery. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. Ceilings in the monastery are 12 feet high. The mines have 8-foot-high ceilings in most places.

Defenders. Most of the inhabitants of the monastery are cultists. Others, such as the orogs, are mercenaries. The lich Renwick (area M16) has nothing to do with the cult.

Doors. Interior doors are made of wood. It takes a successful DC 10 Strength check to force open a locked door. Exterior doors are reinforced with iron bands and usually locked. Such a door requires a successful DC 15 Strength check to force open.

Light. During the day, the windows provide bright light for most interior spaces. At night, no lights are lit. The mines are unlit as well.

Locks. A lock requires thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check to open.

Treasure. Sacred Stone monks are ascetics and don't collect individual treasure. Their gilded tin masks are worthless. For the more worldly denizens of the monastery (such as the duergar), each carries 2d10 gp in mixed coinage and minor valuables.

Walls. The roof of the monastery is about 25 feet above the ground, but the walls have patches of crumbling masonry or poorly fitted fieldstone, so they're relatively easy to climb. The wall surrounding the garden (area M14) is 10 feet high.

Windows. The monastery windows are narrow and tall, almost like arrow slits. The sill of each window is about 10 feet above the ground outside.

M1. Passage of Stone

When the characters arrive at the Sacred Stone Monastery, read the following text:

> A trail leads into an ever-narrowing defile between bluffs of wind-sculpted sandstone. Eventually the walls draw in so closely that you can reach out and touch either side, but then the narrow space opens into a hidden canyon in the heart of the hills. A sprawling monastery with dark, narrow windows and red tile rooftops stands in the middle of this natural amphitheater, ringed by sandstone cliffs all around.
>
> Ahead, a weathered flight of stone steps leads up to the closed monastery doors. The plain doors are made of heavy timber with iron studs. A dusty footpath circles the building.

If the characters scout around the other sides of the building, add the following:

A small door, perhaps a servants' entrance, is on the northwest side of the monastery. On the northeast side, a low wall encloses a good-sized garden with a locked gate. The eastern portion of the monastery is in very poor repair—the walls there are crumbling, and the windows have been bricked up with old masonry. A small side door is near that section, in the southeast portion of the building.

Nobody inside the monastery pays much attention to people skulking around outside, although characters who make a commotion might attract the attention of cultists whose windows look out in the right direction.

All outside doors are locked after nightfall.

M2. Basalt Hall

At night, no one is here, but during the day, two **Sacred Stone monks** (see chapter 7) are stationed here. If the monks are present and the party knocks, tries the door, or converses loudly, read the following:

A small panel in the monastery's front door slides open, and someone wearing a golden mask peers out. The mask is fashioned in the shape of a scowling gargoyle, but the hand that opened the panel seems human enough. From beneath the mask comes a female voice: "Yes? What do you want?"

The monks listen to their visitors' story, then turn the party away unless the characters make convincing arguments about their importance. If the doors are unlocked, the characters can walk in without announcing themselves. In this case, they find two monks dressed in dun-colored robes waiting impassively in the hall. The monks ask what they want and the conversation proceeds in much the same way.

Once the characters pass the front door, read:

This austere hall is finished in irregular blocks of dark basalt that form natural columns along the walls. The doors of the monastery's front entrance face south, while interior doors lead east and west. An interior courtyard lies just to the north of this room, visible through a pair of narrow windows.

The monks attack without warning if anyone attempts to leave through the east or west doors without an escort. If the monks are convinced that the characters are potential recruits or engaged in important cult business, one of the monks guides the party to area M9 to meet Qarbo.

Development

If the characters attack the monastery and then leave, when they return the guards here are replaced by two **minotaurs** sent here from the Temple of Black Earth, supervised by one **Sacred Stone monk** (see chapter 7).

M3. South Dormitory

This room is arranged as a very uncomfortable-looking barracks. Ten thin pallets are rolled up along the walls, beside neatly folded piles of clothing—plain, dun-colored robes and sandals. Two of the clothing piles also include golden masks in the shape of scowling gargoyle faces. There are no other furnishings. A single window looks toward the canyon wall to the south.

This room houses ten **Sacred Stone monks** (see chapter 7). During the day, the room is empty as the monks attend to their duties elsewhere. At night, six monks sleep in this room, two remain awake, and two work in area M7. The two monks who remain awake watch to make sure no one sneaks out to raid the kitchen or the distillery, or otherwise behaves inappropriately for a monk. If combat occurs, sleeping monks wake up and stand up during their first turn. They can each take a normal second turn.

By day, four monks (the ones who drew night shift) sleep here.

M4. Guest Quarters

The door to this room is usually locked. Qarbo carries the key. He is either in area M9 during the day or sleeping here at night.

Eight simple bunks line the walls of this room, each with a small trunk at the foot of the bed. A small table and several wooden chairs stand in the middle of the room near an iron stove. Five of the bunks are bare, but three are comfortably made up with sheets, pillows, and blankets.

Back in the days when the inhabitants of the monastery offered shelter to travelers, this room served as the monastery's guest room. Few people come this way now, so the **Black Earth priest** Qarbo uses this space as his personal quarters. Qarbo keeps two **Black Earth guards** at his beck and call to serve as bodyguards. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.

Qarbo rests here from midnight to shortly after dawn. He spends the rest of his time in area M9, the Shrine of Stone. When Qarbo and his guards are here, they lock the door and sleep.

Treasure

A locked iron coffer beneath Qarbo's bunk contains 120 gp, 90 ep, cloth-of-gold priestly vestments worth 40 gp, a leather pouch containing 2 gold bracelets worth 30 gp each, a scroll of *earthbind*, a scroll of *Maximilian's earthen grasp*, and a scroll of *transmute rock* (see appendix B for a description of these spells). Qarbo carries the coffer key, as well as the key to the locked doors in area M21.


Sacred Stone Monastery
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M24
1 square = 10 feet

M5. West Dormitory

A heavy wooden shutter covers the window of this room, making it quite dark inside. It is also very warm due to a large iron stove with a well-stoked fire. Ten uncomfortable-looking pallets lie on the floor amid tidy piles of iron arms and armor.

This room houses six **duergar** and four **Sacred Stone monks** (see chapter 7). During the day, the monks work in the dojo (area M15) and the kitchen (area M7), while the duergar rest in here. At any given time while the duergar are present, three are awake and three are dozing. At night, the duergar patrol the area around the monastery and venture into the mines while the monks rest.

These duergar mercenaries see the Cult of Black Earth as a good bet. They tolerate the monks because the monks don't say much and generally leave them alone.

M6. Refectory

Four old wooden tables with bench seats stand in the middle of this room, and shelves full of plain clay crockery and wooden platters line the walls. To the west, two windows look out into the canyon beyond the monastery walls. Two doors lead from this room to the north, and one to the south.

The cultists spend little time in this common room. They spend most of their waking hours working or training in other parts of the monastery. When they aren't working, they're resting in their quarters.

At dawn and dusk, the Sacred Stone cultists (except the two door wardens in area M2) gather in this room for half an hour to dine together in silence. At mealtimes, twelve **Sacred Stone monks** eat here, along with **Hellenrae**, the **Black Earth priest** Qarbo, and the two **Black Earth guards** who protect Qarbo. The other denizens of the monastery (the duergar in area M5 and the orogs in area M18) prefer not to eat with the rest of the inhabitants. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.

M7. Kitchen

The door leading outside is locked after nightfall. During the day, monks working in the kitchen frequently go in and out, gathering herbs or dumping refuse.

Hot coals smolder in two big brick hearths in the middle of this room, and the smell of baking bread fills the air. Sacks of flour, casks of salted fish, crates of dried vegetables, and wheels of cheese clutter the walls, along with well-worn work tables and a collection of mismatched cutlery. A doorway to the west leads to a washroom where three large wooden tubs stand. A door to the north leads to the monastery exterior, while another door leads south.

The Sacred Stone monks take turns working in the kitchen. Regardless of the time of day, four **Sacred Stone monks** (see chapter 7) work here. If the hour is late (or early), they are engaged in baking bread, scrubbing kettles, or making preserves. The food isn't very good, but it is plentiful and filling. Basic provisions are stockpiled along the walls.

The room immediately to the west is a bathhouse and laundry area with three large wooden tubs.

M8. Sandstone Court

This area is open to the sky. Characters on the monastery roof can enter the building here.

This long, narrow court is paved in red sandstone. To the north stands the main temple or shrine of the monastery, its copper-sheathed doors emblazoned with a triangular symbol. Doors also exit the court at its east and west ends, and several narrow windows pierce the south wall. Gargoyle statues guard the door, each facing the court with a ferocious leer.

The two statues nearest the temple door are actually two **gargoyles**, hiding in plain sight. They don't react unless characters who don't belong to the cult attempt to enter the shrine to the north (area M9). The gargoyles don't interfere with anyone wearing a Sacred Stone robe and mask, or anyone escorted by individuals dressed in such a manner.

The symbol on the north door is the symbol of elemental earth.

M9. Shrine of Stone

The stairway in the middle of this room descends to area M21 in the mines below the monastery.

Four large columns of natural rock dominate this shrine. A wide set of steps descends into darkness in the center of the room, in front of a slab-like stone altar. Large, copper-sheathed doors stand in the middle of the south wall, and smaller doors exit to the east and west. Two narrow windows in the north wall admit thin fingers of light from outside. Above the altar, a triangular symbol has been chiseled into the heavy stone blocks of the wall.

Anyone who looks in the northeast corner notices a small bronze lever (see that section).

The Black Earth cultists claimed the old temple's main hall as their own, and now this shrine serves as a holy place for the cult members who garrison this outpost—and a proving ground for those who wish to join. When not in area M4, the **Black Earth priest** Qarbo presides here, protected by two **Black Earth guards** (see chapter 7 for both). They attack intruders who appear without an escort.

Altar. Close inspection of the altar reveals that old runes and emblems in its surface have been recently chiseled out. A character who examines the marks can attempt a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check to identify the erased marks (a dwarf succeeds automatically). The runes show that the temple was once dedicated to Moradin.

Bronze Lever. The lever triggers the collapsing stair trap described in area M21 and also releases the umber hulk in that room.

Audience with Qarbo

Qarbo is the second-in-command at the monastery, but the abbess Hellenrae doesn't like to deal with visitors. It therefore falls to Qarbo to interrogate any guests or recruits. If the characters are presented to him (perhaps because they claim they want to join), Qarbo questions them to determine how committed they are to the cult.

Qarbo is cruel and more than a little manic in his demeanor. He grins slyly the entire time he questions the characters, as if enjoying an inside joke. He asks questions such as, "What is your greatest failing?" and "Why do you think you are worthy to be a servant of eternal earth?" There are no right or wrong answers; the priest just wants to see how the newcomers react.

After hearing out the characters, Qarbo chooses one of the following options:

- If the party seems ready to join the cult, Qarbo explains that they must start with a period of self-denial and reflection. He sends for a pair of Sacred Stone monks from area M7, who take all the characters' equipment and clothing and provide them with Sacred Stone monk robes. If the characters accede to this, they are split up and assigned pallets in areas M3 and M5. Over the next few days, they are assigned routine chores in the kitchens and watched carefully.
- If the party seems committed to speaking with higher-ups in the cult (for example, Miraj Vizann), Qarbo reluctantly assigns them space in the guest quarters (area M4) and sends word down to the Temple of Black Earth. Within a day or two, the characters are summoned to the temple (see chapter 4). The Sacred Stone monks provide a guide to show them the way.
- If the party is antagonistic or doesn't seem to be of potential value to the cult, Qarbo feigns acceptance and tells them that they may "proceed below," indicating the stairs leading to area M21. When the majority of the party is on the steps, he pulls the lever and dumps the party into area M21, also releasing the angry umber hulk in that area.

Qarbo is eager to let the umber hulk in area M21 have its fun, so he prefers the third option. If the characters survive the experience, he is quite surprised but hurriedly explains that "they passed the test" and accepts them into the cult or forwards their offer to the leaders in the temple.

The austere shrine offers no treasure, but Qarbo carries the keys to the chest in area M4 and the doors leading into area M21.

M10. Scriptorium

> Writing desks stand beneath the windows of this large workroom. Dusty tomes, stacks of parchment, and pots of ink clutter each desk.

During the day, four **Sacred Stone monks** (see chapter 7) work in this room. At night, they return to their quarters.

The books and scrolls the monks are copying from a small collection that Marlos Urnrayle assembled during his life as a human aristocrat. The tomes include academic texts on the elemental planes, holy texts that refer to earth deities or elemental powers (most quite obscure), and philosophical treatises on self-denial and nihilism as the response to a flawed and illogical world.

Marlos's Testament. Characters who wade through the banal "insights" and "secrets" that make up most of the texts here find Marlos Urnrayle's personal testament. From this text, they can learn the following:

- Marlos Urnrayle is the Prophet of Earth;
- He was drawn to a place called "the Fane of the Eye" by powerful visions. There he found "Ironfang, the Holy Implement of Earth Power," and took it for his own;
- Marlos established the Temple of Black Earth in the ruins of a long-abandoned dwarven stronghold that exists below the Sacred Stone Monastery;
- He nurtures something called the Black Geode, and when all is ready, "the Evergrowing Mountain shall come and remake these lands in his own image."

Treasure

Among the books and parchments are a scroll of *dust devil* and a scroll of *erupting earth* (see appendix B for descriptions of both spells). The monks set them aside, realizing that they are magical and can't be copied.

Characters who take the time to sort through the books find that twenty have value to noncultists. They're worth 25 gp each.

M11. Stairs

> Stone stairs descend ten feet to a landing, turn, and continue to descend beyond your sight. Several large buckets are stacked unevenly on the landing. To the north, a staircase descends ten feet to a door.

The western stairs lead to area M18 in the mines below the monastery. The northern stairs descend to a doorway that opens into the garden (area M14).



The buckets are for fetching water from the well in area M18, a daily chore for the monks.

M12. Abbess's Chambers

The door to this room is locked at night. Hellenrae doesn't wish to be disturbed.

> This large room contains a wooden table with four chairs, a small working desk, several macramé wall hangings, and a single pallet on a low stone shelf set against the west wall. To the north, a barred window looks out over a walled garden.

Hellenrae (see chapter 7), the Abbess of Stone, resides here. She spends little time in her room during the day, preferring to exercise and mediate in the dojo (area M15). At night she retires to this room, but she sleeps only in brief catnaps—even in the middle of the night there is a fifty percent chance that she is wide awake.

If confronted here by intruders, Hellenrae immediately attacks. If she is disturbed by individuals who appear to be new recruits or guests of the cult, she curtly informs them that Qarbo can attend to their needs and dismisses them from her presence.

Barred Window. The window looking over the garden appears to be solidly barred to prevent egress. However, a catch below the sill releases the bars and lets them swing open, so that a person with a slight build can easily wriggle out of the window and drop to the garden below (area M14). Hellenrae flees by this route if she is cornered and doesn't believe she can defeat her enemies.

Treasure

Hellenrae has little interest in material possessions, but she understands that others do. The monastery also needs funds from time to time. A large wooden chest by the desk contains 800 sp, 65 pp, and 12 turquoise stones worth 10 gp each, wrapped in a swatch of cowhide.

The key to area M13 hangs from a hook on the wall by the room's door. Hellenrae wears the key to the padlock in area M24 on a leather cord around her neck.

M13. Distilling Room

The door to this room is locked at night.

> Piles of firewood are stacked neatly against one wall of this room, and four large copper kettles stand in iron frames above iron fireboxes. Copper tubing in long coils leads from one kettle to the next. Several large wooden casks stand at the south end of the room, and shelves on the eastern wall hold scores of brown bottles sealed with red wax.

The Sacred Stone monks have little use for brandy, but Hellenrae recognizes that innocuous activities like producing liquor for visitors might help to conceal the true nature of the Black Earth cult's studies and philosophy. It is also a useful chore to occupy her monks. During the day, two **Sacred Stone monks** (see chapter 7) work here, tending the fires.

Sacred Stone Brandy. There are sixty-five bottles of recently bottled brandy on the shelves. It is strong, but not very good—the liquor has not been properly flavored or aged. It burns fiercely if ignited.

M14. Garden of Stone

The garden gate leading to the monastery exterior is normally locked. Hellenrae and Qarbo carry keys to the gate.

> A walled garden shelters beneath the northern wall of the monastery. The garden is poorly kept, although some effort has been made to clear footpaths through the overgrowth. A garden gate to the northeast leads outside. Three doors open into the monastery at the southeast, south, and western side of the garden. The statues in the garden are particularly lifelike.

The statues are the handiwork of Marlos Urnrayle. He rarely visits the monastery now, but he lived here when he was first establishing the earth cult in the area.

Two of the statues in this garden are actually **gargoyles**. The monsters ignore cultists but freely attack intruders who wander into the area.

M15. Dojo

> Straw mats cover the floor of this large exercise room, and wooden racks along the walls hold quarterstaffs, polearms, and various weapons commonly associated with martial arts. Doors exit to the north and the east. A triangular symbol is carved into the center of the room's western wall.

Hellenrae (see chapter 7), the Abbess of Stone, spends much of her daytime here, sparring with her monks or leading them in various meditations. At any given time, four **Sacred Stone monks** (see chapter 7) practice with her. Hellenrae's instruction consists of beating her followers senseless, so the two monks are at half their normal hit points.

If confronted by individuals she believes to be new recruits, Hellenrae calls them out and tests them personally in hand-to-hand combat. She chooses one character at a time to challenge. If her intended sparring partner declines, Hellenrae attacks anyway. She ends the bout when the victim is down to half hit points or less, or when she is. If multiple characters attack her at once, she realizes at once that this is no longer a practice session and tries her best to kill or incapacitate as many of her foes as possible. Her battered Sacred Stone monks join in as well.

If the characters somehow get Hellenrae into a talkative mood (a difficult prospect), she explains that she sees the Sacred Stone Monastery as a stepping-stone to service in the Black Earth temple. It's her job to use discipline and drudgery to make newcomers worthy servants of elemental earth. She speaks of Marlos Urnrayle with glowing praise and relates the story of his visions and his efforts (see "Marlos's Testament" in area M10).

Ordinary clubs and staffs fill the wooden weapons racks. The sign on the wall is the symbol of the earth cult. Hellenrae wears the key to the lock in area M24 on a leather cord around her neck.

M16. Renwick's Tower

The door from area M14 to M16 is protected by an *arcane lock* spell (cast by the lich Renwick), as is the door leading to the passage to the southwest. Stairs to the north lead down to area M20.

> This older part of the monastery has been fitted out as a laboratory, with work tables covered in alchemical apparatuses and shelves full of strange curios and dusty clay jars. The windows have been bricked up, and cobwebs hang thick in the ceiling corners. An ancient figure peruses a heavy tome that lies open on a small desk, making notes on sheets of parchment covered in arcane writing.

This portion of the monastery serves as the demesne of a long-term tenant of the Sacred Stone Monastery, a **lich** named Renwick Caradoon. The lich isn't a member of the Black Earth cult, and he doesn't care about the other residents of the monastery as long as they don't interrupt his studies.

Hundreds of years ago, Renwick was a hero of some renown and the brother of Samular Caradoon, the founder of the Knights of Samular. The two of them fought bravely in the second Troll War. Renwick's hunger for arcane knowledge eventually led him to prepare for lichdom, but he became a lich only because his brother fed him a lichdom potion on the battlefield rather than let him die. The Black Earth cult naturally tried to make an ally of Renwick, but he ignored them. Hellenrae and her monks make a point of leaving him to his own devices.

Roleplaying Renwick

Renwick doesn't attack intruders. If he believes the characters are Black Earth cultists, he says, "I have already told you no. Depart." If confronted by characters he believes aren't cultists, he says, "I am not your enemy. Now go." If the characters provoke him, he provides fair warning: "In a moment I will fill this room with deadly poisonous gas. You should leave now." If attacked without warning, Renwick uses *time stop*, then casts *cloudkill* before taking his leave. (The lich has *time stop* prepared instead of *power word kill*. His list of prepared spells is otherwise the same as the lich presented in the *Monster Manual*.)

If the characters recognize Renwick (perhaps from the stories told at Summit Hall) and remind him of his heroic days, Renwick might be moved to help them. He doesn't want to fight the cultists since he no longer has any wish to kill, but if persuaded to help, he bestows a gift on any paladin or good-aligned fighter in the party: an *amulet of health*. He also promises to keep more cultists from reoccupying the monastery after the characters drive them out, and he might part with some of the potions and scrolls described in the next section.

Treasure

Renwick's curios and esoteric tomes aren't valuable and hold little magical power. For centuries he has been interested in the philosophy of magic, not bigger and more powerful spells or artifacts. However, scattered among the curios are a *potion of greater healing*, a *potion of hill giant strength*, a scroll of *invisibility*, and a scroll of *Snilloc's snowball swarm* (see appendix B).

M17. Lich's Quarters

A magnificent canopy bed covered in dusty tattered sheets and several moth-eaten couches suggest that this room was once the bedchamber of someone important.

When Renwick first established himself in the old monastery, he claimed this room, though he has no need for the trappings of life. If he decides to help the characters, he allows them to use this room to rest safely.

Renwick's Phylactery. Renwick left his phylactery in a place even he can't easily reach: a tomb beneath Summit Hall. If he should be defeated in combat, he'll re-form there—and see whether he can abscond with his brother's body for reburial in the empty sarcophagus in area M20.

M18. Mine Guardroom

The stairs near this room lead up to area M11 on the monastery's ground floor.

A large well sits in one corner of this room, equipped with a winch-and-bucket mechanism for fetching water. Doors enter from the north, west, and south. Several dirty straw pallets lie tucked into the corners of the room—including one very large and stinking pallet.

This chamber serves as the barracks for the Sacred Stone's subterranean guards: three **orogs** and one **ogre**. The leader of the orogs is a battle-scarred old veteran named Jurth, who claims the title of "commander." The ogre, a flabby simpleton called Drool, pathetically tries to please Jurth by brutalizing the hapless slaves this band of guards oversees.

When strangers appear, Jurth and his gang don't immediately attack. Instead, the orog growls, "The pass sign!" He waits for one of the characters to make the hand sign of the earth cult: a simple triangle formed by touching thumbs and forefingers together. If the characters can't guess the pass sign or bluff their way through without one, Jurth and his followers attack.

Treasure

Jurth has accumulated a good store of loot stolen from the hapless captives who wind up in the clutches of the cult. He conceals this loot in a leather pouch hidden beneath a loose flagstone under his sleeping pallet. The pouch contains 90 gp, and 40 ep. Jurth also carries the keys to the doors in areas M19 and M21.

Development

If the characters kill this group of monsters and leave the dungeon without defeating Hellenrae, within 1d3 days she replaces these guards with six **duergar**. The duergar also arrive if the characters kill Jurth in a random encounter in the mine (area M22).

M19. Slave Pens

At the end of this tunnel, three cell-like rooms have been excavated from the rock. Iron bars wall off each one, with a chain and padlock securing a swinging gate. Inside, a number of prisoners huddle on miserable straw pallets.

The cage door leading into each of these pens is locked. Jurth (in area M18) holds the key. Forcing open a cage door requires a successful DC 20 Strength check.

The cells hold a total of seventeen **commoners**. Most are human peasants, caravan drivers, merchants, or tribesfolk. However, one is the dwarven sage Bruldenthar, one of the missing members of the delegation from Mirabar.

The cult's prisoners, who have been working in the mines, beg for the characters to free them from their pens and lead them out of the monastery. They know that Jurth carries the keys to the pens, and that he can be found in the guardroom to the north (area M18). If questioned, they tell stories of raiders wearing brown cowls or hoods sweeping into town and carrying them back to servitude in the mines. Strangely, the mine contains no valuable ores.

Bruldenthar's Tale. Bruldenthar confirms that earth cultists ambushed the Mirabar delegation south of Beliard, slaying most of their guards. Earth cultists and their captives were ferried across the Dessarin River by pirates who received the sage's beloved books as payment. Bandits flying on giant vultures ambushed the earth cultists somewhere in the Sumber Hills. The bandits captured the delegate Deseyna Norvael. Bruldenthar and the rest were brought to the Sacred Stone Monastery. The sage was put to work, but delegates Rhundorth and Teresiel were taken below to an unknown fate.

M20. The Haunted Crypt

The doors leading into this area are made of old bronze plate. They aren't locked, but they are stuck (DC 10 Strength check to force open). The stairs to the

southeast lead up to area M16, and the door here is locked with an *arcane lock*.

> This barrel-vaulted chamber is obviously an ancient crypt. Niches along the walls hold dozens of old skeletons, some with scraps of burial cloth still clinging to their bones.

Not all the monsters beneath the monastery belong to the Black Earth cult. The crypt is part of the dungeon claimed by the lich Renwick, who normally can be found in his workshop (area M16). The lich retreats here to avoid confronting determined attackers. Six **zombies** guard this place, lying among the remains of the long-dead priests and monks who first built it. The creatures obey Renwick, who ordered them to defend the crypt against all living intruders.

Samular's Empty Tomb. At the east end of the crypt stands a magnificent but empty stone sarcophagus, carved in the image of a noble human knight with a long white beard. An inscription carved across the front of the sarcophagus reads: "Here Lies Samular Caradoon, Defender of the North." The lich prepared the tomb long ago, foreseeing the day when he could abscond with his brother's body (currently interred with the Knights of Samular in Summit Hall).

Treasure

Most of the old clerics and monks were buried quite modestly, but one skeleton in the north wall wears a silver ring set with small rubies (600 gp) and a *ring of fire resistance*.

M21. Hall of Thirsting Stone

The doors leading into this room are made of iron plate and secured with strong but simple locks (DC 20 Strength check to force open, or a DC 10 Dexterity check to pick with thieves' tools).

If the characters listen at the western door, they hear something large moving around restlessly just on the other side. Knocking or making a commotion outside the door provokes the creature in the room to bellow and throw itself against the door, which booms and rattles but otherwise holds.

The wide stairway at the south end leads up to the Shrine of Stone (area M9) in the upper monastery.

> The floor of this large chamber consists of loose red earth. A column of natural stone stands near the middle of the room, and a row of sturdy iron bars with a sliding cage door (currently shut) walls off the western portion of the room. A door of iron plate stands in the western wall behind the iron bars, while a similar door exits to the east. To the south, a wide set of stairs leads up.

If the characters enter the room from the stairs or the eastern door, add the following:

> Behind the iron bars stands a monstrous creature that resembles a cross between a huge ape and a beetle. It has wicked mandibles, powerful claws, and four eye sockets—but two of its eyes have been put out, and its claws are bronze blades. The creature bellows and thrashes in rage, constantly testing the bars and clawing at the walls.

The monster in the western portion of the chamber is an **umber hulk**. The cultists partially blinded the creature and removed its natural claws, so the hulk no longer has its Confusing Gaze power or the ability to burrow. However, the artificial blades increase its claw damage to 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage. The angry, trapped umber hulk eagerly attacks anything it can reach. If the characters goad it through the bars (for example, by attacking with ranged weapons or spells), the umber hulk goes berserk. It can use an action to attempt a DC 20 Strength check on each of its turns to wrench the cage door open.

The natural stone column and the floor of loose earth are harmless. The earth is about 5 feet deep with hard rock underneath; it's not any harder to walk across than firmly packed sand.

Cage. The lever in area M9 opens the cage door. It can also be opened by unlocking it (Jurth in area M18 has the key), although the caged umber hulk immediately attacks whoever opens the cage.

Trapped Stairs. The lever in area M9 also causes the stairs leading into this room to collapse, creating a steep slide. A character actively searching the stairs for traps notices the collapsing mechanism with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Anyone on the stairs when the lever is activated slides to the foot of the stairs and must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. While the stairs are collapsed, climbing back up requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Typically, the Black Earth cultists shove victims down the stairs and pull the lever, simultaneously releasing the caged umber hulk and making sure the victims (and the monster) can't escape back up the stairs.

M22. Mines

Most of this level consists of mine tunnels. Any location that isn't a keyed room is part of the mines.

> Several rough-hewn mine tunnels converge near this spot, shored up by old timbers. Patches of weird fungus or lichen cling to the walls in places. A soft breeze moans through the passageways.

The timber shoring isn't really needed, since the tunnels are sturdy. A breeze enters the mines at area M23, circulates a bit, and then exits at area M24.

Random Encounters. The mines aren't heavily trafficked, but the cultists send their captives to work here and sometimes strange creatures wander in. Check for random encounters once per hour. Roll a d20; if the

result is 18 or higher, a random encounter occurs. Roll a d6 for day encounters, or a d8 for night encounters:

d6 (d8)	Encounter
1	1d4 **commoners** (see area M19)
2	As per result 1, plus 1 **orog** (see area M18)
3	1d3 **Sacred Stone monks** (see area M7)
4	1d3 **violet fungi**
5	1 **grick**
6	Jurth and 1d2 **orogs** (see area M18)
7–8	1d3 + 1 **duergar** (see area M5)

The commoners labor at new excavations, digging with picks and shovels. They are desperate to escape but are thoroughly intimidated. If they mistake the characters for Black Earth cultists, they cringe and work harder. If they realize that the characters are here to fight the cultists, they eagerly relate everything they know about the layout of the mines and the guards in area M18. The commoners also know where the crypt (area M20) and the Hall of Thirsting Stone (area M21) are located, but they haven't been in those rooms. They beg the characters to free the rest of the captives in area M19 and help them all escape.

M23. Hidden Tunnel

A localized cave-in partially obstructs this disused mine tunnel. A heap of rubble stands six feet high and blocks a ten-foot long section of the passage, but the tunnel definitely continues past the collapsed section.

This tunnel continues for a quarter-mile, opening into a well-hidden spot in the surrounding hills. The rubble makes for a tough scramble, but anyone can manage it given a little time.

M24. The Ancient Stair

This stairway leads to the ruins of Tyar-Besil, exiting the Sacred Stone mines.

The passage leads to a gate made of iron bars that blocks the way north, secured with a chain and padlock. Just beyond the gate, worn stone steps descend and turn left. This is no mine tunnel—the stonework is near-perfect despite its evident age. To the right, a short passage leads to a big door of iron plate, dented in from the other side.

Hellenrae and Jurth have keys to this gate. The stairs descend about 250 feet before reaching the Temple of Black Earth (see chapter 4). Any dwarf recognizes the steps as dwarven stonework, most likely thousands of years old.

The door to the east is locked and leads to area M21; Jurth and Qarbo hold the keys.

Conclusion

When the characters defeat Hellenrae and her followers or convince them to guide them deeper into the temple, they are done with the monastery portion of the adventure. The Ancient Stair (area M24) descends about 250 feet, leading to a quarter-mile passage in a natural cavern. This passage in turn leads to area B1 in the Temple of Black Earth (see chapter 4).

Scarlet Moon Hall

Elizar Dryflagon, a fire cultist who was once a druid, has sent word throughout the Dessarin Valley that an obscure (and fictitious) druid circle called the Circle of the Scarlet Moon knows the Rite of the Wicker Giant, a ritual that can restore nature's balance in the troubled region. Several groups have set up camps on the slopes below Scarlet Moon Hall, waiting for Elizar to invite them up to partake in the rite. He has convinced those gathered here that he's a druid of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon and promises to teach others the rite as it's performed. The atmosphere is one of festive anticipation. Real druids here are excited to meet their fellows and learn from the mysterious but powerful Elizar.

Area Features

Scarlet Moon Hall was once a central tower with outer protective walls. The walls are now tumbled ruins, and the tower is under repair. The following features are common to the site. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Haze. The influence of elemental fire creates a smoky haze that renders the area lightly obscured. A bright spot in the haze indicates where the sun or moon is.

Defenders. The potential foes in this area are varied. The fire cultists pretend to be servants of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. Among them, only Elizar has druid capabilities.

Fires. A number of bonfires burn on the hillside. A bonfire deals 1d10 fire damage to a creature the first time on a turn it enters the fire, as well as when the creature starts its turn in the fire. You can modify the damage based on the size of the fire. See the "Damage Severity by Level" table in chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Slope. Within the keep walls, within about 20 feet of each campfire, and along the trails, the ground is level enough to pose no hindrance. Other areas are difficult terrain for those moving uphill on the ground.

Tents. The canvas tents are tall enough for humans to crouch in. Bedrolls and clothing are scattered on most tents' floors. Most also have lanterns hanging inside or from the frame supporting the tent entrance.

Treasure. Most of the visitors here carry 2d10 gp in mixed coinage and minor valuables.

Ascending the Slope

> Visible through the haze that covers the hill is a square tower ringed by ruined walls. In front of the tower burns a bonfire shaped like a fiery giant. Scattered on the slope below the tower are seven bonfires with tents clustered around them. Humanoid figures huddle near these closer fires. A trail leads up to these hillside encampments.

Due to the haze, characters can sneak past or overcome a camp without arousing the attention of the others. Whether or not they attract the attention of nearby camps depends on how quiet they are. Keep in mind that the brown bear (camp Hc2), werewolves (camp Hc3), and worgs (camp Hc7) all have keen senses that don't depend on sight.

The denizens of a camp cry out an alarm only if they're clearly losing a fight. Absent extenuating circumstances, though, they don't repeat the alarm round after round.

Once a battle starts, reinforcements arrive in waves. It's conceivable that, once a few camps empty out, the rest hunker down and hope that whatever is attacking the other camps doesn't come their way.

Characters can avoid the camps entirely by circling the hill and climbing its north side. The north side of the hill is steep but navigable, and can be climbed without having to make ability checks.

Hc1. Druid Camp

> Four robed humans—two male, two female—chant as they stand around a bonfire. On the periphery of the firelight are two massive elk, placidly chewing.

The four **druids** (Varigo, Mahoon, Iniri, and Fariya) are looking forward to the Rite of the Wicker Giant and hope it leads to greater cooperation among the druids of the Dessarin Valley. These druids are already celebrating in hopes of a successful rite. They offer the characters food and drink, including a few sips from a small cask of brandy, and encourage the group to spend the night and witness the rite, which should occur tomorrow.

The fire cultists have decided that these druids are unsuitable for induction into the cult. Elizar plans to feed them to the wicker giant during the rite.

These druids fight only if attacked, spurring their two **elk** companions into battle. They beg for mercy once half of them (including the elk) are down.

Reinforcements. Camp Hc2 arrives the first time a disturbance is detected. Camp Hc3 arrives if the disturbance persists.

Treasure

The druids have a scroll of *elemental bane* and a scroll of *warding wind* (see appendix B for descriptions of both spells) in a wooden case in one of their tents.

Hc2. Cult Camp

> Two human men in robes stand before the bonfire. On the other side of it, leashed to a peg pounded into the ground, is a brown bear.

The humans are two **Eternal Flame priests** (see chapter 7) claiming to be Aylbrith and Ingulf, posing as druids of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. They have a captured **brown bear** with them to improve their disguise. They warmly greet visitors who aren't obviously hostile, asking questions to determine the characters' reason for visiting Scarlet Moon Hall.

If the characters aren't mollified by their claims, the cultists attack. If it can't reach someone within 10 feet of it, the bear uses its action to make a DC 20 Strength check, breaking its leash on a success. Once free, it attacks the fire cultists if it can't reach a character.

Reinforcements. Camp Hc1 arrives first, though the druids of that camp try to talk it out rather than fight. If the disturbance is large or extended, camp Hc6 arrives.

Hc3. Werewolf Camp

> Two rugged humans sit near a large bonfire. They are sparsely dressed and very hairy.

The humans, Storol and Wiglaf, are **werewolves**. They are here because they want to know what the druids are up to. They think the Rite of the Wicker Giant is real.

The werewolves don't know it, but they passed the initial test when fire cultists visited this camp. The fire cult has no idea Storol and Wiglaf are lycanthropes, but they noticed the pair's killer instinct.

The werewolves pretend to be interested in the rite, but prolonged conversation with strangers frustrates them. Any conversational hostility causes them to snap, assume hybrid forms, and attack.

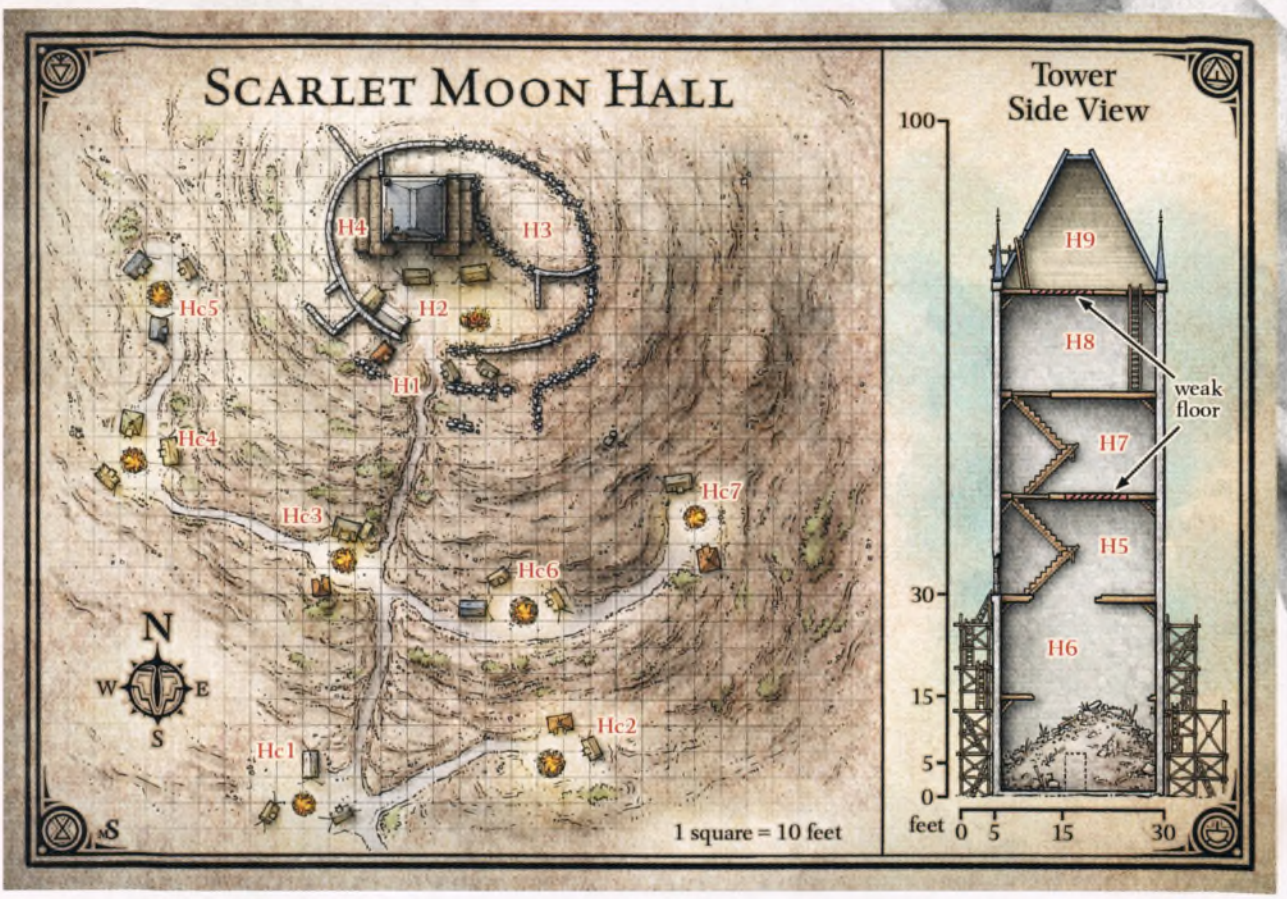
Reinforcements. Camp Hc4 arrives first, then camp Hc6 if the disturbance persists. These reinforcements attack characters and werewolves alike.

Hc4. Cult Camp

> A half-elf woman here is dressed in robes, while her three companions—a human woman and two human men—are dressed in rugged clothing and breastplates. The three in armor cook food on kebabs at their bonfire.

These people are an **Eternal Flame priest** and three **Eternal Flame guardians** (see chapter 7 for both). The priest—a half-elf named Lytin—looks like a druid and tries to do all the talking. Her guardians—Biart, Orm, and Malin—look like rangers, and they become more nervous the longer any conversation lasts.

Reinforcements. Camp Hc3 arrives first, but camp Hc5 might respond to prolonged disturbances.



Hc5. Fiddler's Camp

> This bonfire is a little smaller than the others. An elf woman in robes plays a fiddle as two sprites dance around the smoke above the fire.

This camp has a real **druid**, Gariena, and two **sprites** named Flix and Afid. They are here to contribute to the rite. Gariena has a sense of anticipation, but she wonders why she never heard of the Rite of the Wicker Giant. She also wonders why the preparations are taking so long.

Gariena fights only if attacked and happily shares her campfire with friendly characters. No one can camp here, though. The sprites can't be trusted to refrain from pranks, and Gariena wants no trouble.

Reinforcements. Camp Hc4 arrives, attacking intruders first, then trying to finish off Gariena and the sprites. The fire cult doesn't think Gariena has what it takes to be a cultist.

Treasure

Gariena has a coinpurse with 40 sp and 18 gp in it, plus she wears a silver ring worth 25 gp and carries a scroll of *lesser restoration* and a scroll of *skywrite* (see appendix B). If the characters earn her favor, she gives them her scrolls as gifts to help them in their struggle against the cults of Elemental Evil.

Hc6. Druid Camp

> Three people doze near the bonfire as a fourth leans on a staff, clearly bored out of his mind.

The three sleeping **druids**—Comnall, Murcadh, and Ragnad—wake if the characters approach openly. The fourth person is Sauruki, a **Crushing Wave priest** (see chapter 7) sent by the water cult to figure out what the fire cult is up to here. They're suspicious about strangers, but Sauruki is curious about who the characters are.

The fire cultists haven't made up their minds about this group, although Sauruki has concluded that the fire cultists are seeking recruits.

If the characters seem likely to disrupt the ritual, the druids attack. Sauruki tries to hang back and fight cautiously. He repeatedly makes the sign of the water cult, crossing his forefingers and touching his thumbs, hoping that the characters are affiliated with the water cult.

Reinforcements. Camp Hc7 arrives. Camp Hc3 arrives if the disturbance persists.

Hc7. Bugbear Camp

> This fringe camp has three bulky figures standing near the fire, their robes' hoods pulled up. Two worgs rest at edge of the firelight.

The hooded figures are three **bugbears**, accompanied by two **worgs**. Until recently, this camp was occupied by druids who didn't pass muster with the fire cult and were fed to the wicker giant. The bugbears are trying to look like druids from a distance until the other camps are cleared out. Knowing they aren't going to fool anyone at close range, they attack immediately.

Reinforcements. Camp Hc6 arrives first. The druids aren't sure who to fight at first, though the characters can sway them with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Treasure

The bugbears carry a total of 68 cp, 42 sp, and 55 gp.

H1. Courtyard

> Beyond the ruins of walls ringing the keep's central tower is a courtyard cluttered with tents. A humanoid-shaped wicker giant, two stories tall, burns brightly here. Two figures in robes stand near the wicker giant, their heads lowered in prayer.
>
> The tower is under repair, with wooden scaffolding some thirty feet high stretching across the east and west sides. Lanterns hang from struts and poles attached to the woodworks. Two guards with crossbows watch the courtyard from the scaffolding to the west. Rubble chokes a wide doorway, likely once the main entrance, on the tower's south side.

The two praying figures are **Eternal Flame priests** (see chapter 7). They're disguised as druids, but no one is supposed to be in the courtyard, so they attack intruders. For her first action, one priest stands before the wicker giant and cries, "Arise, and cleanse this place of the unworthy!" She uses her next two actions to repeat this call. If she dies, the other priest uses his actions to do the same. If the priests succeed at calling on the wicker giant three times, see area H2.

Reinforcements. The defenders in the kennel (area H3) join the battle. The guards on the scaffolding (area H4) react slowly to disturbances in the courtyard, because some such occurrences are the fire cult feeding the wicker giant. They join any battle here during its second round, making ranged attacks from the scaffolding unless they have a reason to descend. If the fight is prolonged, the creatures in area H5 join in. Denizens of the hillside camps might, at your option, also come as reinforcements, starting with camp Hc6 and then camp Hc3. Some campers might be influenced to help the characters.

H2. Wicker Giant

> Waves of heat come from the burning wicker giant, but the wooden structure contains the flames without being consumed by them.

Bound in the wicker giant is a **fire elemental**. It remains quiescent until the tower scaffolding starts to collapse, the priests beckon it forth (see area H1), or the characters damage the wicker giant.

Once it emerges, the elemental attacks any creature that couldn't reasonably be mistaken for a fire cultist. It also burns anything nearby that's flammable. Once the elemental emerges, the wicker giant itself starts to burn, much like the scaffolding in area H1.

H3. Kennel

> Ruined walls surround this shallow pit, which was probably a basement once.

Two **hell hounds** and one **Eternal Flame guardian** (see chapter 7) stand guard here.

H4. Scaffolding

The tower scaffolding is 30 feet high and equally as long. It is easy to climb and has a walkway about every 7 feet up. Two **Eternal Flame guardians** (see chapter 7) cover the courtyard from their perches on the scaffolding, preferring not to get drawn into melee combat.

At your option, perhaps due to a falling lantern or stray fire spell, a portion of the scaffolding can catch fire. Such a fire spreads 5 feet in every direction at the start of each round until the structure is fully engulfed. Starting 1 minute after the scaffolding first catches fire, randomly choose 1d2 10-foot sections to collapse every minute until the whole structure is a flaming ruin.

H5. Upper Entry Chamber

The door to this chamber is reachable only from the top of the scaffolding. The tower wall is rough fieldstone, so it can be climbed with successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks.

> This warmly lit room has a large in the wooden floor and stone stairs leading up the northern wall.

Unless they joined the battle in area H2, two **Eternal Flame guardians** (see chapter 7) are here, accompanied by an **azer** who's acting as an envoy between Vanifer and Elizar. They're eager to lure enemies near the hole in the floor, then push them to drop 20 feet into area H6.

Wooden stairs lead up to area H7.

Reinforcements. If a battle here lasts more than 3 rounds, the cultists in area H7 awaken. They warn

Elizar in area H8, giving time for Elizar and his cultists to prepare an ambush in area H7.

H6. The Downward Path

A massive pile of rubble—the furniture and flooring from the level above—sits in the middle of this chamber. A cluster of small fire-creatures burns the wooden beams along the north wall, where a tunnel leads downward.

Rubble covers what was once the main entrance to the tower, but five **magmins** are burning away the debris to make the tunnel in the northern floor larger. They attack anyone who doesn't look like a fire cultist.

Tunnel. The tunnel winds downward and eventually connects to area E1 of the Temple of Eternal Flame (see chapter 4).

H7. Cultist Barracks

This room has a dozen bedrolls scattered across the floor. Stone stairs continue upward along the inside of the tower's north wall.



If they haven't been disturbed, one **Eternal Flame priest** and two **Eternal Flame guardians** (see chapter 7 for both) are asleep when the characters arrive.

Reinforcements. If Elizar Dryflagon is in area H8 and hears a disturbance in this room, he joins the battle as soon as he can.

Weak Floor. The area marked with lines creaks loudly whenever someone steps on it. At the start of every round, roll 1d8. If the result is equal to or lower than the number of creatures standing on the weak floor, it collapses, sending everyone falling 15 feet into area H5 or 35 feet into area H6.

H8. Elizar's Chamber

The room contains a bedroll, a desk, and a bookcase. On the northern wall, a tall ladder leads up to a trapdoor in the ceiling.

Elizar Dryflagon (see chapter 7), an older man in robes and carrying a pipe, is here if he didn't join a battle in area H7. Behind a veneer of good humor is the heart of a pyromaniac. He doesn't parley for long, preferring to burn the characters out of existence.

Treasure

In Elizar's desk are 250 gp, two fire opals (worth 50 gp each), and a scroll of *flame arrows* (see appendix B).

H9. Bats in the Attic

This chamber is under the tower's angled upper roof. Holes in the ceiling lead to the open air. A short ladder to the west leads through one such opening. The room smells strongly of the droppings that cover the floor.

Four **giant bats** roost here. Fire cultists periodically burn them out, but others return within a tenday. The bats are hungry and aggressive, so they attack anyone who comes through the trapdoor.

Roof Opening. The ladder leads about 5 feet up to a circular opening about 3 feet wide. A small platform has been built outside this opening, and on it are supplies for repairing the roof, including 200 feet of hempen rope and a climbing kit.

Weak Floor. This area has a weak floor like the one in area H14. Creatures that fall drop 15 feet into area H8.

Conclusion

When the characters defeat Elizar and his followers, this scenario is largely over. The party can still deal with any campers still on the slope.

The tunnel in area H6 leads to area E1 in the Temple of Eternal Flame. If you aren't ready for the characters to explore that temple, a force from the temple could emerge to drive the characters away. Or, you can allow the characters to descend to the Temple of Eternal Flame and discover how dangerous it is for themselves.



Chapter 4: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water

In chapter 3, the characters succeeded in exposing some or all of the elemental cults' surface outposts as nests of villainy. However, the Haunted Keeps represent only the tip of the iceberg. Each cult's base of operations lies hidden deep beneath the Sumber Hills in the ancient dwarven redoubt of Tyar-Besil. Clearing the cultists out of the Haunted Keeps deals a sharp setback to the affected cults, but unless the characters follow up on their initial successes by infiltrating the temple complex, the cults recover quickly from their early defeats and return in greater force.

Rooting Out Evil

The characters might want to assault the four elemental temples as quickly as possible, but they also need to deal with the cults' continuing efforts to corrupt and terrorize the people of the Dessarin Valley. While the characters are busy smashing one temple, the other three cults can do great harm in the area. Between expeditions to Tyar-Besil, the characters would be well advised to continue the investigations they began in chapter 3.

Ultimately, the natural disasters, monster incursions, and upswing in raider activity represent symptoms of a common disease: the presence of the Temple of

Elemental Evil. No matter which disasters and events the characters choose to respond to, the solution to the region's woes lies in the great dungeon below the Sumber Hills.

Urgent Summons

Early in this part of the adventure, one or more characters receive messages from their factions, asking for help with other dangers in the area. This opportunity allows you to introduce the players to one of the side treks described in chapter 6.

The summons could be a verbal message entrusted to an NPC waiting in the characters' base town. A messenger might brave the wilds to find the characters at their campsite. Magic might be used, such as a *sending* spell. Whether the party chooses to respond or continue on their current course is up to the players.

The Spy's Letter

The characters have a problem in Red Larch: Justran Daehl, the cellarer (ale buyer) of the Helm at Highsun, is a spy for the Cult of the Crushing Wave. He's been reporting on the party's comings and goings since they arrived in the region. Justran doesn't sign his letters, but if the characters find one of his reports in Rivergard or in the Temple of the Crushing Wave, they might be able to figure out who he is by looking for the author.

Most townsfolk don't recognize the handwriting, but those who do regular business with Justran and the Helm at Highsun can identify his script. These include Kaylessa (proprietor of the Swinging Sword Inn), Marlandro Gaelkur (of Gaelkur's), and Aerego Bethendur (the warehouse owner). If the characters show the letter to any of these individuals, the NPC identifies the handwriting. If the players say "we show the letter to everyone in town," Justran hears about it and flees town before the characters corner him.

If confronted, Justran Daehl denies the charge vehemently. He claims that any letter the characters present as evidence is "a clear forgery" until he sees a chance to escape. The cult spy is equivalent to a **bandit captain**. If the encounter takes place at the Helm and the characters don't make a strong case against him, five **commoners** (tavern regulars) come to his defense. They aren't cult servants, just bystanders mistaken about Justran and trying to help the cellarer who keeps them in drink.

Poisoned Ale

Justran might take it upon himself to eliminate the characters. When the characters gather for dinner one evening after they return to Red Larch, he arranges to serve them poisoned ale. This has the same effect as a *potion of poison*, but the characters have advantage on their saving throws because Justran has to dilute the poison among several flagons. (The dilution also makes the poison unlikely to be lethal; Justran is better at making ale than he is at making poison.)

A brief investigation reveals that the poisoned flagons came from the taproom of the Helm at Highsun, and Justran Daehl personally delivered and poured the ale.

Development

If the characters capture Justran, he reveals after brief interrogation that he is a member of the Cult of the Crushing Wave. He knows that an underground stream at Rivergard Keep leads to "the temple below," although he has never been to the Temple of the Crushing Wave. He also knows that Jolliver Grimjaw and his followers (see chapter 3) are water cultists.

The Temple of Elemental Evil

The four elemental cults maintain their chief stronghold in the ancient dwarven citadel of Tyar-Besil beneath the Sumber Hills. Each cult controls a portion of the old dwarven redoubt and has its own sanctum dedicated specifically to the element worshiped. These four temples are described in this chapter.

Several subterranean routes lead from buried Tyar-Besil to the surface. Knifepoint Gully near Feathergale Spire leads to the Temple of Howling Hatred. The Dark Stream flows under Rivergard Keep, leading to the Temple of the Crushing Wave. The Ancient Stair descends from Sacred Stone Monastery to the Temple of Black Earth. Finally, the Path of Frozen Fire leads from the cellars below Scarlet Moon Hall to the Temple of Eternal Flame. Each elemental cult controls one of these routes and therefore controls the quarter of Tyar-Besil that connects to the surface outpost.

Infiltrating the Temples

Characters who dress in cultist gear might have some success infiltrating the temples. Each cult's monstrous allies rarely challenge a group of cultists that proceeds with confidence. Human members of the cult have a good chance to spot impostors at close range, but fast-talking characters might be able to pass themselves off as new arrivals, bearers of important information, or potential allies against another cult. If the characters ask for a prophet or issue threats in the prophet's name, they gain advantage on ability checks they make to bluff or intimidate their way into a temple. Fooled cultists insist on leading the party to one of the cult's leaders. At least two cultists from any group the characters interact with serve as escorts.

Driving the Cults into Retreat

The cultists learn and adapt as the characters attack their strongholds. The four temple dungeons described in this chapter each include a room where that cult's elemental prophet might be encountered. The first time

Character Advancement

The characters probably begin this chapter around 6th level. Encourage the players to take on the challenges in this chapter in whatever order they wish—let their interests drive the story. If you want to pace the adventure, the Temple of Howling Hatred suits a 6th-level party; the Temple of the Crushing Wave is appropriate for a 7th-level party; the Temple of Black Earth is designed for an 8th-level group; and the Temple of Eternal Flame works best for a party of 9th-level characters. Each quarter of the dungeon cleared out by the characters should advance the party one level.

the characters find their way to one these locations, the prophet is present, and the characters can engage their foe. After one prophet falls, the remaining three prophets retreat to lower levels, leaving their minions to defend the temple dungeons.

The characters defeat each dungeon when they kill its prophet or eliminate the monsters in the elemental shrine in these locations:

- Temple of Howling Hatred: area A19
- Temple of the Crushing Wave: area C25
- Temple of Black Earth: area B23
- Temple of Eternal Flame: area E17

Counterattack

It's dangerous to linger in a stronghold without defeating that dungeon's prophet. If the characters try to camp in any of the four temples while its elemental prophet is still alive, the prophet gathers reinforcements and sends them to attack the intruding party. The prophets can organize this strike even if they have retreated down to the Fane of the Eye or the elemental nodes—visions and whisperings from the Eye guide their actions. (However, there are a few specific areas called out within the temple levels where the characters might be able to rest without attracting attention.)

Groups sent up from lower levels of the dungeon include the following:

- Air cult: **Howling Hatred priest** and four **kenku**
- Water cult: **Crushing Wave priest** and four **bugbears**
- Earth cult: **Black Earth priest** and two **ogres**
- Fire cult: **Eternal Flame priest** and four **hobgoblins**

See chapter 7 for each priest's statistics.

Likewise, it isn't safe to camp in a cleared Haunted Keep. The elemental prophets divine the characters' location and send forces to harass the party. Small bands of cult raiders and mercenaries roam the Sumber Hills, so it's a simple matter to order one such group to attack the characters at one of the Haunted Keeps. (See the "Random Encounters" section in chapter 2.) To rest in safety, the characters must either hide their camp or return to a nearby settlement.

Cult Retaliation

The eradication of one or more of the surface outposts of the elemental cults marks the characters as dangerous enemies. As the party continues the assault on cult strongholds in Tyar-Besil, the elemental prophets look for ways to hit back hard, using their *devastation orbs*.

The timing of these retaliatory encounters coincides with the party's progress in overcoming the four temple complexes. A temple is overcome when its prophet is defeated or the monsters in its shrine are eliminated.

- After the characters defeat the first prophet, run "Dire Tidings" when they return to a settlement.
- After the characters force a second cult to abandon its shrine, run the "Reckless Hate" encounter when the party returns to a settlement.
- After the characters force the third cult to abandon its shrine, run the "Race to Destruction" encounter.

Parties that stay in the dungeon and choose not to return to town might be oblivious to the villains' retaliations. If the characters never leave, assume the cultists' effort to destroy a town in "Reckless Hate" causes great damage without the characters on hand to stop it. When "Race to Destruction" is triggered, the characters receive a *sending* or similar warning from a faction NPC that a town is in great danger, providing them with a chance to stop the event.

Dire Tidings

While the characters were busy in ruined Tyar-Besil, elemental cultists used a *devastation orb* to attack one of the towns in the area. The party learns the news when they arrive at any settlement in the Sumber Hills region. If the characters don't venture anywhere near civilization, NPCs the party meets in the wilderness deliver the news.

A caravaner tells the characters of seeing silent pilgrims on their way to the settlement in question. She describes the pilgrims' garb well enough for the characters to know the pilgrims were elemental cultists. They carried a box, which had elemental symbols worked into it. The caravaner and her servants then witnessed the devastation but were too far away to lend any aid.

If the characters visit the wrecked town, they can confirm the scope of the damage. They learn from survivors that the cultists marched to the center of town, opened the box, took out an orb, and then ran for the hills, leaving the orb behind. The disaster happened scant minutes later. Many townspeople were injured, and the survivors are tending to the wounded in makeshift shelters.

Reckless Hate

When the characters defeat a second elemental temple, the offended cult strikes back. Through divinations, spy reports, or visions bestowed by the Elder Elemental Eye, the cultists learn which settlement the player characters are using for a base and send a small force with a *devastation orb* to ravage that settlement—preferably with the characters in it. While the characters rest, trouble arrives on their doorstep.

If the characters make camp outside of town, this encounter occurs when the characters spot the cultist group traveling to a settlement they intend to attack. The cultists' path brings them close to wherever the characters happen to be staying. For example, if the characters are camped out near one of the Haunted Keeps, they spot the group as it exits the passage connecting the keep to the dungeon levels.

> Shortly after sunrise the day after you arrive in town, you hear a commotion outside. Someone shouts, "Hey, stop that!" A moment later voices break into a low, strange chanting.

When the characters investigate, add the following information.

Several strangely dressed people stand in the street. One who looks like a priest chants as the others open a large box engraved with a recurring elemental symbol. Inside, a magical orb resembling a crystal ball pulses and thrums with power. The priest holds the orb aloft and continues to chant while the others kneel before it.

The object is a *devastation orb*, and it's ready to explode. The cultists remove the device from its case and wait for it to detonate. See chapter 7 for descriptions of the devastation orbs and statistics for the cultists. The group's composition depends on which cult is involved:

- One **Howling Hatred priest**, one **hurricane**, and eight **Howling Hatred initiates** armed with a *devastation orb of air*
- One **Black Earth priest**, two **Black Earth guards**, and four **Sacred Stone monks** armed with a *devastation orb of earth*
- One **Eternal Flame priest**, three **Eternal Flame guardians**, and one **flamewrath** armed with a *devastation orb of fire*
- One **Crushing Wave priest** and six **Crushing Wave reavers** armed with a *devastation orb of water*

Race to Destruction

After the characters despoil the third shrine in the Temple of Elemental Evil, the remaining cult sends a powerful force with a *devastation orb* from the Fane of the Eye (see chapter 5) to destroy another town in the Dessarin Valley. The cultists taunt the party with their intentions, hoping to lure the characters into rushing to stop them, thus being caught in the destruction. Choose a target the characters have to travel to reach and allow enough time that the party can get there just in time.

The Warning. While the characters rest, the cultists use a *dream* spell to contact the most prominent or recognizable character in the party.

Your sleep is troubled this night. Half-remembered figments and warnings seem to hover in your mind. Then a shadowy figure strides into your mind's eye and brushes aside your wandering thoughts. "Hear me well, fool," it sneers. "You have offended the Elder Elemental Eye. For your sacrilege, others shall be punished. At sunset the day after tomorrow, we will destroy the town of Beliard. You can try to stop us, but you will fail; none shall survive. This is the price of your defiance."

A new vista forms in your dream. You are standing on a hillside above a small town. A circle of shadowy cultists stands nearby, gazing at a glowing orb in the center of the circle. The orb pulses, and you awaken with a start.



The threat to Beliard is real. The cultists wait a couple of miles outside of town, staying out of sight until the specified time of the attack. If the characters search the outskirts of town, they can engage the cultists away from the target. Otherwise, the cultists march on the town with a *devastation orb* an hour before sunset. The group depends on which cult is involved.

- Two **Feathergale knights** mounted on **hippogriffs**, one **skyweaver**, one **hurricane**, and five **bugbears**
- One **Dark Tide knight** mounted on a **giant crocodile**, one **fathomer**, one **Crushing Wave priest**, and six **bandits**
- One **burrowshark** mounted on a **bulette**, and two **Black Earth guards**
- Three **Eternal Flame guardians**, two **minotaurs**, and four **hell hounds**

These cultists are willing to annihilate themselves in the process of carrying out their mission. The cultists are also under orders to make sure they catch the characters in the blast, so if they are intercepted away from town, they still try to set off the orb (see chapter 7).

Temple of Howling Hatred

When the characters follow the tunnel from Knifepoint Gully (see chapter 3), read the following text:

> An enormous chasm splits the earth as far as the eye can see in the pervasive subterranean darkness. A crude, narrow stairway hugs the rock alongside the chasm, twisting madly in hairpin turns around sharp outcroppings. Jagged and uneven, the stair threatens to spill travelers into the chasm's mouth. After several treacherous miles, the stairway terminates on a broad, flat landing that juts out over the immense black chasm. In the gloom, a lost dwarven city lays in ruins beneath the glittering cavern vault. Broken statues stand in the midst of empty plazas, staring sightlessly into the darkness. A huge step pyramid rises at the edge of the precipice, and from the moat that surrounds it a misty waterfall whispers over the chasm's ledge.

The Cult of the Howling Hatred established its temple in the southwest quarter of ancient Tyar-Besil, where the dwarves built a palace in a vast cavern upon the edge of a great chasm. Where the cavern's glittering, mineral-encrusted ceiling rose high, the dwarves constructed spacious plazas in which they carved towering statues, elaborate pillars, and enormous monuments. They worked the natural stone of the cavern and carved barracks and other living quarters into the rock, connecting them via lamplit passageways. Though it was a fortress, some commerce and art was present, with a rudimentary bazaar and dwarven skalds filling the air with chanted verse. With the aid of a friendly djinni, the dwarves constructed a pyramid-shaped palace at the center of the cavern, surrounded by a moat fed by an underground stream. Dwarven innovation provided the cavern with light, fresh water, and sewage disposal.

Temple Features

Beneath a high cavern ceiling, streets connect a number of spacious plazas where wealthy dwarven families built estates. With the aid of a captive djinni, the air cult works to restore the Tyar-Besil palace and transform it into Aerisi Kalinoth's new Temple of Howling Hatred. The area has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. Interior ceilings are 15 feet high except in the central plaza, where the ceiling is 75 feet high.

Chasm. The chasm plummets 200 feet.

Doors. Single doors are made from stone slabs balanced on central pivots. Opening a door creates two gaps, each about 3 feet wide. No locks remain operable, but some doors are stuck. It takes a successful DC 15 Strength check to force open a stuck door.

Double doors have iron hinges and swing open in one direction or the other, like normal doors.

Music. Music being played in area A4 can be heard faintly in areas A1, A6, and the southern section of A10. It's louder in areas A2, A3, and A16.

Treasure. Although air cultists rarely do, many denizens of the air temple carry small amounts of treasure. Kenku value shiny baubles, and they always have such treasure. Creatures that own individual treasure have 4d10 gp worth of mixed coins and other minor valuables.

A1. Palace Quarter Entrance

> The carved reliefs of two dwarves face one another in profile to complete an arch beyond the ledge. Through the arch, the blocky contours of a lost dwarven city sprawl in the subterranean night. From somewhere within comes an agonized wail, followed by a breathless ramble of whimpering pleas. Then the whole city seems to join the chorus with the screams of creatures mad from torment.

The tormented screams actually come from four **kenku** lurking inside the gatehouse (area A2).

A2. Gatehouse

> A squat stone gatehouse stands at the entrance to the dwarven city. Beyond the open gates, an arched corridor zigzags past sturdy stone walls where arrow slits squint from every angle. At the far end of this murderous hallway stands the entrance to this lost dwarven city.

Four **kenku** occupy the gatehouse structure, hidden behind the arrow slits. They don't reveal themselves to the characters unless the characters discover and attack them through the arrow slits. They torment the

characters by replicating the screams and pleas of the tormented victims of the kenku torturer (area A12).

Arrow Slit Corners. The gatehouse was designed in a zigzag pattern to provide cover for dwarf defenders while slowing their foes' progress. Each corner on either side of the gatehouse holds two arrow slits, allowing creatures inside the gatehouse structure to fire in multiple directions on creatures within the gatehouse passageway. Each arrow slit is also fitted with an iron shutter, which can be closed and latched so that a creature within the gatehouse is only vulnerable from a single direction.

A3. Machine Chamber

Two massive stone pillars thread holes in the floor and ceiling of this vast chamber. Stone crossbeams pierce the pillars to form spokes, creating giant wheels.

Two robed figures whip five sorry-looking humans into pushing against the crossbeams of the westernmost wheel with all their might. As the wheel turns slowly counterclockwise, you hear the grinding of enormous gears hidden deep below the stone floor.

Two **Howling Hatred priests** (see chapter 7) supervise as five **commoners** slowly turn the westernmost wheel (see "Stone Wheels" below). After completing one revolution, they stop and await further instructions.

The commoners are cultists on the brink of becoming initiates. The priests lash these cultists to break their will before final initiation into the cult. If the characters attack, the priests order the commoners to fight to the death. A commoner can be frightened into surrendering with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check.

Stone Wheels. The stone wheels operate an elaborate mechanism beneath the floor in this dungeon complex. The mechanism controls how much water fills the moat (area A11). Turning either wheel one revolution clockwise lowers the moat's water level by 10 feet. Turning a wheel one revolution counterclockwise raises the water level 10 feet. A wheel can't be turned more than one revolution in either direction.

A4. Plaza of the Muses

A stone fountain stands in the middle of a grand plaza, its sides sculpted into the shapes of dwarves bearing drums and horns. Near the fountain, several figures in feathered attire play a shrill, discordant tune on flutes made of bone.

The figures gathered by the fountain are the Windwyrds, a musical group consisting of Aerisi Kalinoth's minstrel, **Windharrow**, and five **Howling Hatred initiates** (see chapter 7 for both). None of the initiates possesses an ounce of musical talent.

If the characters approach the Windwyrds peacefully, the cultists stop playing. Frustrated with the mediocre initiates, Windharrow asks if the characters are skilled musicians and if they would like to audition for the band.

If a bard character or a character proves his or her ability to Windharrow, he recruits the characters into the band and offers them the initiates' robes and flutes. Windharrow doesn't tell the characters what happens to minstrels who displease Aerisi Kalinoth.

If the characters adopt the garments and instruments of the Windwyrds, they stand a chance of passing through the air cult's domain without difficulty.

Bone Flutes. The minstrels' flutes are the hollowed and carved bones of former Windwyrds who failed to please Aerisi Kalinoth with their music. A character can tell the instruments are humanoid bones with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check.

Development

If caught in a fight he knows he's going to lose, Windharrow flees to area A19.

A5. Tyar-Besil Shops

The proprietors of these shops are long gone, but carvings above the doors indicate the owners' former professions: tailor, jeweler, smith, baker. All that remains of these places now are small, rubble-strewn rooms.

A **cloaker** that hunts in the old Tyar-Besil shops moved into the area as soon as a food source (the cult) arrived. Whenever the characters enter one of the shops, they have a twenty-five percent chance of encountering the cloaker. The creature is either disguised in plain sight as a cloak or hiding on the ceiling. The cloaker uses hit-and-run tactics against the characters, rather than risking itself in a drawn-out fight.

Treasure

The cloaker has collected all the valuables left in the area, as well as the wealth of its victims. It has amassed coins and valuables worth 150 gp.

A6. Plaza of Vergadain

The worn image of a smiling dwarf on the face of a coin is stamped into the flagstones that pave this plaza. An old sign bearing this same image hangs above the door of a large hall in the center of the plaza.

Seven **kenku** wander the lane behind the hall, searching through the rubble for treasure. As the characters near the lane, the kenku hide and attempt to frighten the party away with ghostly sounds from the gloom.

A7. Plaza of Moradin

> Several streets converge on a plaza, in the center of which stands a thirty-foot-tall granite statue of Moradin grasping a great stone lantern in an outstretched fist. A bright light emanates from the lantern, revealing ruined shops around the plaza, their inner chambers extending into the rock.

Two **Howling Hatred initiates**, one **hurricane**, one **skyweaver**, and two **kenku** are stationed here to watch for incursions by Underdark predators. (See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.)

North Tunnel. The bent tunnel to the north leads to area E27 of the Temple of Eternal Flame.

Statue. The statue of Moradin is made of solid granite except for its eyes and the panels of the lantern, which are fashioned from quartz. A *continual flame* spell cast within the lantern's hollow interior brightly lights this plaza.

A8. Ruined Villa

> The freestanding buildings in this part of the city are little more than crumbling shells and heaps of rubble. Deep holes split the cobblestone streets and buildings gape wide open, walls turned to rubble. Motes of dust float in the air, and in the silent gloom something scratches at the stones.

An **umber hulk** lairs here among the broken buildings. The air cult drove its usual prey away, and now the umber hulk feasts on cultists that wander into its territory. The umber hulk strikes from behind rock walls to seize its prey before burrowing away again. The air cult suffers at least one loss each week to the umber hulk, which is devious enough to cover its tunnels.

Treasure

Searching through the ruined villa uncovers 92 gp, a miniature electrum anvil with etchings of funerary rites in honor of Moradin (150 gp), and an *immovable rod*.

A9. Tombs

> Gigantic stone doors covered in twin reliefs of dwarven gods in profile loom fifteen feet high. The dwarven gods bear somber expressions and formal regalia. The doors are spiked shut from the outside.

The reliefs portray Dumathoin, the Keeper of Secrets Under the Mountain, and Marthammor Duin, the Watcher and Finder of Trails. Besilmer dwarves revered these gods as watchers over their dead.

The air cultists started exploring the tombs, but they suspended their exploration after ghoul attacks. They and have closed off the tombs.

Opening the doors requires removing the wedged spikes, which takes a few minutes with the right tools. A successful DC 25 Strength check allows a character to force the doors without removing the spikes. If the characters open the doors, read the following text:

> Beyond the doors, the floor declines toward a great chasm. The tombs and crypts of dwarves sprawl like a city in miniature before the chasm's edge. Emaciated figures appear from behind these tombs and fix their hungry eyes upon you.

Seven **ghouls** prowl the grounds and attack as soon as they realize the doors have opened. If any cultists remain in area A7, the hear the fighting and retreat to the palace (area A18).

Treasure

If the characters loot the tombs of the Tyar-Besil, they find 3d10 figurines, keepsakes, and funerary masks worth 50 gp each.

A10. Palace Plaza

> A deep moat surrounds a plaza consisting of a step pyramid encircled by a stone walkway. Stone colonnades to the north and east span the moat and connect the plaza to other parts of the ruined dwarven enclave. A short bridge spans the moat to the south. Holding up the bridge and colonnades are enormous statues of dwarves submerged up to their necks. Perched atop the pyramid and watching over the vault is a humanoid figure in a feathered cloak mounted on a large, draconic creature. The water in the moat flows west before plunging over a waterfall into a dark abyss. The sound of rushing water echoes like thunder within this vault, the ceiling of which glitters with mineral deposits like a perpetual starry night.

A **skyweaver** (see chapter 7) named Kaz Hanar and his **wyvern** mount perch atop the pyramid, guarding the plaza. They swoop down to attack anyone who isn't dressed as an air cultist.

If the characters are disguised as air cultists, Kaz lands upon the nearest bridge or colonnade and asks them where they are going. Kaz doesn't care much about their answers; he's bored and looking for an excuse to exert his authority. If disguised, the characters must provide a halfway compelling story to convince Kaz to let them pass. If they fail to convince Kaz, he and his wyvern refuse to let them pass.

The ceiling of the vault is 75 feet above the walkway and roughly hewn. The step pyramid once served as the dwarven palace of Tyar-Besil. It has two levels (areas A18 and A19), and each level is 20 feet tall.

The pillared colonnade that spans the moat north of the plaza leads to area A7. A similar but longer


Temple of Howling Hatred
N
W
E
S
A19
A9
A5
A5
A5
A7
A13
A6
A20
A5
A5
A5
A8
A11
A10
1 square = 10 feet
A18
Up to A19
A17
A15
A14
A16
A12
A4
A3
A14
A14
A14
A2
A1
Altar
Bunk
Fountain
Obelisk
Tombs
Arrow slits
Curtain
Light shaft
Pillar
Worm Burrow
SCM14

colonnade to the east is described in area A17. The bridge to the south leads to area A16.

A11. Moat

Walls of smoothly chiseled stone enclose this 20-foot-deep moat. An underground stream pours into the moat, filling it with water. Valves opened and closed by the stone wheels in area A3 control the amount of water that flows into the moat. Shutting the valves empties the moat as the remaining water flows over the waterfall to the west. Characters with light sources who examine the moat notice the glint of golden coins and the sheen of steel weapons and armor at the bottom (see "Treasure" below).

A **stone golem** shaped like a 12-foot-tall, 9-foot-wide dwarf patrols the moat by walking along its floor, attacking any creatures that fall into it. When the moat is full, the golem is hidden under dark waters. As the moat drains, the golem is revealed. The golem never leaves the moat. The Besilmer dwarves knew the command words to control the golem; those words have been lost.

Waterfall. A large gap in the west wall leads to a 200-foot-deep chasm. Water from the moat drains into this chasm, forming a waterfall. At the start of its turn, a creature swimming in the westernmost stretch of the moat is pulled 20 feet toward the chasm by the current unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Treasure

Over the ages, many unfortunate creatures have met their deaths in the moat, leaving some of their treasures scattered haphazardly across the bottom. Among the rusted weapons and dented armor are gold and silver items, including torcs and rings set with semi-precious stones, pendants, brooches, and the like, worth about 600 gp total. In addition, a platinum goblet set with rubies (worth 2,500 gp) lays on the moat's floor.

A12. Moradin's Shrine

> Frescoes cover two walls of this chamber, one depicting the creation of the dwarves by Moradin, the other a massive battle between orcs and dwarves. The far wall is pocked and pitted with holes in the masonry where gemstones once surrounded an altar in the shape of an anvil. Now only the chipped remnants of garnets and agates remain. In the middle of the room, three bird-headed creatures torment a group of shackled prisoners.

This room contains three **kenku** and five bound and shackled human **commoners**. One kenku tortures the prisoners while the other two mimic the prisoners' cries of agony.

Prisoners. Four of the prisoners are human travelers who were drugged and kidnapped by cultists in Yartar. They were shipped downriver to be indoctrinated into the cult or sacrificed. One of the prisoners is Bero Gladham. If freed, he tells the characters that his wife Nerise was "taken below" by the cultists.

Development

If the prisoners are returned to their homes, their families offer a reward of 50 gp per prisoner returned.

A13. Vergadain's Hall

> This building was once a dwarven hall for feasting. Old wooden tables lay scattered and broken throughout the long main room, and three gigantic casks line the wall behind what was once a beautiful oak bar. Behind the casks are doors for loading and unloading the casks.

The air cult uses the hall as a meditation area. At any time, five **Howling Hatred initiates**, one **hurricane,** and one **skyweaver** can be found here, levitating above the ground and chanting. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics. The hurricane carries a *storm boomerang* (see chapter 7) and gains the following action option:

Storm Boomerang. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit; range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (3d4) thunder damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn. *Miss:* The boomerang returns to the hurricane's hand.

Casks. The gigantic casks once held fine dwarven ale, but they have been dry for centuries.

A14. Living Quarters

> These buildings are more or less intact, although the furnishings and decorations have long since been removed. Shards of rubble, broken pottery, and bits of bone litter the floor.

Air cultist use these areas as sleeping quarters. If the characters are disguised as cultists, they can rest here for a time. If the characters don't mimic the manner of the cult (levitating, meditating, or practicing breathing exercises), any cultists present begin to ask questions.

Random Encounters. Check for a random encounter when the characters enter one of the apartments and every 10 minutes that they remain. Roll a d20 on the following table.

d20	Encounter
1–2	2d4 **Howling Hatred initiates** (see area A3)
3	1d4 **hurricanes** (see area A20)
4	1d2 **skyweavers** (see area A20)
5	1d2 **Howling Hatred priests** (see area A3)
6	1 **kenku** (see area A12)
7–20	None

East Tunnel. This tunnel leads east to area C20 of the Temple of the Crushing Wave.

A15. Plaza of Fallen Spires

Cracked flagstones of ultramarine marble pave this plaza. An avenue to the east ends at a wall of fallen masonry and stone. To the west, a pillared colannade stretches across a moat to a step pyramid.

Ahtayir, a **djinni** in a torn vest and ragged pantaloons, labors here. His noble countenance bears a stoic expression as he carves a boulder with stone carving tools.

Torhild Flametongue, king of the Besilmer dwarves, possessed a horn that could summon Ahtayir once every one hundred and one years. By the power of the horn, the summoned djinni was obligated to complete a single service or task. The palace quarter of the dwarven city was partly constructed by the djinni.

When Aerisi Kalinoth discovered the horn, she commanded the djinni to restore the dwarven city to its former glory. Ahtayir works endlessly at this task, carving stone masonry and statuary and flying them through the cavern, reconstructing the city block by block. He resents this duty, but he can't escape it.

If Ahtayir likes the characters or trusts in their ability to succeed against the air cult, he counsels them to attack Aerisi Kalinoth in hopes that she summons him, releasing him from his task.

Treasure

If the characters befriend Ahtayir and sunder the horn that summons him, the djinni brings each character a flask of *bottled breath* (see chapter 7) from his palace on the Plane of Air.

A16. Obelisk Row

Three tapered obelisks, their sides inscribed with ancient pictographs, stand in a row, their peaks scraping the fifteen-foot-high ceiling. Each obelisk has a gaunt human tied to its base. Around the obelisks, a colored cobblestone mosaic depicts Moradin, a huge warhammer slung over his shoulder.

The obelisks are made of granite. They stand 15 feet tall and are 4 feet wide at the base. Lashed to the obelisks with thick ropes are three **Howling Hatred initiates** (see chapter 7) suffering from extreme starvation. They suffer from level 4 exhaustion (see appendix A, "Conditions," in the *Player's Handbook*). Beneath their hollow rib cages, their bellies are little more than concave spaces where the flesh stretches thin across their bones. Their arms, legs, and faces are similarly skeletal, and terrible welts cover their bodies.

The initiates wear cult garb and are being tested. If the characters try to free them, they protest, claiming that their cult masters are teaching them how to "survive on air alone."

A17. The Palace Way

This stone colonnade spans the moat surrounding the step pyramid. Stone pillars line the way like enormous trees, engraved with the names and likenesses of notable dwarves of the past. Broken pieces of wood and stone litter the floor.

If the characters haven't already dealt with Kaz Hanar (see area A10), add the following:

The colonnade ends at a walkway enclosing a step pyramid to the west. Perched atop the pyramid is a large draconic creature with a humanoid rider. The rider wears a feathered cloak.

The creatures atop the step pyramid are Kaz Hanar and his wyvern mount (see area A10 for details). They confront characters who approach the pyramid along this colonnade.

A18. Grand Hall

Two rows of pillars support the twenty-foot-high ceiling of this marble hall. The pillars are sculpted to resemble dwarves locked in solemn stares. Each one clutches a stone axe. East of the pillars are two ascending marble staircases without handrails. In the middle of the room, several cultists in gray feathered robes levitate a few feet above the floor while chanting a hymn. Howling air rises from a pit in the middle of the floor.

One **hurricane**, one **skyweaver**, and five **Howling Hatred initiates** (see chapter 7 for statistics) guard this room, levitating three feet above the floor as they chant a hymn to Yan-C-Bin. The levitation effect ends on a cultist if he or she moves or takes damage. Each initiate carries two *seeker darts* (see chapter 7) and gains the following attack option:

Seeker Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, and the hurricane gains advantage on the attack roll; range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 7 (3d4) lightning damage.

If the characters are disguised as air cultists, the cultists stationed here ignore them unless attacked. Otherwise, the cultists cease their chanting and attack. Sounds of combat in this room alert the creatures in area A19, but no reinforcements from that area arrive.

Pit. The pit is actually a 10-foot-square vertical shaft of smooth stone that descends to the Howling Caves (see chapter 5). The updraft slows the descent of any creature that leaps or falls into the pit, as if a *feather fall* spell had been cast on it. Air cultists are trained to ascend the shaft by catching the wind with their cloaks and *wingwear*.

A19. Temple of Elemental Air

The stairs rise twenty feet to a spacious, twenty-foot-high chamber containing a map of an ancient dwarven realm meticulously etched into the flagstone floor. At the far end of the chamber, a high throne atop a marble dais overlooks all. Peaked arcades hung with gossamer sky-blue curtains run the length of the chamber on either side. From behind these a heady incense wafts, its sweet smoke moving like a creature of air.

Behind the high throne, a great spiraling horn rests in an alcove.

This chamber once served as a seat of power for the dwarf king of Besilmer and his war council. Engraved on the floor is a map of the ancient dwarven kingdom. The air cult has turned it into a den of vice and depravity. If this is the first of the elemental temples the characters explore, the air prophet **Aerisi Kalinoth** sits upon the high throne overseeing her court, her illusory wings gently fanning the air. She keeps her magic spear, *Windvane* (see chapter 7), close to her at all times. If Aerisi is here, her ever-watchful **invisible stalker** companion, Whisper, glides through the chamber unseen. If he escaped from area A4, **Windharrow** is here as well, kneeling or sitting at Aerisi's feet. Ten **Howling Hatred initiates** lay drugged behind the curtains that hang between the pillars to the north and south. Aerisi can command them to attack intruders, but they are effectively poisoned. See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.

If Aerisi isn't here, a **vrock**, whose service was a gift from a demonic envoy, guards the temple alone. It lurks behind the throne and attacks any non-cultists that enter the hall. The drug-addled initiates don't aid the vrock and fight only in self-defense.

Roleplaying Aerisi Kalinoth. Aerisi rules the Cult of the Howling Hatred like an imperious, vain, and tempestuous queen. She is oblivious to compassion or kindness unless such gestures are directed her way. She sees ordinary mortals as expendable, weak-willed toys and has brought many individuals to the Cult of the Howling Hatred by seducing them with her powers of enchantment. She's obsessed with the avariel (winged elves), so she has given herself illusory wings so she can pretend to be one.

She knows about the characters and their exploits, but her pride doesn't permit her to view them as a threat. If they accuse her of malfeasance, she tells the characters that the Cult of the Black Earth is trying to frame her followers by posing as air cultists, hoping to trick the characters into going after her hated rival. If the characters seem eager to fight the earth cultists, Aerisi grants them safe passage from her territory.

If seriously opposed, Aerisi uses an action to blow the horn (see below). The djinni Ahtayir (area A15) arrives at the end of Aerisi's next turn. She orders the djinni to cover her escape and flies down the shaft in area A18.

Horn. Etchings of cloudy landscapes encircle the horn, where a pyramid palace seems to float upon a cloud bank among groves of palm, fig, and date trees. Blowing the horn calls forth the djinni Ahtayir, who must then perform a single task for the one who summoned him. Once that task is complete, Ahtayir is free to return to his estate on the Elemental Plane of Air and can't be summoned again in this manner for one hundred and one years. The horn can be sundered by a single hit from a weapon that deals 10 damage or more. If the horn is sundered, Ahtayir can no longer be summoned by it.

Treasure

Aerisi wears a platinum torc (worth 1,600 gp), gold and sapphire rings (four, each worth 1,000 gp), and a diadem (6,400 gp) from Evereska. She carries *Windvane* (see chapter 7) and a spellbook containing all of the spells she has prepared (see her statistics in chapter 7).

Development

If the characters defeat the djinni and her cultists, Aerisi (and Windharrow, if he is present) flee to the Howling Caves via the shaft in area A18.

The first time Aerisi Kalinoth drops to 0 hit points, she vanishes in a screaming gust of wind, leaving *Windvane* behind.

A20. Worm's Tunnel

This large, unlit room is empty save for one feature. Sticking up out of a large hole in the floor is the skeletal head of a great worm, its mouth agape.

The dead worm is all that remains of a purple worm killed by dwarves. The bones of several dead dwarves lie where the worm's gullet used to be. Characters can climb through the skeleton to access the tunnel it left behind. The tunnel is 10 feet wide and leads down to area F1 in the Fane of the Eye (see chapter 5).

Conclusion

If Aerisi is defeated, the air cultists in the Temple of Howling Hatred scatter and flee. Some abandon the cult for good, and others retreat to the Fane of the Eye and the Howling Caves. Track these cultists as you wish.

Temple of the Crushing Wave

The Cult of the Crushing Wave maintains its headquarters in the southeast quarter of ancient Tyar-Besil. Long ago, this portion of Tyar-Besil contained storehouses. The Dark Stream provided a safe, navigable waterway linking the stronghold with the Dessarin River and the surface dominions of the realm.

Gar Shatterkeel, the Prophet of Water, instructed his followers to claim as much of the quarter as they could and to entice monsters friendly to the cult's cause to establish lairs nearby.



The Dark Stream

An underground stream connects the Temple of the Crushing Wave to the surface. The stream originates from a large spring in this part of the ancient dwarven stronghold. It flows through tunnels and caverns for about 2 miles before passing under Rivergard Keep and emptying into the Dessarin River. The stream is sluggish, and it isn't hard to row or pole a boat against the current.

Random Encounters. Each time the characters travel the Dark Stream to or from the Temple of the Crushing Wave, roll a d20 for a random encounter at some point during the underground voyage.

d20	Encounter
1	1d6 **darkmantles**
2	1d4 + 1 **piercers**
3	1d4 + 4 **troglodytes**
4	1d4 + 1 **shadows**
5	1 **water weird**
6	1 **chuul**
7–20	None

Darkmantles and piercers drop from the tunnel ceiling into the boat. Troglodytes hurl javelins from the shore where the Dark Stream passes through an open cavern. Water weirds and chuuls lurk in the stream and attack from the water.

Temple Features

This quarter has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. Ceilings are 15 feet high.

Doors. Doors consist of stone slabs balanced on central pivots—opening a door creates two gaps about 3 feet wide. No locks remain operable, but the cultists secure some doors with a hasp-and-pin closure. Characters can force open such doors with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Double doors have iron hinges and swing open in one direction or the other, like normal doors.

Canals. The lakes and canals in this area have a water level about 5 feet below the floor level of the surrounding dungeon. The canals are 15 feet deep. A sluggish current flows southward down both canals from the waterfalls at area C25.

A character who falls into a canal finds that the sides are smooth and slippery. It is very hard to cling to the wall or to climb out, unless a quay is nearby.

Light. Cultists illuminate areas they use frequently with *continual flame* spells cast on torches in bronze wall sconces. The rest of the level is dark.

Quays. Some areas adjacent to canals are quays, with several steps leading from the floor level down to just 1 foot above water level.

Treasure. Many denizens of the temple carry small amounts of treasure. Creatures that own individual treasure have 4d10 gp worth of mixed coins and other minor valuables.

C1. Lake Landing

If the characters arrive by boat from the stream, read the following text:

> Firelight shines from a large cavern ahead. The stream opens into a large underground lake. To the right, a crumbling stone quay leads to a tunnel heading northeast. A ten-foot skiff is moored to the quay, and a torch burns in a bronze sconce by the tunnel mouth. Beside the quay, a twenty-foot wide canal leads north from the large lake. The lake stretches westward into darkness.

If the characters find their way here from other parts of the dungeon, read the following text instead:

> The passage opens into a large, dark cavern filled by a subterranean lake. At the east end of the lake, a torch illuminates a stone quay with a ten-foot skiff tied up alongside it. The west end of the lake disappears into darkness.

The quay leading to area C4 might or might not be visible, depending on which direction the party approaches from. It isn't illuminated and hard to see in the darkness.

The landing at the east end of the cavern is guarded by four **Crushing Wave reavers** and one **fathomer** commanded by a **Dark Tide knight** named Eyon (see chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics). Eyon's mount, a **hunter shark**, swims in the lake nearby. The cultists challenge any strange boats that approach from the east and attack unless the characters convince them to parley.

Roleplaying Eyon. If the characters succeed in opening negotiations, Eyon questions them with a good deal of suspicion. She is a hard-bitten, callous mercenary who expects only the worst from people. The instant Eyon decides the characters are trying to string her along, she orders her reavers to attack.

The reavers know that most enemies are at a serious disadvantage in the water. If they attack an enemy standing on the edge of the quay or on a boat, reavers attempt to use the "Shoving a Creature" special attack to push a character into the water. (The water is 15 feet deep near the quay.) Eyon prefers to fight from the water while mounted on her shark, using her lance against enemies in a boat or at the water's edge. She fights on foot if the characters don't cooperate by moving close to the water.

Treasure

Eyon has a waterproofed leather pouch on her belt that contains 15 gp, 6 pp, five delicately carved coral gemstones worth 80 gp each, and a *potion of healing*.

Development

If the characters defeat these cultists and then leave this part of the dungeon, the guards are replaced by the cultists in area C7 within an hour.

C2. Canals

> A twenty-foot wide canal leads between ancient masonry walls into darkness. The water moves sluggishly, indicating a weak current. Torchlight flickers in the distance.

Torches positioned near the bridges at areas C6, C15, and C24 provide illumination; from just about any point the characters find the canal, they can see one of the bridge torches.

The dwarves of Besilmer built the canal to channel the spring in area C26 away from their delvings and link their city's mercantile district with the world above. The water is 15 feet deep. A character can pole a boat through a canal at a speed of 10 feet.

Random Encounters. Aquatic creatures wander the canals. Check for a random encounter once every per hour while the party is swimming or moving by boat anywhere on a canal. Roll a d20 and consult the following table:

d20	Encounter
1	1d4 + 1 **ghouls** (see area C4)
2–3	1d4 + 4 **lizardfolk** (see area C13)
4	1d2 **trolls** (see area C12)
5	1 **giant octopus** (see area C3)
6	1 **dragon turtle** (see area C21)
7–20	None

The giant octopus attacks any small group it encounters. Other monsters attack parties they identify as intruders.

C3. Whisper Lake

> This underground lake is dark, still, and cold. To the west, the lake ends at a gravel shore, and a faint glimmer of torchlight hints at a channel or canal to the north. To the south, a crumbling stone quay leads to a dark passageway. At the east end of the lake, another torch burns above a larger quay, with another passageway leading east. A second canal leads north from the eastern portion of the lake, and the glimmer of light comes from that direction, as well.

The ceiling of this cavern is a dome, at its highest point almost 50 feet above the water. The lake is 20 feet deep near the cavern walls, dropping to 60 feet in the middle.

The lake earns its name from a trick of acoustics. A mere whisper spoken in area C1 can easily be heard in area C19, and vice versa.

The lake is home to small blind cave fish. A **giant octopus** lurks in a grotto to the south, behind a column of rock that supports the cavern ceiling. The creature attacks swimmers or boaters who approach within 30 feet of its lair.

C4. Drowning Chambers

A dank, rotten smell pervades this chamber. The floor is perforated by eight small pools, each about 3 feet wide and filled to the brim with black, stinking water. Several large stones lie on the floor near the pools, each wrapped several times around by lengths of old rope. A symbol is painted on the southern wall—a shape like an X with the bottom limbs linked by a horizontal line.

Long ago this chamber served as the harbormaster's post, but the Crushing Wave cult rededicated it as a place to ceremonially drown captives. Each of the pools is 10 feet deep. The stones average about 50 pounds, and the ropes are used to bind a victim's feet together before pushing him or her into the pool.

Nine aquatic **ghouls** (which have a swimming speed of 30 feet) lurk in this chamber—previous victims of the cult's obscene rite. Eight are submerged in the pools where they died, and four more skulk in the shadows of the ruined enclosure at the west end of the room. The monsters hide so they can surprise intruders.

If the ghouls succeed in paralyzing a character, the nearest one uses an action to tie one of the heavy stones to the paralyzed character's feet. On the following turn, the ghoul shoves the paralyzed character into one of the drowning pools. Swimming to the surface with a tethered stone requires a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, and wriggling free of the tether in the confined space requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

C5. Gaol

An iron hasp-and-pin arrangement secures the door to this room. The lock can't be reached from inside but is easy to undo from the corridor.

This room evidently serves as a prison. A half-dozen straw pallets covered by threadbare blankets are spread out on the floor, and a cask of water leans against one wall. A dark, slit-like window looks out to the west.

The cultists currently hold no prisoners in this makeshift jail. If the characters are defeated in the temple, they are stripped of their gear and confined here while Gar Shatterkeel decides how best to dispose of them.

C6. Victory Bridge

The stairs on each side of the canal climb 10 feet from the quays, so the bridge is 15 feet above the water level.

A stone bridge spans the canal in a single elegant arch. Steps on each side climb up to the bridge. The bridge has a low stone balustrade, and its weathered sides are carved with images of dwarven battles. A single torch burns at the apex of the bridge.

The bridge was elevated well above the water so that the dwarves who built this level could move large boats and barges freely up and down the canal.

C7. Reaver Barracks

This old chamber has been furnished with six plain wooden bunks and sacks of provisions. Stone doors exit to the south and the west.

Crushing Wave cultists who guard the lake landing (area C1) bunk here. Six double bunks serve nine reavers, a priest, a fathomer, and a Dark Tide knight named Eyon. At any given time, five **Crushing Wave reavers** and one **Crushing Wave priest** are here (see chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics).

Cultists in this room are usually off-duty and might be asleep; roll 1d6 to see how many cultists are in their bunks. Sounds of fighting nearby rouse the sleeping cultists, who join the fray on their turns during the third round of combat.

C8. Ancient Silos

There are two of these rooms, both identical.

This large room is strewn with crumbling masonry. A dry pit lies in the middle of the floor, ringed by a five-foot-wide walkway.

These two rooms were once granaries for the dwarven citadel, but any food stored here rotted away long ago. The silo spaces are each 30 feet deep. Other than the possibility of a nasty fall, these rooms provide safe places for the party to rest.

C9. North Guard Post

The doors leading into this room are secured by hasps and pins from inside. Read the following text when the characters approach a door:

This stone door has an iron plate about one foot square set in its middle.

Each door has a small square hole covered with a sliding iron plate. The cultists in the room (see below)

use the holes to make crossbow attacks at intruders in the hallways. Opening or closing a hole cover requires an action. Normally one cultist operates the hole cover while another shoots. Only one cultist can shoot out of a hole at a time.

Read the following if the characters enter or peer into the room:

> This room is bunk room and guard post. Sturdy bronze hasps are fitted to the two stone doors, and each door features a loophole covered by a small iron plate at chest level on a human. A round table and four rickety wooden chairs stand in the middle of the room. There are ten bunks here, although half of them don't appear to be in use.

This guard post is manned by a **one-eyed shiver** named Khalt, a **Dark Tide knight** named Gordol, and three **Crushing Wave reavers** (see chapter 7 for all). Khalt is in charge, and he runs a tight ship. These reavers are armed with light crossbows instead of javelins (+4 to hit, 1d8 + 2 piercing damage), and Gordol also has a light crossbow (+7 to hit, 1d8 + 3 piercing damage).

Treasure

Khalt has a pouch containing 30 gp, 12 pp, four garnets worth 100 gp each, and two *potions of greater healing*.

Development

If the characters defeat these cultists and then leave this level of the dungeon, the cultists replace these guards with four Crushing Wave reavers from area C23.

C10. Gargoyle Fountain

> This chamber has been badly damaged. Several collapsed columns and buckling walls speak to the passage of many long years, but one feature remains curiously intact: a stone fountain in the middle of the west wall. It consists of a ten-foot-wide semicircular stone basin of water, with a grinning gargoyle perched on a pedestal jutting out from the wall. Stone doors exit to the north and the south.

Two **nothics** occupy the room, hiding behind the broken columns and rubble choking the eastern part of the chamber. The nothics took up residence here in the hopes that unwary cult members might be easy prey for an ambush or unwittingly yield secrets of power to the monsters' weird insight. They let large and well-armed parties pass through unmolested, but then attempt to pick off a character bringing up the rear.

Gargoyle Fountain. The fountain is fed through a well-engineered system that taps the hidden spring in area C26. An ancient blessing provides the fountain with modest healing powers; anyone who drinks from it gains the benefits of having finished a short rest, but an individual who benefits from the fountain's magic can't do so again for 24 hours. The water loses its healing power if removed from the fountain.

North Tunnel. This tunnel leads north to area B11 of the Temple of Black Earth.

C11. Court of the Merfolk

> An ancient fountain shaped like three dancing merfolk stands in the middle of this court. The fountain is dry, and the sculpture has been badly damaged—two of the merfolk are missing their arms, and the third is missing her head. Hallways lead north, south, and east from this chamber. A glimmer of torchlight comes from the north, and another glimmer to the east.
>
> A door to the northwest is covered with painted glyphs and images with aquatic motifs, marred by long scratches that obscure their meaning.

The ceiling in this chamber is 30 feet high. Vandalism to the decorations on the northwestern door is the handiwork of Thuluna Maah, a sea hag in area C14.

C12. Troll Hole

> This room is filthy. The walls are crumbling and crooked, and the heaps of uncured pelts and hides strewn across the floor form a crude, foul-smelling carpet. Gnawed bones and broken crockery are scattered about, along with a few odd pieces of armor, most bent, twisted, or badly scored by claw marks. Doors lead to the north and the east.

This room is the lair of three aquatic **trolls**, which have a swimming speed of 40 feet and the ability to breathe underwater. Only two are here, since one troll guards area C15 at any given time.

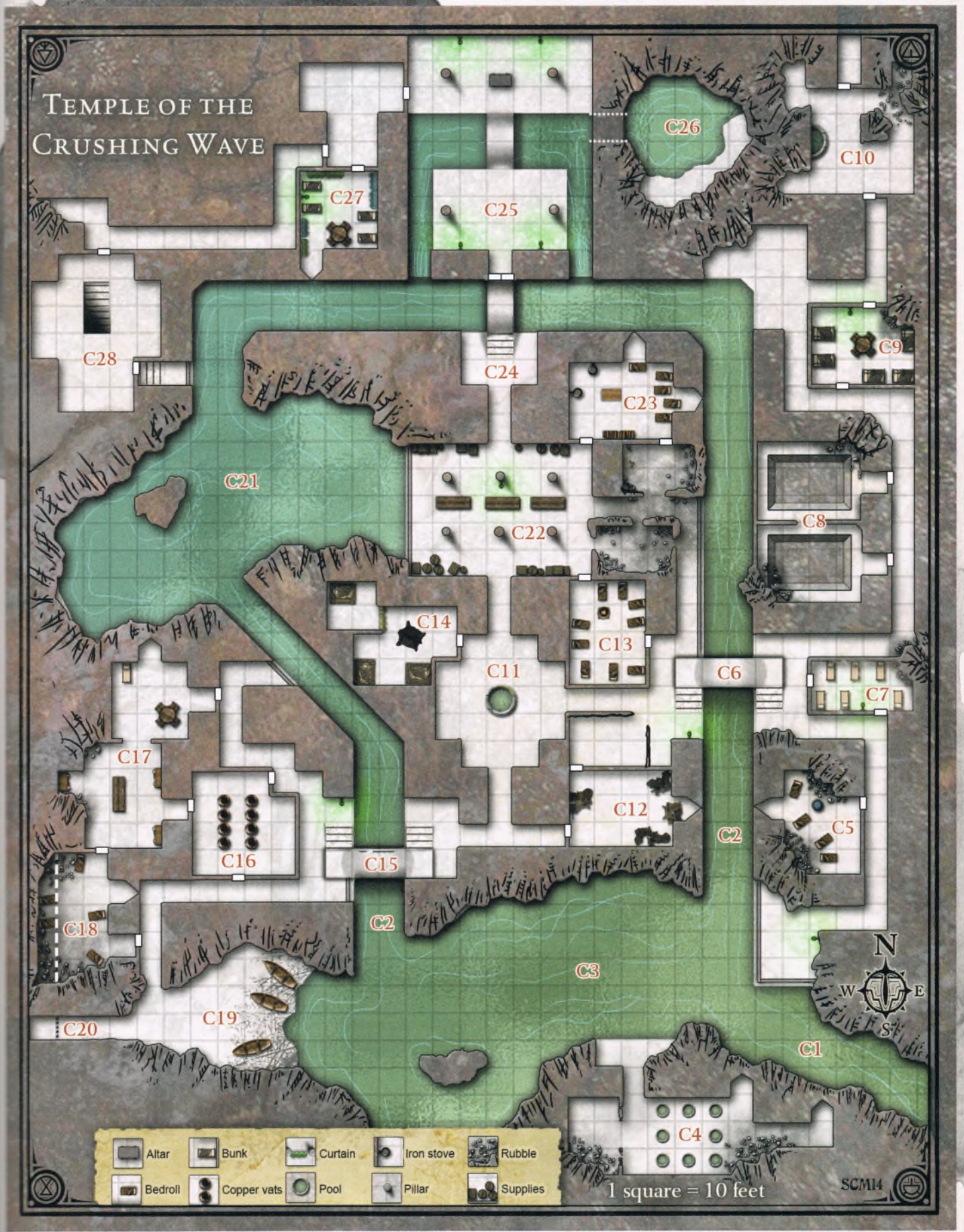
The trolls—named Gorgebelly, Marrowsucker, and Ninetooth—ignore goings-on in the dungeon around them, and they grudgingly answer any summons for help. Characters disguised as water cultists, or characters who insist they are doing the cult's business, can easily convince the trolls to stay here and do nothing, or bribe them to cause trouble somewhere else.

C13. Blackmaw Den

A musty odor pervades the hall outside this room. The doors are marked with crudely drawn pictures of monstrous eyes and fanged maws.

> This room is filled with a rank reptilian smell and cluttered with tattered animal hides and dank straw. A battered iron brazier brimming with hot embers glows in the middle of the room. Half-gnawed carcasses heaped beside the brazier attest to an indifferent effort to cook them over the coals. There are two doors: one north and one south.

This is the den of a band of lizardfolk who call themselves the Blackmaws. These creatures have


Temple of the Crushing Wave
C1
C2
C3
C4
C5
C6
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C10
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C15
C16
C17
C18
C19
C20
C21
C22
C23
C24
C25
C26
C27
C28
N
W
E
S
Altar
Bunk
Curtain
Iron stove
Rubble
Bedroll
Copper vats
Pool
Pillar
Supplies
1 square = 10 feet
SCM14

degenerated into savagery despite their use of human-style arms and armor. The carcasses by the brazier include the remains of a fire cultist spy caught skulking in the area a few days ago.

Eight **lizardfolk** are here now, including the leader of the tribe, a warrior with 36 hit points named Tornscale. They are armed with javelins, maces, and shields. Five more lizardfolk lurk around area C25, keeping guard. Tornscale and its followers are loyal to the sea hag Thuluna Maah (area C14). They hate and resent the human members of the cult. If the characters are disguised as water cultists when they venture into this area, the Blackmaws are outraged by the invasion of their privacy and attack just as ferociously as they would attack the cult's enemies.

If the lizardfolk lose at least two of their number in a fight here, Tornscale sends one of the remaining warriors to warn Thuluna and summon help.

C14. Hag Lair

Fine wooden furniture, tapestries of green and gold, and a bearskin carpet decorate this richly appointed room—but the furniture has been scratched up, the tapestries badly torn, and the carpet rent with foot-long holes. To the northwest, a tattered green curtain screens off a large alcove. Two large heaps of dank pelts lie in the southern part of the chamber. A wet reek like rotten seaweed hangs in the air, and small crabs scuttle around the room.

A **sea hag** named Thuluna Maah and two **ogres** that serve as her bodyguards live in this room. The two ogres stand watch in the outer portion of the room, while Thuluna lurks behind the curtain in the northwest alcove, her personal bedchamber. If the hour is late, Thuluna and her guards are asleep.

Roleplaying Thuluna. Thuluna Maah is the second-in-command of the temple, answering only to Gar Shatterkeel. She is a sly, calculating creature, quick to offer bargains and make deals that she can later turn to her advantage. The hag wields great influence over the cult's nonhuman members, mostly because the ogres and trolls do anything she tells them to. Thuluna would like to unseat Shatterkeel and purge the cult of its human fathomers and one-eyed shivers, but she is patient. For now, she tries to convince Shatterkeel to strike against the rival cults, hoping that the air or fire cultists kill him for her and clear the way for her to take over the Crushing Wave cult.

If she knows a fight is coming, Thuluna grabs the potions out of her wooden chest. She hates beauty, so she targets the best-looking character. If the fight goes against her, she pleads for mercy and offers to show the characters a great treasure if they spare her. Thuluna then leads them to Bronzefume's lair in area C21.

Treasure

Four chairs are worth 80 gp each but weigh 30 pounds apiece. A wooden chest in the northwest alcove contains 190 gp, 8 pp, a *potion of hill giant strength*, and a *potion of fire resistance*. Near the hag's bedding is a *+1 longsword* made of dragon bone and with a dragon-leather grip. It has rubies in its pommel and hilt. The sword grows warm and the rubies glow slightly when the sword is within 120 feet of a dragon. The sword is warm and its rubies are glowing while here because the weapon is within 120 feet of the dragon turtle in area C21.

C15. Dragon Bridge

Stairs on each side of the canal climb up to a stone bridge, which spans the canal fifteen feet above the water level. The sides of the bridge are carved in the image of dragons standing guard over treasure hoards. A single torch illuminates the bridge.

On the west side of the canal, passages lead to the west and to the north. On the east side of the canal, one passage leads east.

One aquatic **troll** from area C12 lurks in the canal underneath the bridge, keeping watch for intruders. The troll surfaces to challenge anyone moving through the area by boat or attempting to cross the bridge. It can be fooled by almost any claim that sounds remotely plausible, although it attacks any intruders who look like they expect a fight. If the characters are in a boat, the troll begins the battle by trying to capsize the vessel, which requires an action and a successful DC 20 Strength check.

C16. Thunderhammer Brewery

Sealed copper vats stand in two rows in the middle of this large room. The vats are old and completely covered in verdigris. Most of the paint on the walls peeled away long ago, but a few hints of murals remain, showing dwarves working in fields and tending hop vines. Three new, backpack-sized glass tanks with carrying harnesses are stacked neatly at the end of the row of vats. Doors exit to the west, east, and south.

Most of the vats are empty, but three currently hold **water weirds** drained from the three empty *weird tanks* (see chapter 7) stacked on the floor. The vats holding water weirds are cold and clammy to the touch, and sound half-full if rapped on. A weird can attack only if someone opens the hatch at the top of the vat in which it is contained.

Any commotion in here (for example, characters banging on copper vats or fighting one or more water weirds) alerts the monsters in area C17.

C17. Morbeoth's Workshop

The northernmost door leading into this area is secured from inside by a bronze hasp and pin.

Parts of this chamber are buried in piles of crumbling masonry, but enough remains intact to serve as an arcane workshop. A long wooden table in the middle of the room is littered with pieces of a complicated apparatus involving a large glass tank, copper fittings and piping, and a leather carrying harness, while shelves full of alchemical reagents stand against the south wall. The air is quite cold in here, and a chill mist clings to the floor. A large adjoining room to the north looks like someone's bedchamber.

Doors lead out to the south and the east, and another door leads east from the bedchamber area.

A **one-eyed shiver** named Morbeoth makes his home in these rooms. He commands the western portion of the temple and defends it against incursions from the Howling Hatred cultists. Prepared for battle, he carries a *potion of gaseous form* and a *potion of healing*. Six **Crushing Wave reavers** serve as his personal guards.

Morbeoth has experimented with devices that rely on elemental power. The device on the table is a disassembled *weird tank* (see chapter 7). A character with proficiency in Arcana who makes a careful study of the workshop and the stored ingredients can determine that items powered by the energy of elemental water are assembled here.

Roleplaying Morbeoth. Morbeoth is proud and prickly. He feels his mastery of arcane power gives him the right to impose his will on anyone weaker or less willful than himself. He especially resents the fact that a mere druid was chosen to serve as the Prophet of Water, and that an ugly monster like a sea hag serves as the cult's second-in-command. Given the opportunity, he would steer a group of meddling adventurers into Thuluna Maah's territory (area C14), let them fight and kill her, then sweep in from behind to eliminate the adventurers and claim a great victory for the Crushing Wave cult.

Morbeoth carries the key to the gate in area C20.

Treasure

A small iron chest in Morbeoth's bedchamber contains 260 sp, 22 pp, and several unsigned letters reporting on events in Red Larch, including the arrival of the characters and their actions in town. The handwriting is an unusual mix of block letters and script. (See the "The Spy's Letter" section at the beginning of this chapter.)

Development

Sounds of battle here alert the bugbears in area C18, who investigate soon after the fighting begins.

C18. West Guard Post

The monsters in this room post a sentry by the arrow slit looking out into the hallway. If intruders approach, the room's denizens prepare an ambush and attempt to surprise the characters when they enter this room.



The ceiling in this chamber is twenty feet high, and a ten-foot-high loft covers the west half of the room. Piles of crumbling brick in the middle of the floor mark spots where ovens once stood. Filthy, flea-infested straw pallets are arranged on the floor, alongside a water barrel and casks of provisions. An arrow slit looks out over the hallway to the east, and doors exit to the east and the north.

This chamber once served as the hop silo for the nearby Thunderhammer brewery. It now is a guard post manned by five **bugbears** who protect the Temple of the Crushing Wave against any incursion from the west.

One bugbear always watches at the arrow slit in the northeast part of the room. The bugbear on watch notes groups passing through the corridor outside. If intruders try to slip past the guard post, the bugbears in this room storm out to attack them from the rear. Any fighting here alerts Morbeoth and his guards (area C17). They respond to the attack by joining the battle.

The bugbears in this room have been specifically warned to watch out for "air cultist tricks," so they are especially wary of any efforts to bluff or deceive them.

Reinforcements. If the bugbears are defeated, they are replaced within a day by the trolls from area C12.

C19. Cavern Lakeshore

This natural cavern widens and descends toward a pebble-covered lakeshore. Several rotted wooden skiffs are drawn up on the shore. To the east, a large subterranean lake stretches into the darkness. To the west, passages lead west and north.

Three old boats wait by the shore. They are far newer than the rest of the dungeon, having been left here less than a hundred years ago by a previous band of explorers. One is in good enough shape that it could be repaired with an hour's work by stripping planks off the other boats. Any sustained activity in this area attracts the attention of the **giant octopus** that lives in area C3. The monster can haul itself up onto the shore in search of a tasty-looking meal.

C20. Gated Passage

A crudely built iron gate that looks like it is a new addition to this ancient dungeon blocks the passage. A heavy chain and a padlock secure the gate.

Water cultists installed this gate a couple of months ago to prevent raids from the Temple of Howling Hatred. Morbeoth (area C17) holds the key to the gate. The lock can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check and a set of thieves' tools, or the gate can be wrenched open with a successful DC 25 Strength check.

West Tunnel. This passage continues west to area A14 in the Temple of Howling Hatred.

C21. Starry Lake

A pale glimmer plays over the waters of this subterranean lake. The cavern ceiling is naturally formed and speckled with hundreds of tiny points of blue light, mimicking a starry night. The canal that runs through this lake continues north and south. To the east, a wide quay at the end of the lake leads to a large hall with red pillars.

The ceiling is 50 feet above water level. Its "stars" are small patches of luminescent lichen. Each patch is an inch in diameter and one-tenth as bright as a candle. If removed, a lichen's glow persists for 1d3 days.

The lake averages 40 feet deep, shallowing to 10 feet near the east end. It houses the strongest monster in the Crushing Wave cult: a **dragon turtle** with 220 hit points named Bronzefume. Young and impressionable, she was lured to the Temple of the Crushing Wave by Gar Shatterkeel's offer of riches. Bronzefume stays out of sight in the western end of the lake, waiting for the water prophet to decide the time is right to seize control of the river. Due to her reduced hit points, Bronzefume has a challenge rating of 13 (10,000 XP).

If a boat ventures into her half of the lake, Bronzefume surfaces to investigate. She also answers if the gong in area C22 is struck. The dragon turtle attacks only if she's sure those she meets are intruders, such as if she sees water cultists fighting the characters.

Bronzefume prefers to attack boats rather than people. Given a choice between attacking a character and damaging a boat that character is on, she opts for the boat. Destroying a small skiff takes up her actions for 1d4 rounds, during which she ignores characters who retreat.

Treasure

A large wooden chest lies open on the bottom in the western end of the lake. It contains Bronzefume's hoard of 700 gp, 440 ep, six chrysoprase gemstones worth 40 gp each, and four large onyxes worth 70 gp each.

C22. Market Hall

Six tall columns of cracked and chipped red marble loom over this hall, which lies east of an underground lake. Provisions and trade goods are stacked against the walls: bundles of valuable furs and pelts, sacks of flour and meal, barrels of salted meat and ale, casks of oil, and more. Three long tables with benches are set up in the middle of the room, and a large bronze gong stands on the stone quay at the lake edge. A single torch burns in a sconce on one of the room's middle pillars.

The Crushing Wave cult is hoarding supplies and trade goods here. Much of the riverboat cargo that's gone missing on the Dessarin River in the last few months can be found in this hall.

The first time the characters visit, one **fathomer** (see chapter 7) and three **cultists** are here, sorting through the newest pile of looted cargo. The sounds of fighting here alerts the lizardfolk in area C13 or the cultists in area C23, who investigate soon after fighting begins.

If faced with a dangerous band of attackers, the cultists attempt to reach the gong. Striking the gong summons Bronzefume from area C21. She surfaces by the quay on her turn 3 rounds after the gong sounds, then joins the fight.

Random Encounters. Each time the characters pass through this area, roll a d20 on the following table to see what additional creatures, if any, are here.

d20	Encounter
1	1d4 + 4 **lizardfolk** (see area C13)
2–3	1d4 + 1 **Crushing Wave reavers** (see area C7)
4	1d3 + 1 **bugbears** (see area C18)
5	1 **Crushing Wave priest** and 1d4 **cultists** (see area C27)
6	**Thuluna Maah** and 2 **ogres** (see area C14)
7–20	None

Treasure

The loot amounts to three tons of trade goods, with a total value of about 500 gp. It takes at least three trips in a keelboat or ten trips with the small skiffs moored in area C1 to move all the cargo out of the hall. Characters can collect 500 pounds of the most valuable goods and haul away 250 gp worth in two small boats.

C23. Galley

Two iron stoves, barrels full of provisions, kettles and crockery stacked by a washbasin, and a pile of firewood against the wall of this room indicate that someone does a lot of cooking here. Five plain double bunks are tucked into the eastern end of the room. Two doors exit to the south, and two arrow slits look out over the black waters of a canal to the north and the east.

This area serves as the kitchen for the Crushing Wave temple. The cultists prepare their meals here and dine at the tables in area C22. When the characters arrive, two **Crushing Wave reavers** (see chapter 7) and four **cultists** are here. If the hour is late, most are asleep in their bunks, but one or two cultists attend to chores such as baking or cleaning regardless of the time. The extra bunks belong to the cultists working in area C22.

Any loud fighting in this room alerts the cultists in area C22, who investigate soon after.

C24. Bridge of Heroes

A stone bridge crosses over the canal fifteen feet above the water level here. Steps on the south side of the canal climb up to the bridge, which leads to a set a stone double doors. Painted on the doors is a large symbol.

West and east of the bridge, and level with it, culverts carved in the shape of huge, yawning dwarven faces discharge streams of water into the canal. The small waterfalls make a lot of noise in the vicinity of the bridge. A hallway leads south from the quay on the south side of the canal.

The mark on the door is the water cult's symbol. The doors leading to area C25 are unlocked but protected by a *glyph of warding*. Any creature that opens either door without first making the hand sign of the water cult (an "X" of the forefingers, with thumbs overlapping) triggers the trap. A character searching the door for a trap finds the glyph with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The glyph deals 5d8 thunder damage on a failed DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. Any explosion makes enough noise to alert all of the creatures in the Temple of the Crushing Wave.

Culverts. It's possible to enter area C25 through the culverts. Reaching a culvert requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to climb 15 feet up the wet, smooth masonry from the canal level. The culverts are about 4 feet high, and the stream is only 1 foot deep where it crosses over the lip. A character who climbs into the culvert mouth can easily crouch and wade forward into area C25, potentially surprising the villains there.

C25. Temple of Elemental Water

A *glyph of warding* (see area C24) protects the double doors at the south end of the room.

A twenty-foot-wide moat divides this shrine into northern and southern halves. In the north half, two large stone pillars flank an altar in the form of a plain stone block. A few coins lie on the altar. Above and behind the altar looms a huge symbol made from beams of driftwood, fixed in an X-like shape on the wall. A single stone door leads westward from this part of the room.

In the southern half of the room, two ten-foot-wide channels run along the east and west walls of the shrine, spilling out through low culverts to the south. Two more pillars stand here, and a low stone bridge leads across the dividing channel to the altar and the northern part of the room.

The moat is 10 feet deep, and the water level is almost even with the floor. However, the smaller spillways that carry water south to the culverts are only 2 feet deep.

In the middle of the eastern wall, a submerged culvert leads to area C26.

This shrine was once dedicated to dwarven gods, but the Crushing Wave cultists rededicated it to Olhydra. Five **lizardfolk** warriors of the Blackmaw tribe stand guard in the southern part of the shrine.

If this is the first elemental temple the characters explore, they find **Gar Shatterkeel** (see chapter 7) here, standing next to the altar in the northern part of the room. Otherwise, he has retreated down to the Fane of the Eye (see chapter 5). In that case, a **hezrou** demon is on guard with the lizardfolk. The demon lurks in the deep moat in the middle of the shrine.

Roleplaying Gar Shatterkeel. If the characters have the chance to engage Shatterkeel in conversation, the prophet is sullen and suspicious. He despises most people and believes that even his most reliable followers are likely to fail him through weakness or treachery. Shatterkeel knows the characters aren't members of the cult and aren't here to join up, so he questions them tersely: "Who are you? What do you want? Why shouldn't I drown you?"

Shatterkeel hears out those who claim to bring news or gifts, and he might be persuaded to let them go if they seem intent on attacking one of the other cults. If drawn into an explanation of the cult, he reveals, "Only through destruction can the errors of this world be mended. The coming flood shall wash away all who are unworthy."

Treasure

Gar carries *Drown* (see chapter 7). The water cultists bring treasure here and heap it on the altar. At the moment, only 25 sp, 12 gp, and six small agates worth 10 gp each are strewn across the altar. Shatterkeel regularly gathers the offerings and secures them in area C26.

C26. Vault

To reach this area, a character must swim through the submerged tunnel leading from area C25.

> A clear, deep spring fills most of this natural cavern. A dry ledge makes up part of the south side of the chamber.

This pool is almost 80 feet deep and fed by an aquifer through porous rock at the bottom. It is the source of the Dark Stream, and it fills the canals and lakes on this level. Its inaccessibility makes it an ideal place for Gar Shatterkeel to hoard the better part of the water cult's treasure. He is beyond such cares, but he realizes that wealth is a motivation for some who aren't entirely committed to the tenets of the Crushing Wave cult.

Treasure

Several rusty iron coffers lie on the dry ledge at the south edge of the chamber. Two contain 730 gp, 900 sp, a silver ewer, a scroll of *tidal wave*, and a scroll of *vitriolic sphere* (see appendix B for both spells). Two more hold waterproofed leather satchels that contain nearly fifty heavy old tomes written in Dethek (the Dwarvish script). These are the missing books of Bruldenthar, the sage from Mirabar. The sage is held in the mines below the Sacred Stone Monastery.

C27. Priests' Quarters

> This well-appointed room contains eight neatly made bunks, a round table with several chairs, tapestries of green and blue, and a copper brazier full of glowing coals. An arrow slit looks out over a dark canal to the south.

This room serves as the personal quarters of the cult priests: two **Crushing Wave priests** (see chapter 7) and four **cultists**. The priests see themselves as the most important members of the cult, and they make sure to look after their creature comforts. They intermittently take care of the Temple of Elemental Water.

On the rare occasions when Gar Shatterkeel retires to rest for a few hours, he sleeps here. Otherwise, he is found in area C25, attempting to discern the will of Olhydra or instructing others in the lore and philosophy of the cult.

The priests and cultists know the answers to the mezzoloth's riddles in area C28, but resist divulging them to strangers.

C28. Caravan Stairs

> The walls of this chamber are carved with stone friezes. They depict dwarven merchants leading trains of mules or giant lizards burdened with heavy packs through immense caverns. In the center of the chamber, a wide stairway leads down into darkness. At the top of the stairs stands a hunched, insectoid creature with a two-tined pitchfork.

The stairway leads down to area F6 of the Fane of the Eye (see chapter 5).

The Crushing Wave cultists summoned a **mezzoloth** and ordered it to destroy any intruders seeking to use the stairs. To determine whether someone is an intruder, the mezzoloth asks three questions:

What do you serve? The answer should be "Olhydra," "the Princess of Evil Water," or "water."

What are you? The proper answer is "I am nothing."

What lies below? The correct answer is "the Fane of the Eye" or "the Elder Elemental Eye."

If the party can't answer any of the questions, the mezzoloth attacks. It fights to the death.

Conclusion

If Shatterkeel is defeated or retreats to the deeper levels and the characters defeat Thuluna Maah and Morbeoth, the Crushing Wave cult falls apart. Surviving cultists abandon this level, although some monsters might remain. A few cultists retreat to the Fane of the Eye or the Plunging Torrents, while others flee the temple altogether. If Thuluna or Morbeoth remain after the characters leave Crushing Wave territory, the cultists reorganize their defenses to fight off any other incursion.

Temple of Black Earth

When the elemental prophets were drawn to Tyar-Besil, the servants of elemental earth took control of the northeast quarter of the dwarven ruins. Long ago, this area served as Tyar-Besil's main entrance, a well-fortified gate complex with barracks, guardrooms, armories, and stables. Enemies that managed to fight their way down the Ancient Stair from the surface above were stopped in their tracks by the daunting defenses of the gate quarter. More than one reckless attack by orcs, trolls, or giants was driven back from the gate,. In time, those savage foes found other ways to attack the dwarves of the Sumber Hills, and the stronghold was finally abandoned. The gates of Tyar-Besil lie in ruin now, broken not by the siege engines of enemies but instead by the tremors produced by the nearby elemental node.

Unlike the members of the other three cults, the Black Earth cultists have easy access to the surface. This quarter of the temple complex lies almost directly underneath the Sacred Stone Monastery, linked by the Ancient Stair. Earth cult raiders can strike at the surrounding settlements and retreat to the safety of the Black Earth temple with ease. Marlos Urnrayle, the Prophet of Earth, chose the long-wrecked fortifications of Tyar-Besil as the headquarters of his cult for this very reason.

The Ancient Stair

The Temple of Black Earth lies at the bottom of the Ancient Stair, a series of descending passageways beneath the Sacred Stone Monastery. The stair ends at the passageway to the north of area B1. It leads up to area M24 in the mines beneath the Sacred Stone Monastery (see chapter 3).

The Ancient Stair descends about 250 feet in flights of 20 to 30 feet. As might be expected of dwarven construction, the structure has stood the test of time. Other than a noticeably smooth, worn patch in the middle of each step, the Ancient Stair remains in good condition.

Temple Features

This complex has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. Ceilings are 15 feet high.

Doors. Doors consist of stone slabs balanced on central pivots—opening a door creates two gaps about 3 feet wide. No locks remain operable, but the cultists secure some doors with a hasp-and-pin closure. Characters can force open such doors with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Double doors have iron hinges and swing open in one direction or the other, like normal doors.

Chasms. Large chasms or rifts zigzag through this part of ancient Tyar-Besil. Chasms average 100 to 200 feet deep, but the sides are rough, sloping rock, not sheer walls. Chasm floors tend to be steep, jumbled boulder-falls and are difficult terrain.

Light. Cultists illuminate areas they use frequently with *continual flame* spells cast on torches in bronze wall sconces. The rest of the level is dark.

Treasure. Many denizens of the temple carry small amounts of treasure. Creatures that own individual treasure have 4d10 gp worth of mixed coins and other minor valuables.

B1. Gargoyle Chasm

> The passage leads to a subterranean chasm spanned by a zigzagging, ten-foot-wide stone bridge without railings. The bridge links tunnels leading north and south. The chasm floor is fifty feet below the bridge and consists of a jumbled mass of boulders. To the west, the chasm narrows and continues for some distance.

Three **gargoyles** guard the area, lurking on ledges in the shadowy upper reaches of this cavern, the ceiling of which is 50 feet higher than the bridge and 100 feet above the cavern floor. Characters with torches or darkvision spot the gargoyles if they have a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher. The gargoyles ignore groups exiting the Temple of Black Earth. They attack any strangers approaching from the north unless the strangers pause at the bridge to either give the hand sign of the cult (a triangle formed with thumbs and forefingers of both hands) or call out, "I serve the Black Earth!"

In combat, the gargoyles look for opportunities to push characters off the bridge. If two gargoyles are defeated, the third retreats, flying to area B2 to hide.

Chasm Floor. Several skeletons lie broken or half-buried on the chasm floor. Most are dwarves and orcs in badly rusted armor.

B2. North Chasm

This cavernous area is 100 feet high from floor to ceiling. If the characters enter from the east (via area B1), read the following text:

> The floor of this large cavern is a broken jumble of stone, with steep walls slanting up to a ceiling of hanging stalactites perhaps a hundred feet above. Fifty feet up the jagged walls are two openings: a wider opening to the southwest and a narrow tunnel leading southeast.

If the characters are standing on the ledge at area B6 or B21, use the following text instead:

> Beyond the ledge lies a cavern with a ceiling of hanging stalactites fifty feet overhead and a rubble-strewn floor fifty feet below. Five feet below you, a narrow ledge hugs the wall, wrapping nearly halfway around the cavern.

Marlos Urnrayle used *stone shape* spells to create a narrow ledge that hugs the walls of the cavern. This

ledge isn't visible from the cavern floor, and it starts 5 feet below the ledge leading to area B6 and ends at an arrow slit, beyond which lies area B22. The arrow slit is 4 feet tall but only 6 inches wide.

B3. Ruined Gates

A massive pair of stone doors lies broken just south of this small plaza, flanking by iron torches that brightly illuminate the area. One door lists unevenly on its bottom hinge, and the other lies shattered on the ground. The standing door is carved with a pastoral scene of grain fields and rolling hills, worn and pitted by the centuries. A large, dimly lit hall waits beyond the broken gates. Arrow slits are carved into the west and east walls.

This was formerly the front gate of the stronghold of Tyar-Besil, but many years ago an earthquake finished the destruction begun by orcs and giants. The ceiling here is 30 feet high, and the gate stands 15 feet tall. Marlos Urnrayle intends to repair it, but he has not yet found anyone sufficiently skilled to do the work.

Arrow Slits. The arrow slits facing this area from the guard posts at areas B5 and B6 aren't currently manned. However, any loud commotion around the gate might attract the attention of the cultists in those areas. If they notice intruders, they begin sniping with crossbows or spells at any enemies in view.

Development

If the characters attack the Temple of Black Earth and retreat, the cultists reinforce this area. They block the front gate with an iron portcullis (described in chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) and post vigilant guards in area B4 and at the arrow slits in areas B5 and B6.

B4. Hall of the Gate

This was once a magnificent hall with a soaring ceiling, marble floors, and intricate carvings of prosperous farmlands decorating the walls. It has since fallen to ruin. Deep cracks mar the walls, sections of the masonry have collapsed, and the huge stone doors at the north end of the hall are broken. Passages lead west and south, and there is a stone door to the east. A small cooking fire and several bedrolls are in the southeast corner of the room.

The same earth tremors that shattered the gate marred the walls and floors with cracks, and patches of the 30-foot-high ceiling have fallen as well.

Four **hobgoblins**, a **burrowshark** named Nartham (see chapter 7), and Nartham's **bulette** mount guard the Hall of the Gate. Nartham is a violent, short-tempered fellow. If the characters attempt to talk their way into the temple, they need to talk fast, because Nartham craves an excuse to kill.

The cooking fire and bedrolls belong to the hobgoblins, who have not yet been allocated better quarters in the temple. They hang back and pelt the characters with arrows while Nartham and his bulette tear into the party. The hobgoblins are mercenaries, hoping to earn enough loot to return to their tribe and take it over.

Reinforcements. The duergar in area B5 and the cultists in area B7 hear any battle in this room. However, they are used to Nartham's bulette making noise, so it takes a while before they become curious about any racket. The duergar use crossbows (see area B5) while the cultists in B7 come to aid the forces here.

Development

If the characters defeat the guards here and depart the temple, Marlos Urnrayle replaces the guards in a few hours with the cultists from area B14. In a few days, he augments this force with two **ogres**.

B5. East Guardroom

The crumbling masonry in this old guardroom illustrates the great age of this dungeon. To the north, a long gallery leads to an arrow slit in the western wall. To the south, piles of rubble choke a small inner chamber. Half a dozen plain bedrolls and an iron stove furnish the room. A pile of firewood nearby keeps the stove well stoked.

This guardroom serves as the barracks and post of five **duergar** in the service of the Black Earth cult. The gray dwarves don't keep a close watch from the arrow slit to the north, since they know that the gargoyles in area B1 and Nartham's guards in area B4 stand watch.

If alerted by serious fighting or unusual activity outside, two duergar take light crossbows (+2 to hit, 1d8 piercing damage) and post themselves at the arrow slits. The other two prepare to defend the room's only entrance.

B6. Yarsha's Burrow

A large pile of rubble from a partially collapsed wall fills the southeast corner of this guardroom, while a narrow fissure mars the wall to the north. Despite these failings, the room serves as a barracks and guardroom. Four plain wooden bunks are arrayed around the room, each with a small footlocker. At the back of an alcove in the northeast wall is an arrow slit.

This room served as a guardroom for the Hall of the Gate, but tremors collapsed the doorway that once linked the two rooms and formed the tunnel leading to area B2. A **stonemelder** named Yarsha and her two **Black Earth guards** (see chapter 7 for both) dwell here. In addition to normal gear, Yarsha carries a *potion of greater healing*, and the guards have light crossbows (+3

to hit, 1d8 piercing damage) if they need to defend area B3, but they don't keep a watch posted at the arrow slit.

Yarsha is murderous, and she has set her sights on assassinating Miraj Vizann and taking his place as the cult's second-in-command. If she and her guards are on the verge of defeat, she turns on her own guards and finishes them off so she can try to strike a deal with the characters. Yarsha tells the party that Miraj is the earth prophet, and where they can find him (area B8). She asks nothing for herself other than a temporary truce.

The cultists don't know about the ledge in area B2 that links the northern tunnel to area B22.

Treasure

An iron coffer under Yarsha's bunk contains 210 sp, 140 ep, a pouch with six obsidian flakes worth 10 gp each, and a *potion of water breathing*.

B7. Gatewarden's Quarters

This large suite consists of several small rooms linked by low archways. Brown curtains offer some amount of privacy for the different rooms, and martial displays cover the walls—shields and crossed swords, tattered banners, and a few mounted monster heads, including those of a peryton and a manticore.

The Black Earth cultists use these rooms as a barracks. A **burrowshark** named Dynath, a **Black Earth guard**, and four **cultists** occupy the room. (Statistics for the Black Earth guard and burrowshark appear in chapter 7.) Dynath's bulette is stabled in area B9. In addition, the cultists currently on duty in area B20 have bunks in this room.

The cultists keep odd hours, and at any given time 1d4 are sacked out in their bunks. At least two of the residents are awake even in the middle of the night. They assume that random strangers that blunder in unannounced are enemies and attack. If circumstances permit, the occupants of the room spread the alarm by alerting the cultists in area B4 to the attack.

Treasure

Dynath wears a hidden purse underneath his armor containing 15 gp, 5 pp, and five fine citrines worth 40 gp each.

B8. Mud Sorcerer's Lab

Carved into this door is a frowning dwarf warrior in plate armor with spiky maces where his fists should be.

The interior of the chamber can be described as follows:

Large stone statues carved to look like scowling dwarf warriors line the walls of this large chamber. Each statue has spiky maces in place of hands. However, several of the statues are melted or deformed. The flagstones in the middle of the room have been removed to reveal a surface of natural rock. Several worktables and shelves full of alchemical reagents are tucked up against the walls between the statues.

This is the lair and workroom of **Miraj Vizann** (see chapter 7), an earth genasi and second in command of the Cult of the Black Earth. The statues were once animated constructs, though the magic that powered them faded long ago. Miraj managed to reactivate two of the stone warriors. One now stands watch in area B24, and the other is here. The ancient construct is equivalent to a **stone golem** with 102 hit points and no Multiattack action (challenge rating 4 instead of 8).

Roleplaying Miraj Vizann. Miraj is rational, deliberate, and slow to anger. He supports the cult because it deepens his understanding of elemental magic. If challenged, he attempts to persuade his attackers to turn their efforts against the fire cult. Miraj isn't above offering a bribe to entice enemies, then reneging on the deal if they come back to collect.

Miraj calls himself a "mud sorcerer" because he practices earth and water magic, and he reveres both Ogrémoch and Olhydra. He bears the water cultists no ill will and sometimes acts as an advocate or emissary on their behalf.

In battle, Miraj commands the golem to defend him. He then retreats to the back of the room to cast spells. Miraj turns invisible and flees if death seems imminent.

The worktables and shelves hold common alchemical ingredients and notebooks, including unusual mineral salts and solutions. The notes indicate that the melted statues are golems that Miraj experimented on without success.

Treasure

A wooden chest stowed under one of the worktables holds a small hoard of 220 gp, nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each, and a *potion of water breathing*.

B9. Broken Hall

Some long-ago, a seismic event devastated this great hall. A deep chasm splits the chamber in two, leaving a wide gap between the room's northern and southern halves. Freestanding pillars of rock to the east create natural "stepping stones" across the chasm. The chasm continues beyond the west wall, and a narrow ledge hugs the south wall of the expanse. Six huge stone pillars still stand in this chamber, and the ceiling here is almost fifty feet high. Each of the pillars anchors heavy iron chains with links as big as a warrior's hand.


Temple of Black Earth
N
W
E
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B22
S
B2
B1
B21
B24
B3
B20
B6
B23
B4
B5
B19
B7
B18
B17
B8
B15
B9
B10
B16
B13
B14
B12
B11
Anvil
Firepit
Pillar
S
Secret door
Bedroll
Firewood
Pool
Statue
Bunk
Iron stove
Rack
Supplies
1 square = 10 feet
SCM14

The warriors of Tyar-Besil assembled here to practice with arms. The Cult of the Black Earth now uses the room as a stable for their prized mounts: three **bulettes**. One belongs to Dynath in area B7. The other two were recently caught and haven't yet been broken. The bulettes are being held here until the monsters can be bonded with cultists.

Each bulette is chained securely to one of the big pillars in the room (the northeast, center west, and southeast pillars, specifically). The chains keep the bulettes within 15 feet of the pillars, but they can move freely otherwise. The bulettes spend most of their time dozing, but they are light sleepers. A bulette can break it chain with a successful DC 20 Strength check, but the chain to the northeast (holding the trained bulette) is weaker, requiring only a successful DC 15 Strength check to break.

Chasm. The chasm that bisects the room is 100 feet deep and ranges in width from 15 feet (at the far east end) to 30 feet. The pillars of rock at the east end of the chasm are flat on top, and the gaps between them are 5 feet wide.

B10. Long Chasm

If the smiths still work in area B15, hammering and clattering chains can be heard coming from there. Characters close to that end of the chasm also see a ruddy red glow playing on the walls nearby. Explorers that carry bright lights in this area might be noticed by the creatures in B15.

> This long chasm stretches northwest to southeast. A five-foot-wide ledge clings to one wall, then forms a narrow stone bridge that spans the chasm and connects to a similar ledge that runs along the opposite wall.

The ledges and stone bridge are 100 feet above the chasm floor and 100 feet below the chasm roof. Area B15 is visible from the bridge and at the same level.

Creatures that make a lot of noise in the vicinity of the natural bridge disturb a **swarm of bats** roosting on the bridge's underside.

The bridge is narrow and uneven. Any creature that takes damage while standing on the bridge must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. If the save fails by 5 or more, the creature falls into the chasm. On any other failed result, the creature slips and falls prone on edge of the bridge.

B11. South Passage

This hallway leads south to area C10 of the Temple of the Crushing Wave.

B12. Broog-Norb's Lair

If the characters approach this room from the east, read the following text:

> You come to a tunnel that runs north and south. Both ends of the tunnel have collapsed, but the west wall has a set of double doors with crude messages painted on them in Common. The message on the south door reads, "NORBS RUM. KEEP OWT BROOG." The north door says, "BROOGS RUM. NORB IZ STOOPID."

Use the following text to describe the room's interior:

> Crumbling masonry, huge uncured pelts, and heaps of picked-over bones and refuse fill this large room. It looks like it used to be a kitchen or bakery: huge ancient brick ovens stand in the middle of the chamber, although most are crumbling heaps of red rubble now.

This room was the main kitchen for the dwarven soldiers stationed in this part of Tyar-Besil. It is now the lair of Broog and Norb—the two heads of a particularly large and grumpy **ettin**. Broog-Norb has 130 hit points.

Broog-Norb isn't a follower of the Cult of the Black Earth. He found a way down into the ruins of Tyar-Besil months ago. The ettin has a tenuous truce with the earth cultists, who are careful to stay out of his way. He attacks intruders who make it clear that they aren't part of the earth cult, but only threatens intruders who present themselves as cult members. Broog-Norb has no idea who is a cultist and who isn't.

Treasure

The ettin's treasure lies in an untidy heap covered with a filthy pelt. The pile contains 2,900 cp, 130 ep, an ivory statuette of an elephant worth 80 gp, and a pair of gold bracelets worth 30 gp each.

B13. Hunting Hall

> Water fills a rectangular marble basin in the middle of this hall, and the walls display an ancient frieze that circles the room. The frieze depicts woodland images of deer, bears, and game fowl, along with parties of dwarven hunters. The southeast corner of the room is badly damaged, and the walls there are little more than rubble.

The dwarves of Tyar-Besil were proud of their pastoral ways, and they celebrated their surface dominions with scenes of farms and woodlands. This room served as a mess hall long ago, and many fine feasts were held here. The Black Earth cultists intend to repair the hall and replace the imagery with their own cheerless symbols, but they haven't gotten around to it yet.

Piping buried under the floor connects to the spring in the northern part of the Crushing Wave cult's territory and feeds the pool. The basin walls stand about a foot above the floor, and the pool is 4 feet deep. The water is fresh and safe to drink.

B14. Torture Chamber

A wooden torture rack stands in the middle of this room. Manacles hang from the walls and fiendish hooks, blades, and clamps hang on the back wall. Four cramped iron cages stand in the room's western alcove, occupied by gaunt, dirty humans with blank gazes. In the room's eastern alcove stand two double bunks and an iron stove.

This chamber has been equipped with implements to torture defeated enemies, cult servants who fail their insane leaders, or the occasional innocent victim. This grim chamber is the domain of a **stonemelder** (see chapter 7) named Heldorm and the three **cultists** who assist him.

Roleplaying Heldorm. Unbalanced, Heldorm goes about his work while arguing with himself and tittering at a series of black jests he only partially shares aloud. If the characters pass themselves off as Black Earth cultists, he assumes they brought him a new victim, and asks, "Who is to be questioned?" He is very excited by the prospect of interrogating a new subject.

Prisoners. The captives locked in the cages include the following:

- Orna, a female human **Black Earth guard** (see chapter 7) who dared to strike a Black Earth priest a few days ago. Greedy and brutal, she is now enraged against the cult.
- Droth, a male human mercenary **thug** in the service of the Howling Hatred cult. He is virtually catatonic but shuffles from place to place if led.
- Wulgreda, a hapless female dwarf **commoner** who was captured while prospecting in the hills near the Sacred Stone Monastery. She warns the party that Orna is a Black Earth guard.
- Gervor, a male half-elf **noble** who is all that is left of an adventuring company ambushed by the cult a month ago in the Sumber Hills. He is badly injured and has 1 hit point remaining.

Wulgreda and Gervor are happy just to be released, although they ask the party to help them get to safety. Orna wants to go her own way, but she is willing to trade information for her freedom. She's willing to guide the characters to Marlos Urnrayle (area B21).

Treasure

Hedorm keeps the best pickings from the prisoners in a locked wooden chest (the key is in his pocket). His trove includes 230 sp, a pouch of six azurites worth 10 gp each, Orna's plate armor, Gervor's studded leather armor and longsword, and a *wand of magic missiles* (fully charged) left behind by a previous victim.

B15. Stone Forge

Characters approaching this area hear the ringing of hammers on anvils before they enter. This room looks out directly over area B10.

A forge stands in the middle of this room, surrounded by piles of firewood. Two big anvils stand close by, and hammers, tongs, and other smithing tools are scattered around several workbenches along the chamber's walls. There are doorways to the west and the south, but the eastern end of the room opens up onto a dark chasm.

Black Earth cultists have turned this former barracks into a forge where they create elemental devices. The master of the forge is a **dao** named Xharva Deem. Two **duergar** assist her.

Roleplaying the Dao. Xharva Deem has no interest in fighting, because her bargain with Marlos Urnrayle requires her to make implements of elemental power for the cult. That is the extent of her promise. If the characters ask why she is standing aside, she answers, "Urnrayle has not paid me to fight puny mortals. He can look after his own slaves."

She doesn't defend her duergar assistants, although she fights back with indignant fury if any mortal dares to attack her. Xharva Deem also intervenes if characters attempt to vandalize her forge, take her tools, or remove objects she is working on, although she issues a sharply worded warning first.

Treasure

Xharva Deem is well paid indeed. Two iron coffers by her forge contain a total of 600 gp, two gold bracelets worth 100 gp each, a gold necklace with a ruby pendant worth 750 gp, and a bag with a dozen malachites worth 25 gp each. In addition, the dao has completed one set of *claws of the umber hulk* for the cult (see chapter 7). The claws sit on a singed square of leather on one of the workbenches.

B16. Armory

A single thick pillar supports the low, barrel-vaulted ceiling of this unlit chamber. Rusted scraps of metal—the remnants of breastplates, shields, axes, and swords—hang from the walls on old pegs, or lie on the floor where they fell long ago. More recent clutter in the form of filthy furs and splintered wooden furniture also lies scattered about the room. A pile of broken chairs and table legs lies next to a smoky fire pit on the north side of the room.

Doors lead to the east and the southwest.

This room serves as a guard post for the Black Earth cult. It also provides a good place from which the earth cultists can keep an eye on the Cult of the Eternal Flame. To guard this point of access, Marlos Urnrayle has assigned a garrison of five **ogres** with orders to let no one enter from the west without giving the pass sign of the earth cult (a triangle formed by thumbs and forefingers). The ogres have no orders to prevent people from leaving, although they challenge strangers who don't look like members of the cult.

Southwest Tunnel. This corridor connects to area E30 in the Temple of Eternal Flame.

Development

If the ogres are defeated, Marlos Urnrayle replaces them with an **earth elemental myrmidon** (see chapter 7) after 1d4 days.

B17. Chasm Staircase

If the characters approach this area from the east, read the following text:

> A great chasm opens before you, its ceiling thirty feet overhead. In the middle of the chasm is a square pillar of black rock. A stone bridge leads to a staircase that wraps around this pillar. The chasm, the staircase, and the pillar descend into darkness.

An *alarm* spell has been cast on the middle of the bridge. If the characters trigger the alarm, read:

> When you reach the middle of the bridge, you feel a slight tremor underfoot. Then a loud, low-pitched tone like the groaning of a giant fills the air, reverberating within the chasm.

The alarm alerts cultists in area B18, who awaken, arm themselves, and move to watch for new arrivals.

The staircase descends to area F11 in the Fane of the Eye (see chapter 5).

B18. Barracks

> This room appears to be a clean, neatly organized bunkroom. The sparse furnishings include six double-bunks arranged against the south and east walls, and a wooden table with several chairs in the north half of the room. An iron stove with a tidy pile of firewood stands near the middle of the room. In the southwest corner, an arrow-slit looks out at a dark passageway. Doors lead to the east and west.

A dozen Black Earth cultists are quartered here, but only four **Black Earth guards** and a **Black Earth priest** (see chapter 7 for both) are present at any given time. Two guards are sleeping and unarmored; they have AC 10 and won't have time to don their armor if an alarm is raised.

Two light crossbows are positioned near the arrow slit, so the guards can fire on intruders outside the room (+3 to hit, 1d8 piercing damage on a hit).

B19. Statue of Ogrémoch

> Three hallways meet at this room. An alcove in gthe middle of the west wall holds a ten-foot-tall statue depicting a crude humanoid form composed of earth, boulders, and sharp crystals. One massive, rocky fist is raised above its blunt head. Shattered rubble from an older statue lies heaped around the pedestal on which this figure stands.

The statue depicts Ogrémoch, the Prince of Evil Earth. Marlos Urnrayle sculpted it.

B20. Mess Hall

> Three trestle tables are arranged in the middle of this room, and crates of provisions are stacked neatly against the walls. To the southeast, an open doorway leads to a small kitchen containing more provisions and a large cooking-hearth. A tattered gray cloak with feathers is nailed to the middle of the north wall. Doors lead to the east, west, and south.

Earth cultists typically eat alone or in pairs, helping themselves to a stew kept simmering all day and whatever other provisions are available. Two **Black Earth guards** (see chapter 7) currently eat at the middle table, while three **cultists** work in the kitchen.

The feathered cloak is a trophy taken from a Howling Hatred cultist (Droth, imprisoned in area B14).

Random Encounters. The mess hall sees a good deal of traffic, and characters who linger here are likely to run into more members of the Black Earth cult. Each time after the first the characters pass through this area, roll a d20 on the following table:

d20	Encounter
1–2	1d3 + 1 **duergar** (see area B5)
3	1d4 **ogres** (see area B16)
4	1 **stonemelder** and 2 **Black Earth guards** (see area B6)
5	1 **burrowshark** and 1d4 **cultists** (see area B7)
6	1 **Black Earth priest** and 1d4 **Black Earth guards** (see area B18)
7	**Miraj Vizann** (see area B8)
8–20	None

B21. Screaming Statues

This cavern has formations of flowstone, stalagmites, and stalactites everywhere. A stone building is anchored in the north wall, and a stone door stands in a masonry wall to the south. A natural gap in the cavern wall to the east reveals a chasm beyond. Numerous lifelike statues have been arranged among the rock formations. The statues depict creatures in poses suggesting shock, fear, or agony.

If this is the first of the elemental temples the characters explore, **Marlos Urnrayle** (see chapter 7) is here. Visions have warned the medusa of the characters' arrival, and he prefers to meet visitors in this area. A **shadow demon** that serves as Marlos's messenger and majordomo lurks nearby.

If he isn't here, Marlos has retreated down to the Fane of the Eye or the Black Geode (see chapter 5).

Roleplaying Marlos Urnrayle. An unrelenting narcissist, Marlos loves talking about himself. If they forget they're talking to a medusa and take a good look at him, he is happy to make a permanent record of their astonishment. Marlos enjoys fine things and showing off. He gloats about how he has discovered power to shake the foundations of the earth. Very soon, he intends to pay back everyone who ever defied or insulted him.

In combat, Marlos relies on his petrifying gaze to keep him safe from ranged attacks or spells, as he closes in to use *Ironfang* and his snaky hair. When the battle turns against him, Marlos flees to area B23 and makes his getaway through the hidden path in area B2.

Statues. The statues are the petrified remains of earth cultists who displeased Urnrayle.

Treasure

Marlos carries *Ironfang* (see chapter 7).

B22. Earth Prophet's Sanctum

This sumptuously appointed chamber features tapestries of gold and brown, a huge bed covered in pillows, fine mahogany furniture with crimson cushions, and lovely art objects including sculptures, busts, and urns. An arrow slit faces toward a chasm to the east.

Marlos has carefully prepared the alcove with the arrow slit to function as a means of escape. The arrow slit is 4 feet high, 6 inches wide, and 1 foot deep. One use of his Earth Passage feature is sufficient to pass through. Just outside is a narrow ledge (see area B2).

Treasure

In the urns, Marlos has stored 1,100 sp and 130 pp. Within the room are a beautiful tapestry of a flying dragon (worth 400 gp), a carved lyre worth 250 gp, and an embroidered silk robe worth 80 gp. A suit of *elven chain* is folded inside a wooden chest.

B23. Shrine of Bleeding Stone

An irregular pit fills the center of this large hall. In the middle of the pit stands an obelisk of glistening black stone. Bleached bones lie scattered near the foot of the obelisk. A smaller stone post in front of the obelisk holds a pair of manacles, which now confine a strange gnome with gray skin and a bald head.

A **Black Earth priest** (see chapter 7) named Erione is establishing a shrine here atop the wreckage of an ancient dwarven chapel. She is joined by four **cultists**.

Erione resents the fact that few priests hold high places in the cult, and she intends to demonstrate that worship can bring even greater power. She has coaxed a **black pudding** into the porous rock obelisk. It seeps forth on her command.

Erione has manacled a female **deep gnome** named Rukhelmoth "Rukh" Glitterstone to the stone post at the foot of the obelisk and intends to offer him as a sacrifice to the black pudding. When the pudding emerges, it seeps out of the obelisk like thick black blood and attacks the gnome first. Only after the gnome has been consumed does it pay attention to the characters.

Rukh is an explorer who was captured as she tried to sneak into the Fane of the Eye. She hasn't explored the Temple of Black Earth but has seen areas B17 and B21. If rescued, she gladly shares the following information:

- The leader of the earth cult is a medusa named Marlos Urnrayle. He lairs in a cavern to the northeast.
- A staircase to the south leads down to an ancient drow temple that has been overrun by elemental cultists.
- The cultists have created elemental nodes in the dungeons below. (Rukh speculates that these nodes are the source of the cultists' weird elemental powers.)

B24. Sentinel's Hall

Four massive, square columns support the ceiling of this ancient hall. Passages lead out to the northwest and southeast. In the middle of the hall stands the ten-foot statue of a stern dwarf warrior with spiked balls instead of hands.

The statue is a **stone golem** reactivated by Miraj Vizann (see area B8) and placed here. It has 102 hit points and no Multiattack action. (It has a challenge rating 4 instead of 8.)

The stone golem responds only to attacks and creatures entering the hall from the west. If intruders make a triangular handsign by touching thumbs and forefingers, or if they speak the pass phrase "I serve the Black Earth," the golem allows them to continue. Otherwise, it attacks.

West Tunnel. The passage to the west leads to area E5 in the Temple of Eternal Flame.



Conclusion

If the characters defeat Marlos and Miraj, or both flee the dungeon, Yarsha (see area B6) does her best to hold the cult together. If she, too, is defeated, the Black Earth cult is broken. With their leaders lost, the remaining earth cultists retreat to the Fane of the Eye or leave the area altogether. Xharva Deem (see area B15) packs up her treasures and leaves with her duergar assistants in tow. Broog-Norb the ettin (see area B12) remains.

Temple of Eternal Flame

During the height of ancient Tyar-Besil, the northwest quarter of the ancient dwarven fortress served as its manufacturing center, where great forges and foundries butted up against all the natural resources necessary to craft weapons and armor both beautiful and deadly. Lava from the volcanic rock below provided heat and material, and where the lava had flowed and then sank away again, rich veins of ore and gems were left behind in the natural tubes for the dwarves to discover and mine. For many centuries, the dwarves beneath the Sumber Hills forged weapons, hardware, and magnificent treasures. The best of these they kept for themselves. The rest traveled to the surface world, where merchants carried the dwarves' work far afield. In time, as the city was abandoned, the forges grew quiet, the foundries cooled, and the dwarven masters left their workbenches to darkness and departed to other realms.

When Vanifer was first drawn to the complex, she instructed her minions to stake claims in and around the abandoned foundries. The tiefling knows that controlling the ability to craft the tools of warfare gives her cult a leg up on the others, and she fervently believes that she can use this power to bring the other elemental temples to heel, allowing her to rule over all.

Lava Tubes

Area E1 in the Temple of Eternal Flame connects to the surface through a series of twisting, turning lava tubes that meander beneath the surface for more than a mile. The tubes join the underground temple to Scarlet Moon Hall (see chapter 3). Numerous side tubes and old mining tunnels branch off into darkness from the main route, which is well lit by torches at periodic intervals.

Temple Features

This complex has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. Ceilings are 15 feet high.

Doors. Doors consist of stone slabs balanced on central pivots—opening a door creates two gaps about 3 feet wide. No locks remain operable, but the cultists secure some doors with a hasp-and-pin closure. Characters can force open such doors with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Double doors have iron hinges and swing open in one direction or the other, like normal doors.

Light. Cultists illuminate areas they use frequently with *continual flame* spells cast on torches in bronze wall sconces. The rest of the level is dark.

Treasure. Many denizens of the temple carry small amounts of treasure. Creatures that own individual treasure have 4d10 gp worth of mixed coins and other minor valuables.

E1. Entrance

An arrow slit is carved into the south wall of the lava tube leading to this area. The arrow slit is 3 feet tall, 6 inches wide, and unguarded. Behind the arrow slit is a tunnel leading to area E6.

Read the following text when the characters reach the chamber at the top of the stairs:

> The passage widens at this point, with two large alcoves flanking the hallway. Loose piles of stone form barricades at the front of each alcove, angled to defend against intrusion from the west. A path between the barricades leads to a wide, descending staircase to the east.

Four **hobgoblins** and one **hobgoblin captain** stand guard here, dressed in flame-red tabards with the symbol of elemental fire on the chest. They challenge anyone approaching from the west, but they pay little attention to anyone heading in that direction.

Visitors heading east must make the handsign of the fire cult (hands cupped together upright, with one pinky finger upward in the middle) or state the pass phrase, which is "Fire is eternal!" Otherwise, visitors must convince the hobgoblins that they must talk to temple leaders. The hobgoblins attack if none of these things happens. If the characters talk their way past the hobgoblins, two hobgoblins escort the party to area E2.

Reinforcements. Sounds of combat here attract the guards in area E2.

Treasure

The hobgoblin captain has a belt pouch containing 20 gp and a pair of polished bloodstones worth 50 gp each.

Development

If the characters defeat these hobgoblins and then leave this part of the dungeon, the guards are replaced by the hobgoblins in area E10 within an hour or two.

E2. Columned Chamber

If the characters come here without raising an alarm, read the following text:

> The hall widens to form a domed chamber supported by four obsidian columns with fiery cracks in them. The air is oppressively warm.

Two **razerblasts** (see chapter 7) keep to the sides of the chamber. How these guards react depends on how the characters arrive. If characters come from within the fire temple and act like they belong there, the guards pay them little mind. Characters who arrive escorted by hobgoblins must convince the guards to let them pass. If they do, one of the razerblasts escorts the party.

If a fight breaks out, one of the razerblasts shouts, "Imix defend us!" When this happens, read the following text aloud:

> The obsidian columns transform into pillars of magma that radiate intense heat and light, making the air shimmer.

A creature that moves within 10 feet of one or more magma pillars for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there takes 2d10 fire damage. The razerblasts have immunity to fire damage.

Development

If the characters defeat these guards and leave the area, a replacement watch consisting of the cultists from area E7 is stationed here two hours later. These cultists know the command phrase to activate the obsidian columns.

E3. Niche Hall

> Niches line both sides of this dark hall. A shadowy form stands within each niche.

The shadowy forms are statues of dwarven warriors, carved long ago as an honor guard for those passing through this area.

Tripwire Trap. A tripwire stretches across the floor between the westernmost pair of niches. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher notice it automatically. Otherwise, a character searching the floor for traps spots the tripwire with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. If the wire is tripped, a spring-loaded greataxe disguised to look like part of the southern statue snaps across the hallway and makes an attack against the creature that triggered the trap (+10 to hit; 1d12 + 5 slashing damage on a hit). The clanging of the axe alerts the guards in area E2, who investigate.

Secret Door. A secret door is hidden behind the southeasternmost statue. It can be found with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

E4. Hidden Vault

> This vault contains two stone sarcophagi elaborately carved with Dwarvish runes and bas-relief images of sleeping dwarves. An unlit brazier sits in each corner, and a brass censer hangs from a chain connected to the ceiling in the chamber's center.

No one in the fire cult knows of this secret area. The Dethek runes on one sarcophagus read, "Rest well, Findon Stonemender. Dream of hammer and chisel

echoing in your halls." On the other, they read, "Beloved Gitte. Heavy are the hearts of all who knew ye."

Lifting a sarcophagus lid requires a successful DC 20 Strength check.

Treasure

The dry-rotted remains of a smaller coffin sits within each sarcophagus. The gold and silver trim and fittings of each coffin are worth 150 gp total. Desiccated skeletal remains rest under the coffin remains. Each wears a finely wrought funerary mask of gold inlaid with garnets and sapphires, worth 2,000 gp. Findon's favorite stonecutter's tools were also buried with him. Numerous finely wrought chisels, awls, and scrapers are scattered the length of the coffin, and he holds his hammer clasped across his chest.

Development

Dwarf NPCs who see the funerary masks might recognize them for what they are and question the characters about how they came to possess them. Word of the find eventually gets back to dwarven leaders throughout the North. Within a few weeks, a small delegation of dwarves tracks down the characters and asks for information on where the masks were found. The dwarves also insist that the masks be turned over to them. If the characters demand payment, the dwarves frown but agree to pay up to 200 pp for each mask.

Once the dwarves learn about an entrance to Tyar-Besil, they begin mounting expeditions. However, the Cult of the Eternal Flame will not relinquish its lair without a fight.

E5. Crumbling Barricades

This partially collapsed chamber is L-shaped. The floor is covered in shards of rock and bone. A rough five-foot wall separates the two halves of the room.

Two **ogres** in plate armor (AC 17) and four **half-ogres** challenge anyone coming from outside the temple. Those seeking entrance must make signs like those described in E1. If the characters instead ask to speak with the temple's leaders, one ogre leaves and returns with a razerblast from area E2.

East Tunnel. This tunnel leads to area B24 in the Temple of Black Earth.

Treasure

The ogres and half-ogres have collected a small trove, which they keep in a silver-and-mother-of-pearl box that they've buried in the rubble in the northeast corner of the chamber. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to uncover it due to telltale signs the rubble has been disturbed recently. The box is worth 150 gp and contains 35 gp, 17 pp, four alexandrites worth 30 gp each, a *potion of extra healing*, and a *potion of diminution*.

Development

If the characters slay the ogres and then head into another area, some of the ogres from area E9 replace them in an hour.

E6. Bastian's Quarters

The door to this chamber is locked from within unless Bastian is elsewhere.

The interior of this stifling chamber is filled with the odor of wood smoke, and a smoky haze fills the air. Four oversized braziers in the corners put off considerable light. A divan sits along one wall, while a writing table with a basalt top rests against another wall. Numerous rugs, many of them singed at the edges, lie scattered on the floor. Wall hangings woven in various shades of scarlet, blood, and rose red and bearing fire-stitched patterns decorate the chamber.

A red-skinned man paces in the middle of the room.

This is the lair and study of a fire genasi named **Bastian Thermandar** (see chapter 7), second in command of the fire cult. He is responsible for guarding the northern half of the complex.

Roleplaying Bastian. Bastian is suspicious of anyone he doesn't already know and assumes any intruders are enemies. He's calculating enough to engage in conversation, trying to learn what the characters are capable of and why they're here. Bastian tries to convince the characters to go after Vanifer, and he promises an immense (and fictitious) reward if the characters bring him *Tinderstrike*. If the characters seem agreeable and competent, he provides them with directions to get them to area E26. He also describes of what they might encounter along the way. In so doing, he minimizes the dangers of the intervening rooms.

Reinforcements. The cultists in E7 and E8 come to Bastian's aid if he's attacked here.

Secret Door. A secret door in the north wall can be found with a successful a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. It opens into a tunnel that travels north for 40 feet before ending at an arrow slit that looks out into a lava tube (see area E1).

E7. Barracks

This chamber is a barracks. Rows of bunks line the walls, and several tables fill the central portion. Braziers and torches are spaced at regular intervals throughout the place. Barrels, crates, and trunks have been stacked against the wall at the southern end. A wide opening in the southeast wall leads to a stone bridge spanning a firelit chasm.

The southeast chasm is described in area E12.

A dozen fire temple cultists bunk here, but only four **Eternal Flame guardians** (see chapter 7) are present

when the characters arrive. Two must awaken, then stand and move to join any battle; they have AC 12, since they have no time to don armor.

Reinforcements. If trouble takes the soldiers in this room unaware, sounds of battle attract attention from areas E6, E8, and E9. The ogres in area E9 are particularly slow to respond, however.

E8. Priests' Room

> Three beds, each with a footlocker, take up most of this room. Sets of shelves and a writing desk are to the south. A small table is set against the middle the northern wall. There, sheets of parchment and an inkwell sit haphazardly next to two flagons and a stack of platters.

This room has been claimed by three cult priests. At any given time, two **Eternal Flame priests** (see chapter 7) are present. If the characters catch them unaware, one is eating at the table while the other is sitting at a desk, consulting a tome and writing.

Treasure

One of the priests carries a *potion of fire breath*. The footlockers contain a total of 36 sp and 19 gp.

E9. Ogre Den

> Two smelly piles of fur have been shoved into the two northern corners of this room. A small bag with knuckle bones spilling out lies between the two nests, and a half-eaten haunch of meat sits next to it.

The piles of fur are beds used by the ogres in area E5.

If the characters make a racket here, the guards in area E7 investigate. The hobgoblins in area E10 also come once it's clear the noise isn't simply the ogres being rowdy. The hobgoblins might wait until any noise has died down, then just peak in.

Treasure

One ogre has hidden a small pouch in a pocket of a fur-lined cloak piled amid its bedding. The pouch contains several shiny rocks as well as one blue quartz (5 gp), one hematite (5 gp), and one piece of obsidian (10 gp). One of the shiny rocks is actually a *stone of luck*.

E10. Hobgoblin Lair

The characters can smell the meat cooking here from the stairway to the east and the room to the west.

> This unusually shaped chamber smells of cooking meat. A number of sleeping pallets lie along the walls, and an open fire ring sits in the center. Meat sizzles on a spit there.

Hobgoblins that serve the fire temple bunk here. Six **hobgoblins** and one **hobgoblin captain** are present. Unless they have reason not to be, four hobgoblins are sleeping, while the other two are sitting at the fire with their captain. Sleeping hobgoblins wake and spend their first turn standing and arming themselves, joining the fight on their next turns. Lacking time to don armor, each has AC 13 (shield).

If the hobgoblin captain is reduced to half its hit point maximum, it spends one turn drinking a *potion of greater healing* (see "Treasure").

Reinforcements. These hobgoblins are often loud, engaging in training or contests. The forces in area E6, E7, and E8 might investigate a disturbance here, but it takes a while. The ogres in area E9 come only if ordered to do so by the cultists.

Stairs. The stairs to the south descend 30 feet to a wide, torchlit hallway west of area E11.

Treasure

The hobgoblin captain has a small, polished oak box containing three *potions of fire resistance* and a *potion of greater healing*.

E11. Cellblock

> This long passage is broken at regular intervals by doors spaced fifteen feet apart along the north and south walls. Many of the doors are secured from this side with hasp-and-pin mechanisms.

The four westernmost cells (furnished on the map) serve as barracks for the slave handlers, while the rest are used to imprison slaves.

The first time the adventurers open a door leading to a furnished chamber, read the following:

> A bed is set against one wall, with a desk pushed against the wall across from it. A red tapestry hangs above the desk. Stitched into the tapestry with black thread is a bowl-shaped symbol.

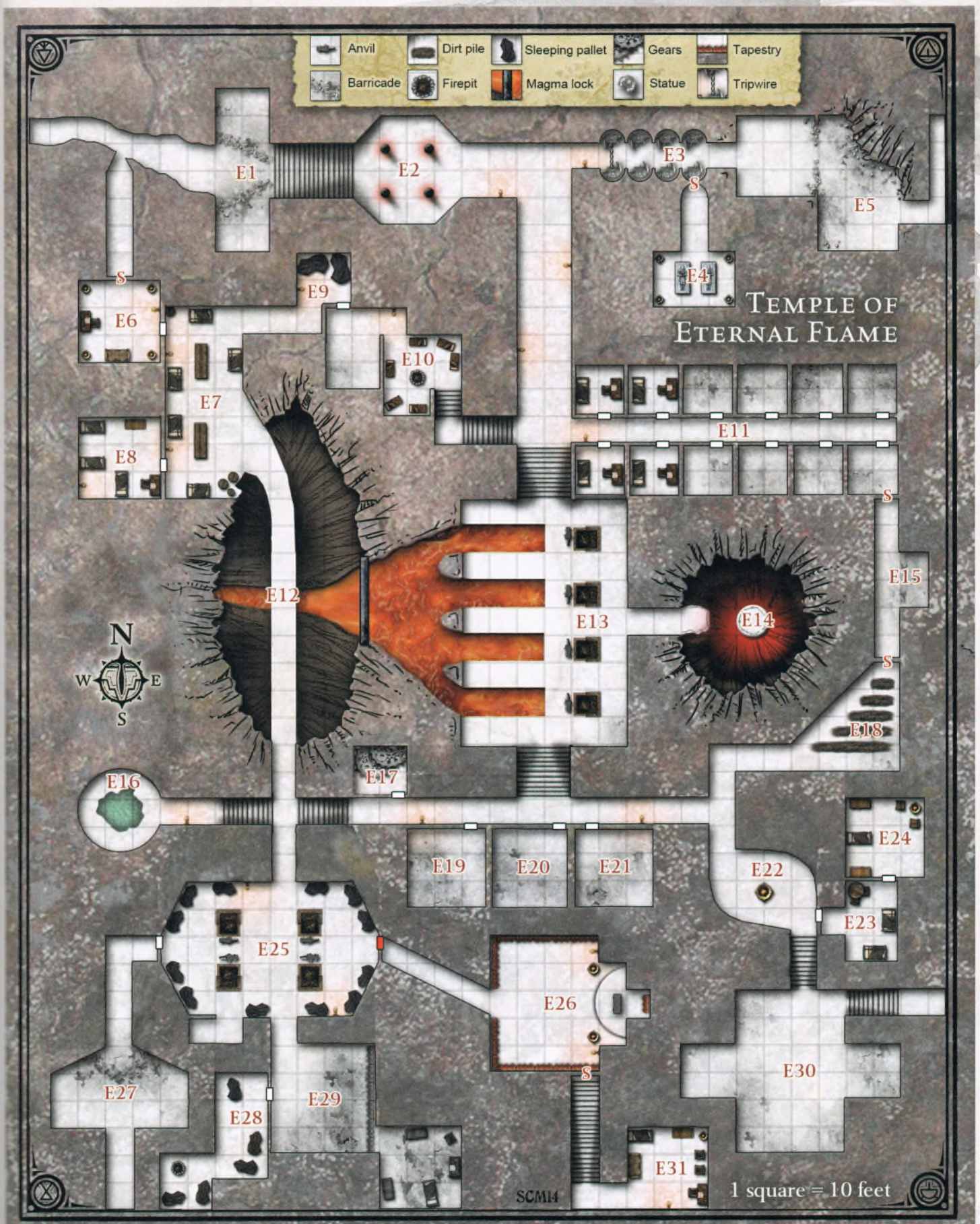
The symbol on the tapestry is the symbol of fire; show it to the players. Each furnished cell to the north houses an **Eternal Flame guardian**, and each of the furnished cells to the south houses a **flamewrath** (see chapter 7 for both). Combat in one of the cells attracts the attention of the other cultists nearby.

Secret Door Cell. The cell in the southeast corner of the hall is empty. A secret door in the south wall can be found with a successful a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Prison Cells

The doors of the unfurnished cells—aside from the one with the secret door—are uncomfortably warm to the touch.

Each unfurnished cell north of the hall contains a **salamander**—four salamanders total. If offered freedom, the salamanders can be convinced to fight the fire cultists. If forced to fight alongside azers, however,


Anvil
Barricade
Dirt pile
Firepit
Sleeping pallet
Magma lock
Gears
Statue
Tapestry
Tripwire
E1
E2
E3
E4
E5
E6
E7
E8
E9
E10
E11
E12
E13
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E28
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E31
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S
Temple of Eternal Flame
SCM14
1 square = 10 feet

the salamanders have a twenty-five percent chance each round of turning on the azers during a fight.

Each unfurnished cell south of the hall (not counting the easternmost cell, which is empty) contains two **azers**—six azers total. They are eager to fight the fire cultists and the efreeti slaver (see area E13), but they need weapons. If the salamanders attack the azers, the azers fight the salamanders until one side or the other is defeated. If the characters don't help the azers fight the salamanders, the azers turn on the characters as well.

E12. Lava Chasm

> A stone bridge stretches across a hot, hazy chasm lit by a river of lava forty feet below. The roof of the chasm hangs fifty feet above the bridge.

The stone bridge is safe to cross. A creature takes 6d10 fire damage when it enters the lava for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there.

Mechanism. Once the characters move to a point near the center of the chamber, read the following aloud:

> A large mechanism hangs in the air to the east. It is a set of steel pulleys and thick iron chains connected to a hanging barricade of black stone. The wall appears to be some sort of a canal lock.

This mechanism controls the flow of lava into area E13. It is operated from area E17. Despite its age, this device still functions perfectly.

E13. Foundry

The temperature rises noticeably as one approaches this room, and characters can hear sounds of metal striking metal long before they see what's inside.

> Noise, light, and heat issue from this massive chamber. Runnels of lava flow from holes in the west wall into bronze troughs. Heat shimmers, smoke, and steam rise toward the domed ceiling, escaping through vents. Staircases rise at opposite ends of the room, and a smaller passage exits to the east. An efreeti drives azers and salamanders to make armaments here while fire cultists strand guard.

This chamber is the heart of the fire cult's domain, the great foundry where they forge weapons and armor. Noise here drowns out any fighting taking place outside the immediate vicinity. An **efreeti** aided by one **razerblast** and two **Eternal Flame guardians** (see chapter 7 for both) drives a **salamander** and three **azers**, forcing them to work the forges.

As soon as any disturbance happens here, the slaves turn on the efreeti. The efreeti then focuses his attention on corralling his charges, leaving the cultists to deal with the characters. If it becomes obvious that the fight is going badly for the cultists, the efreeti retreats to his lair in the fire node (see chapter 5) via area E14.

If the characters arrive with salamanders or azers from area E11, those creatures take up arms on their respective sides. The salamanders and azers attack the efreeti until he retreats, then turn on each other. Survivors might be influenced to continue to help the characters as described in area E11.

None of the armor and weapons currently being forged here is near enough to completion to be used effectively.

An iron talking tube runs between the southwest wall of this room and the eastern wall of area E17, so that instructions could be passed back and forth between the smiths and the engineers operating the canal and lock mechanism in area E12.

Development

Once the characters kill or drive off the slavers here, the rest of the fire temple goes on high alert. An hour afterward, guards from in areas E7–E10 and areas E25–E29 take shifts watching this area. The guards aim to prevent anyone from entering area E14.

E14. Shaft to the Fire Node

> At the end of this passage, a wooden platform similar to a drawbridge extends into a large, irregularly shaped vertical shaft perhaps fifty feet across. A large stone disk, twelve feet in diameter, hovers next to the wooden extension. The shaft rises into inky blackness overhead, but a flickering, ruddy light is visible far below.

The first time the characters arrive here, the hovering disk is present. Any other time, it has a fifty percent chance to be at this level.

The disk is made to rise or descend by uttering the proper command word into the shaft loudly enough for it to echo. The command words are "ash" to make the platform sink and "ember" to make it rise. It rises no higher than this position. It takes 1 minute for it to move from one place to another. The shaft descends to area F15 in the Fane of the Eye and further down to area W1 in the Weeping Colossus (see chapter 5 for both).

E15. Ancient Armory

When characters first discover either secret door into this unlit place, read the following text aloud:

> Dust and cobwebs fill this corridor. About halfway along the passage, it widens into a small room where racks of rusted weapons and armor still stand. A gleaming shield hangs on the east wall.

All of the weapons and armor are ruined except for the shield hanging on the wall.

Treasure

The hanging shield is a *+1 shield* with a sprocket on its front that slowly turns clockwise, making one rotation per hour.

E16. Well

This chamber is unlit.

> At the end of the hall is a circular room that is cooler than the rest of the complex. A pool of water fills the room's center. The water's surface, as smooth as glass, comes to a foot below the surrounding floor.

The depth of the well is about 12 feet. The water seeps up from below through cracks in the well's floor.

E17. Mechanical Room

> A complex assortment of gears, flywheels, drive shafts, and levers fills most of the northern half of this chamber. It is clear that someone has done repair work on it recently, for numerous parts look brand new and the entirety gleams from having been recently polished and lubricated.

This mechanism operates the canal and lock system that runs between areas E12 and E13. The levers activate counterweights and springs that raise and lower the great barrier door, which controls how much lava would flow into the troughs. An iron talking tube runs between the eastern wall of this room and the southwest corner of the foundry (area E13).

E18. Library

> A faint odor emanates from this dark place, which holds the chill of the grave. Strange mounds run the length of the room and look like furrows for planting.

The mounds are the decayed remains of bookshelves and tomes that used to run in neat, orderly rows. When the cultists arrived here, they discovered the patch of brown mold that has taken up residence here. After unsuccessfully trying to burn it (which caused it to double in size), they decided to avoid the place. The brown mold (see chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) fills the 20-foot-square section in the southeast corner.

E19. Kennel

The door is locked with a hasp-and-pin mechanism.

> This hot chamber smells of sulfur and meat.

Four **hell hounds** lair here. They attack if whoever opened the door isn't Lyzzie (area E29), their mistress.

E20 and E21. Storage Rooms

> The smell of old iron and dust fills this room. Great heaps of junk are stacked everywhere. In some places, the collection is neat and orderly, while in others, it's a tumbled mess.

Lyzzie Calderos (see area E29) decided to convert a storage room for her hell hounds, so she ordered her minions to toss all the junk found in that room into these two, hence the disheveled nature of some piles.

A thorough search of each room requires 6 hours. Whether the characters find anything of value is up to you.

E22. Display Hall

Two **Eternal Flame guardians** (see chapter 7) stand guard here.

> This oddly shaped room features two rounded corners that make the chamber flow in a pleasing way. A stairwell disappears downward from the south wall, and a door is set into the east wall. A large stone brazier, its base shaped like a pair of back-to-back sitting dwarves, rests in the center of the room, giving off heat and light.

The staircase leads down to area E30.

Reinforcements. Should a fight break out here, the occupants of area E23 notify Ignatia (area E24) and then join the combat. Ignatia joins soon after.

E23. Barracks

> A short passage beyond the door opens into a rectangular chamber containing two sets of bunk beds and a trestle table with benches on either side. A large cask sits at one end of the table, and there are several pewter mugs near the cask.

The cask holds weak, sour wine.

Two **Eternal Flame guardians** (see chapter 7) are drinking and playing cards at the table. They attack anyone who isn't wearing cult apparel and suspiciously question anyone disguised as a cult member.

Reinforcements. Any fighting here draws the attention of Ignatia in area E24.

E24. Ignatia's Abode

> Two bookshelves stand in opposite corner of this room. Between them stands a bed. A pair of chairs flank a brazier in another corner. Lying in the middle of the floor is an individual with a warrior's physique, his wrists and ankles bound with rope. He has been beaten.

Ignatia, a **flamewrath** (see chapter 7), lives here. She leads the warriors outside and serves as the watch commander for the hobgoblins guarding the south barricades (area E27).

Prisoner. Unless the characters have somehow set the temple on high alert, Ignatia is questioning a **Crushing Wave reaver** who was caught sneaking close to Eternal Flame cult territory. The reaver, Orgaal, is unarmed and has 4 hit points remaining.

Treasure

The shelves contain many books, several of which are valuable and collectively worth 250 gp. An urn filled with ashes sits atop one bookshelf, and at its bottom Ignatia has buried 170 gp, 170 ep, and 10 sardonyxes worth 50 gp each.

E25. Supplicants' Room

This large chamber is shaped like an elongated hexagon, with a door set into the points at east and west. The door to the east has been painted red with a black, stylized cauldron symbol upon it. Additional exits lead north and south. Several ancient forges and anvils stand in the room, and many sleeping pallets lie scattered in their midst.

Eight **cultists** and two **cult fanatics** are here.

Reinforcements. Lyzzie and her magmins (area E29) investigate any commotion here. If appropriate, Lyzzie uses *sending* to contact the chimera in area E30. The chimera moves to help Lyzzie as soon as it can.

E26. Fire Temple

This room has a wide alcove in the west wall. A raised dais with an altar fills the alcove. Flanking the dais are two smoking braziers and two flickering torches in sconces. Rich tapestries decorate the walls. The tapestry behind the dais is adorned with a stylized cauldron symbol.

If this is the first of the elemental temples the characters explore, **Vanifer** (see chapter 7) is kneeling before the altar, contemplating the higher meaning of her faith. The braziers are receptacles holding two **fire elementals** under Vanifer's command. They appear and attack as soon as their mistress orders them to.

Roleplaying Vanifer. Vanifer is willing to talk, but only to size up the characters. If the characters seem amenable to conversation, she vows to take her cult far away from the Sumber Hills if they do her the favor of killing Gar Shatterkeel and delivering his claw as proof of his demise. She honors no such deal.

In combat, Vanifer commands the elementals to engage the characters while she casts spells. If the fight seems to be going badly, Vanifer flees to the shaft (area E14) and down into the fire node.

Secret Door. A secret door is hidden behind one of the tapestries on the east end of the south wall. A character who searches the wall and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check locates it. Beyond lies a flight of stairs leading down to area E31.

E27. Barricades

The passage emerges into an oddly shaped room. A loose pile of stone forms a barricade across the route, angled to defend intrusion from the south.

Six **hobgoblins** stand guard here, dressed in flame-red tabards with the symbol of elemental fire on the chest. They challenge anyone approaching from the south, but they pay little attention to anyone heading in that direction.

Gaining Passage. Visitors from the south must form the hand-sign for the fire cult (hands cupped together upright, with one pinky finger jutting upward in the middle), state the pass phrase ("Fire is eternal!"), or convince the hobgoblins to allow passage. Otherwise, the hobgoblins attack. It takes only a little persuasion to convince the hobgoblins that intruders have a legitimate reason to be here. These guards would much rather pass the buck to cult leaders.

South Tunnel. This tunnel connects to area A7 in the Temple of Howling Hatred.

Development

If the characters defeat these hobgoblins, the guards are replaced by the hobgoblins in area E28 within an hour or two.

E28. Barracks

This foul smelling, oddly shaped room contains a number of sleeping pallets.

The hobgoblins who serve Lyzzie (area E29) dwell here. Four **hobgoblins** and a **hobgoblin captain** are currently relaxing. Unless the characters look like cultists, the hobgoblins attack.

Treasure

The hobgoblin captain carries a *potion of healing* and a pouch containing 60 sp.

E29. Lyzzie's Quarters

Scorch marks and charred furnishings litter this chamber, and a burned tapestry spans the east wall. Dancing about the room are four small humanoids made of magma.

The dancing creatures are four **magmins**. They are curious to know who the characters are and playfully try to set them on fire. If they are harmed, the magmins hiss loud enough to alert their mistress, Lyzandra "Lyzzie" Calderos. She is a human **mage** with *wall of fire* and *immolation* (see appendix B) prepared instead



of *ice storm* and *cone of cold*. When the characters first arrive, Lyzzie is relaxing in a smaller room behind the burnt tapestry. Lyzzie's room contains several scorched bunkbeds, a charred desk, but nothing of value.

Reinforcements. The hobbgoblins in area E28 are drawn to sounds of combat here.

E30. Chimera Lair

> This room has a vaulted ceiling thirty feet high. Wide alcoves dominate the east and west walls, and treasure glitters in the western one. An unpleasant musky scent mixes with the odor of sulfur here. The floor is marred with broken spots, scorch marks, bits of debris, and dark stains.

A **chimera** loyal to the fire cult lounges in the western alcove. It emerges from its alcove to taunt and threaten the characters, pacing and snarling. If the characters attack it or try to plunder its hoard, it retaliates. Otherwise, it lets them pass through its lair unmolested.

East Tunnel. This tunnel leads to area B16 in the Temple of Black Earth.

Treasure

Scattered in the western alcove—among broken bones and scraps of clothing—is the chimera's hoard of 517 cp, 1,048 sp, 432 gp, five polished moonstones (50 gp each), a *potion of water breathing*, and a tiny red silk pouch that contains fine sand (*dust of disappearance*).

E31. Vanifer's Chamber

> Throw rugs, privacy screens, a couch, and a quartet of comfortable chairs have created a cozy space here. Gossamer fabrics are draped across a four poster bed, and a desk sits in the southeastern corner.

Vanifer spends very little time here.

Treasure

A search of the desk reveals a scroll of *Melf's minute meteors* and a scroll of *wall of sand* (see appendix B for descriptions of both spells).

Conclusion

Three key leaders keep the Cult of the Eternal Flame organized: Vanifer, Bastian Thermandar, and Lyzzie Calderos. If any of these leaders survive after the characters leave the temple, the cultists reorganize their defenses and fight off further incursions. If Vanifer retreats to the deeper levels and the characters defeat Bastian and Lyzzie, the Eternal Flame cult loses its cohesion, and the surviving cultists abandon this level. Some retreat to the Fane of the Eye or the Weeping Colossus, while others flee the temple altogether. A few monsters might remain, such as the chimera, which rounds up as much loot as it can and takes to hunting stray cultists once their leaders are all gone.



Chapter 5: Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye

The struggle to defeat the forces of Elemental Evil is coming to a head. Characters have cleared out the cult's surface outposts and taken the fight to the temples beneath the Sumber Hills. Below the ancient dwarven stronghold of Tyar-Besil is a deeper and even older maze of dark caverns—the Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye. This area consists of the Fane of the Eye and the four elemental nodes from which the cults draw their power.

The elemental nodes are growing so strong that their mere existence is triggering catastrophes. Little investigation is to be done at this point; the cultists' plans are clear. The big question is whether the characters can contain the damage. Time is pressing, and the party might have to make hard choices.

Wrath of the Elements

The elemental prophets sense that they are running out of time, and they redouble their efforts to expand Elemental Evil's power across the Dessarin Valley. If they can't subdue the area with *devastation orbs*, the prophets tear open rifts to the elemental planes so that nothing can resist the elemental power.

The characters must contain the damage. Each time the characters retreat from the Fane of the Eye

or finish exploring an elemental node, run one of the encounters from among "Downpour," "Burning Hills," and "Tortured Earth."

In addition, two new threats establish themselves in the area. Haayon the Punisher threatens Beliard, while Westbridge gives in to the Counsel of Despair. The adventurers might receive word of these situations, or the party might stumble across them.

Downpour

If the water node is still active, a torrential downpour begins while the adventurers are traveling in the Sumber Hills. This torrent lasts for 12 hours, producing an immense amount of rain, wind, and lightning. The downpour has the following principal effects:

- The adventurers can't finish a long rest unless they are indoors.
- All overland travel takes twice as long.
- Vision is heavily obscured past 100 feet.
- The DC to avoid becoming lost increases to 15.

You can present the characters with unexpected obstacles related to the storm to convey the idea that conditions are worsening in the Dessarin Valley.

Burning Hills

Use this event only if the fire node is still active. The characters find themselves—and perhaps a settlement they care about—in the path of three **fire elementals** and five **smoke mephits**. The elementals go for the nearest large combustible objects, while the smoke mephits scatter and use their cinder breath to start small peripheral fires.

> The smell of smoke drifts on the air. Upwind, plumes of smoke billow up from the hillsides. Grass is catching fire at a furious rate, and the fire is moving quickly your way. Big creatures made of flame race over the ground, while small shapes flit in the smoke.

The adventurers detect the fire when it is 500 feet away. It covers a front of about 200 feet. At the start of each round, the fire advances 2d6 × 10 feet. Smoke renders the fire's area, and 100 feet ahead of it, lightly obscured. A creature that enters the fire for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 1d10 fire damage. If the creature isn't immune to fire and needs to breathe, it must also succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated from smoke inhalation until the start of its next turn.

Tortured Earth

If the earth node is still active, one of the tremors wracking the Dessarin Valley strikes almost under the party's feet. The effect is like that created by an *earthquake* spell, but the area's radius is 1,000 feet. The saving throw DC is 15.

As the tremor ends, a young **purple worm** with 184 hit points (challenge rating 13) burrows out of the ground. Driven into a frenzy by the quake, it attacks other living creatures nearby. It retreats rather than perishing in combat.

Counsel of Despair

Seeing no end to the destruction visited on their homes, a cowardly faction among the elders of Westbridge submits to the forces of elemental earth. They hope to be spared further sorrow and destruction. Characters learn of this development from Sedina Wolfpaw, a half-elf **scout** from Triboar who visited Westbridge, discovered the situation, and hurried to track down anyone who could help. She introduces the problem as follows:

> "Westbridge was badly damaged by earthquakes. I was down that way, and I found half the town gathered in front of the Harvest Inn. Most of them were listening to a priest in stony armor. He was preaching about how destruction was coming, and only the chosen would be spared, and they were listening to him!" She shakes her head. "When I tried to speak up, the priest told the townies to seize me, but I managed to escape. I knew I had to find someone who can fight these lunatics, so here I am."

Sedina is happy to accompany the party to Westbridge. Otherwise, she continues on her way.

Arrival in Westbridge

When the adventurers reach Westbridge, their reception depends on the manner of their arrival.

Direct Approach. Characters who come into town openly are met by a haggard orchardist named Jendon (a human **commoner**), who wears a cloak with a brown patch made of the same fabric as the robes the earth cultists wear. Jendon tries to persuade the adventurers to leave, explaining that, "We don't have any choice. The earth priests are the only ones who can save us now."

Jendon isn't evil. He just doesn't see any evidence that so-called "heroes" have managed to stop the catastrophes ravaging the area. Jendon knows some might call him a coward, but he is convinced that submission to the forces of elemental earth is what any rational person would do.

Clandestine Arrival. If the characters try to slip into town without being spotted, they quickly meet a bowyer named Reetha (a human **commoner**). She wants nothing to do with the Black Earth cult and despairs

Character Advancement

If the party cleaned out each of the temples in chapter 4, the adventurers begin this chapter around 10th level. The Fane of the Eye is intended for a 10th-level group; the Howling Caves are designed for an 11th-level party; the Plunging Torrents and Black Geode are intended for a party of about 12th level; and the Weeping Colossus is designed for a 13th-level party. As a rough guideline, the party should gain one level after clearing the Fane, one level after finishing the first elemental node they explore, and one more level after completing the third node they explore.

that her neighbors knuckled under to the cultists. Reetha tells the characters that most townspeople are just scared, and that cultists have taken over the Harvest Inn.

New Converts

The adventurers find the cult already at work.

> Much of Westbridge lies in ruins. A handful of people are out and about, but they keep to themselves. Several dozen more townsfolk have gathered in a clearing. They each wear a brown patch on their cloaks or tunics as they stand listening to a trio of hooded priests who are leading them in strange prayer to "the Black Earth."

The three hooded priests are junior members of the Black Earth cult (**cultists**) who are enjoying haranguing the forty or so **commoners** undergoing indoctrination. The cultists taunt any characters who approach, saying, "These people have learned the truth. You can't save them, but we can."

The Westbridgers are frightened. They don't like the cultists, but they think they need the cult's protection against future disasters. Some beg the characters not to interfere, while others take the adventurers' arrival as reason to stand up to the cult. If fighting breaks out here, most of the commoners scatter, but six aid the adventurers. These braver folk warn the characters that the "high priest," Dreyon, is at the Harvest Inn and has a hill giant in his service.

The Harvest Inn

Dreyon, the leader of the cult contingent occupying Westbridge, is a **Black Earth priest**. Two **Black Earth guards**, a **hill giant** named Lomm, and a gang of six **hobgoblins** aid him. (See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.) The group has taken over the Harvest Inn. Lomm sleeps in the stable he has emptied of livestock.

Herivin Dardragon, the halfling proprietor, remains on the premises, along with four of his staff (human **commoners**). They are little better than poorly treated servants desperately trying to keep up with the hill giant's appetite. Herivin and his staff want the villains dead.

When confronted, Dreyon orders the commoners to drive out the characters. If that fails, he then tries to use the Westbridgers as living shields.

Haayon the Punisher

This encounter occurs only after the prophets of the Cult of the Howling Hatred and the Cult of the Crushing Wave have been defeated. Bands of raiders roaming the area, minor outposts and lairs far from the Haunted Keeps, and survivors of the party's attacks are scattered and leaderless without direction. New leaders arise to gather the dispersed cultists and reestablish the defeated temples; one such leader is Haayon the Punisher.

Haayon is a cloud giant who hopes to become the next leader of the air cult. Late to answer the call of Elemental Evil, he recently arrived in the Dessarin Valley to discover the cult broken. The cloud giant believes the air cultists were defeated because they were weak, so he imposes a brutal regime of self-denial and atonement on surviving cultists.

Given time, Haayon might very well rebuild the Cult of the Howling Hatred. He knows little of what's happening underground, though he's extensively questioning each cultist he encounters. In his arrogance, he sees the existence of fleeing cultists as proof that new leadership is needed.

The Punished

Through rumors in a town or messages from faction members, the characters hear the following tale. For the description, choose a settlement the characters aren't in and that has not been destroyed.

> Refugees have been shuffling down from the hills north of the town. Some wear the white robes and black-feathered cowls of air cultists, while others are dressed in the green of the water cultists. Each person bears a placard around his or her neck, reading "I am punished."

The refugees are **cultists** who fled the defeats at the Haunted Keeps and the elemental temples, but then got rounded up by Haayon. Those who Haayon finds worthy are welcomed into his camp. The unworthy are marked with placards and sent away. Only the rejected cultists know where Haayon's camp is.

Haayon's Camp

The giant's band has gathered at a hilltop ruin in the hills overlooking Jundar's Pass, where the road leads northeast from Beliard. When the adventurers locate the camp, read the following text:

> A footpath leads to a ruined stone wall that rings a hilltop. A dozen tents are pitched in the shelter of the walls, along with a pavilion. At one side of the camp, five slumped figures are tied to wooden posts, each captive with a placard around his or her neck. Silent figures in leather breeches stand guard.

Five **Crushing Wave reavers** and a **Howling Hatred priest** wearing a *balloon pack* watch the outer camp. (See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics and rules for the *balloon pack*.) The figures tied to the posts are five air and water cultists. Each has 1 hit point remaining and wears a wooden placard that reads, "I am punished."

Haayon the **cloud giant**, two **Feathergale knights** (see chapter 7), and six loyal **cultists** gather inside the pavilion. Behind the pavilion are two **hippogriffs** that serve the knights as mounts. The giant and his minions hear any fighting that breaks out in the outer part of the camp but don't join the fray until their turns during the fourth round.

Roleplaying Haayon. If the characters approach peacefully and with a plausible story, Haayon is willing to hear them out. If they ask about the punished cultists,

the giant justifies their humiliation by saying they're weak. If they serve as a warning to others, all the better.

Haayon is a patient and perceptive listener. He is committed to forcing any newcomers to join his group. Such initiates must subject themselves to his judgment. If the adventurers refuse, Haayon says, "Consent isn't necessary for judgment. Lack of it proves punishment is required." He then gives the signal to attack.

Treasure

Haayon's pavilion contains two large wooden chests filled with the valuables he has confiscated from those who failed his judgment. The chests holds 260 gp, a pouch with six citrines worth 60 gp each, and another pouch containing two *potions of flying*.

Fighting the Prophets

After the characters defeat one prophet, the remaining three prophets receive visions that encourage them to retreat to the caverns below Tyar-Besil. One prophet of your choice relocates to the Fane of the Eye. That villain can be found in area F21, beseeching the Elder Elemental Eye for aid. The other two prophets relocate to their elemental nodes and begin to summon their respective Princes of Elemental Evil. The adventurers interrupt the first prophet they encounter in a node. The second successfully summons his or her patron just as the characters arrive.

Saving the Delegates

A few delegates from Mirabar and their possessions remain to be found:

- Deseyna Norvael is in the Howling Caves (area N17).
- Rhundorth is in the Black Geode (area G15).
- Teresiel is in the Weeping Colossus (area W17), along with her pouch of magical seeds.

Saving the delegates solves the mystery that drew the characters into this adventure.

Fane of the Eye

Below the ruined halls of Tyar-Besil is a maze of natural caverns and ancient structures that was here before the dwarves built their stronghold. Long ago, drow exiles devoted to the worship of Elemental Evil built this subterranean shrine to the Elder Elemental Eye. This is where the four prophets found their elemental weapons.

The Fane of the Eye serves as common ground for the cults. Here the animosities among air, earth, fire, and water are set aside, and a wary truce prevails. Malevolent and inscrutable, the Eye watches over the cultists and judges them, or so the prophets believe. Were it not for the belief that the Eye wants them to work together, the cults would fight constantly.

Each temple complex in the ruins of Tyar-Besil offers access to the fane. Below the fane are four elemental nodes from which the cults draw their power. Cultists traveling to an elemental node must pass through the fane. Each cult keeps control over access to its elemental node, but any of the temples or elemental nodes can be accessed from the fane.

Fane Features

The fane consists mostly of caverns, some improved by magical manipulation of the rock. The northeast portion includes chambers built by the dwarves of Besilmer, so it resembles the stonework of their city. The complex has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. In the passages, the walls slope together unevenly to meet at an angle about 15 feet above the floor. The chamber ceilings are about 10 feet above the floor near the walls, but they can be as much as 30 feet high in the middle.

Dark Curtains. Clouds of black fog, cold and oily to the touch, cordon off areas of the fane. They block vision and mute sound. Objects pass through unimpeded, but living creatures doing so feel psychic resistance and nausea from pushing through. Only creatures devoted to Elemental Evil are untroubled by the sensations.

Doors. Doors are made from stone slabs balanced on central pivots. Opening a door creates two openings about 3 feet wide. No original locks remain operable, but the cultists secure some doors with a hasp-and-pin mechanism. A door closed in this way can be forced with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Light. The glow of weird, phosphorescent lichen—a side effect of the strange magical properties of the area—provides dim light. The lichen is more heavily concentrated in the upper reaches of the large chambers, and just barely visible in the passages.

F1. Worm's Stair

> The skeleton of a giant worm is fused to the sides of this long tunnel, disappearing into a nearly vertical tunnel fifty feet above the floor. Wooden steps have been lashed to the bones, creating a makeshift staircase. Several odd backpacks lie in a pile on the floor at the foot of the stairs.

The vertical tunnel leads to area A20 of the Temple of Howling Hatred, almost 150 feet above. The stairs end after 50 feet, requiring an easy climb up the ribs.

Treasure

The odd backpacks are five *balloon packs* (see chapter 7) left here by the cultists.

F2. Howling Pit

> Wind howls as it climbs this dark shaft.

After 80 feet, the pit tapers into a tunnel (area N1 of the Howling Caves, described later in this chapter). Chaotic gusts blow up and down the shaft, too weak to pose an actual hazard. Climbing the rough pit walls requires successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks.

F3. Wind Prison

A stone pedestal in the middle of this cavern holds a glassy sphere about eight inches in diameter. The sphere seems to contain swirling smoke. Battered armor, damaged weapons, and tattered clothing are strewn around the chamber, but the floor within ten feet of the sphere is free of such debris. Several weapons on the ground seem like they might still be serviceable, although all are badly worn.

If the orb is disturbed, all creatures within 10 feet of it must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be swept up into a whirlwind, suspended 20 feet in the air. The orb vanishes as the whirlwind forms.

Those suspended in the whirlwind are restrained and battered by windblown debris. At the start of each of its turns, a creature restrained by the whirlwind takes 1d10 bludgeoning damage. A creature in the whirlwind can use its action to attempt a DC 20 Strength check. If successful, the creature ends the restrained condition on it, falls 20 feet to the floor, and escapes the whirlwind. A creature outside the whirlwind can attempt a similar check to pull another creature from the whirlwind, assuming it has the ability to reach a target 20 feet in the air. The whirlwind lasts 1 minute and then collapses, releasing creatures caught within it.

While the whirlwind rages, four **flying swords** animate from the debris scattered around the cave. The flying swords attack creatures outside the whirlwind.

F4. Harpy Nest

Characters spot the light in this chamber before entering it.

A bronze torch glowing with a magical light lies next to the corpse of a bare-chested man with a shield in the shape of a crab shell and a broken shark-toothed sword. Several other corpses are scattered on the floor. Some have been picked down to bone, their clothing and armor discarded nearby, while others have hardly been touched.

The walls are uneven, with small ledges and fissures on all sides. The ceiling is about a hundred feet high.

Three **harpies** nest on the highest ledges. These wicked creatures guard the cave for the Cult of the Howling Hatred. The bodies are those whom the harpies lured to destruction. When the harpies spot intruders, they begin to sing.

Those who are affected by the harpies' song are compelled to climb. The nests are 80 feet above the floor. The first 40 feet of the climb require a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks, but after that, the DC is 15.

Corpses. The bodies on the floor include a water cultist (the figure with the crab-shell shield and broken sword), two lizardfolk, an ogre, and a male halfling in the robes of a cleric of Sune, and a female half-elf fighter in battered plate armor.

Treasure

The harpies have collected loot in their nests, including 560 sp, 220 gp, a gold bracelet (50 gp), a silver ewer (10 gp), a pair of silver earrings shaped like skulls (each worth 10 gp), and a *potion of superior healing*.

F5. Rust Monster Pit

A low, thin mist clings to the floor of this cave, and the walls glisten with moisture. Several sets of crude bronze manacles are anchored to the walls, and three hold haggard human captives. The captives are unconscious, although they groan and writhe slowly.

A steady breeze blows toward a passage to the west, while from the east comes the distant sound of running water.

The mist is natural, caused by the humid air in area F6 being drawn westward by the draft in area F3 across cool stone in this cavern. The mist conceals a pit at the north end of the cave.

Pit. A character searching the floor notices the pit with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character unaware of the pit falls into it. The pit is 10 feet deep and contains a **rust monster** that wandered into this cave after being driven out of area F9. The rust monster is heavily obscured by the mist and makes a surprise attack against a creature that falls into the pit, gaining advantage on its attack roll if its target is prone.

Prisoners. Three captives are chained to the walls. Two are fire cultists, while the third is a riverboat crewman captured a few days ago by Crushing Wave river bandits. The manacles are secured by cotter pins that are easy to remove, but the captives can't reach them. Manacles can also be broken with a successful DC 20 Strength check.

F6. Swift Stream

A waterfall gushes out of the wall of this large cave, filling a swirling pool and then coursing through a passage to the north. A winding footpath follows the rushing stream. In addition to the stream's passage, there are stone stairs leading up into a passage of dwarven stonework to the north and cave mouths to the northwest and southwest.

This cavern is the center of the Crushing Wave cult's presence in the fane. Two **water weirds** lurk in the pool and guard the area for the cult. They attack anyone approaching the water who fails to give the water cult's hand sign. The pool is 20 feet deep. Swimming in the pool requires DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks due to the swirling currents. Any creature that fails such a check is swept into the stream.

The stream is 4 feet deep, cold, and swift. Any creature without a swimming speed that moves into the stream for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be swept 40 feet downstream. Swimming against


Fane of the Eye
F1
F2
F3
F4
F5
F6
F7
F8
F9
F10
F11
F12
F13
F14
F15
F16
F17
F18
F19
F20
F21
Brazier
Dark curtain
Firepit
Fungus patch
Pitch pool
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 feet
SCM14

the current requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Stairs. The stairs lead up to area C28 in the Temple of the Crushing Wave (chapter 4).

F7. Blackmaw Throne

> A big stone bench surrounded by dozens of humanoid skulls stands against the northwest wall of this dank cavern. In the middle of the room, hot coals glow in a fire pit, while crude nests of moss and mud are heaped here and there.

A **lizard king** named Drexa leads the Blackmaw tribe, a group of lizardfolk devoted to the Crushing Wave cult. A **lizardfolk shaman** named Sskesh advises Drexa, and eight **lizardfolk** warriors make their nests in this area. Armed with morningstars, shields, and javelins, the Blackmaws are vile savages that torture, kill, and eat their enemies.

Roleplaying Drexa. Although the lizardfolk here are evil and bellicose, Drexa believes he should be one of the leaders of the Crushing Wave. He resents that such a position wasn't given to him. Those who look likely to overthrow Gar Shatterkeel, or who have proof they have done so, might be able to convince Drexa to help them. Drexa has seen failed coups before, and he sides with the characters only if he's sure to wind up on top.

Narrow Tunnel. The tunnel leading east is 10 feet high and only 2 feet wide. Medium characters must squeeze to move through it.

Treasure

Drexa has amassed a small amount of treasure from the Blackmaws' participation in various raids on the surface. He regards the tribe's treasure as his own. Two wooden chests contain 2,300 cp, 1,250 sp, and 290 gp. In addition, Drexa wears a heavy gold chain worth 200 gp.

F8. The Plunge

The waterfall here can be heard from quite a distance.

> The roar of falling water fills this cavern. A stream flows from a passage to the south and spills over the edge of a forty-foot-wide pit. A set of slick stone steps descends into the spray-filled bowl to the north, while a passage to the west holds steps leading upward.

A creature swept over the falls lands in a water-filled basin (area P1 of the Plunging Torrents, described later in this chapter), taking no damage. At the start of its turn in the basin, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be driven 10 feet underwater and restrained there. The creature can use its action to make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, ending the restrained condition on a success.

The stairs that hug the edge of the pit, though slippery, provide a much safer route down to area P1.

F9. Fungal Swamp

> A forest of weird fungal growth infests this large cavern. Giant toadstools and puffballs stand in and among shallow pools of water or atop ledges along the walls. Those walls are covered by huge growths of shelf fungi. Water drips constantly from above.

The influences of elemental earth and elemental water meet in this cavern, producing a muddy bog crowded with enormous fungi. Most of the fungi are harmless, and some are even edible. However, three **violet fungi** cluster where the footpaths intersect.

A **grell** lurks in the upper reaches of the chamber, watching for lone travelers or stragglers it might be able to pick off. The creature quietly drifts down and attacks the rearmost member of a party that is otherwise occupied.

Shelf Path. Because dangerous fungi often lurk near the footpaths, denizens of the fane who pass through this chamber have found another way around. The shelf fungi adhering to the walls are surprisingly sturdy and offer a 3-foot-wide path that circles the eastern side of the chamber. Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher spots the shelf path, and exploration reveals it automatically.

F10. Foebreaker's Crypt

> A stone sarcophagus rests on a dais in the southern half of this room. A worn frieze circles the monument about four feet above the ground, but it has been badly damaged, and it is difficult to make out what the carvings represent.

This crypt marks the resting place of a dwarven hero of ancient Tyar-Besil who fought a great battle against monsters invading from the Underdark. Close inspection shows that the wall carvings depict a dwarf slaughtering minotaurs and grimlocks. The name Hendrel Foebreaker is inscribed in the Dethek script on the lid of the sarcophagus, followed by the Dwarvish phrase, "Bow your head, and remember valor."

The crypt contains Hendrel's bones, interred here as a warning to Besilmer's enemies. His tomb is also the center of a *hallow* spell, which extends to the doors of the room. Any good-aligned humanoid who heeds the tomb's carving receives the effect of a 5th-level *aid* spell. A creature can benefit from this effect only once per day.

F11. Foot of the Obelisk

> This cavern is a vertical shaft. Rising up the shaft is a black stone obelisk, twenty feet on a side, with a stone staircase wrapping around its sides, ascending into darkness.

The stairs ascend to area B17 in the Temple of Black Earth (see chapter 4).

F12. Abandoned Mine

A natural passage enters this rubble-strewn chamber from the south, petering out to the north. Stone doors lead to the east, west, and south. Rusting iron rails are anchored to the floor, and a pair of ancient ore carts still rest on the rails. The dust on the floor is thick, and the air is stale.

The dwarves of Tyar-Besil began to carve mining tunnels here, but they gave up when faced with too many threats pouring up from the Underdark.

Four **specters** lurk in the shallow tunnel to the north. These are the spirits of grimlocks that died here long ago and became infused with the evil that permeates the fane. They attack any living creature that enters this chamber. The cultists avoid the area.

Treasure

If any character is currently under the blessing of Hendrel Foebreaker (area F10), the shining apparition of a stern dwarf warrior in golden mail appears when the last specter is defeated. With a slight smile of gratitude, the spirit silently points at a heap of rubble at the end of the northern tunnel, then fades away. Beneath the debris lies Hendrel's magic hammer, a *dwarven thrower*. The weapon can't be found until Hendrel's spirit manifests.

F13. Hall of Black Crystal

Weird crystals jut from the walls and the floor of this ancient hall, giving off violet light. On the east side, these crystals form a distinct doorway or gate, beyond which the floor slopes downward. Two huge bedrolls and barrels full of provisions are in the southern end of the room.

The eastern passage descends to area G1 of the Black Geode (described later in this chapter). To protect their sanctum, earth cultists stationed two **hill giants** here. Each giant wears ring mail (AC 14).

Roleplaying the Giants. The giants, Karg and Maul, pass the time playing a game akin to Tic-Tac-Toe, using rocks of different colors. Maul is frustrated because he has been losing to Karg. When the party arrives, he calls out, "I wanna play dese li'l guys! Hey, puny-bones! Wanna play?"

If a character accepts the challenge, resolve the outcome of each game with an Intelligence contest. The giants usually bet 10 gp per game. Losing infuriates Maul; if the characters fail to calm him, he attacks, which prompts Karg to attack as well. The giants also attack if no character accepts the challenge or if they characters speak ill of their game.



Treasure

Karg and Maul carry large satchels. Between them, they have 160 gp, 22 pp, three red spinels (100 gp each), a fine amethyst (150 gp), and a mummified human head.

F14. Zegdar's Lair

This cavern is festooned with dozens of burned human hands and reptilian claws fixed to the walls with iron nails. An iron brazier in the middle of the room is full of hot, glowing coals. A large sleeping pallet of furs is arranged to the south. A hulking minotaur sits on the pallet, counting coins in an iron coffer, while a strange one-eyed creature cowers next to the brazier.

The **minotaur** is Zegdar, chief of the Emberhorn tribe. He has 117 hit points, wears a chain mail hauberk (AC 16), has an Intelligence score of 11, speaks Undercommon, and is blessed by Imix. The blessing grants the minotaur immunity to fire damage as well as the following additional action option:

Burning Breath (Recharge 5–6). The minotaur exhales a cloud of burning embers in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Vanifer has directed Wyx, a simpering **nothic**, to act as Zegdar's adviser. Wyx flatters Zegdar so that he does his job and doesn't become a problem. The rest of the Emberhorns hate Wyx, but Zegdar sees the nothic as proof of his importance.

Trophies. The Emberhorn minotaurs take trophies by hewing the hands from their smaller defeated foes. To dedicate the victory to Imix, the minotaurs roast the hands in coals.

Treasure

Zegdar's iron coffer contains 130 sp, 220 gp, and ten flawed hematite gemstones worth 5 gp each.

F15. Fiery Throat

A ten-foot-wide slab of stone levitates in the center of this wide vertical shaft. A bridge-like pier of rock juts out to meet the platform from a wide ledge on the eastern side of the shaft. Hot fumes rise from below, and the shaft glows with fiery light below this level. The shaft continues upward into darkness.

Three passages lead away from the shaft. A small brass gong and a striking hammer are near the ledge.

The floating disk is made to move by uttering the proper command word loudly enough for it to echo. The command words are "ash" to make the platform sink and "ember" to make it rise. It takes 1 minute for it to move from one place to another. The shaft ascends to area E14 in the Temple of Eternal Flame and descends to area W1 in the Weeping Colossus (the fire node, described later in this chapter).

Speaking either command word or striking the gong calls the disk to this level. Any such noise alerts the creatures in areas F14, F16, and F17 that someone is here.

F16. Emberhorn Den

A blackened ogre skeleton stands against the north wall of this cavern, pinned in place by iron nails and rawhide straps. A black iron brazier full of hot coals stands in the middle of the room. Three huge, filthy bedrolls lie near the feet of the ogre skeleton.

This room houses three Emberhorn **minotaurs** waiting to receive the "blessing of Imix" (the ability to breathe clouds of burning embers).

The ogre was a minion of the earth cult killed by the Emberhorns a couple months ago. As is their custom, the minotaurs roasted the body and hung the remains as a trophy.

Reinforcements. Any loud noise in here causes the minotaurs in area F17 to investigate. One goes to warn Zegdar in area F14, and the other joins battle as soon as possible.

F17. Ancient Conjury

The stonework in this chamber is noticeably different from the natural caverns nearby. The room was roughly hewn from the surrounding rock but never dressed or finished. In the middle of the floor is a strange symbol shaped like overlapping circles, cut into the stone with two-inch wide channels.

Two **minotaurs** of the Emberhorn tribe stand guard in this chamber, defending the fire cult's foothold in the fane. They have the Burning Breath special action (see area F14), having received the "blessing of Imix."

Long before dwarves established their stronghold in the caves above the fane, these caverns belonged to drow who were drawn here by the area's elemental energies. This chamber was a conjuring room where drow summoned demons using the circles etched in the floor. Any character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes the nature of the circles, and that they are ancient and damaged to the point of uselessness.

Reinforcements. Any loud noise in here causes the minotaurs in area F16 to investigate. One goes to warn Zegdar in area F14, and the other two join battle as soon as possible.



F18. Drow Tomb

Flame dances above a pool of murky water to the south, lighting the room. A sarcophagus carved from glassy black stone stands atop a natural pedestal toward the north. The sarcophagus has fluted embellishments, delicate ribs, and friezes that show groveling demons.

In the center of the sarcophagus lid is a symbol that combines those of the four elemental cults—the symbol of the Elder Elemental Eye (see chapter 1). The cultists believe the coffin is holy and left it undisturbed. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence check can identify the sarcophagus as an example of drow artistry. The sarcophagus contains only dust and bones.

Trap. A *glyph of warding* protects the sarcophagus. A character can find the glyph with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Triggered by any attempt to open the coffin, the glyph casts *Mordenkainen's sword* (melee spell attack +10). The sword attacks any creature within 30 feet of the sarcophagus, starting with the triggering creature. It disappears after 1 minute.

Flaming Water. The flame burning on the water is fed by natural oil seeping into a tainted pool that is 5 feet deep. The water is undrinkable.

F19. That Which Lurks

In the middle of the chamber is a statue depicting an amorphous body and thick tentacles, hunching over as if to feed. A purple crystal the size of a human head represents one alien eye.

Drow carved this chamber and raised this idol to honor Ghaunadaur, a dark god associated with oozes. A character must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check to identify this obscure deity.

The "crystal" is worthless glass. Any creature that removes or destroys the stone must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be subjected to Ghaunadaur's curse. The curse is like a *polymorph* spell, except it turns the offender into an **ochre jelly** that lacks the Split reaction. A *greater restoration* or *remove curse* spell ends this effect.

F20. Hall of Battle

This room smells of blood and death. The debris of several recent battles is scattered throughout this rough-hewn chamber. A dozen dead warriors, clearly of the earth and water cults, lie amid a handful of monstrous corpses, such as those of bugbears and ogres. Some of the bodies look like they have been here for months, while others are only days old. A whirlwind of air encased in armor and clutching a flail rushes into view.

This chamber has been a battleground for the elemental cults as they seek to consolidate control of the fane. The Cult of the Howling Hatred presently holds the room, which is guarded by an **air elemental myrmidon** (see chapter 7).

When intruders appear, the myrmidon levels its flail at them and asks in a cold voice, "Whom do you serve?" The myrmidon decides whether the adventurers are friends or foes, based on their response to its question and the gear they wear. If the characters look like air cultists and reply that they serve elemental air or the Elder Elemental Eye, the myrmidon might be satisfied. If not, the myrmidon attacks.

Treasure

The various human corpses in this hall include air cultists, earth cultists, and a pair of fire cultists. No coinage or other valuables remain, but the characters can scrounge up cloaks, surcoats, or robes sufficient to create five air cultist disguises, four earth cultist disguises, and one fire cultist disguise.

F21. Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye

A stone ziggurat capped by a huge altar of black granite stands in the middle of this cavern. At the foot of the altar lies a bound and gagged figure. Fresh rivulets of blood stain the altar and trickle down the steps of the ziggurat. On all sides of the cavern, guttering flames dance atop sluggish pools of oily water. Gusts of wind moan and howl from fissures high in the cavern walls.

This chamber is the Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye, the dark force that lies behind Elemental Evil. The ziggurat dates back to ancient times when drow renegades venerated the Eye, long before the days of Besilmer. The elemental prophets come here to seek visions and boons from the Eye, although it is a fickle and uncommunicative power that rarely responds in any recognizable way.

Altar. Any non-evil creature that touches the altar or makes a melee weapon attack against it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (4d10) psychic damage. The altar has AC 15, 150 hit points, and immunity to acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic, and thunder damage, as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons. As long as the altar remains intact, servants of Elemental Evil (including members of the hour elemental cults) can't be frightened while in this room.

Flaming Water. The flames burning on the pools are fed by oil seeps beneath the water. The water is tainted and undrinkable.

Cult Forces

One of the four elemental prophets is here when the adventurers first arrive. Accompanying the prophet is a handful of subordinates. Choose from the following options, discounting any prophet who has been defeated:

- **Aerisi Kalinoth**. The air prophet is accompanied by **Windharrow** (if he escaped the Temple of Howling Hatred), two **hurricanes**, and three **Howling Hatred initiates**.
- **Gar Shatterkeel**. He is mounted on a **giant crocodile** and accompanied by four **Crushing Wave reavers**.
- **Marlos Urnrayle**. The earth prophet is accompanied by two **gargoyles** and two **Sacred Stone monks** wearing gargoyle masks.
- **Vanifer**. The fire prophet has a **flameskull** and two **razerblasts** under her command.

The prophet knows who the characters are. He or she is also aware of any other prophets the party has faced and defeated, having seen the events in fevered visions. The prophet dismisses any such defeat as the culling the weak, assuring the characters that no such weakness is to be found here.

If it seems in keeping with the prophet's personality (see chapter 7), he or she attempts to recruit the characters, saying, "You have shown you are resourceful and have great courage. We can use you. Swear allegiance to me, and I shall show you power such as you have never dreamed of."

Sacrifice. If the characters accept the prophet's offer, he or she demands a test of good faith. The prophet and entourage move to a tactically safe position. Then, to prove their sincerity, the new converts must offer the sacrifice. The villains have a **commoner** named Darreth, abducted from Womford weeks ago, as a sacrifice. Darreth is already bound, gagged, and lying at the foot of the altar.

Darreth doesn't know the layout of the fane, but he has met each prophet except the one the characters defeated on the temple level. He can describe their appearance and demeanor, and he can identify the elemental weapons that each one carries. Further, he knows that these weapons are important and somehow connected to places of elemental power called "nodes."

If he is set free, Darreth is brave enough to accompany the characters if they so wish, and also desperate enough to make the trip back to Womford alone if the characters give him directions back to the surface.

Treasure

Each elemental prophet carries an elemental weapon (see chapter 7).



Conclusion

Defeating the prophet in the Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye (area F21) causes the two remaining elemental prophets to receive a vision of the defeated prophet's final moments and the final incantations of a summoning ritual they haven't yet attempted. Each surviving prophet retreats into his or her respective elemental node and begins preparations to summon one of the four Prince of Elemental Evil.

Any monsters in the fane remain until the characters defeat them.

The Howling Caves

These caves belonged to deep gnomes who had started to explore the Besilmer ruins when the air cult arrived. When the air cult seized the caves below Tyar-Besil, the svirfneblin organized resistance. Their attempt was futile. As soon as Aerisi Kalinoth understood the power of the *devastation orbs*, she tested one on the svirfneblin. The resulting cyclone obliterated the outpost, and its chaotic aftereffects imbued the caves with elemental power which blows through the caves to this day.

Cave Features

The area has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. Most cavern ceilings are 30 feet high, and passage ceilings range from 10 to 15 feet high.

Light. The Howling Caves are lightless.

Wind. Wind continuously moves through the Howling Caves, in whispers or howls.

N1. Entrance

> A subterranean wind blows north, up the tunnel, carrying distant screams from the south.

The north end of the tunnel forms the bottom of a widening shaft that leads up to area F2 in the Fane of the Eye. The rough walls can be climbed safely.

N2. Deadly Pool

> The temperature plunges in this cave, which is dominated by a frozen pool. Ice crystals glitter on the walls, floor, and other rock formations. Snow whirls about on strong gusts.

When the characters first arrive, the temperature in this cave is –30 degrees Fahrenheit. The ice is frozen solid and slippery. (See chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for rules on extreme cold and slippery ice.) For every minute the characters spend here, there is a cumulative ten percent chance that the temperature shifts dramatically.

When the temperature shifts, read the following:

> Suddenly, the air grows very warm. Water rains from above. The ice cracks, and thick waves of steam rise from the pool. Bobbing among the breaking ice, the bloated bodies of small humanoids stare up with wide, dead eyes.

The shift to extreme heat, as described in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, takes only a moment. When the heat begins, the ice cracks at the start of that round and is unable to hold any weight end of the round 3 rounds later. The lake is 12 feet deep and turns to boiling water. A creature that enters the water for the first time on its turn or starts its turn there takes 7 (2d6) fire damage. In addition, steam renders the cave lightly obscured.

Floating Corpses. The bodies are the boiled remains of svirfneblin that lived in area N5.

N3. Oubliette

> Gore spatters the floor and walls of this windy cave, and the floor is strewn with dismembered humanoid corpses. A windy cyclone moves among the remains. A shaft in the ceiling leads up farther than you can see.

The shaft leads to area A19 in the Temple of Howling Hatred. An **air elemental** is bound to this area and cycles beneath the shaft like a red cyclone. Everywhere it moves, it spatters the walls with blood, bone, and viscera.

The corpses are sacrifices to Yan-C-Bin, hurled down the shaft by air cultists. The symbol of elemental air is cut into each victim's forehead. The characters can find an intact head and see the symbol in gory relief.

N4. Storm Chasm

> A chasm divides the subterranean passageway, which continues on the other side ten feet away. Fog obscures the chasm's depths.

The chasm is 50 feet deep, and the lower 40 feet of it is heavily obscured by fog. At the bottom of the chasm are blunt rocks and cave floor. The walls are rough and can be climbed with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

The chasm fills with wind, thunder, or lightning at random times. If one or more creatures are in the chasm, have them roll initiative. On initiative count 10, roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine what effect, if any, occurs in the chasm:

d20	Effect
1–10	None
11–15	Wind
16–18	Thunder
19–20	Lightning

Wind. A strong wind fills the chasm for 1 minute. The wind extinguishes open flames in or above the chasm and imposes disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity checks made by creatures in the chasm.

Thunder. Thunder momentarily fills the chasm. Each creature in the chasm must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, it takes 10 (3d6) thunder damage and is deafened for 1 minute. On a success, the creature takes half damage and isn't deafened.

Lightning. Lightning momentarily fills the chasm. Each creature in the chasm must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) lightning damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

N5. Svirfneblin Settlement

If the nycaloth is in area N7, the characters hear a horrid, rasping song coming from the eastern passage.

> Dwellings carved in the walls of this cavern have been torn asunder by some intense force. Ruins of several dwellings resemble gaps in the walls and piles of rubble. Scores of small humanoid corpses are scattered among the ruins.

This svirfneblin settlement was the test site for Aerisi Kalinoth's first *devastation orb*. Four **specters** of deep gnomes who perished here wander the ruins. The power of the air node imbued them with elemental energy, so their attacks deal lightning damage instead of necrotic. They attack any creature that enters the cavern.

N6. Breathless Cave

> Giant spiders are seized in death among dead cave lizards, giant bats, a carrion crawler, and a female drow decked in fine chain mail, with ruby-pommeled knives at her hips. No injuries are apparent, and the smell of death is fainter than one would expect. At the back of the cave, within ten feet of the drow, a breeze whistles through three tiny fissures in the rock.

The fissures magically pull the air from the cave and the lungs of any creature that comes within 30 feet of the back of the cave. Such a creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be unable to breathe. The creature can't breathe normally again unless it succeeds on the saving throw, made again at the end of each minute. A *remove curse* spell also ends the effect, as does *bottled breath* (see chapter 7).

Treasure

The drow wears a suit of *elven chain* and carries a pair of fine daggers decorated with rubies (1,000 gp each), as well as a scroll of *primordial ward* (see appendix B). See area N7 for more information on this drow.

N7. The Floating Ones

If the nycaloth is alive here, the characters hear a horrid, rasping song coming from the area before they see it.

> Two humans, an aarakocra, and a drow hang suspended from hooks connected to chains. Blood pools on the floor beneath them. Beetles scurry along the floor, walls, and down the chains and onto the victims, which faintly struggle, rasp, and moan as a breeze turns them around and around. Debris, including tattered clothing and broken weapons, is scattered against the walls.

This gruesome display is the work of a **nycaloth** that takes sadistic delight in torturing captives. It guards the outer reaches of the Howling Caves against intruders.

Prisoners. The prisoners here are in poor condition. Each one is incoherent and has 1 hit point remaining. Healing brings a captive back to his or her senses.

The humans are two **Howling Hatred initiates** (see chapter 7) who angered Aerisi one time too many. They're sullen and silent if interrogated. They flee for the surface at the first opportunity.

Feathergale knights captured the **aarakocra**, named Kazra and brought her here for interrogation. She wants only to fly under the open sky once again and pleads with the characters to escort her back to the surface.

The **drow mage**, Balix, is a historian and companion to the dead scout in area N5. They came to see the Fane of the Eye and to find out if surfacers were here, and they walked into a cult ambush. He wants nothing to do with the cults, the surface world, or anything other than returning to the nearest drow community. He uses his innate *darkness* spell to retreat as soon as possible.

Treasure

Among the debris is a spider silk pouch with 23 pp and a *necklace of prayer beads*. The necklace holds one *bead of blessing*, one *bead of curing*, one *bead of summons*, and one *bead of wind walking*.

N8. Wind Chorus

> Wind rushes through this curving natural passage and off into the darkness beyond, howling in a changing pitch as it feeds through the alcoves and fissures of faraway caves.

Occasionally, while here, one or more characters hear whispered lies or hateful howls, as many times as you wish.

Whispered Lies. Choose an NPC friend or ally who was or is important to the affected characters. Those characters hear the NPC's voice on the wind, but the voice taunts and whispers of failures, flaws, and negative traits.

Hateful Howls. Choose an NPC adversary who was or is important to the affected characters. The voice of the adversary swears vengeance, makes threats, and foretells doom.

N9. Mushroom Forest

> This cave has an uneven floor covered with toadstools. The toadstool caps are spotted white, purple, green, and blue. Some are as low and wide as forest ferns while others stand as tall as humans, their stems thick as the trunks of trees. Still others shed a faint light, eerily illuminating a sloped passage leading down to the shore of a placid body of water that also glows dimly. Beneath whispering gusts of air, the sound of dripping water echoes.

Among the myriad fungi, several are magical and act as potions if eaten. One aqua-spotted toadstool acts as a *potion of longevity*. Two amber toadstools flecked with gray work as *potions of heroism*. Three pale lavender toadstools are like *potions of healing*. These magical toadstools regrow over the course of the next year.

Eating any other toadstool forces the eater to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw after 2d4 minutes. Failure indicates the consumer is poisoned. A creature poisoned in this way can repeat the saving throw at the end of each hour, ending the effect on a success.

The sloping passage to the south leads to area N12.

N10. Stalagmite Garden

> Wind blows through this weird stalagmite garden. The rock formations are smooth and contorted, their natural forms weathered to be chaotic and abstract.

Supernatural air has weathered the stalagmites such that they form weird images as one moves through the cavern. The characters might see a line of figures struggling to walk against the wind, faces of the dead, or anything else you wish to depict or convey in your campaign.

N11. Hero's Tomb

> A yellow casket rests on the flat top of a stone column in the middle of a glowing mere.

The natural column rises 20 feet and is slick with water and fungus, so it requires successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks to climb unaided. The casket is covered with a patch of yellow mold (see chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Beneath the mold, a Dwarvish inscription on the casket reads, "Here rests Godwyd the Wyrmbane, dragonslayer and peacekeeper." The casket contains dust, bones, a cloven skull and helm, and a battered breastplate. A gleaming shortsword is clutched in the skeleton's hands (see "Treasure" below).

Treasure

Godwyd's shortsword is a *dragon slayer*. Removing the blade causes a low moan to rise from the casket, but nothing else happens.

N12. Glowing Mere

> Surrounded by tall stalagmites and fungi, a wide, placid pool of water stretches through this elongated cavern. The water glows a soft blue, and in its shallows, silvery fish dart in and out of sight.

The mere is 15 feet deep at its deepest point. The water here is clear and clean.

N13a–N13b. Whispering Caverns

> This cave has an uneven floor. Wind whispers through the flowstone formations here.

These caves are empty.

N14. Air Node's Doorstep

Wind blowing from area N15 intensifies as it passes through this area, extinguishing torches and other open flames.

> Several windy tunnels meet at a chasm. Ledges along the cavern walls create natural footpaths above the abyss.

The chasm is 100 feet deep. The strong wind makes walking on the narrow ledges treacherous. Any creature doing so must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. A creature that fails this check falls from the ledge into the chasm. Normally, the chasm would be easy to climb, but the wind makes it so the climb requires successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks. A creature that fails such a check falls from the chasm wall.

N15. Windhuggers

> A warm wind swirls through this smooth cave, seemingly changing course at random. Nine cultists wearing feathered cloaks stand here with arms outstretched, as though waiting for the wind's embrace or, perhaps, waiting for the wind to carry them somewhere far, far away.

A **Howling Hatred priest** and eight **Howling Hatred initiates** (see chapter 7 for both) are here, but they are too swept up in their "windhugging" to fret about intruders. They attack only if the characters disturb them. This wind here is loud enough that sounds of combat in this cave can't be heard elsewhere.

N16. Tortured Cavern

> The walls have a smoothed, rippled look about them, as if the stone was melted. Squat stalagmites and elongated stalactites bend and lean in unnatural arcs. A strong draft blows across the rock formations, eliciting a hollow howl.

As the characters explore this area, a **black pudding** pours out of a narrow crack in the wall behind them, cutting off their escape. It fights until slain.

N17. Sacrifices

Characters hear the wind and spot the green light here before arriving.

> At an intersection of four tunnels, a mighty gale blows from the northern way, making a constant howl. Two braziers burn with green flame, lighting the area. Numerous rock columns join the floor to the ceiling. Severed silk ropes, darkly sodden with blood, sit at the base of three gore-spattered columns. Tied to two other columns are two women, each with a symbol cut into her forehead.

Prisoners are kept here until they can be sacrificed to Yan-C-Bin in area N19. Two invisible **barlguras** guard the prisoners. The demons lurk among the columns in the upper reaches of the cave, dropping down to attack intruders who dare free the prisoners. If they spot the characters, the two women warn characters of the "invisible demons" that guard them.

Light. Two braziers light this area with *continual flame* spells.

Prisoners. Two humans are kept here, the symbol of air cut into each one's forehead. One is Nerise Gladham, a farmer (an unarmed **commoner** with 2 hit points remaining). The other is Deseyna Norvael, a high-ranking Waterdhavian diplomat (an unarmed **noble** with 4 hit points remaining) who was part of the Mirabar delegation. Both prisoners want only to escape this area and return to civilization.

N18. Royal Guard

The wind is so strong in this chamber and the tunnel leading to area N19 that each creature starting its turn in the area must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be pushed 10 feet toward area N17. Flying creatures have disadvantage on the save. From this point on, a creature must spend 2 feet of movement for every 1 foot it moves when moving closer to area N19. Flying creatures spend 5 feet of movement instead of 2.

The wind disperses gas or vapor, and it extinguishes candles, torches, and similar unprotected flames in the area. It causes protected flames, such as those of lanterns, to dance wildly and has a fifty percent chance to extinguish them.

The characters spot the green light (*continual flame*) from the brazier here before arriving.

A powerful wind roars through this small cave, causing bits of debris to ricochet off the walls, exploding into dust from the impact. In the middle of the cavern a stone brazier is lit with a steady green flame. Blocking the tunnel to the north are four thin figures in billowing cult robes. The wind doesn't seem to impede them at all.

Four emaciated **Howling Hatred priests** (see chapter 7)—Aerisi's most devout cultists—guard this area. Periods of sustaining themselves upon only air have warped their bodies. Their eyes bulge from cavernous sockets, and skin stretches across jutting bone. Because of their devotion, they are immune to the wind's effects.

N19. Air Portal

Characters hear thunder and see flashes of light as they approach this area.

In the middle of this cavern, spikes of stone jut upward like three immense claws. Between them, a churning thundercloud thrashes with lightning. Thunder cracks, and cascades of tiny rocks tumble from above. Beneath the thunderhead stands a raised area splattered with the blood of many sacrifices.

A silvery window is sometimes visible in the center of the cloud. It opens onto clouds in an endless sky.

If the characters defeated Aerisi, two **air elemental myrmidons** (see chapter 7) defend this cave.

If Aerisi is here but isn't the only prophet still alive, use the "Encounter with Aerisi" section. Use the "Encounter with Yan-C-Bin" section if Aerisi is the only remaining prophet. In either encounter, the air elemental myrmidons aren't present.

Encounter with Aerisi

Aerisi Kalinoth (see chapter 7) stands next to the air portal, protected by an **air elemental myrmidon**. While attempting to call Yan-C-Bin into the world, she tries to stay out of the characters' reach while casting her destructive spells. The myrmidons focus on thwarting and killing ranged attackers and spellcasters.

Aerisi refuses to flee at this point, and trying to do so through the air portal with *Windvane* would be disastrous. When the characters defeat her, she vanishes in a scream of wind, but *Windvane* remains, as does the portal.

Encounter with Yan-C-Bin

When the characters arrive, **Aerisi Kalinoth** is alone. She holds *Windvane* aloft and cries, "With this key, I call forth my lord and master!" The moon elf then bows as **Yan-C-Bin** (see chapter 7) flies through the portal. The Prince of Evil Air appears as a gaunt, dark-gray man with white hair and glowing eyes. In this form Yan-C-Bin smiles, and his eyes flash with lightning. As Aerisi gloats, Yan-C-Bin focuses on destroying the characters.



The Air Portal

The thundercloud surrounds a silvery window, which is a portal to the Plane of Air that leads directly to the steps of Yan-C-Bin's invisible castle. This portal is 30 feet from the floor.

Those who pass through the portal arrive on the steps of Yan-C-Bin's invisible fortress, where Yan-C-Bin comes forth to destroy them. Although Yan-C-Bin can enter the world only when the proper ritual is complete, the characters can easily flee through the portal.

Characters can close the portal only by hurling *Windvane* into it, destroying the weapon in the process. If the portal closes while Yan-C-Bin remains in the world, he is forced back to the Elemental Plane of Air.

Treasure

Aerisi has decked herself in royal finery. She wears a platinum torc (worth 1,600 gp), gold and sapphire rings (four, each worth 1,000 gp), and a diadem (6,400 gp) from Evereska. She carries *Windvane* (see chapter 7).

The Plunging Torrents

Dangerous waterfalls, sudden deluges, and weird elemental effects fill the Plunging Torrents, a cavernous extension of the Elemental Plane of Water.

Torrents Features

The complex has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. Cavern ceilings are 10 feet above the water.

Climbing. The walls are rough, slippery stone that require successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks to climb.

Currents. In locations near steep waterfalls, rapid currents exist. Whenever a creature enters a strong current for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be carried 10 feet in the direction of the current, as indicated by arrows on the Plunging Torrents map. The creature can attempt to swim against the current by making successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks. Such water is difficult terrain for all swimmers.

Doors. Interior doors are made of stone and have neither locks nor keyholes.

Light. The node is dimly illuminated by blue and green glows that radiate from the water.

Water Depth. Most water is 20 feet deep.

Waterfalls. Waterfalls are 40 feet high. A creature swept over a waterfall takes no damage from the fall. However, at the start of its turn in the lower basin, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be driven 10 feet underwater and restrained there. The creature can use its action to make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, ending the restrained condition on a success.

Aboleth Whispers

Whenever the characters explore a new area, roll a d6. On a roll of 1, choose one character to receive an image of the setting features (but not creatures) in area P4, P5, or P6. The aboleth living in the node is telepathically projecting these images to frighten trespassers and ultimately lure them to its lair.

Whenever a character responds to this telepathic contact, a link is established. The aboleth instantly knows all the character's desires and goals. It then intermittently projects images to the character in which everything the character loves is destroyed by the Cult of the Crushing Wave. After receiving these images, the character must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or suffer a random form of short-term madness, as described in chapter 8, "Running the Game," of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Random Encounters

Check for a random encounter every 10 minutes. Roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine what, if anything, the characters encounter:

d20	Encounter
1	1 **giant octopus** (see area P11)
2–3	1d4 **ice mephits** (see area P14)
4	1 **water weird** (see area P16)
5	1 **Dark Tide knight** mounted on a **water weird** (see area P16)
6	1d4 **swarms of quippers**
7–20	None

Symbol of Water

Within the Plunging Torrents, any creature that has the symbol of water scratched into their flesh gains a swimming speed equal to its ground speed, is immune to the effects of currents, and suffers no negative effects from descending a waterfall. Inscribing the mark deals 1 slashing damage and leaves a scar. Healing magic can remove the scar and the capabilities it grants.

P1. Waterfall Basin

The waterfall here can be heard from quite a distance.

> A loud waterfall pours into this mossy cavern. Wet stairs hug the western wall, climbing higher than the waterfall and descending into the water-filled basin. Where the stairs meet the water's surface, an iron post juts at an angle, and a flat boat is tied to it. Tunnels to the northeast and northwest channel the water from the pool. Above the pool, a seven-foot-diameter globe of water hovers in midair.

A character who has a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 10 or higher notices the water symbol engraved above the northeast passageway.

The stairs descend 5 feet beneath the lake surface, ending at a rough underwater ledge 15 feet above the submerged cavern floor. The stairs ascend to area F8 in the Fane of the Eye.

Iron Post. The iron post is a recent addition to the cavern, planted haphazardly into the rock of the staircase. When the characters arrive in the chamber for the first time, a punt is moored here.

The punt is a long, flat-bottomed boat equipped with a pole for navigation through the water node. This punt can accommodate up to seven Medium creatures. As part of its movement, a creature can use the pole to propel the punt 10 feet. The punt has AC 8 and 50 hit points. If it goes over a waterfall, it loses 25 hit points and capsizes.

Watery Globe. The 7-foot globe of water floats 1 foot above water level and is stationary until a creature touches it, whereupon it envelops the creature and carries it to area P20 via the northeast tunnel (passing though areas P12, P14, and P16). The globe has a flying speed of 10 feet, and a creature contained within gains the benefit of a *water breathing* spell for as long as it remains in the globe. Any time during the trip, the creature inside the globe can swim out of it as an action. The globe carries only the one creature and bursts upon

reaching its destination. A globe is immune to damage, though *dust of dryness* destroys it.

When the globe is destroyed or leaves this cave, another one rises up out of the water to take its place.

P2. Plunging Passage

> The current moves swiftly toward a small, rocky island that splits the waterway north and south. The sound of falling water is louder to the south.

The current pulls to the south of the island toward the waterfall leading to area P17. Characters navigating the area by water are pulled south and over the falls unless they take countermeasures.

The waterway to the north flows westward down the passageway, unaffected by the current.

P3. Nets

> The waterway dead-ends in a long cavern where only the distant sound of the falls echoes off the walls. Nets divide the cavern, spanning the distance between pairs of stalagmites jutting above the water.

Seven **giant crabs** dwell in this cavern. Three are in plain sight on the rocky ledge to the northwest. Two crabs cling underwater to each span of net. Characters observing the water must roll a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the submerged crabs, which climb their nets to attack any creatures that pass within reach. Once combat starts, all the crabs attack.

Nets. Each net draped across the cavern has AC 8 and 20 hit points. They extend 5 feet above the water. Because the nets are wet, each has resistance to fire damage. Once a net drops to 0 hit points, the net sinks into the water and provides no impediment.

Underwater Passage. If the characters explore beneath the water, read the following:

> Forty feet beneath the water, the walls are constructed of worked stone. Red and black mosaics of tentacles flank a set of black marble doors in the south wall. Reliefs of long, curving fangs line the arc of the door frame.

The double doors push open to reveal an underwater passage to area P4.

P4. Temple Entrance

The walls of this cavern are covered with slime and can't be climbed without gear, and the water here is fouled and unfit to drink.

The water fills the cavern to within 2 feet of the ceiling. The following boxed text assumes that the characters can see underwater:

> Through the water looms a colonnade supporting an arched pediment above a long portico. Behind the colonnade is a pair of stone doors graven with a relief of a circular, saw-toothed maw. In the plaza in front of this structure, four slimy, fishlike humanoids kneel beneath a sunken stone idol of branching tentacles, which convene at the top around a circular fanged mouth.
>
> At the southwestern end of the plaza, a set of curving stairs climbs above the water.

Four **kuo-toa** worship at the altar, while a **kuo-toa monitor** guards the northeast doors. The kuo-toa try to capture victims for their aboleth god (see area P6).

Reinforcements. If a battle occurs here, the creatures from area P7 investigate and join the fray.

P5. Shrine of Yngukulub

> This room echoes with the roar of falling water. Relief carvings of horrific mouths, each framed by a knotwork of oozing tentacles wrought in stone, adorn the slime-covered walls of this half-submerged shrine.
>
> Stairs lined with columns ascend from the water to a landing where a block of smooth stone serves as an altar. Chains snake from the base of the altar, ending in open, rusty manacles.
>
> Three fish-like humanoids with jagged teeth stand around the altar. One wears a headdress of kelp and seashells, and it holds aloft a trident with tines shaped like tentacles.

This is where the aboleth in area P6 comes to feed on sacrifices. A **kuo-toa archpriest** armed with a *trident of fish command* and two **kuo-toa** attend their god here. They attempt to capture the characters and chain them to the altar. The rough-hewn landing on which the altar sits is 20 feet above water level.

Replace the kuo-toa archpriest's Scepter action with the following action:

Trident of Fish Command. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

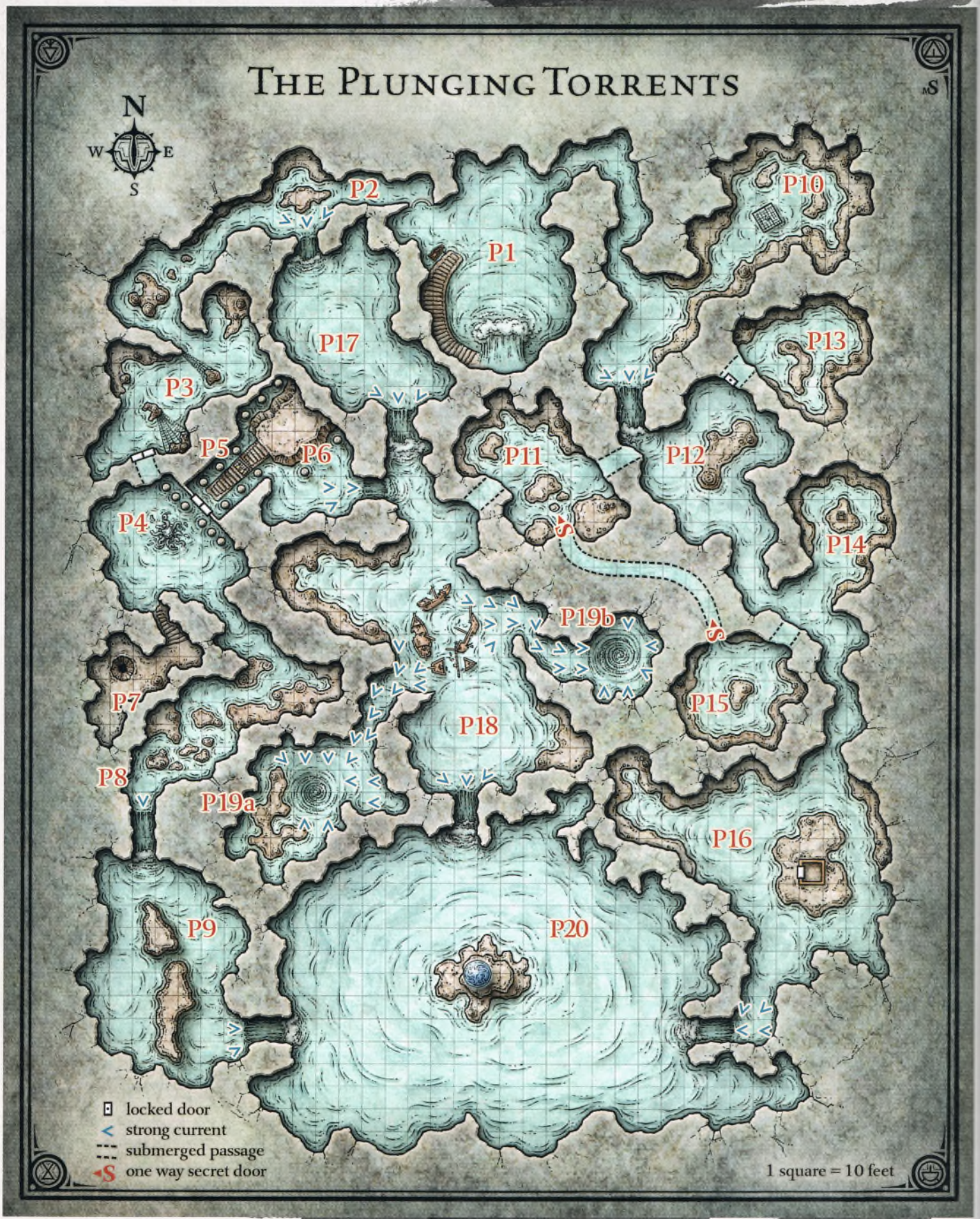
The walls of this cavern are covered with slime and can't be climbed without gear, and the water here is foul and unfit to drink.

Reinforcements. If the aboleth is in area P6, it crawls up to the landing and joins the battle.

P6. Yngukulub the Devourer

An **aboleth** named Yngukulub the Devourer has allied itself with Gar Shatterkeel and the Cult of the Crushing Wave. Deranged kuo-toa bring the aboleth sacrifices, and when they lack a proper sacrifice, they willingly feed themselves to their hungry god.

Yngukulub obeys Gar Shatterkeel because it awaits the day when Olhydra drowns the civilized world and


THE PLUNGING TORRENTS
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P16
P17
P18
P19a
P19b
P20
locked door
strong current
submerged passage
one way secret door
1 square = 10 feet

crushes the temples of the gods. In the dark age that results from the triumph of Olhydra, aboleths can return to their proper place as rulers of the world.

If Gar Shatterkeel was defeated in the Temple of the Crushing Wave, the aboleth guards the water portal in area P20. Otherwise, it is here.

> The slimy water that fills this cave flows through a hole in the east wall before plunging into the cavernous darkness beyond. Tall, slime-covered columns ascend from the foul water. Each one is decorated with a mosaic depicting elves, dwarves, humans, and other races descending into the fanged maw of a three-eyed, tentacled horror at the base of the column. The monster's eyes glitter like gems.

If it is here, the aboleth reaches out telepathically to the characters, promising to fulfill their desires in exchange for servitude. Characters who refuse are pulled down into the briny depths and devoured. The aboleth is heavily obscured by the dark, slimy water while completely submerged. It has no trouble pursuing prey that plunges over the waterfall to the east.

Reinforcements. The kuo-toa in area P5 come to the aboleth's defense if they aren't already dead.

Treasure

The triple eyes of the aboleths depicted on the columns are actually emeralds, sapphires, and blue-green opals. The six gemstones are worth 1,000 gp apiece.

Lying on the floor of the aboleth's cave are 180 pp, 1,700 ep, and a *tentacle rod*.

P7. Quipper Pit

> Stairs rise to a small, damp cave where five loathsome fishfolk stand around a pit, choking and muttering.

The pit is 10 feet wide and 40 feet down to the water. The water at the bottom of the pit is 10 feet deep (enough to cushion a fall).

Four **kuo-toa** and a **kuo-toa whip** have filled the pit with a **swarm of quippers**. They ritually feed creatures to the quippers at times when they and the aboleth are sated. Their ritual is nonsense: gasping, muttering, and croaking with no basis in any known language. The kuo-toa attempt to push characters to the pit.

P8. Sloping Cave

> Stalactites cover the ceiling of this cave, which slopes down toward the south. Embankments skirt the edges, and small, flat stones rise from the water, which is about 5 feet deep. Tiny white fish move through the shallows, darting over glittering coins visible beneath the water.

A **roper** and four **piercers** cling to the cavern ceiling among the stalactites. A character who pays close attention to the stalactites and succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the symbol of water etched into the creatures' tough flesh.

The roper attacks first. As it snares prey with its tendrils, it pulls its prey under the nearby piercers, which then drop from the ceiling. The piercers have advantage on attack rolls made against creatures grappled by the roper.

Treasure

Beneath the water are 230 ep and 563 gp.

P9. Crushing Wave Outpost

> The ceiling of this large, water-filled cavern is 30 feet above the water's surface. In the middle of the cavern, two rocky plateaus rise twenty feet above the water. Atop each plinth crouches a humanoid with slimy, translucent skin. The water flows toward the southeast, where you hear a thunderous waterfall.

The water is only 5 feet deep in this cavern. The walls of the plateaus are wet but rough, and can be climbed with successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks.

Two **Crushing Wave reavers** (see chapter 7) keep watch atop the plateaus. Each has five javelins. They are slaves of the aboleth, and slime covers their translucent flesh. They aren't afraid to die.

Unless they are drawn to area P20 to protect the aboleth, two **chuuls** lurk behind the plateaus. They step out of hiding and attack interlopers as soon as the Crushing Wave reavers start hurling javelins. If a chuul paralyzes a foe, it allows the current to take the helpless creature over the falls and into area P20.

P10. Trial by Water

> A ribbon of dry land hugs the walls of this cavern, the walls of which are covered with chalk-scrawled symbols of elemental water.
>
> In the center of the cavern, a wrought-iron cage dangles from a rope lashed to a stalactite. Three-fourths of the cage hangs submerged in the pool that fills the middle of the cavern. A dozen humanoids pack the cage, elemental water's symbol raised in a scar on every brow. Tired hands grasp at the bars as the captives struggle to press their mouths above the water. Among the mass of wrestling forms, some lay still, floating face down inside the cage.

Eight **Crushing Wave reavers** (see chapter 7) occupy the cage with the drowned corpses of four other cultists.

Gar Shatterkeel locked weak and disobedient cultists inside the cage in a ritual meant to strengthen them. The cultists attack if the characters free them, using bare hands until they can seize weapons. They surrender if reduced to half their number.

P11. Hunter's Den

> Water drips from the stalactites in this serene cave, echoing through the gloom. Wide rock ledges extend around the perimeter, and natural stone islands provide ample room to sit or lay down.

This cave is the lair of a **giant octopus**. It spends most of its time hunting, so it has only a ten percent chance each hour to be in its lair.

Submerged tunnels connect this cave to areas P12 and P18. Characters swimming underwater spot them automatically.

Secret Passage. A one-way secret door blocks access to a submerged tunnel that ends at another similar door. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check is sufficient to find either door, but they open only from the other side.

P12. Feeding Cave

> A long pool fills the cavern, broken only by an island bristling with stalagmites. A corpse floats face down in the water near the island.

Gar Shatterkeel uses this cave to dispose of those who oppose or displease him.

Underwater Gate. A submerged tunnel leads to area P13. This tunnel is blocked by a sturdy and locked iron gate. Four short iron chains ending in manacles are anchored to the iron bars of the gate. Using thieves' tools, a character can pick the lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. The gate can also be wrenched open with a successful DC 25 Strength check.

Drum. A drum stands amid the stalagmites on the island. The cult uses the drum to alert the ghouls in area P13 when fresh meat awaits them.

Floating Corpse. The corpse belongs to a Crushing Wave initiate who got too close to the underwater gate while inspecting its manacles and was paralyzed and clawed to death by the ghast in area P13. A search of the corpse reveals a ring with two keys—one that unlocks the gate, and another that unlocks the gate's manacles.

Southern Area. While exploring the southern part of this area, characters can hear the cackling of the mephits in area P14 above the roar of the falls. The temperature begins to drop the closer one moves toward area P14.

P13. The Hungry

> Humanoid bones are scattered across the water's bottom. Barnacles cling to the cave walls, and piles of splintered bone crowd the cave's ledges and islands. The smell of brine battles with the stench of decay.

Seven **ghouls** and a **ghast** gnaw on the bones in this cave. When a creature enters their lair, the ghouls dive in to devour it and escape confinement.

P14. Eye of Anguish

> Frosty mist fills this cave. Icicles and water crystals glitter along ledges, the ceiling, and the walls, and a brittle crust of ice surrounds a central isle upon which crouches a pale-skinned, bare-chested man wearing an eyepatch. He is surrounded by seven cackling, prancing, imp-like creatures made of ice. Five humans are spread-eagled against the far wall, frozen to its surface, their skin black from frostbite. Some hang upside down or sideways; some are missing fingers, hands, and feet.

A **one-eyed shiver** (see chapter 7) and seven **ice mephits** inhabit this cave. The one-eyed shiver, called the Eye of Anguish by the other cultists, oversees the torture of prisoners. The ice mephits assist him.

Frozen Prisoners. The humans stuck on the cave wall are surfacers who learned too much about the Cult of the Crushing Wave or who stood in its way. A few could be adventurers who failed to stop the cult. Decide who these prisoners are, if any of them are alive, and what role you want them to play.

Development

If the battle here is extremely loud, the cultists in area P16 know to prepare for danger.

P15. Reflection Chamber

> A throne made of coral and seashells stands on the rock at the center of this chamber. Across the arms of the throne, a pearl- and sapphire-encrusted narwhal horn rests like a lordly scepter. The smooth surface of the cavern's pool reflects the throne.

Gar Shatterkeel uses this chamber as his personal retreat, where he reflects on the future of his cult.

The water here radiates divination magic under the scrutiny of a *detect magic* spell. Once per day, when a creature touches the narwhal horn to the pool, a *scrying* spell is instantaneously cast. The spell is limited to creatures and locations within the Plunging Torrents, allows no saving throw, and turns the pool's surface into a scrying sensor. If the horn's wielder doesn't specify a target before touching the horn to the pool, roll a d20. The roll is the number of the area shown in the pool for the spell's duration. (For example, a roll of 9 focuses the scrying sensor on area P9.)

A submerged passage leads to area P14. Characters swimming underwater spot it automatically.

Secret Passageway. An underwater, one-way secret door swivels to allow access to a submerged tunnel leading northwest. Finding the door requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A

similar secret door at the end of the tunnel opens into area P11 and can be spotted without an ability check.

Treasure

Encrusted with sapphires and pearls, the narwhal horn is worth 10,000 gp. A creature holding the narwhal horn in this cave feels it tug toward the reflective water.

P16. Hut of the Dark Tide

The waterfall at the southern end of this cave is audible from the northern approach.

> A crude stone hut perches atop a stony island in the midst of a wide pool. Water drizzles from the cavern ceiling, and the roar of a waterfall echoes throughout.

Two **water weirds** hidden beneath the water's surface serve as bonded mounts for two **Dark Tide knights** (see chapter 7) who live in the hut on the island. One knight is standing guard on the island when the characters first arrive; the other one is resting inside the hut.

The hut contains two hammocks made from fishing nets, as well as the knights' weapons, clothing, and belongings. None of these belongings are valuable.

P17. Elemental Guardian

> Water pours into this cavern from a waterfall to the north, then flows over a second waterfall to the south. Thick mist conceals the cavern ceiling, with only an occasional stalactite piercing the fog. The surface of the water undulates in big, rolling waves.

The ceiling is 30 feet above the eater's surface. A **water elemental myrmidon** (see chapter 7) lurks under the water but rises to attack trespassers not dressed as water cultists.

P18. Wrecks

> Heavy rain batters what must be a gigantic cavern, its walls and ceiling lost in the driving storm. Even the roar of the waterfalls to the north, west, and south hush beneath the rain's noise as it strikes the water.
>
> At the center of the cavern, the shattered hulks of sailing vessels lean upon their sides. Barnacles cling to the hulls. Humanoid skeletons droop from the rigging or lay in tangled piles, and seaweed hangs from the gunwales.

The rain renders the entire area lightly obscured, and strong currents on either side of the wreckage pull toward areas P19a and P19b. Despite the enormity of the cavern, the water here is only 5 feet deep.

A **hydra** nests among the wrecks, and it attacks any intruder that isn't Gar Shatterkeel.

Wrecked Ships. Olhydra channeled the power of the water node to deliver these vessels to Gar Shatterkeel as a demonstration of her power. One of the wrecks is the Tethyrian merchant galley that once conscripted a young Gar Shatterkeel into brutal indenture. The other is the same Calishite pirate vessel that attacked the Tethyrian merchant galley, an event that caused Gar to be cast adrift and lose his arm to a shark.

The wrecks form solid ground, but in most places they are difficult terrain, slick with rain where they aren't full of holes and splintered wood. Any character who attempts a complex maneuver, or takes the Dash or Disengage action, must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall from the wreckage.

The ships lean on their sides. At your option, the ships might have multiple levels of vertical terrain, hanging sails, and tilting masts, which the characters can climb or use as walkways.

Treasure

The Calishite pirate ship carries a chest laden with treasure. Characters searching the wreck find the chest, which contains a *+1 scimitar*, an *alchemy jug*, 1,200 gp, a diamond worth 5,000 gp, and two small rubies worth 1,000 gp each.

The hold of the Tethyrian merchant vessel is gutted, its supplies long gone. One of the skeletons aboard wears a suit of fine scale mail decorated with shell motifs. This scale mail is *mariner's armor*.

P19a–P19b. Vortexes

Strong currents channel water from area P18 to these caves. In the center of each cave is a swirling vortex. Any creature drawn down into the vortex is teleported to a random body of water within the Plunging Torrents. Roll a d20; the number rolled determines of the location where the creature appears. For example, on a roll of 7, the creature teleports to the quipper pit in area P7.

P20. Water Portal

> An island rises from a lake at the epicenter of three roaring waterfalls. Flutes of rose, ivory, and lavender coral fringe the island. Above the island floats a gigantic, shimmering globe of water. Smaller globes of water emerge from it, drift outward, and hover in the air a few feet above the surface of the lake. The ambient light reveals the cavern ceiling, eighty feet above the island and hung with countless stalactites.

The cave floor gradually rises toward the island, such that the water is 20 feet deep at the cave perimeter and only 5 feet deep within 10 feet of the island.

If the characters previously defeated Gar Shatterkeel, use the "Encounter with the Aboleth" section. If Gar has retreated to the node and the characters have defeated two other elemental prophets, use the "Encounter with Gar Shatterkeel" section. If Gar is the sole remaining prophet, use the "Encounter with Olhydra" section.



Water Globes. When the characters first arrive, three 7-foot-diameter globes of water drift about this cavern. Each globe of water floats 1 foot above water level and is stationary until a creature touches it, whereupon it envelops the creature and carries it to area P1 via the north tunnel (passing though areas P18, P17, and P2). The globe has a flying speed of 10 feet, and a creature contained within gains the benefit of a *water breathing* spell for as long as it remains in the globe. Any time during the trip, the creature inside the globe can swim out of it as an action. The globe carries only the one creature and bursts upon reaching its destination. A globe is immune to damage, though *dust of dryness* destroys it.

If a globe is destroyed or leaves this cave, another one emerges from the water portal to take its place.

Encounter with the Aboleth

The **aboleth** from area P6 and the two **chuuls** from area P9 guard the portal. The creatures are submerged in the southwest corner of the cave when the characters first arrive. The aboleth hopes to kill or enslave the characters, seize *Drown*, and replace Gar Shatterkeel as Olhydra's prophet.

Encounter with Gar Shatterkeel

Gar Shatterkeel (see chapter 7) stands on the island before the water portal, beginning his ritual to call forth Olhydra. He is guarded by a **water elemental** and three **crocodiles** that circle the island, attacking any creatures that approach.

Gar makes a final stand here. He can't retreat to the Plane of Water with *Drown*, and he refuses to abandon his grim mission. When the characters defeat him, he turns to inky water and courses away. *Drown* remains where he fell.

Encounter with Olhydra

Gar Shatterkeel stands on the island, unguarded. He holds his trident aloft and cries, "With this key I call forth my mistress!" A dark flow emerges from the portal, forming an immense water elemental with pearly, malignant eyes. This is **Olhydra**, Princess of Evil Water (see chapter 7). Olhydra focuses on remaining in the world to work evil, especially keeping *Drown* away from the characters.

Rising Water. When Olhydra appears, the water in the lake rises 2 feet at the end of each round. Since the waterfalls in the cavern are 40 feet high, the lake rises to the level of areas P9, P16, and P18 after 20 rounds. Once the water reaches the tops of the waterfalls, the water stops at 60 feet deep.

The Water Portal

The water portal is a 13-foot-diameter globe of water that floats above the island.

Characters who pass through the portal arrive underwater on the Elemental Plane of Water, where Olhydra comes forth to destroy them. Characters can retreat through the portal; however, Olhydra can't pass through the portal until the ritual is complete.

Characters can close the portal only by hurling *Drown* into it, destroying *Drown* in the process. If the portal closes while Olhydra remains in the world, she is forced back to the Plane of Water. No more watery globes form within the Plunging Torrents, and the water in the node returns to normal levels. Over the course of the next few days, much of the remaining water siphons out into the surrounding earth.

The Black Geode

The Black Geode is a natural cavern distinguished by the seams of luminous violet crystal. Marlos Urnrayle used *Ironfang* to transform these caverns into an earth node. In the Black Geode's largest cavern lies a portal that leads to Ogrémoch's domain on the Elemental Plane of Earth. Bizarre creatures from that place have crossed through the gate and now inhabit the caverns, while the raw energy of the elemental plane seeps out and is slowly transforming the Black Geode into a reflection of Ogrémoch's domain.

Geode Features

The area has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Character Recognition. Even if he has not yet encountered the characters, Marlos has seen them in his visions. The earth prophet gives descriptions of the characters to all cultists in the Black Geode.

Ceilings. Cavern ceilings are 30 feet high, while tunnels are 15 feet high.

Light. Most areas are dimly lit by crystal formations that give off a soft, violet glow.

Random Encounters

Check for random encounters once every 30 minutes. Roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine what, if anything, the characters encounter:

d20	Encounter
1	1 **burrowshark** riding a **bulette** (see area G13)
2	1 **stonemelder** and 1d3 + 1 **Black Earth guards** (see area G12)
3	1d2 **earth elementals**
4	1 **umber hulk** (bursts out of a nearby wall)
5	Bleeding earth
6	Ceiling collapse
7	Crystal extrusion
8	Fissure
9	Flowstone growth
10–20	None

Bleeding Earth. A nearby wall swells and splits open, oozing thick black mud.

Ceiling Collapse. A tremor causes part of the ceiling to collapse above one random party member. If the party includes NPCs, be sure to count them as well. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone and buried. While buried in this way, the target is restrained and unable to breathe or stand up. A creature can take an action to extricate itself or another buried creature, doing so with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Crystal Extrusion. A crack splits open on a nearby wall, extruding foot-long, luminous violet crystals.

Fissure. A tremor causes a fissure 1d6 × 10 feet deep to open in the floor beneath one party member (determined randomly). If the party includes NPCs, be sure to count them as well. The affected party member must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the fissure, taking bludgeoning damage as normal unless it is tied off or otherwise protected against falling. The walls of the fissure are rough and can be climbed with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Flowstone Growth. Stalactites within 30 feet of the party begin to drip like melting wax. By the time the change ceases, each stalactite has grown 1d4 feet longer. If a stalactite touches the opposite surface, it becomes a natural column.

G1. Hall of the Guardians

This cave lies at the end of a twisting, declining tunnel that began in area F13 of the Fane of the Eye.

> The rough walls of this cavern rise to a vaulted ceiling hung with stalactites and clumps of slender, luminous crystals that bathe the cavern in a soft, violet light. Passages lead east and west. To the east, the tunnel ascends. The western passage is flanked by a pair of twenty-foot tall stone statues of rough-hewn humanoids, their faces grim masks of forbiddance. Next to each statue is a human guard encased in stone armor.

Two **Black Earth guards** (see chapter 7) stand in front of the statues. Characters not wearing disguises are recognized for who they really are. Characters disguised as earth cultists or cult prisoners must make a Charisma (Deception) check contested by the guards' Wisdom (Insight) checks; if all the characters succeed, the guards are fooled and allow them to pass.

If combat erupts here, two **earth elementals** burst up from the middle of the floor and join the battle. These elementals have veins of glowing purple crystal; each sheds bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for another 15 feet beyond that.

G2. Keltar and Gorx

> The walls of this circular chamber are thick with glowing crystals. In the middle of the room is a fat, egg-shaped creature with three arms, three legs, heavy-lidded eyes, and a wide mouth atop its stony ovoid body. Casually dropping gemstones into the creature's gaping mouth is a creepy-looking earth cultist.

A **stonemelder** (see chapter 7) named Keltar keeps vigil with a **xorn** he discovered hiding in area G17. If the characters attack either, both retaliate in kind. The xorn flees once it has fewer than 20 hit points, but Keltar fights to the death.

Roleplaying Keltar. Keltar believes the xorn, called Gorx, is an emissary from Ogrémoch sent to test the cult's worth. In fact, the creature wandered through the earth portal out of curiosity. Since Keltar was eager to please Gorx, it has done nothing to dissuade him.

The xorn has convinced Keltar that Ogrémoch wants tribute, and so Keltar extracts offerings from everyone who passes through. Keltar is so obsessed with offerings that he ignores the appearance of passersby and the usual pass phrase. When he notices the characters, he asks, "Do you bring an offering?"

Making an offering involves throwing precious metals or gems into the xorn's maw. Keltar soberly informs contributors the treasure is transported to Ogrémoch's domain.

The xorn can smell the party's wealth, and so it demands a tribute of 500 gp in Terran. If the party complies, Keltar asks, "Is our prince satisfied with the offering?" to which Gorx replies, "The prince finds this sacrifice pleasing." Keltar believes the xorn has deemed the party worthy, so he allows them to pass. He also helpfully responds to inquiries. If the characters are undisguised, he directs them toward area G3, as another test of their worthiness. Keltar directs the characters toward area G6 if he believes them to be cultists and also reminds them of the pass phrase to cross the stone bridge (area G9) safely: "We walk in the shadow of Ogrémoch!"

If the characters refuse to pay, the xorn attacks the character carrying the most treasure. Meanwhile, Keltar flees to area G6.

Treasure

The xorn's stomach still contains some undigested offerings: 9 gp, three egg-sized chunks of rough moonstone worth 25 gp each, three carnelians worth 50 gp each, and a cracked amethyst worth 100 gp. Keltar carries two more carnelians and hides a folded scroll of *investiture of stone* (see appendix B) in a pocket.

G3. Roper Den

This cave is a thicket of stalagmites and stalactites. Several weapons and broken pieces of armor lie scattered among the spires in the room's center.

A **roper** hangs from the ceiling above the debris. It ate several cultists before the others started avoiding the area. Eager for more humanoid flesh, the roper attempts to subdue as many of the adventurers as it can. It closes its eye and retracts it tendrils when reduced to 20 hit points, hoping the characters leave it alone.

Treasure

Scattered amid the broken weapons and armor are 65 gp, a brass statuette of an imp with onyx eyes worth 180 gp, and a *ring of swimming*.

G4. Bewildering Crystals

This cave is a forest of glowing crystals, which grow like foliage on slender stone columns that make it difficult to gauge the chamber's true size. Slumped against one of the columns is a dead man wearing a stone breastplate.

Any creature entering the cave for the first time on a turn or starting its turn inside must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of a *confusion* spell. Once a creature succeeds on its saving throw, it is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

A thunderous noise emanates from the northeast tunnel, which is only 5 feet high and slopes gently upward to area G6. The tunnel ends at a wall of falling mud (see area G6). Any creature passing under the mud takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

Corpse. The corpse belongs to a Black Earth guard killed by one of his fellow cultists. The guard carries nothing of value.

Secret Passage. The "secret" entrance to area G5 is a tunnel cloaked by a 6th-level *major image* spell to look like a solid stone wall. Discovering its nature from a distance requires a DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) check, although direct interaction immediately reveals the illusion.

G5. Underdark Entrance

A hole in the back of this cave forms the mouth of a tunnel that plunges deeper into the earth. The tunnel is devoid of the luminous crystals that grow elsewhere in these caverns, and a chill, fetid breeze wafts up from its depths.

This tunnel runs for miles, eventually branching off into the caves of the Underdark.

G6. Mudflow Falls

The dull roar of splashing, churning mud fills this cavern, the walls and ceiling of which are streaked with glittering veins of glowing violet crystal. A stream of mud pours through a gash in the roof, cascades down until it crashes onto a ten-foot-high ledge, then tumbles over the ledge into a thin river of mud that flows out through a hole in the northeast corner. A stone staircase climbs up to the ledge, where a passage leads north. A tunnel on the lower level leads south.

Earth cultists call this river of elemental mud the Mudflow. The river is 6 feet wide, 3 feet deep, and descends a total of 40 feet by the time it reaches area G11. Any creature that enters the river for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there must make a DC 10 Strength saving throw or fall prone and be swept 20 feet toward area G11. A creature that is prone in the mud must use an action and succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to stand up. Standing isn't possible within the section of tunnel between this cave and area G11; that stretch of the river is completely submerged in mud.

A creature can use an action to pull itself or another creature within its reach out of the Mudflow, doing so on a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.


G16
G17
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G11
The Black Geode
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G1
1 square = 10 feet
= 20 foot descent

Every 1 foot of movement through the mud costs 2 feet of speed, 5 feet if the creature is trying to move against the flow.

Hidden Tunnel. A 5-foot-high tunnel hidden behind the mud descends to area G4. A creature must pass though the mud to reach the tunnel, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage from the falling mud.

Ledge. The western portion of the cave is 10 feet higher than the eastern portion, and the ledge can be scaled with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. The stone staircase leading up to the ledge is on the north side of the Mudflow.

G7. Empty Cave

> This small cave is striated with glowing violet crystals. A tunnel to the south turns sharply eastward, while a tunnel to the north slopes down and toward the east as well.

This area is perfect for random encounters.

G8. Cavern of the Lost Crown

As the party approaches this area for the first time, read the following text:

> Bloodcurdling screams come from the cave ahead. The cries last only a few seconds, then stop suddenly.

Once the party can see the cave, read the following:

> Humanoid bones litter the floor of this cavern. Some skeletons are partially intact, their rib cages shattered by boulders lying atop them. Only one skeleton remains whole, and it clutches to its chest an open-faced steel helmet decorated with a golden circlet above the brow, from which seven small gold spikes project upward.

The crowned helmet is an ancient dwarven relic (see "Treasure" below) that radiates strong magic when scrutinized with a *detect magic* spell. As soon as someone tries to take it, the **ghost** of a duergar treasure hunter named Reulek appears and uses his Horrifying Visage, screaming, "Thieves! Learn from my folly! Even in death, the dwarves of Besilmer guard their fabled treasure!" As the ghost intones these words, four **specters** of dead drow killed here long ago in a cave collapse materialize and attack the living.

Roleplaying Reulek. Earth cultists found the crowned helmet in the Temple of Black Earth but failed to realize its significance. Reulek later stole it and was sneaking toward area G5 when he fell prey to the specters in this cave.

Reulek believes the specters killed him for stealing the helmet. His soul is bound to the relic by the thought that he must return it to its rightful owner before going to his eternal rest.

If the adventurers defeat the specters and talk to the ghost, Ruelek explains his predicament. If the characters point out the specters weren't dwarves and probably didn't care about the crown, Reulek admits that his death may have had nothing to do with the relic. He knows that the remains of the last king of Besilmer are beneath the Halls of the Hunting Axe. He asks the characters to help him return the crowned helm to the king's tomb. Characters who agree find that Reulek accompanies them through his connection to the relic, although he manifests only when you wish him to do so.

If the party refuses to help, or if at any point Reulek gets the sense that they aren't going to follow through on their promise, he uses Possession to enforce the agreement. If the party stays true to the bargain, Reulek's spirit thanks them as he goes to his rest.

Reulek was the partner of an oni named Obratu (see "Vale of Dancing Waters" in chapter 6). The characters might recognize his name from the note they find if they defeat Obratu. Reulek shrugs if the characters mention Obratu, saying, "It was a partnership of convenience."

Treasure

The golden-spiked helm is the *Lost Crown of Besilmer* (see chapter 7).

G9. Narrow Stone Bridge

The following boxed text assumes that the characters arrive here via the tunnel to the north or south:

> The passage opens onto a smooth stone bridge flanked by boulders. The bridge is five feet wide, has no railings, and spans a wide cavern that echoes with strange clacking noises.

The bridge is 40 feet long and sturdy. A creature on the bridge that takes 10 damage or more from a single source must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. If the save fails by 5 or more, the creature is knocked off the bridge and falls. On any other failed result, the creature is knocked prone but manages not to fall off the bridge. The bridge is 40 feet above the floor of the surrounding cavern (area G10).

Two **galeb duhrs** guard the bridge—one at each end. They look like ordinary boulders until they open their eyes and move. To cross the bridge without rousing the galeb duhrs, someone among the passersby must speak the cult's pass phrase: "We walk in the shadow of Ogrémoch!" Otherwise, the galeb duhrs wait until intruders are halfway across the bridge before attacking, first by animating the boulders set near them and commanding them to roll across the bridge.

The clacking noises are made by the hook horrors in the surrounding cavern.

Reinforcements. Combat on the bridge attracts the hook horrors in area G10, which gather under the bridge and attack any creature that falls.

G10. Clickety Clack

This long cavern cuts a wide swath through the earth. Its jagged walls look as if the stone here tore itself apart. Shattered bones lie amid the scree. High above, a narrow stone bridge spans the defile. The chasm echoes with clacking noises that sound a little like falling rocks.

The cavern ceiling is 80 feet high, and the bridge (area G9) is 40 feet above the cavern floor.

Eight **hook horrors** hide in crevices along the walls, communicating with one another using a series of indecipherable clicks and clacks. The hook horrors attack any creature that tries to cross their territory or falls from the bridge.

Secret Way. Hidden at the back of one hook horror's crevice is a narrow passage leading 20 feet up to area G7. The opening to this tunnel requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot, although a character who explores the crevice by entering it finds the hidden tunnel without an ability check.

Treasure

Characters who search through the shattered bones of the hook horrors' previous victims find 17 sp, four pieces of blue quartz (10 gp each), a silver hand mirror inlaid with lapis lazuli (270 gp), and a *pearl of power*.

G11. Elemental Mud Pool

A river of thick mud gushes from a fissure in one wall, running a short way before gathering into a swirling pool. Standing next to the pool is an earth elemental encased in armor and several small creatures composed of thick, dripping mud.

The river of mud flows into this cavern from area G6. An **earth elemental myrmidon** (see chapter 7) stands guard, ignoring the taunts of six **mud mephits**. The myrmidon is protective of the pool and attacks intruders. The mephits join in, but unlike the myrmidon, each one reduced to fewer than 10 hit points flees.

See area G6 for rules about moving through the river of mud. A creature that ends its turn in the swirling pool must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be sucked down into the Elemental Plane of Earth and lost. A creature tethered by a rope can be pulled 10 feet toward the edge of the pool with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Development

If the characters observe the cave unnoticed for a few minutes, they see the myrmidon lean over the pool and pluck a fledgling **mud mephit** from the muck. The pool has a noncumulative five percent chance of spawning a new mud mephit each hour.

G12. Hall of Meditation

If the characters approach this area quietly and without bright light sources, they can surprise the earth cultists within.

The walls of this cavern are broken at regular intervals by small alcoves, each of which holds a shard of glowing violet crystal. Four earth cultists are here. Each one kneels or sits in front of an alcove, in a way that suggests a form of meditation.

At any given time, the cave contains two **Black Earth guards**, one **burrowshark**, and one **stonemelder** (see chapter 7 for these cultists' statistics). The guards are in the southern part of the cave, the others in the northern section. If **Hellenrae** (see chapter 7) has not been defeated, she is here in place of the stonemelder. The cultists are meditating, using the crystals as foci. They are too entranced to hear sounds of combat in areas G9 or G13.

Several barrels and crates stand at the north end of the cavern. They contain water and rations.

G13. Bulette Kennels

Boulders have been used to build crude, roofless enclosures similar to pens—three to the north and three to the south. Odd saddles and harnesses are piled in the middle of the cave, while spears and goads lean against the walls.

There is a fifty percent chance that a **burrowshark** (see chapter 7) named Rorgrin is here, along with his trained **bulette** mount; otherwise they're in area G14. If they are here, Rorgrin and his mount are in plain view and attack intruders on sight.

The enclosures to the north and south are kennels enclosed by 10-foot-high walls. The south kennels are empty. The northern kennels contain three young bulettes (use **rhinoceros** statistics, but they bite instead of gore). These bulettes are sleeping if Rorgrin isn't present. A character can sneak past the sleeping bulettes by succeeding on a DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) check. The bulettes awaken on a failed check or if one or more of them is attacked. If Rorgrin is in area G14, the roused bulettes hiss at strangers, alerting Rorgrin to their presence.

G14. Rorgrin's Cave

The back of this small cave is filled by a nest made of broken shards of rock. Nearby, a bedroll is laid out on the ground with an odd saddle sitting in place of a pillow.

If the party didn't encounter Rorgrin in area G13, they find the **burrowshark** here with his trained **bulette** mount. Half the time, the pair is asleep.

Treasure

Stashed under his leather saddle "pillow," Rorgrin keeps a small leather bag containing 91 gp, two garnets (worth 100 gp each), and a *potion of thunder resistance*.

G15. Arcane Foundry

> Stone slabs line the walls of this cave. Weapons, pieces of armor, and various tools cover the slabs. In the middle of the chamber, steam rises from a well of boiling mud.

The slabs are worktables covered with tools used for chiseling and carving stone and crystal, as well as weapons and bits of armor (see "Treasure" below).

Two **stonemelders** (see chapter 7) work here, along with a dwarf master smith Rhundorth—one of the delegates from Mirabar (see below). If **Miraj Vizann** (see chapter 7) survives, he is here in place of one stonemelder. Three **nothics** watch from the shadows, ready to provide arcane insight during the forging process. The nothics are unwilling servants and flee toward area G16 if given the opportunity.

Rhundorth has the statistics of a **guard** but is unarmed and unarmored (AC 11). His Strength is 18, and he speaks Common and Dwarvish. If given a choice of weapons, he prefers a warhammer (+6 to hit, 1d8 + 4 bludgeoning damage, or 1d10 + 4 bludgeoning damage while using two hands). He is lawful good.

Roleplaying Rhundorth. Rhundorth was conscripted to toil here, helping the earth cult craft armor and weapons in exchange for a promise that other delegates in the earth cult's custody wouldn't be harmed. He knows the sage Bruldenthar was left in the mines of the Sacred Stone Monastery, and Lady Deseyna was captured by air cult raiders. He also reports that the moon elf Teresiel was handed over to the fire cult a couple of tendays ago.

Mud Pool. A creature that enters the well of boiling mud for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 10 (3d6) fire damage. The mud is 5 feet deep and heated by a volcanic vent beneath the cave.

Treasure

Characters searching the worktables find several crystal staffs, stone morningstars, and pieces of rock armor, as well as a *+1 breastplate* crafted from polished crystal. It bears the symbol of earth, and it heightens its wearer's urges to act in a selfish, greedy, or wicked way.

G16. Cathedral of Stone

> This cavern has a vaulted ceiling supported by six natural stone columns. Crystal growths protruding from the ceiling cast a lurid purple glow over everything. Issuing from a tunnel that descends toward the east is the loud, constant sound of stone grinding against stone.

If the nothics in area G15 retreat to this cave, they cower at the western end of the room.

G17. Earth Portal

> This colossal cavern is an alien landscape filled with soaring stone buttresses, weirdly twisting columns, and gargantuan shards of glowing crystal. A long path of steps is cut into the uneven floor and wends its way between the mighty stone pillars to the cavern's core. There, the steps climb to the base of a stone monolith that is constantly changing its shape, filling the great cavern with a thunderous grinding noise.

If Marlos Urnrayle has been defeated elsewhere, this cavern is guarded by two **earth elemental myrmidons** (see chapter 7) that stand before the monolith in plain view. If Marlos has retreated to this cavern and the characters have defeated two other prophets, use the "Encounter with Marlos Urnrayle" section. Use the "Encounter with Ogrémoch" section if Marlos is the last remaining prophet.

Encounter with Marlos Urnrayle

Marlos Urnrayle (see chapter 7) stands before the earth portal, attempting to summon Ogrémoch. The characters find him with his back turned and the hood of his rich cloak pulled up, so he looks like a finely dressed cult priest. Two **Black Earth guards** (see chapter 7) attend him, and four **gargoyles** cling to the four nearest columns. Marlos continues incantations until he becomes aware of the characters. Then, he pulls back his hood and attacks.

Marlos taunts the characters, challenging those who avert their eyes to behold his power and beauty. The medusa is infuriated if anyone manages to meet his gaze and survive, concentrating his attacks on such characters.

The prophet stands his ground here. He can't flee through the earth portal with *Ironfang*, and his pride doesn't allow him to relinquish his power in the node. When the characters defeat him, he turns to mud and melts away. *Ironfang* and the portal remain.

Encounter with Ogrémoch

Marlos Urnrayle appears much as he does in the previous section. When the characters arrive, he holds *Ironfang* aloft and intones, "With this key, I call forth the Mountain of Doom, the great and terrible Ogrémoch!" He steps back as the earth portal liquifies and the



colossal form of **Ogrémoch** emerges (see chapter 7). Ogrémoch focuses on destroying the characters with little concern for the consequences to Marlos. The elemental prince's aim is to remain in the world and consolidate power here before sowing chaos.

The Earth Portal

The monolith is a portal leading to the Elemental Plane of Earth. Part of the monolith is in a liquid state at any given time, and any creature that touches the liquid stone is pulled into the Plane of Earth, near Ogrémoch's dwelling place. The Prince of Evil Earth can attack intruders on his home plane but can't pursue them through the portal into the world until the proper ritual is complete.

Characters can close the portal only by striking the monolith with *Ironfang*. When the elemental weapon strikes the monolith, it chips the otherwise indestructible stone, causing the portal to implode in a grinding display, showering the area with pulverized rock and crystal. Ogrémoch is forced back to his home plane when this event happens, serving the cult. Cultists other than Marlos cower and flee.

When the portal implodes, an *earthquake* spell is triggered, centered at the point where the monolith once stood. Five minutes later, this entire cavern collapses, killing and burying any creatures still inside. The bridge at area G9 collapses as well, while other areas of the Black Geode remain intact. Cut off from the influence of the Plane of Earth, the Black Geode no longer experiences tremors and weird magical effects, reverting to its natural state over a few days.

The Weeping Colossus

The Weeping Colossus sits in the heart of a volcanic fissure. During the height of the dwarven civilization of Besilmer, lava filled this entire area, and the heat and magma rose into the lowest levels of the city where the foundries were located. When Vanifer arrived with her cult, she used her connection with Imix, the Prince of Evil Fire, to settle the magma and form the chambers left behind. Now, the fissure and lava tubes serve as the fire node, an extension of the Elemental Plane of Fire, resulting in lava flows, ash storms, gouts of liquid fire, and other strange elemental effects.

Colossus Features

The complex has the following features. Any exceptions are noted in areas to which they apply.

Ceilings. Ceilings are 15 feet high in tunnels and 20 feet high in chambers.

Chambers and Passages. The various open spaces were formed from flows of lava that crusted over and cooled, with the hotter middle draining away. Where the walls and ceilings are solid, the surfaces are smooth like glass or folded where the liquid stone flowed in layers. In other places, drips and splashes have formed formations like stalagmites, stalactites, and rounded bubble formations similar to bunches of grapes. Despite the solidity of the formations, much of it is still hot.

Floors. Floors can be smooth and rounded or flat. In some places, the floor is a crust with lava beneath.

Lava. A creature takes 6d10 fire damage when it enters lava for the first time on a turn or when it ends its turn there.

Light. All areas of the node are brightly lit by fire or lava.

Sounds. The hiss and rumble of flowing lava can be heard throughout the node.

Elemental Heat

The map indicates three zones of heat intensity. The low intensity zone is uncomfortably hot but doesn't otherwise impede the characters. Characters in the medium and high zones are subject to extreme heat, as described in chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. In the high intensity zone, the DC for avoiding exhaustion starts at 10.

Random Encounters

For every 30 minutes the characters spend inside the Weeping Colossus, roll a d20 and consult the following table. Explanations of some of the encounters appear after the table. In the medium intensity zone, roll a d20 and a d4, subtracting the d4 from the d20 roll. Use a d6 instead of a d4 in the high intensity zone.

d20	Encounter
1–2	1 **fire elemental**
3	1d8 **magmin**
4	1d3 **salamanders** (see area W7)
5	Crust break
6	Flame gout
7	Lava rain
8	Smoke cloud
9	Sulfur cloud
10–20	None

Crust Break. A random character steps on a particularly thin spot on the floor. The character must succeed at a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall into a hole (seventy-five percent chance) or lava beneath the thin spot (twenty-five percent chance). If the case of a hole, the character falls 1d4 × 10 feet into an empty magma pocket. The lava deals damage as described earlier.

Flame Gout. A bubble of gas spontaneously ignites, creating a burst of flame identical to a *burning hands* spell. The cone starts in the space of a random character and shoots in a random direction.

Lava Rain. At the start of a round, lava droplets form on the ceiling and fall in a 20-foot-diameter area, dealing 9 (2d8) fire damage to any creature that enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there. The drops ignite exposed flammable objects. The rain ends at the end of a round 2d4 rounds later.

Smoke Cloud. A cloud of smoke kicks up, filling an area 40 feet in diameter and causing that area to become lightly obscured. The smoke dissipates in 1d4 minutes unless a wind disperses it.

Sulfur Cloud. A discharge of noxious fumes erupts from a nearby vent. The effects are identical to a *stinking cloud* spell.

W1. Volcanic Shaft

This shaft descends from area E14 in the Temple of Eternal Flame, past area F15 in the Fane of the Eye. A magical disk allows easy movement among the levels.

> The natural walls of the shaft widen near the base. Heat and light radiate from a bubbling lake of lava that covers most of the floor. Lava flows through an exit to the northeast. Stone passages open to the northwest, west, and south.

One **flamewrath** watches from the tunnel labeled "a," while one **Eternal Flame priest** is positioned at the tunnel labeled "b." A **razerblast** stands watch in the middle passage. (See chapter 7 for the cultists' statistics.) The guards attack intruders who fail to use the pass phrase, "Hail the heart of fire!"

Brass Plate. A small brass plate is embedded in the north wall of the middle passage, near where the razerblast stands watch. It has an indentation in the shape of a human hand. When pressed, the plate causes basalt pillars to rise from the lava, creating stepping stones between the floating disk and the middle passage. The pillars are hot when they first rise. A creature that comes into contact with a hot pillar for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 3 (1d6) fire damage. After 1 minute, the pillars cool.

Lava Passage. The northeastern lava flow is only 4 feet lower than the ceiling of the passage through which it flows.

Development

The razerblast in area W2 takes the place of any guards slain here.

W2. Sentry Chamber

> Half of this oddly shaped chamber is set higher than the other half, as if it cracked and shifted a few feet upward. A natural pillar is the only feature of the upper level. In the center the lower level, a vortex of flame jets from the floor toward the ceiling. Numerous exits head off in different directions around the perimeter.

One **razerblast** (see chapter 7) and one **fire giant** lounge here, off duty from keeping watch over area W1. When the characters first enter this chamber, the fire giant is dozing on the upper shelf. The razerblast sits near the jet of flame, treating it like a campfire.

Hidden Exit. The passageway toward area W5 is hidden behind the basalt pillar and positioned high up along the wall. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher notices it. Otherwise, the characters have to look in the right place. Crude holds are cut into the pillar and the wall, so they can be climbed like a ladder to the passage.

Treasure

The giant has a satchel made of chain mail. Inside are 600 gp, thirteen bloodstones worth 50 gp, and a *potion of invisibility*.

W3. Causeway

This chamber's lower reaches are filled with lava. An uneven stone causeway spans the lava, ending at a narrow ledge along the eastern wall. Hanging from a pair of stout chains near the western tunnel is a large brass gong.

To the north, lava flows out through a wide passage, the magma almost toughing the ceiling there. To the south is a similar passage, but the ceiling there is a few feet higher than the lava.

Vanifer sacrifices prisoners here by forcing them to cross the causeway to the eastern ledge, then ringing the gong to alert the molten roper in area W4.

Causeway. The causeway is 3 to 5 feet wide and has no railing. Its surface is rough and uneven. If the characters go out on the causeway, see area W4.

Gong. The gong creates a loud, reverberating tone that can be easily heard within 100 feet. If the characters strike the gong, see area W4.

Lava Passages. The southern lava flow is only 4 feet lower than the ceiling of the passage through which it flows. To the north, the gap between lava and ceiling is only a few inches.

W4. Pool of Lava

The causeway hugs the east wall, narrowing as it travels north until it finally peters out. The magma hisses and roils, and flames dance on its surface.

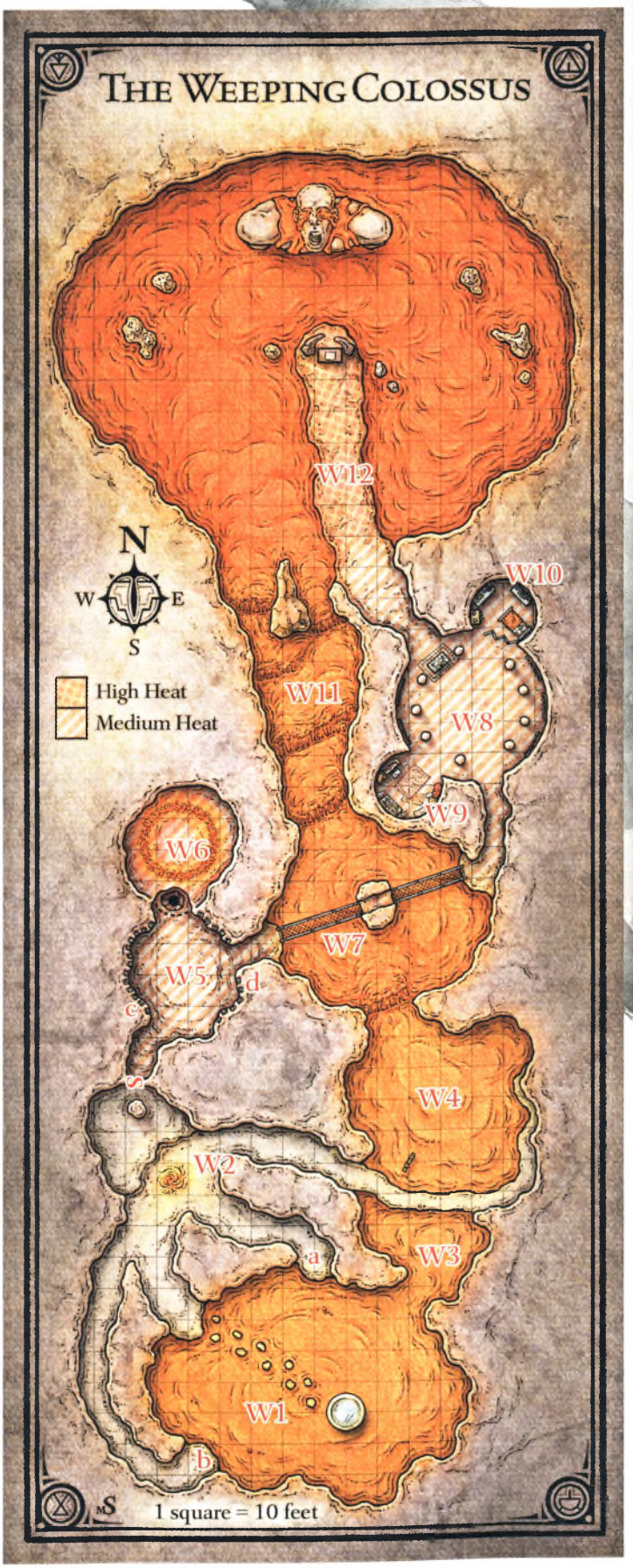
A **roper** made of molten magma lurks in the middle of the lava pool, peeking up occasionally or rising to the sound of the gong. It has immunity to fire damage and vulnerability to cold damage, and its bite attack deals fire damage instead of piercing damage. A hit from the roper's tendril deals 4 (1d8) fire damage, and a creature takes the same damage each time it ends its turn grappled by the roper.

When the roper uses its Reel action, it pulls creatures it is grappling into the lava. Because of the lava, the roper has a challenge rating of 11 (7,200 XP).

W5. Chamber of Skulls

This chamber sits at the high point of this part of the fire node. Both passages leading into it (from area W2 and area W7) rise toward it at a thirty-degree angle. A bizarre play of multicolored flickering light is visible before the characters enter.

The steep passage opens into a chamber with a convex floor. Scores of humanoid skulls, most of them scorched and charred, are stuffed into niches in the walls. Many of them burn with flames, each varying in color, casting the entire chamber in bizarre light.



Because of the convex floor, characters standing at an entryway can't see the other exits.

Flaming Skulls. Most of the skulls are ordinary skulls with *continual flame* spells cast on them. However, four of the skulls are actually **flameskulls**. They attack if the prisoners in area W6 try to escape. Otherwise, they remain motionless.

Fumes. Due to the height of the room relative to the rest of the node, toxic fumes collect here. Whenever a creature starts its turn inside the room, it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Holding one's breath doesn't negate the effects.

Hidden Levers. Levers are hidden in secret niches behind skulls at the points marked "c" and "d" on the map. Finding a lever requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Pulling either lever opens a small vent in the center of the ceiling, and natural air currents draw the fumes out of the chamber in a few moments. Characters to notice the steady airflow. The vent closes again 1 minute after a lever is pulled, and the chamber refills with fumes after 5 minutes.

Shaft. An alcove in the north wall contains an 8-foot-diameter shaft that leads 30 feet down to area W6. Read the following if the characters look into the shaft:

> Intense heat and light radiate up from the bottom of this smooth-sided shaft, and the crackle of flames is easily discernible from below. A chain ladder is coiled up near the hole, one end attached to the wall.

Characters can descend the shaft using the chain ladder without needing to make an ability check.

W6. Prison

This room is 30 feet below area W5 and accessible via a vertical shaft. Once a character reaches the bottom of the shaft, read the following:

> This rough, circular cave is painfully hot. A curved wall of fire stretches from floor to ceiling and leaves only five feet between it and the surrounding walls.

The ceiling here is 20 feet high. The fire is a ring-shaped *wall of fire* spell made permanent (until dispelled) by Vanifer. A creature that ends its turn in this room but outside the ring takes 5d8 fire damage. A creature takes the same damage when it enters the wall for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there.

Vanifer can control this wall, lowering it (or parts of it) to deposit or extract prisoners and then raising it again. The wall radiates no heat inside the ring, so the prisoners are unharmed while they remain there.

Prisoners. Two Waterdhavian caravan merchants named Kharloss and Jarlee (use the **noble** statistics), and a **Crushing Wave reaver** named Dirana, are here and awaiting their fate as sacrifices. The prisoners are exhausted and delirious.

Kharloss and Jarlee are willing to pay up to 500 gp for an escort to any town in the Dessarin Valley. They're honest. However, it takes several tendays to acquire the necessary coin from their holdings in Waterdeep.

Dirana is willing to trade information. She can sketch a basic map of the Temple of the Crushing Wave and the Plunging Torrents. She hasn't been to either place in several tendays and doesn't know who or what inhabits most of the chambers.

Development

If the characters leave any prisoners here, Vanifer sacrifices the remaining captives to the magma roper (area W4) within a day. If the prison is empty, the ring of fire is a low flame near the floor.

Characters captured within the node are stripped of their gear and brought here. If they fail to escape within 24 hours, Vanifer comes with the cultists in area W8, takes the prisoners to area W4, and feeds them to the magma roper

W7. Breeding Chamber

> The tunnel opens above a pool of lava, the surface of which is thirty feet below. A metal catwalk suspended 10 feet from the ceiling by iron chains connects to another tunnel on the far side, as well as to a stone column rising up from the magma. The catwalk passes through a hole in the column. In the lava below, serpentine creatures glide and splash. To the south, the lava cascades into the pool before the current continues down a channel to the north.

Four **salamanders** and eight **fire snakes** swim in the lava, which they use as a breeding pool. The salamanders lob their spears at anyone other than Vanifer and her guards who crosses the room, while the fire snakes have no way to attack creatures on the catwalks. If seriously wounded, the salamanders and fire snakes dive below the lava and remain out of sight.

Catwalk. The catwalk has no rail and shakes as people move across it, but it's sturdy.

Treasure

Inside the column is a rock that has the symbol of fire carved into it. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher notices it. Under the rock is a small brass box—one of Vanifer's emergency stashes—containing two *potions of greater healing* and a *potion of gaseous form*.

W8. Fire Shrine

Basalt pillars rise from the glassy floor of this circular cave to support a smooth domed ceiling. Niches carved into the columns hold dancing flames that illuminate copper tapestries hanging on the walls. Each tapestry bears the symbol of the fire cult. Just in front of a wide exit tunnel stands a dais with an altar atop it. Before the altar kneel three cultists, two in robes and one encased in armor.

To the north and south are smaller chambers attached to the shrine. An ornate privacy screen blocks the view to the north. The southern room is circular and lavishly decorated.

If the efreeti from the Temple of Eternal Flame (see chapter 4) has withdrawn to its abode (area W9), it is visible to any character who enters this room.

This room serves as a place of reflection and worship. Two **Eternal Flame priests** and one **razerblast** (see chapter 7 for both) are praying to Imix when the characters first arrive. Unless the characters are disguised as fire cultists, they are attacked on sight. The efreeti, if present, also joins the battle.

Treasure

Seven tapestries worth 50 gp each adorn the walls.

W9. Efreeti Lair

The **efreeti** from area E13 in the Temple of Eternal Flame (see chapter 4) lives here.

Colorful carpets and throw pillows are scattered across the floor, while a sumptuous feast is laid out on an obsidian table along the far wall. Under it is an ornate chest. A divan with finely woven cloth coverlets and pillows sits along the north side. Small jets of flame that emerge from the walls at regular intervals light the place.

The furnishings here are made of materials immune to fire. The food on the table is edible and delicious.

Treasure

The chest contains 750 gp, a *potion of speed*, and a tin tube containing a scroll of *immolation* (see appendix B).

W10. Vanifer's Chamber

Beyond the privacy screen is a comfortable bedchamber. Several pieces of suggestive art hang on the walls, and a number of risqué sculptures of humans, tieflings, and other creatures in the throes of passion adorn side tables. In the middle sits a bed with plush covers and many pillows. An armoire stands against a side wall.

Vanifer relaxes here and brings guests along when it suits her.

Treasure

An *elixir of health* is inside the pocket of a robe hanging in the armoire. Six paintings by a noted Calishite artist named Talik al'Hamud adorn the walls; the heat has ruined them, but they are still worth 25 gp apiece.

W11. Flowing Lava

A stream of lava flows down this long, sloping chamber to an immense magma pool beyond, tumbling over a series of rock shelves. One enormous point of rock juts up and forward from the flow.

A **young red dragon**, Halinaxus, sits upon the point of rock, contemplating whether he can abide serving the fire prophet. Vanifer and Halinaxus have a truce as they negotiate the terms of Halinaxus's assistance.

Roleplaying Halinaxus. The dragon is intrigued by the potential power of the cult. He considers how he might someday take over. Halinaxus also loves the prizes Vanifer has hinted at giving him, so he is willing to bide his time and watch events unfold.

Halinaxus has an unobscured view of the fire portal (area W12) and the causeway leading up to it. If he spots one or more party members not dressed like fire cultists, he alights from his perch and lands on the causeway to cut off their escape. He then demands that the characters plead or pay for their lives. The dragon is supremely arrogant and doesn't suffer any disrepect from puny humanoids. If flattered and bribed to his satisfaction, he scoops up his newly won treasures and returns to his perch.

Treasure

Halinaxus has accumulated a loose pile of loot. On his perch are 160 pp, eleven red garnets (100 gp each), a *potion of invulnerability*, and a *wand of fear*.

W12. Fire Portal

This titanic cavern is filled with a lake of gently undulating magma. A rough, uneven causeway of natural rock leads out into the middle, to a point where two crooked pillars of glassy black rock jut up on either side of a great altar of the same stone. Just beyond the altar, a gargantuan stone colossus rises from the lava to its waist, its head thrown back as if in agony. Tears of lava stream down its face, and lava wells from its gaping mouth. Above the colossus's head hovers a great orb of fire and light—a miniature sun with motes of fire swirling around it. The ceiling is another twenty feet up, at least one hundred feet overhead.

If Vanifer has been defeated, Halinaxus (see area W11) guards the fire portal and fights to the death to protect it. A **fire elemental myrmidon** (see chapter 7) stands



before the altar in plain view, rushing forward to attack anyone other than Vanifer who approaches the portal. If Vanifer has retreated to this cavern and the characters have defeated two other prophets, use the "Encounter with Vanifer" section. Use the "Encounter with Imix" section if Vanifer is the last remaining prophet. In either case, the myrmidon isn't present.

Encounter with Vanifer

Vanifer (see chapter 7) stands before the obsidian altar, watched over by Halinaxus (see area W11). Incinerath, a **fire elemental** with 150 hit points, protects Vanifer. The elemental considers itself an avatar of Imix. Vanifer prefers to let Halinaxus and Incinerath fight while she casts spells from behind a *wall of fire*.

Vanifer doesn't dissemble, ask for mercy, or try to escape. Instead, she is sly and contemptuous. Halinaxus and Incinerath are arrogant blowhards but fearless in battle.

If Vanifer is defeated, she turns to smoke with a mournful scream and dissipates. *Tinderstrike* falls to the ground, and the portal remains.

Encounter with Imix

This encounter features the same antagonists as described in the "Encounter with Vanifer," above. When the characters arrive, **Vanifer** holds *Tinderstrike* aloft and cries, "With this key, I call forth my master, the Eternal Flame!" The fire portal flares, and a gout of flame strikes Incinerath. With a howl of glee, the elemental transforms into **Imix** (see chapter 7). The Prince of Evil Elemental Fire then focuses on destroying the characters with little concern for the consequences to Vanifer. Imix wants to annihilate the characters, but he also knows he must keep the fire portal open. He summons fire elementals to aid him.

The Fire Portal

The fire portal is the giant ball of flame floating just above the head of the weeping colossus, 80 feet from the ground. It leads to the Elemental Plane of Fire, where Imix dwells. Imix attacks any enemy who comes through the portal. However, he can't pursue them into the world until the proper ritual is complete.

Characters can close the portal only by hurling *Tinderstrike* into it. Once struck, the portal flares, consumes *Tinderstrike*, and implodes. It sucks all fire elementals, including Imix, back to the Elemental Plane of Fire. With the portal collapsed, the node gradually returns to its natural state. A small river of lava still flows from area W1 through areas W3, W4, W7, and W11 into area W12. The Weeping Colossus might remain, or the closing of the portal might shatter the stone titan.

Concluding the Campaign

With at least one Prince of Elemental Evil down for the count and the others unable to reach the Material Plane through the nodes, the Dessarin Valley is safe from Elemental Evil, for now. Over the next few months, the region returns to its tranquil state. It's still a frontier, but monster predations and banditry decline. The weather

returns to normal, even if the people of Red Larch point out that "normal weather means bad weather around here, and unpredictable besides."

Some tavern talk can be overheard about occupying the Haunted Keeps to scare away unwanted squatters, or razing the forts once and for all. No power in the valley has the soldiers to accomplish the task, so nothing comes of it unless the characters take action.

Remaining cultists slink away and disperse within a tenday of the cults' defeat. Bereft of leadership and reeling from the events, the cultists decide the Dessarin Valley isn't the place for them. Some go to nearby cities, especially Waterdeep and Neverwinter, and attempt to hide amid the bustle as they rebuild their ranks. Any monsters loyal to the cult are free to fend for themselves.

The characters can become involved in a mop-up effort against the cult remnants.

Recovering from Defeat

If the characters fail to prevent a Prince of Elemental Evil from remaining in the world, all is not lost. The triumphant prince remains near the node for several weeks, reorganizing its cult and bringing the scattered remnants of the other cults to heel. This time allows the characters to plan a second assault.

The factions the characters are affiliated with take a more active role in thwarting Elemental Evil. Reports from characters who survived the first battle carry great weight with them, and it's possible that a faction was scrying near the node at just the right time and saw how the battle unfolded. If the characters need better gear or spells cast on their behalf, the factions get to work. No one wants a second assault to fail for lack of *potions of fire resistance*, for example.

The ranks of the cult are depleted, and they can't be refilled until word spreads about the arrival of an elemental prince. Characters know what to expect, but the Prince of Elemental Evil is arrogant and disdainful enough to carry on just as he or she did in the first battle.

Faction Actions

If the characters end the threat of Elemental Evil, the factions they're affiliated with are appropriately grateful and impressed. The characters can expect more tangible aid from the factions in the future. Were it not for the characters, the Dessarin Valley would be a bastion of evil that was bound to spread across the North.

A closer connection with faction leaders cuts both ways. If the characters stopped Elemental Evil in its tracks, just think of all the other threats and rivals one could deploy them against. The characters have proved themselves capable of mighty deeds, and now that's what the factions expect.

If the characters' victory was less complete, the factions goad them to finish the job. For example, the characters might have left elemental nodes open. All five factions are strident about getting those nodes closed, though their reasons, methods, and encouragements vary.

Evil Dreams

The Elder Elemental Eye—whatever that power is—has suffered a telling defeat in the Dessarin Valley. However, it hasn't been completely expunged. The four cults were a promising incarnation of Elemental Evil, but they ultimately failed the test placed before them.

The next time the Elder Elemental Eye stirs in the Dessarin Valley, it doesn't choose relative newcomers like humans to do its bidding. It turns to the drow, who built it a shrine beneath the Sumber Hills thousands of years ago. The drow cult rises again, returns to the Fane of the Eye, and starts undermining drow society. If the drow fall under the sway of Elemental Evil, the surface world will need experienced characters to face this new threat.

Know anyone who fits that description?





Chapter 6: Alarums and Excursions

This chapter presents secondary adventures loosely tied to the Elemental Evil storyline. First are adventures for 1st- through 3rd-level characters in and near Red Larch. Then come side treks for characters of higher levels.

Trouble in Red Larch

Red Larch is an excellent place for novice adventurers to begin their careers. Scenarios in this section provide 1st- through 3rd-level characters with the opportunity to learn about Red Larch while dealing with local troubles.

To unearth interesting rumors and find directions to potential adventure sites, the characters must explore Red Larch and interact with the citizens. Red Larch is described in chapter 2. See the "Trouble in Red Larch" entries for what the locals know.

Arrival in Red Larch

> Red Larch is a town on the Long Road, a few days' travel north of Waterdeep and a few days' travel south of Triboar. It's a way stop for caravans coming to or from the cities of the North, with an inn named the Swinging Sword, a tavern called the Helm at Highsun, and many craftspeople who cater to travelers.

For descriptions of buildings and NPCs in Red Larch, see chapter 2. The characters might be locals or travelers. They and players learn about the area as the party explores the town and meets its citizens.

The Swinging Sword (area 2) is the only inn, and the Helm at Highsun (area 3) is a large tavern across the street from the inn. Locals gather at Gaelkur's store (area 17) or the tavern to gossip. Ironhead Arms (area 13) is the best place to buy weapons and armor, and Helvar Tarnlar (area 7) sells well-made clothing for travelers. Red Larch doesn't have a mayor, but Constable Harburk (area 11) keeps the peace. Characters affiliated with factions might know the names of faction agents and supporters in town.

Into the Wilderness

> Hills partitioned into fields and pastures by fieldstone fences or hedges surround Red Larch. A mile or so outside the town, cultivated areas give way to unspoiled wilderness. Miles of hills, woods, and grassland stretch on as far as the eye can see, filled with plentiful wildlife.

The "Red Larch Surroundings" map shows the locations of several interesting sites and encounters in the vicinity. Citizens or rumors in town direct characters to these sites. The adventurers can also discover the following points of interest by exploring.

Bears and Bows

Constable Harburk (Red Larch, area 11) has heard rumors of a bandit lair south of town. If the characters investigate this lead, read the following:

> In a brush-choked dell a short distance from the Cairn Road is a makeshift camp in front of a cave entrance. Four surly humans sharpen their blades around the fire. Nearby is a wagon with a wooden cage atop it. Inside the cage, a black bear paws at the bars.

The four **bandits** attack strangers, preferring ranged attacks. Their hideout is a cave full of stolen food, wine, weapons, and coins. They stole a wagon loaded with a giant boar in a stout iron cage, bound for a noble in Waterdeep. They ate the beast, but then captured a **black bear**.

The bandits broke the cage's lock, so they have it spiked shut with an iron piton. Starved, the bear uses an action to heave itself into the cage door when any violence starts. If it makes a successful DC 15 Strength check, it bursts free. The bear then attacks the closest creature or the creature that hurt it most recently. It runs off when reduced to fewer than half its hit points.

Treasure

Coins in the cave total 99 cp, 74 sp, and 13 gp, divided among several coin purses. The bandits also accumulated other plunder worth 100 gp, including numerous weapons.

Haunted Tomb

Minthra Mhandyvver's granddaughter Pell (Red Larch, area 14) knows where this tomb is, as does Mangobarl Lorren (Red Larch, area 8).

> A dark, rectangular hole gapes amid the grass and vines of a nearby hillside. A stone door can be seen, ajar, in the tunnel's dim depths. The door bears chiseled marks that might once have been a name.

Over time, many rich folks built in the valley. Some are buried in old tombs near town. One such tomb is the final resting place of a forgotten noble who was a warrior in his day.

If the characters scout the area before entering the tomb passage, they discover a brigand camp hidden in a boulder jumble 150 feet away. A **goblin** named Mougra and a **half-ogre** named Geeraugh have been watching the tomb. They attack anyone who invades their camp. Otherwise, they might ambush the characters—see the next section.

Tomb Passage

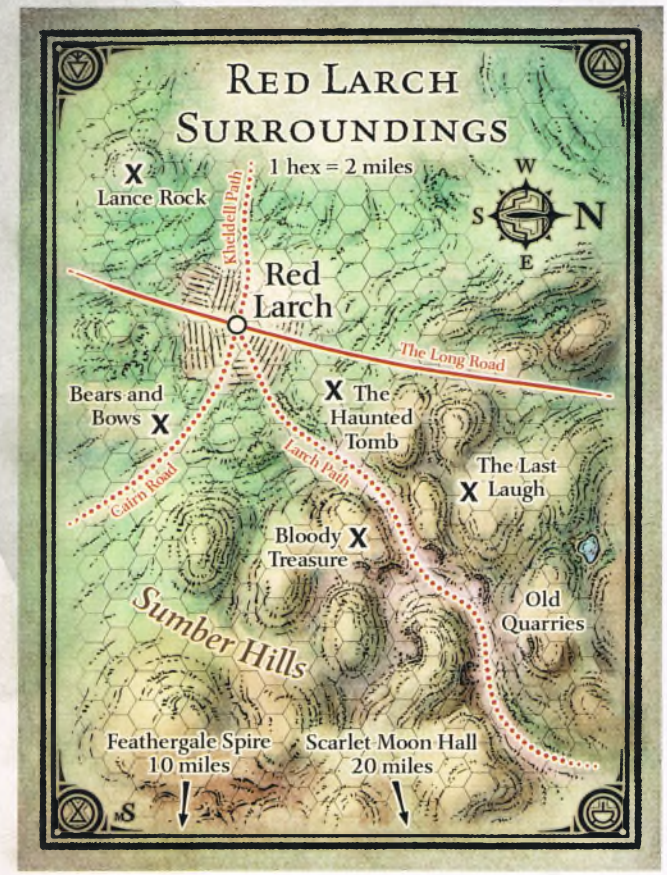
Within the tomb passage, the stone door is open enough to allow a Small character to shimmy through. It opens inward.

Geeraugh and Mougra built an improvised alarm made metal wagon wheel fittings against the inside of the door. If the door is pushed open without removing this "alarm," the metal pieces fall with a loud crash. If Geeraugh and Mougra hear the alarm, they sneak up to watch the tomb and ambush anyone who emerges. They prefer robbery to a fight.

When the characters enter, read the following:

> Inside the door is a passage, ten feet high by ten wide, running straight into the hill. Thirty feet later, it opens out into a square room, thirty feet by thirty feet, containing a stone block table. Stains and marks atop this slab suggest rusted objects were once arrayed on it. In the middle of the wall to the right of the entry passage, is a closed and severely rusted iron door.

If the rusted iron door is touched, a ghostly armored male human wielding a spectral longsword emerges



from it. This minor ghost was a guard who died having failed to protect the noble interred here. (Use **specter** statistics, except this ghost is lawful neutral.) He warns intruders to leave his master's tomb. Although the ghost might talk to peaceful characters, he attacks those who refuse to leave. The ghost doesn't pursue those who flee.

Inner Tomb

The iron door is rusted shut. A characters can force it open with a successful DC 15 Strength check. Inside, the following is revealed:

> Beyond the rusted door is another square room, twenty feet by twenty feet, containing a stone coffin. The ceiling is cracked, allowing roots and water into the chamber from multiple points, although little collects here. At the coffin's feet is a rusty iron chest.

Inside the coffin is a skeleton dressed in a rusted breastplate and clasping a longsword to its chest. This **flying sword** attacks intruders when the coffin is opened. It returns to its place in the coffin if no one remains in this room.

Treasure

The chest contains ruined cloth and the sodden remains of a book, but it also has a false wooden bottom. Someone who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices the bottom is several inches higher than the chest should be deep. Within is a gold chain and locket with a portrait of a lovely half-elf female etched in profile on the inside (100 gp) and two rings of braided silver and electrum (25 gp each).

Bloody Treasure

In the hills south of the Larch Path is a cave known to Red Larchers as Tricklerock Cave. Albaeri Mellikho (Red Larch, area 18) and Elak Dornan (Red Larch, area 12) point the characters to this location.

> In a ravine, an exposed rock face is split by a vertical crevice about three feet wide and fifteen feet high. Water trickles from the opening and spills into a nearby bog. In the mud around the crevice are many overlapping bootprints. Some head into the crevice, and some come out.

If the characters enter the crevice, read the following:

> The crevice leads twenty feet into the hillside before opening up into a cavern. Many trickles of water combine into a pleasant sound, and the walls glisten with moisture. Stalagmites dot the floor, and stalactites hang from the ceiling.

The cave is home to four **stirges**, which attack as soon as a character enters the cave. Contrary to local rumors, there is no treasure to be found in Tricklerock Cave.

The Last Laugh

Endrith Vallivoe (Red Larch, area 22) heard a report that might lead the characters here.

> A weathered human skull, jaw sagging, is pinned to the trunk of a tree ahead by a big black arrow protruding from one of the skull's eye sockets.

Black parchment (actually dyed human skin) is wrapped around the arrow just in front of the fletching. It is a message that reads, in Common:

The Last Laugh
You'll be next!
Valklondar

The arrow's point is of black-painted metal, and it punched a hole through the back of the skull and sank deep into the tree. Anyone who handles the arrow has nightmares of the skull rushing at them, laughing coldly. Such persons have been marked. For a tenday, undead attack them reluctantly and as a last possible target.

Lance Rock

Characters who confront troublesome situations in the wilderness attract the attention of Kaylessa Irkell, proprietor of the Swinging Sword (Red Larch, area 2). Kaylessa believes an evil influence emanating from Lance Rock is the source of Red Larch's troubles. She asks the characters, who should still be 1st level, to find out what's going on. The characters discover that a necromancer who styles himself a "lord" is lurking in a cave near the landmark.

Northwest of Red Larch, Lance Rock is visible for miles. When the characters can see it, read the following text:

> Lance Rock is a narrow, twenty-five-foot menhir of bare, gray rock that juts eastward at a sixty-degree angle.

The menhir is gray granite, unlike the surrounding limestone. (A dragon dropped it here long ago.) A few hundred feet south of the stone is a ravine choked with brush. A trail leads into the brush near a neatly-painted sign that reads, in Common:

Come no closer
lest you catch
the disfiguring plague
that afflicts me!
The Lord of Lance Rock

The trail continues down to a cave mouth. Another warning sign with the same message is posted by the opening. If the characters explore the cave, proceed with the "Necromancer's Cave" encounters below.

Necromancer's Cave

An insane and reclusive necromancer named Oreioth—the self-styled "Lord of Lance Rock"— has taken residence in the caves near Lance Rock. He poses no immediate threat to Red Larch but doesn't take kindly to trespassers.

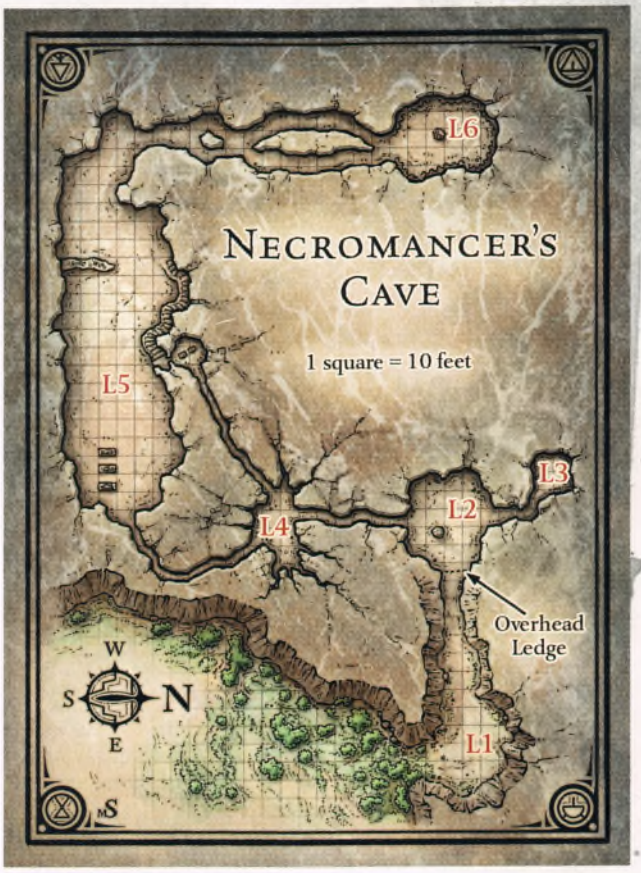
L1. Entry Cave

> The cave mouth opens into darkness from which a breezes blows, carrying the faint odor of death. Inside is a natural cave, its floor and ceiling uneven. The passage leads to the west, narrowing as it proceeds.

A body is sprawled on the floor 60 feet into the passage. When the characters get close enough to take a good look at the body, read the following:

> The corpse of a human male is sprawled here on its back. It wears only leather breeches.

The body is a **zombie**, but it animates only if touched. Then, it attacks.



L2. Guard Cave

> A round, high-ceilinged cave opens here. It has two narrow exits, one leading north and the other south. A flat boulder sits in the center of the cave. It's about six feet across, eight feet long, and three feet high. Dark stains color its top.

The boulder is stained with dry blood.

Above the eastern entrance, two **zombies** stand on a ledge 10 feet up. They hold a wooden box full of rocks between them. When they spot an intruder, they let the box go so it crashes down on the interloper. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. The zombies then jump down from the ledge (taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage each) to attack.

L3. Corpse Cave

> Motionless humanoid figures dressed in dirty clothes or scraps of armor are propped against the walls of this cave. Some are little more than skeletons with wisps of hair and skin stretched tightly over their bones. Others are fresher. A few old shortswords lie on the dusty floor.

Twelve corpses are stored in this chamber. Seven are skeletal, and five are fresher. Three **skeletons** remain still among the other remains. They attack anyone who touches them or the corpses here.

L4. Dancing Dead

The passage that leads to this room from the north can be described as follows:

> This narrow passage is about ten feet high in most places, with rough, irregular walls. Protruding spurs on the walls are coated in dried blood.

Eventually this natural passage widens out:

> The star-shaped cavern ahead has many clefts in its walls. Only two, across the cavern, seem large enough to traverse. Three zombies lurch about the area. One is costumed like a bear, another is dressed as a lady in a frilly dress and thick makeup, and the last is costumed as a jester with jingling bells on its collar and sleeves.

These three **zombies** are dressed to entertain the Lord of Lance Rock by acting out grotesque comedies. They have orders to playact for a few moments when they spot intruders, using the distraction to approach and attack.

Sounds of combat in this room alert the necromancer Oreioth (in area L5) that intruders are nearby. Oreioth climbs the stairs in area L5 to peer into the end of the western passage (see that section), hoping to get a chance to trigger the trap there.

Southwestern Passage. This tunnel leads to a small cavern with two closed iron chests resting on the floor. A peephole in the south wall allows someone standing at the top of the stairs in area L5 to observe the chests. By the peephole is a lever that opens a trapdoor in the ceiling above the chests, releasing a rockfall.

If Oreioth is in position, he waits until at least two intruders have entered the cave, then he moves away from the peephole and pulls the lever. When he does, he cries, easily audible through the peephole, "You dare to pit yourselves against the Lord of Lance Rock? Death is your reward!" Then he continues to cackle as he retreats.

Those in the room can make DC 10 Dexterity saving throws, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half that damage on a success.

The iron chests are empty.



L5. Workshop

> The passage opens into an enormous cavern illuminated by several guttering torches set in sconces on the walls. The floor is uneven, and the ceiling is forty feet up. Three flat boulders near the passage serve as tables for human corpses. Severed body parts sit in baskets by the corpses, covered in dry gore. A figure in a dark hood stands by the third table, its back to you. Matted hair juts from the hood, and the figure holds a bone needle threaded with dark cord in its hand.
>
> Farther to the west, a stone stair climbs the north wall, ending near the ceiling. A stone slab like a counter juts from the wall across the room from the base of the stairs. It holds saws, knives, and other tools. Four skeletons stand beyond this tool bench, guarding a wide passage that exits the to the west.

The hooded figure is a **zombie**, and five **crawling claws** hide among the other body parts in the baskets. If intruders do anything other than turn back, the monsters attack.

The "Lord of Lance Rock" is **Oreioth** (see chapter 7), a wild-eyed Tethyrian human with a bristly beard and a shaved head. If the characters moved through area L4

alerting him, they find Oreioth arranging and cleaning his tools on the tool bench. Otherwise, he watches warily from behind the four **skeletons**. In any case, if confronted, he shrinks from conflict and orders his skeletons to attack while he retreats into area L6.

The necromancer refers to himself in the third person and by his self-appointed title. He's afraid of physical confrontation, but he pretends bravery when his pets shield him, saying, "Bow before the Lord of Lance Rock! Me! Behold my dark terrors!" He's willing to magnanimously consider a surrender or offers of truce, as long as intruders leave the cave.

Stairs. The steps along the north wall lead up to a ledge overlooking this room. A peephole by this ledge looks into the western passage of area L4, and there is a lever here that controls the rockfall trap in that room.

Tools. The stone counter serves as a tool bench. The tools here include saws, knives, awls, embalming tools, and metal bowls. Among them is a jug of grain alcohol and a cask of fresh water. Everything is very clean.

L6. Study

The workshop narrows into another passage that splits and links up twice. It gently descends to this area described as follows:

> An oval cavern opens here, forty feet wide and sixty feet long. Dark purple tapestries hang on the walls. At the center stands a pedestal fashioned of severed arms arranged to clutch one another in a cone. Cradled in the uppermost hands is a glowing crystal sphere. A dark sigil with an eyelike slit floats above the sphere.

For the sigil, show the players the Elder Elemental Eye symbol (see chapter 1) without additional context. The sigil is an illusion that disappears if it or the pedestal is disturbed.

If he is here, **Oreioth** (see chapter 7) is hiding behind the draperies at the north end of the room, holding a *wand of magic missiles*. He reacts only if attacked or someone approaches the floating sigil. In this latter case, he yells, "Can't you see it? It's the Eye! It sees your every move! Don't you fear it?"

If he dies, Oreioth turns into a black flame. The flame dwindles to nothing with a plaintive wail and vanishes.

Treasure

The glowing sphere is a *driftglobe*. Behind the draperies are niches where Oreioth keeps his food, drink, supplies, clothes, and bedding, as well as 165 sp, 78 gp and four polished jet gems (50 gp each). If Oreioth failed to retrieve it, the *wand of magic missiles* is stored in a niche.

Tomb of Moving Stones

Shortly after the characters return to Red Larch from Lance Rock, this scenario intended for 2nd-level characters begins. Beneath the town are tunnels and chambers carved by ancient dwarves. The place includes a vault in which great stones mysteriously change position.

Several generations ago, stonecutters working in the quarries discovered the old tunnels, buried miners, and the weird phenomenon of the moving stones. At first those who found the place kept it secret because they hoped to find treasure within. No such treasure was ever found, but the conspiracy survived.

The Red Larchers who knew about the place came to include the leading citizens of the town. They regarded the phenomenon as supernatural and portentous. They called themselves the Believers and referred to the miners entombed in the chamber as the Delvers. The Believers carefully observed the stones for messages in their movements, and they saw the Delvers as stern guardians watching over an ancient mystery.

Over the years, the Believers began to arrange events and opportunities in Red Larch to ensure that fellow Believers prospered. They became a secret town council and met to make hard decisions "for the good of all." People causing trouble in Red Larch were driven out of business, intimidated, or even murdered.

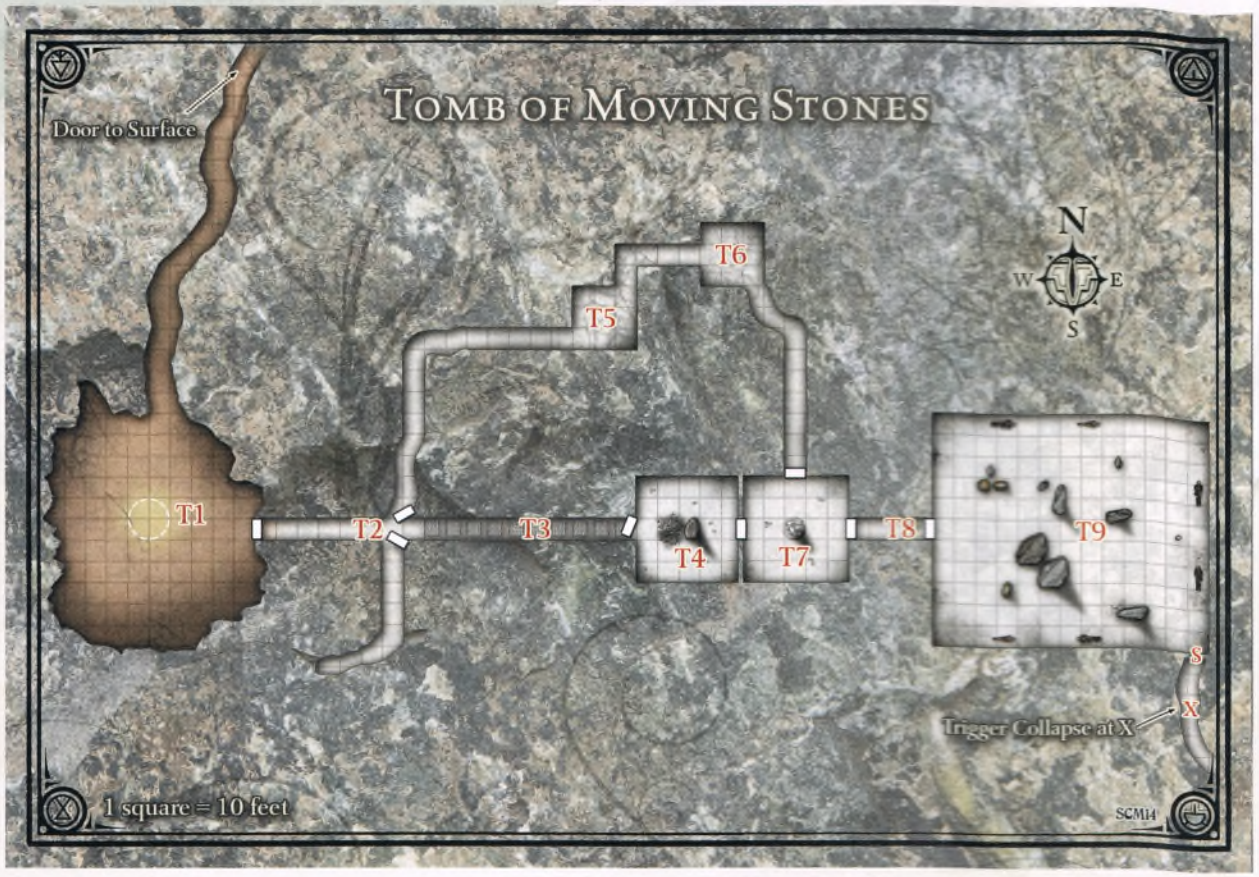
Several months ago, agents of the Cult of the Black Earth stumbled across the Tomb of Moving Stones, and an ambitious cult priest named Larrakh came to Red Larch to bring the Believers under the cult's control. Unhindered by superstition, as the Believers are, he learned the secret of how to manipulate the moving stones. Larrakh now uses the stones to deliver "messages" that he interprets for the Believers, manipulating them to do the earth cult's bidding.

Characters who focus on the right set of rumors in Red Larch might discover the Tomb of Moving Stones. The Believers have a hidden entrance in Waelvur's Wagonworks (Red Larch, area 16). The long, winding tunnel from this establishment leads to area T1 in the tomb. A second hidden entrance in the Mellikho Stoneworks (Red Larch, area 18) leads to area T9.

Sinkhole

If the characters don't find any leads to this scenario, a sinkhole opens in the middle of Red Larch, exposing the hidden chambers. In that eventuality, read the following text when you're ready to start:





An ordinary afternoon in Red Larch is broken by a tremor. A second later, four small children and the old cart they are playing on slide down into a sinkhole that suddenly opens. They disappear from sight, shrieking for help.

A distraught woman runs out of a nearby house and sprints to the edge of the hole, which crumbles away, spilling her in as well. More people run from other homes. Calls of "A rope, a rope!" and "Get a ladder!" fill the air.

Any creature that moves to the sinkhole's edge without taking precautions, such as lying flat on the ground and crawling forward or securing themselves with a rope, must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the hole as the ground crumbles further. The bottom of the sinkhole is 30 feet down, but a cushioning heap of loose earth has already cascaded into the underlying cavern, so those who fall take no damage.

When characters can see within, read the following:

A dark chamber is about thirty feet below the level of the ground. It looks larger than the hole and extends into darkness on all sides. A heap of loose earth is piled in the middle. The children who first fell in are sitting on the mound of earth, coughing in the dust and sobbing with fright. "My boy, my boy!" a worried parent shouts, peeping over the edge. "Somebody do something!"

More townsfolk hurry up from all sides, staying clear of the edge. Among them are a few town elders, who pull people away from the edge and order the others to stay back. "Leave it to us!" says one of the elders. "We will tend to this matter! The children won't be harmed by being down there a little while, but no one must go down there. Keep back!"

The sinkhole exposes area T1 in the Tomb of Moving Stones. Townsfolk who've fallen in are scared, bruised, and unable to climb out without aid, but otherwise unharmed.

The town elders trying to control the situation are Ilmeth Waelvur (male Tethyrian human **bandit**; see Red Larch, area 16), Albaeri Mellikho (female Tethyrian human **commoner**; see Red Larch, area 18), and Ulhro Luruth (male Chondathan human **commoner**; see Red Larch, area 19). Anxious to keep anyone from discovering that the sinkhole leads to passages, they make statements such as, "This isn't to be discussed in front of strangers!" and "The Delvers must not be angered!" and "The stones must not be moved!" Such commands elicit little obedience from the frightened townsfolk.

If no character has a rope, a helpful resident arrives with an old coil. He or she pushes past the elders to offer the rope to the characters. Children wail down in the pit as more onlookers arrive. It's clearly time for a rescue mission.

Rescuing those who've fallen is a matter of lowering a rescuer down with a rope, tying it around a victim, and having people above haul away. The townsfolk are grateful for the characters' aid.

T1. Entry Cavern

If the sinkhole opened up, this cavern has a pile of dirt in the center and a gaping, 20-foot-diameter hole in the 30-foot-high ceiling.

> This wide, irregularly shaped cavern has a floor of smooth bedrock. Damp dirt and stone, with tree roots protruding here and there, make up the walls. A five-foot-wide tunnel leads off to the north, and a stone slab—a door with a rusty pull-ring—stands to the east. By the stone door, a couple well-used cloaks and a waterskin are on the floor.

The waterskin is half full of water. The cloaks are quite plain. They belong to Believers who don't want to attract attention while coming or going from the entrance tunnel.

The stone door to the east has no lock. It slides open smoothly. Beyond it, a passage of dressed stone slopes downward, continuing east to area T2.

North Tunnel

This tunnel leads to Waelvur's Wagonworks (Red Larch, area 16). If the characters investigate the tunnel, read the following:

> The tunnel is muddy. It winds north a long way before rising gradually. After two hundred feet or so, it ends at a wooden door that forms a sloping roof. A small wooden coffer sits on the floor by the door, and beside the coffer is a heap of damp sand from which the ends of torches protrude.

The door opens among several old wagons that have been left to rot. On the surface, the door looks like a wooden cellar door and opens next to Waelvur's Wagonworks.

The damp torches were extinguished by being thrust into the sand. They are hard to light but readily burn if lit with an existing fire. The coffer contains flint and steel, as well as six dry torches.

T2. Stone Sentinels

> Sixty feet beyond the stone door, the tunnel levels out. Two stone reliefs of stern dwarves in chain mail and carrying battleaxes face each other across the tunnel. The carvings stand out from the passage walls, and they have gaps around them, so they could be doors. The passage continues past them.

The doors slide open easily if pushed. To the south, the door leads to a long stone tunnel that ends in a pit covered by a stone bench with a hole in it (a privy unused for decades). The door on the north side of the hall guards a passage leading to area T5.

T3. Cage Trap

If the party continues east along the tunnel past area T2, they walk into a trap. Read the following text only if a character examines the ceiling:

> The ceiling consists of square stone panels about ten feet on a side. Rusty iron frames surround each panel. The panels are suspended about several inches from one another and the wall to either side. They form a row overhead that continues down the passage.

Ten iron cages are suspended from chains over the hallway, and the "panels" are the cage bottoms. The true ceiling is 25 feet high, and each cage hangs from 5 feet of heavy chain and is 10 feet tall. The bottom panels appear to be a 10-foot ceiling from the hallway. The panels are thin plaster painted to resemble stone.

When the characters can see the eastern end of the hall, read the following:

> At the end of the passage is another stone door with an iron pull ring in it. It stands slightly ajar with darkness beyond. About five feet up, the door has a two-inch-wide, foot-long horizontal slit.

Unless Grund (male half-orc **thug**) has already been dealt with, he is peering through the viewing slit. With his darkvision, he spots approaching characters 60 feet away, but if the characters are carrying light sources, he notices them as soon as they pass the doors in area T2.

Grund's orders are to trap intruders. Anyone who isn't an intruder is supposed to pause 60 feet from the door, cross his or her fists, and call out, "A Believer approaches!" Grund drops cages on anyone who doesn't follow this protocol.

Dropping Cages. Each cage's chain runs through a pulley secured to a heavy iron bar just inside the door in area T4. From where he is, Grund can use an action to release two chains. He starts with the cage at the western end of the tunnel, sealing off retreat, followed by a cage dropped on the party. Roll initiative at that point. Grund's uses his second turn to block the eastern edge of the passage with a third cage and to drop another cage on characters not already trapped.

A falling cage targets the corresponding 10-foot square section of the passage. Targets in the area can stand still, taking no damage as the plaster on the cage bottom breaks and the cage seals them in. Those who wish to avoid a falling cage must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Those who fail are caught in the cage. Anyone who fails by 5 or more is hit by the iron frame of the cage bottom. Such a creature takes 7 (2d6)

bludgeoning damage and is pinned under the cage. While pinned, the character is prone and restrained.

A character who uses an action to make a successful DC 15 Strength check can lift the cage enough to allow one creature to escape. It takes a successful DC 20 Strength check to bend the rusty bars enough to allow everyone in or under the cage to escape. A character pinned under a cage lacks good leverage and has disadvantage on these Strength checks.

Development

If Grund traps the characters in the hall, he runs to tell Baragustas in area T8. Baragustas calls the Bringers of Woe (see area T7), who arrive 10 minutes later. The villains raise cages one by one to attack trapped characters, aiming to capture them. Larrakh then plans to sacrifice the characters at a special ceremony.

T4. Antechamber

This big, square chamber has been hewn out of the rock. In the center of the chamber's west wall is a stone door that has a narrow viewing slit. Beside the door is a set of iron bars bolted into the wall about three feet above the floor. Ten oiled chains are secured to the bars, leading up to a hole bored in the ceiling. Another solid stone door is in the middle of the east wall.

An eight-foot-tall rectangular stone stands upright in the room's center. The stone has an inscription on it that's hard to read from a distance. At the foot of the standing stone, a small human is pinned, face down, by rocks placed atop his arms, legs, and back. He is barefoot and wears ragged clothes.

Depending on what has happened in area T3, Grund (male half-orc **thug**) might be standing by the western door, keeping watch down the hallway. Grund is baffled by intruders that arrive behind him. After standing and gaping for a moment, he finally says, "You can't be here. You have to go!" He points down the western hallway. In obvious exasperation and desperation, he attacks anyone who attempts to leave by the eastern door.

Pinned under a pile of small boulders is an eleven-year-old boy named Braelen Hatherhand (male Tethyrian human **commoner** with 2 hit points and no effective attacks). He is drifting in and out of consciousness. If strangers enter the room, he revives enough to feebly plead for his freedom.

Rolelplaying Braelen. Braelen has been pinned here for two days. Heavy stones were carefully placed to hold him in place without crushing or breaking anything. He is cold, thirsty, hungry, tired, and scared. The boy clams up in terror if he's intimidated or bullied. If approached in a friendly manner, he first begs for food and water. He can offer the following information as responses to the characters' questions.

- The Believers put him here as punishment for being disobedient. He failed to deliver a message from his father, Rotharr Hatherhand, to Ilmeth Waelvur. It was a slip of paper the boy didn't read.
- Rotharr is one of the Believers. Other Believers Braelen knows are Baragustas Harbuckler, Marlandro Gaelkur, and Ilmeth Waelvur. The boy also knows Grund isn't really a Believer, but the Believers take care of him, so he does what they tell him to do.
- The Believers are a secret group made up of some of the most important people in town. They guard the moving stones, and make sure no one disturbs the Delvers, who are entombed here. The Believers watch the moving stones carefully, because it's a bad sign when they move, and they have to figure out what it means to avert danger. (This information isn't true, but that's what the Believers and Braelen believe.)
- Braelen isn't angry with his father or the Believers. He believes this sort of treatment is normal, and he's worried his father might find out the punishment ended before it was supposed to.
- The chamber of moving stones and the buried Delvers are to the east, beyond three more stone doors.

If the characters release Braelen, he tries to go back to the surface through the tunnel in area T1.

Chains. Fastened to iron bars here are chains to the cages in area T3. Characters can raise a fallen cage back to its original position by hauling on its chain.

Inscription. The inscription on the standing stone reads, in Common: "Displease not the Delvers."

T5. Charnel Chamber

Characters catch the scent of death as they approach this room.

The tunnel opens into a square room that reeks of decaying flesh. Three human corpses, reduced to little more than bloody bone and sinew, are sprawled in the room's center. Two oversized rats root among the bodies, stopping to chew flesh they've pulled free. Scuttling noises come from narrow crevices in the walls.

Five **giant rats** found their way in through the narrow crevices, which are just big enough for the rodents to squeeze through. Two are in the middle of the room, and three more lurk in the crevices. Believers don't yet know the rats are here, and the grisly meal is sufficient to keep the rats from wandering. The giant rats ignore intruders that give them a wide berth and avoid startling them. They attack if harmed or provoked.

The bodies are those of travelers who disappeared near Red Larch. Each has the symbol of the earth cult cut deeply enough in the forehead to mark the skull. To pass a test commanded by the earth cultist Larrakh (see area T9), Believers waylaid and killed the travelers in separate incidents over the last month. The Believers are rarely murderers, but Larrakh is maneuvering them into darker and darker deeds.

T6. Hovering Stone

The tunnel opens into a square room. In the center of it, a black rock about a foot across hovers three feet from the floor.

A normal rock floats here because of ancient magic that maintains an invisible floor-to-ceiling cylinder that is 10 feet wide. Visible to *detect magic* (transmutation school), the column enables objects placed and left in it to float where released. The column can hold up to 500 pounds. Objects in excess of this weight fall. If the characters move the rock, which weighs 20 pounds, out of the column, it is freed from the effect and crashes to the floor.

T7. Dwarf Statue

This fifty-foot-square chamber is hewn out of rock. The floor is rough but flat, the walls show the chisel-marks of the original builders, and the ceiling is about ten feet high. Identical stone doors with iron pull-ring handles stand in the middle of the east, north, and west walls.

In the center of the room stands a life-sized and lifelike statue of a dwarf warrior wearing a chain shirt, helm, and big boots. He carries a shield on his left arm and a battleaxe in his right hand. The statue has clearly been broken into, roughly, the head and upper torso, lower torso, and legs. These pieces have been reassembled and held together and upright in a stout wooden frame. A dagger along with several coins and gems lie on the floor in front of the statue, surrounded by an ring of fine gravel.

The statue is a petrified and long-dead dwarf. On the frame holding it together, a small, neat inscription reads:

Petrified Ironstar (?) dwarf,
found 1459 DR in Red Larch West Quarry
in broken condition.

The ring of gravel surrounds the statue at a distance of 5 feet, intended to mark a suitably respectful distance from the statue. Believers have a tradition of leaving small valuables here for luck. Larrakh urges them to bring more each tenday so he can collect it and take it with him when he leaves Red Larch.

Treasure

Offerings left here by the Believers include 440 cp, 253 sp, and 97 gp. Six small green agates (worth 5 gp each) and two polished moonstones (worth 50 gp each) are among the coins.

To encourage the Believers, Larrakh left a *+1 dagger* decorated with star motifs and a grip of night-blue leather. Dried blood still coats the dagger from its use in killing and carving symbols on the murder victims in area T5. The dagger doesn't make noise when it hits or cuts something.

The name "Reszur" is graven on the dagger's pommel. If the wielder speaks the name, the blade gives off a faint, cold glow, shedding dim light in a 10-foot radius until the wielder speaks the name again.

Development

It's only a matter of minutes before the Black Earth cultists in Red Larch—the so-called Bringers of Woe—hear about the characters' exploration of the tomb. They don't want anyone to expose their manipulation of the town elders, so they slip into the tomb via the north tunnel in area T1 and hunt down the party. These cultists can catch up to the party here, or if you prefer, in area T9.

If the party enters the dungeon before the sinkhole occurs, townsfolk or cult watchers near Mellikho Stoneworks or Waelvur's Wagonworks notice the characters' activities. The cultists hurry to whichever entrance the characters didn't use and begin searching the tomb.

The Bringers of Woe are six **bandits** whose leather armor bears the symbol of the Black Earth cult. (This encounter is hard for a party that is only 1st level.) When the Bringers of Woe meet the adventurers, the bandits grimly and confidently say, "We are the Bringers of Woe. We have come to reward your curiosity." The cultists then attack, fighting to the death. Three hang back and shoot at spellcasters, concentrating fire on one foe at a time. The other three advance to tie up the rest of the party in melee.

T8. Approach

A passage—ten feet wide, ten feet high, and hewn out of the rock—runs forty feet ahead. A small lantern hangs from a hook in the wall next to the door at the east end of the passage. Sitting on a wooden stool by the lantern is a balding, beardless old male human in patched and faded work trousers and a matching tunic. He is idly whittling a stick.

The human is an elder of Red Larch named Baragustas Harbuckler, a retired carpenter (male Tethyrian human **commoner**).

Roleplaying Baragustas. Baragustas, a Believer, is unarmed and afraid of the characters. He throws himself to the floor and begs for mercy. Baragustas is too weak to put up any sort of a fight, but he wrings his hands and begs the characters not to provoke "the wrath of the Delvers" by disturbing the stones of the tomb (area T9).

Baragustas knows everything that Braelen knows (see area T4). He freely acknowledges the existence of the Believers and explains the mystery of the moving stones, telling the characters, "From time to time, the great stones change position when no one is watching. That is how they talk to us. They show us signs of coming danger and warn us when we make bad choices."



The old carpenter knows much about the Believers' influence in Red Larch over the years. The recent involvement with "the earth priests" who help them to understand the moving stones is something he idly mentions. He is quite intimidated by Larrakh, and more scared of the earth cultists than he is of the adventurers.

Baragustas isn't as innocent as he acts. He denies knowledge of murders or any other foul play, feigning surprise at the mention of evidence such as the corpses in area T5. The old man had no hand in such activities, but his denial is a lie. He knows of the murders.

Treasure

Baragustas has 25 cp and 19 sp on him. He also has a simple silver wedding band worth 10 gp.

T9. Chamber of Moving Stones

If the characters speak to Baragustas in area T8 or examine the door to this area, a **Black Earth priest** (see chapter 7) named Larrakh hears them. If he does, he quickly sets down his lantern and hides. The following descriptive text assumes this is the case:

> An enormous chamber with a twenty-foot ceiling has been carved out of the rock here. A lighted lantern rests on the floor near the center of the room. An odd array of stone monoliths—some upright standing stones, and others arranged in three-stone arches—stand around the chamber. Six low stone slabs are set against the walls around the perimeter of the room. Each holds humanoid bones, dressed in scraps of tattered cloth and rusted iron.

Larrakh is hidden behind one of the larger stones. He spends almost all his time in this chamber, studying the old stones and experimenting with the magical floor. When he sees the characters, he lashes out at them with his magic.

Roleplaying Larrakh. Larrakh uses the stones in the chamber for cover, but he has no intention of fighting to the death. If this place has been discovered and he can't swiftly and easily eliminate the intruders, Larrakh tries to flee through a secret door (see below). He triggers a rock fall to cover his escape.

Larrakh is in disgrace among the Black Earth priesthood after bungling some earlier missions. He is determined to conquer Red Larch without violence by subverting and exploiting the Believers. Before the adventurers came along, he planned to ensnare the

Believers with ever-darker acts of obedience and evil, then take over the town through his new servants.

Bringers of Woe. If the characters didn't already fight the Bringers of Woe (see area T7), they fight them here instead. The Bringers show up late for the fight, arriving from area T8 or the secret door a few minutes after the party defeats Larrakh or he makes his escape.

Bones. Upon the stone slabs are the bones of human miners who discovered this chamber before Red Larch was founded. None of the skeletons are intact; each has a crushed limb, chest cavity, or head. The injuries are consistent with mining accidents. The Believers revere these skeletons, calling them "the Delvers," and leave the bodies untouched.

Secret Door. In the southeastern corner is a secret door that requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find by noticing the unmortared stone outlining the door. It swivels on a central point, making a narrow opening to either side. The tunnel leads to the quarry pit in Mellikho Stoneworks (Red Larch, area 18).

The earth cultists use this passage to enter and exit the tomb, and the Believers have disguised it to keep away the curious. Farther in, the tunnel is partially blocked with dusty canvas, broken beams, and loose rock to make it look like it has collapsed. A Medium or smaller creature can carefully pick a way through the debris. If someone uses an action to yank out a shoring timber, the jumble does collapse. Then, a 10-foot section of the tunnel is buried in the heap, blocking passage. Removing the debris takes a few hours of work.

Moving Stones. This area was a large storage cellar and workshop carved out by the dwarves of Besilmer thousands of years ago. The dwarves left behind an odd array of pillars, threshold stones, lintels, and carved stone doors. Human miners from the ancient kingdom of Phalorm discovered the dwarven delving. The miners chose to bury their dead here. Until the Believers of Red Larch discovered it, the chamber was forgotten again.

The dwarves enchanted the chamber floor to levitate stone in contact with it, so the floor's magic can be detected with *detect magic* (transmutation school). A moderate impact on the floor, such as a dropped object weighing at least 1 pound or a firm stamp of the foot, activates the levitation effect, which lasts for 1 minute. When the floor is active, the stones hover less than an inch off the floor, and they move with a light touch. Thus, minor earth tremors can cause the stones to move. Intruders, even beasts, can move stones about accidentally.

The Believers have never figured out the magic, and none have seen the stones levitating. Larrakh and the Black Earth cultists discovered how the floor works. They have been amusing themselves by shifting the stones around and telling the Believers that the mysterious movements are fearsome signs of impending doom.

Treasure

Larrakh was part of the attack on the Mirabar delegation described in chapter 3. (News of the delegation's disappearance doesn't reach Red Larch until you are ready to carry on with the next part of the adventure.) He carries four Mirabar trade bars, each a foot-long spindle of iron, like two long, four-sided pyramids joined at the base. These bars are genuine, so they make a distinctive tone when struck. They are worth 5 gp each. Any character native to the North recognizes the city's distinctive currency.

Conclusion

The aftermath of the discovery of the Tomb of Moving Stones depends on how the last few encounters played out, in particular the discovery of bodies in area T5. The corpses are those of murder victims.

If the characters didn't pay much attention to the bodies, then the remaining Believers are able to abscond with them and bury them elsewhere before Harburk finds them. Red Larch is scandalized, but it's a matter of secrets and lies, not murder and justice.

If the characters expressed curiosity about the bodies, or if you deem it likely that Constable Harburk reached area T5 before Believers did, then matters grow more serious. Harburk quickly draws the correct conclusion that the Believers are the murderers. The constable launches a full-fledged investigation.

If he can, Harburk questions Grund and Baragustas. Grund didn't kill anyone or witness the murders, but admits to helping stash the corpses. He says Albaeri Mellikho and Ilmeth Waelvur oversaw the process. Baragustas is also innocent of any overt wrongdoing, so he's quick to confirm Grund's story and exonerate himself.

Marlandro Gaelkur, Albaeri Mellikho, and Ilmeth Waelvur are the actual culprits. Mellikho maintains her innocence in the face of all evidence, blustering loudly. Waelvur breaks down and confesses his involvement, and he implicates Mellikho. Gaelkur plays it cool as long as he can, and tries flees town a few tendays later when it becomes clear Waelvur is about to implicate him as well. The murderers also tell of Larrakh's part in the scandal, and of their use of his magic dagger.

This drama plays out over the course of the next month, with some Believers fleeing the town and others disavowing any knowledge of the murders. It might be tempting for the characters to get involved, but they have the four elemental cults to contend with. Justice for the Believers can play out in the background during the characters' next few visits to Red Larch.

Side Treks

Dangerous, seemingly unrelated situations are arising in widely scattered places, from Yartar to Womford and the Westwood to the High Forest. None of these troubles can be set right for good until the elemental prophets and their cults are defeated, but that doesn't mean these secondary events can be allowed to fester. Characters might conclude that some of these problems are so dire that they must be dealt with immediately, even if that means diverting attention away from their campaign against Elemental Evil.



Using the Treks

Side treks presented in this chapter are summarized in this section, along with their level. Options for involving the characters are presented in the next section and in the side treks themselves. Some are directly related to the elemental cults, and others are situations unconnected to the cults that demand immediate attention. These short adventures can provide a good change of pace.

New Management. When the innkeeper of the Bargewright Inn is called away, the characters are asked to step in and manage things for a few days. Zhentarim infighting makes what should be a routine task far more challenging. This adventure is designed for 3rd-level characters, although it is equally playable at lower and higher levels.

Iceshield Orcs. An orc tribe displaced by the natural disasters caused by the elemental cults launches a series of raids against homesteaders in the eastern part of the valley. This adventure is designed for 4th-level characters.

The Long Road. Trade in the Dessarin Valley is grinding to a halt. It is now vital to make sure that a caravan gets from Bargewright Inn to Triboar. This adventure is designed for a 5th-level party.

Curse of the Fire Witch. The Cult of the Black Earth sets a trap for the characters by spreading rumors of a fire witch terrorizing the Nettlebee halfling clan. This adventure is designed for 6th-level characters.

Vale of Dancing Waters. A sacred dwarven shrine falls silent, leading the characters to investigate. They learn that a murderous villain has captured the holy site. This adventure is designed for an 8th-level party.

Dark Dealings in Yartar. Criminals are auctioning off a *devastation orb* to the highest bidder, and the characters must recover it first. This adventure is designed for a 9th-level party.

Rundreth Manor. A sinister entity known only as the Dark Lady lurks in Rundreth Manor, overlooking the Long Road. For years, caravans have hurried by in safety, but now dead bodies are appearing on the road. Something has changed, and not for the better. This adventure is designed for 10th-level characters.

Halls of the Hunting Axe. The legendary burial place of King Torhild Flametongue, founder of the ancient dwarf kingdom of Besilmer, is the Halls of the Hunting Axe. When a young dwarven noble sets out to find the dwarf-king's tomb, the characters discover he's not the only one after the prize. This adventure is designed for 11th-level characters.

Faction Influence

The side treks provide excellent opportunities to highlight each character's allegiance to a major faction. Different factions are concerned about different situations. Side treks that are especially suitable for each faction include the following:

- The Emerald Enclave is concerned about the Iceshield orc raids and stories of a despoiled Uthgardt barrow near Nettlebee Ranch.
- The Harpers are worried about the threat posed by the Dark Lady of Rundreth Manor. They are also intent on protecting the treasures hidden in the Halls of the Hunting Axe.
- The Lords' Alliance sees the need to show ordinary merchants that the Long Road is still safe. Later on, the alliance decides that it's time for the legendary weapon of King Torhild Flametongue, long buried in the Halls of the Hunting Axe, to be brought back into the light of day.
- The Order of the Gauntlet is worried about the Iceshield orc raids. They also want to make sure the hidden shrine in the Vale of Dancing Waters remains safe.
- The Zhentarim are anxious to restore the normal flow of commerce in the region, getting caravans moving on the Long Road. They also have concerns at the Bargewright Inn.

New Management

The Bargewritght Inn depends on regular supply runs downriver by barge from Yartar, but its regular supply boat is overdue. The innkeeper, Nalaskur Thaelond, a Zhentarim operative, is mounting a supply run to Waterdeep to talk matters over with his superiors there. He needs someone to mind the inn in his absence.

Nalaskur works with but doesn't trust Chalaska Muruin, a terse, cold-eyed human **veteran**. Chalaska is the Senior Sword, master of the inn's forty **guards** (known as Swords). Chalaska runs the community, but

she knows Nalaskur is her counterbalance, and he has orders to spy on her, as she does him. Chalaska doesn't like Nalaskur and would enjoy seeing him permanently removed. The Zhentarim could promptly replace Nalaskur, but such a replacement wouldn't know the inn's functions were rearranged to Chalaska's benefit.

This situation leaves Thaelond unwilling to appoint Muruin as his temporary replacement while he travels to Waterdeep. Instead, he prefers to frustrate her and have an easy scapegoat for anything that goes wrong.

Unknown to Chalaska and Nalaskur, an ambitious Zhentarim agent named Inglor Brathren (male dwarf **spy**) has established a cover identity as a handyman, allowing him to see and overhear secrets. Inglor thinks Nalaskur is lining his pockets at the expense of the Zhentarim. He suspects that Chalaska is turning a blind eye to Nalaskur's skimming, but he fears Chalaska and can't accuse her without proof. Inglor decides both need framing and replacing.

Setup

This adventure occurs when the characters encounter Nalaskur Thaelond (male half-elf **spy**). He asks the characters to run the inn for a tenday or so, promising handsome pay and a good recommendation to his superiors. If the characters accept, Nalaskur designates one character (preferably someone associated with the Zhentarim) as the innkeeper and tells him or her where the keys are, and of the importance of those keys (see the "Key Duty" section below). He is in a hurry to leave, so he doesn't hand them over personally.

If the characters refuse, Thaelond leaves them a note about the keys and travels to Waterdeep. Before doing so, he tells the inn staff the characters accepted the job. Others in the Bargewright Inn rush to the characters when things start to go wrong.

If the characters have no connection to the Zhentarim, someone they've befriended or owe a favor to agrees to run the inn. That person then begs the characters for aid. Alternatively, the characters are merely present as events unfold.

Since the Zhentarim controls the Bargewright Inn, any number of **scouts**, **spies**, and **thugs** might be present in the inn complex. These agents could be at rest or on special missions. In any case, all of them look out for Zhentarim interests.



Key Duty

The innkeeper's foremost duty is ensuring keys to the gates and crucial inner doors remain safe from foes of the Zhentarim. The organization's negotiations, trade, and logistical preparations must remain secure. All the keys are hung in a cabinet in the innkeeper's office near the tavern taproom. The cabinet and office are locked when no one is using the office.

The black, thick-barreled keys are as long as a big human's hand, with distinctive red teardrops painted on their handle ends. The number of red drops identifies which lock each key belongs to.

Six keys go missing immediately after Nalaskur leaves for Waterdeep. Inglor, keen to impugn Nalaskur's judgment, steals them and stashes them in a chest in the attic of the southern tower. At the latest, characters notice the keys are gone from their usual location when Chalaska asks for some so she can lock up for the night.

The six missing keys unlock the outer wall's main gate, the outer wall's postern, two similar inner wall gates, the meeting rooms in the southern inn tower, and the strong room at the base of the northern tower. This last room is where the Zhentarim store pay chests, stolen items, valuables, and important objects.

Search for the Keys

When it becomes clear that the keys are missing, Chalaska sounds an alarm and doubles the guards on the gates. She then calls for the other Swords to search the fortified community and its visitors.

The character who has the highest Wisdom and was in the taproom just before the keys came up missing remembers a well-dressed human male who left the tavern quickly just before Chalaska asked for the keys. If the character succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check, he or she remembers the man looked worried and held a small note in his hand.

Suspicion Spreads. As a search effort gets underway, Chalaska says to the new innkeeper, "What are you going to do about the missing keys? Maybe they aren't missing at all!" She then orders four Swords to frisk the innkeeper, searching for the keys. Chalaska is distrustful but willing to accept that the innkeeper doesn't currently have the keys.

In the case of violence, the Swords try to disarm and subdue rather than kill. Chalaska is hard-nosed but not murderous. She and her fellows also back down from a superior force.

Unlucky Kendrin

When the commotion starts over the keys, the second phase of Inglor's plan unfolds.

Grendo's Note. Inglor planted a note on Grendo, a young tavern server (male Tethyrian human **commoner**). Grendo finds the note when everyone is turning out their pockets for the Swords. The crumpled parchment reads, "Tell Kendrin Feldarr it's Chalaska." Grendo doesn't know how he got the note and has never met someone named Kendrin. He's afraid of (and a little smitten with) Chalaska, so he's completely honest.

Finding Kendrin. The guest book shows a merchant named Kendrin Feldarr is staying at the inn.

Kendrin usually sells exotic animals and their parts around the northern Sword Coast. Trade troubles along the Long Road have him on edge.

Inglor learned all this information from Kendrin in an earlier taproom interaction. Inglor also slipped a note to Kendrin. That note reads, "They're watching. You aren't safe here."

When confronted in his room, Kendrin (male Chondathan human **noble**) is packing. He drops a wooden box and takes off running, out of his head and screaming in fear. When the box falls, it breaks and releases four exotic **spiders**. He has dropped the note on his bed.

Kendrin shoves or punches anyone who gets in his way. He draws a weapon only if one is used against him. When he eventually scuffles with one of the Swords, all the Swords converge to capture him.

Kendrin isn't a member of the Zhentarim. When finally brought to heel, with regard to Grendo's note, he has no idea of any intrigues or who Chalaska is. As for the second note, he admits his troubles.

Strong Room Burglary

While everyone is dealing with Kendrin, Inglor takes the opportunity to find out what's hidden in Nalaskur's strong room. To discredit Chalaska, for allowing the burglary, and Nalaskur, for leaving the Bargewright in incompetent hands, Inglor takes 500 gp. He then ransacks the room.

Before leaving the strong room, Inglor carefully places two distinctive silver fox-head buttons that he stole from a dress shirt of Chalaska's. Most of Bargewright's locals and all the Swords recognize the buttons. Inglor then leaves with the door ajar.

Inglor stashes 200 gp in the chest where he previously hid the keys. He then sneaks the keys and 300 gp into Chalaska's bedroom.

Its possible the characters spot Inglor about his skulduggery. When moving around the inn, though, he doesn't usually act in a suspicious way. He's a handyman, and he has a reason to be just about anywhere in the inn.

General Alarm

After the burglary, Inglor goes into the other areas of Bargewright Inn. Among the locals, he starts a whispering campaign about something odd going on inside the inn. He reminds those who listen that Chalaska is responsible for security.

If no one raises the alarm about the strong room within a few hours, Inglor "discovers" its door ajar in the morning. Due to Inglor's gossip the night before, more people than usual are in the inn's taproom for breakfast. He announces the problem publicly and urges someone to investigate. The dwarf even volunteers to be the first searched if that might "get things going."

As the investigation proceeds, he says, "I heard there was some sort of kerfuffle over Chalaska last night. Someone had a note about her?" He later adds, "Nothing like this happened while Nalaskur was in charge. Maybe he should have been here."

Conclusion

At this point, the clues all point at Chalaska. The strong room has her buttons. Her room contains the keys and some stolen gold, as well as her damaged shirt. She grows more agitated as the evidence mounts. As the Senior Sword, she takes a gamble, influencing some loyal Swords to help her. The renegades bar themselves in the strong room.

A thorough search might turn up the chest in the southern tower's attic and the gold there. In this case, Inglor's greed might be his undoing. His bootprints are in the dust on the attic's floor. Chalaska's aren't.

Nalaskur returns to find the Bargewright Inn in the state the characters' decisions lead to. With his ledger, he confirms that 500 gp is missing from the store room, not just 300. This final discovery might lead to another search that eventually points to Inglor, who is the only dwarf on staff inside the inn.

If not, Inglor succeeds. Chalaska is discredited and removed from service. Nalaskur loses face with the Zhentarim, as do the characters.

Iceshield Orcs

Orc raids are common occurrences throughout the frontier, as small bands of orcs steal livestock or waylay the occasional supply wagon. In recent days, a tribe hiding in the rough lands east of the Sumber Hills has become markedly bolder. The Iceshield orcs are attacking farms and cattle ranches throughout the region, and orc scouts have been sighted by patrols less than a day's ride from Yartar.

Although the folk who live in the area are hardy and independent, capable of handling the occasional raid, the reports of organized orc war bands have them worried. The farmers and ranchers take steps to protect themselves, but they also look for adventurers willing to stop the orcs from running amok on their lands.

Background

The Iceshield orcs reside in a handful of lodges spaced about a day apart along the western edge of the High Forest. They have long been a thorn in the side of the denizens of that wood and the settlers who farm and ranch in the plains to the west. Now the Iceshields have become a prominent threat. Disruptions to the weather and landscape due to the powerful magic being used by the elemental cults has been taken as a sign from Gruumsh that blood and gold must flow from the lands of lesser races.

The orcs seek supply sources in the valley. Scouts found that the farmers and ranchers in the area are prime options. Now, roving war bands attack the frontier families directly, raiding the homesteads with impunity. In addition to stealing livestock, the Iceshields take any carts and wagons they find, loading them with loot. They take the families as slaves and force them to tow the conveyances back to the Iceshield lodges.

Some independent-minded squads of orcs decided that the fertile land of the homesteads was more appealing than serving as underlings in their own lodges, and they killed the original owners to occupy the land. They have no intention of farming the crops or tending the livestock, but they intend to stay until the food runs out, then move on to the next settlement.

The homesteaders, in conjunction with members of the Emerald Enclave and the Order of the Gauntlet, asked the elves of the High Forest for aid. The elves organized hunting parties to put an end to the disturbance. Now the farmers and ranchers are trying to hang on long enough for the elves to quell the uproar.

Setup

While traveling through the area, the characters discover the burning homestead of the Anderil Farm. Orcs attacked, taking a few farmers prisoner and setting the place ablaze. From there, the characters travel to the Dellmon Ranch, where they can aid in its defense until help from High Forest elves arrives.



Alternatively, use one of the following options to draw the characters into this side trek:

- The next time the characters head into town for recuperation, supplies, or any other errand, they hear about the orc raids from displaced locals, who ask for help.
- Members of the Order of the Gauntlet, perhaps in Summit Hall, look for other faction members to find Erned Stoutblade, because he hasn't been heard from in several days (see the "Dellmon Ranch" section).
- Members of the Emerald Enclave are worried about missing members of the delegation sent to meet with the elves of the High Forest and need someone to search for them (see the "Dellmon Ranch" section). Using the *animal messenger* spell, the delegation sent a message, saying, "We're trapped at Dellmon Ranch and besieged by an orc war band. Safe for now, but we dare not leave. Send aid. Make sure they're tough."

Smoke on the Horizon

This encounter occurs early in the day. As the party travels, they spot smoke. Read the following text:

> The trail emerges from a dry gulch. A column of thick, black smoke rises at a slight angle over the trees. It looks like something is burning just over the next ridge.

The burning farm is within five minutes' travel. Once the characters approach within sight, read the following:

> A fiercely burning homestead is nestled in a small valley slightly below your position at the top of the ridge. The barn is a smoking ruin and the house is half consumed by fire. Panicked livestock scrambles about a fenced corral on the far side of the barn.

Selwyn Anderil, a male half-elf, and his human wife, Maygan, have lived on this farm for eight years. Maygan is expecting the couple's first child. They employ two laborers, a pair of young human brothers named Ob and Fip Lavelle who came to the region from Waterdeep to escape city life and enjoy the country.

Iceshield orcs attacked the homestead about an hour ago, taking Maygan and the brothers captive. They gravely wounded Selwyn, who was beaten into unconsciousness while trying to protect his wife. The orcs forced the brothers to load the family's wagon with everything the orcs thought they could use. After setting fire to the barn and house, the orcs departed, forcing the brothers to pull the wagon. Maygan was stuffed in the wagon among the cargo.

Saving Selwyn

Selwyn is just returning to consciousness in the house's front room when the characters arrive. The fire was set at the back side of the building and is moving toward the front. Selwyn is woozy and can't save himself.

If any characters approach within 60 feet of the house, they hear Selwyn coughing from the smoke and feebly crying for help. Once someone enters through the front door, read the following:

> The front room is filled with heat and smoke, and flames lick the ceiling. A slender half-elf with a bloody gash on his forehead is sprawled on the floor, feebly trying to rise. He struggles to sit up when he sees you. "Maygan!" he cries. "My wife! Please find her!" Then he collapses again in another fit of coughing.

Selwyn (a **commoner** with 1 hit point remaining) can be easily carried or led outside. Once outside, it takes him a few minutes to clear his lungs. Selwyn is frantic about the fate of his wife. A quick search of the burning house reveals that no one else, dead or alive, is inside. No remains can be found in the barn.

Selwyn relates as much he can remember about what happened before he was beaten to unconsciousness. If the characters include him in any discussion of following the wagon tracks, he insists on going with them. Otherwise, he frantically looks around for any clue that reveals what happened to her and the Lavelle brothers and sets out on foot by himself.

Rescue Mission

The wagon and boot tracks of the departing orcs and their prisoners are obvious in the loose soil. Once found, they are easy to follow.

The procession of orcs, prisoners, and wagon doesn't move very fast, so it's not difficult for the characters to catch up. Pursuing characters reach the orcs within thirty minutes of following their trail. If the characters move cautiously despite the rush to catch up, then they can gain surprise. Otherwise, the orcs spot them as they approach. In any case, read the following aloud:

> Four brutish orcs surround a wagon sitting in the shade of some stunted trees along a dry riverbed. Two human males in plain farming clothes have collapsed near the front of the vehicle. The wagon's wheels are sunk several inches into the loose, sandy soil. A female human is in the wagon, among supplies and other loot.

The four **orcs** are emboldened by their recent success raiding several homesteads. They immediately attack, throwing their javelins first, and then moving toward the characters to engage them in melee. If Selwyn is with the group, he doesn't fight the orcs but instead rushes toward the wagon to free Maygan. The Lavelle brothers are too weary to assist in any fight.

Even if the characters win the fight and successfully rescue the homesteaders, the Anderils' place is ruined and they must find shelter for the night. They had heard about other homesteaders gathering at the Dellmon Ranch to defend against the raiding parties and would like to go there. They ask the characters to escort them. If the adventurers agree, the group can reach Dellmon Ranch in a couple hours.

Dellmon Ranch

The Dellmon family has lived in this area for several generations and is well known by the other homesteaders in the region. They are a wealthy family, having worked hard to cultivate their land, and they aren't willing to let a bunch of orcs drive them off. They've heard the stories of the rampaging orc war bands and seen the scouts nearby. When the attacks began on the smaller homesteads in the vicinity, Kerbin Dellmon sent out word that anyone could stay at their compound for safety. A number of farmers and ranchers took the Dellmons up on their offer.

Every able-bodied person on the premises pitched in to help bolster the defenses. They built a series of low earth ridges and ditches as defensive works running between the various buildings (see the map) and put together makeshift crenellations on the roof lines for missile combatants. They also stockpiled weapons and caches of ammunition.

The Dellmon Family

Kerbin Dellmon (male Tethyrian human **noble**), patriarch of the Dellmon family, refused to leave his home despite the fact that his family is in danger and might have been safer retreating to Yartar. He's determined to stay and fight, and nothing anyone has said has changed his mind. Kerbin's daughter Dreena sent a message to the elves of the High Forest, but no one knows if or when they might respond. As far as they know, the ranch's defenders are on their own.

Other Dellmon family members present at the ranch include the following people:

- Kerbin's oldest child, Perd (male Tethyrian human **noble**), agrees with his father's never-give-in mentality. Perd is concerned for the safety of the children and privately wonders if staying was a mistake.
- Perd's wife, Marka (female Tethyrian human **scout**) worries about whether they are safe.
- Kerbin's middle child, Dreena (female Tethyrian human **druid**) is a budding member of the Emerald Enclave. She was part of the delegation sent to meet the elves, and she sent the distress message to the enclave. The Emerald Enclave doesn't know, but Dreena also sent a distress message to the elves of the High Forest with an *animal messenger* spell.
- Kerbin's younger son, Fyndrick (male Tethyrian human **guard**), is a hothead and has been agitating to confront the orcs before they lay siege to the ranch.
- Perd and Marka's children, Livi (female) and Thrade (male), aren't old enough to fight, though Thrade has hidden a dagger beneath his bed.

Ranch Workers and Guests

The Dellmons have many laborers and guests, including the following people:

- Flameran Verminbane, a lightfoot halfling **scout**, is a member of the Emerald Enclave and the delegation to the elves.
- Erned Stoutblade, a Tethyrian human **knight** and member of the Order of the Gauntlet, came from Yartar with the intention of defending the weak and meting out justice to the Iceshield tribe. He has been trying to bring retribution to the orcs for their depredations, and he just arrived with news that a large orc war band is nearby and heading in the ranch's direction. There's not enough time to flee, and everyone is hunkering down to defend the compound as best as they can.
- Stowal and Branikan are brothers (male shield dwarf **guards**) who serve as the area's blacksmiths, tinkerers, and general laborers-for-hire.
- The remaining defenders consist of eighteen farm and ranch folk, as well as a few Emerald Enclave allies. Twelve able-bodied **commoners** wield handaxes, sickles, or spears. Half have shortbows. Four warriors (**guards**) and two hunters (**scouts**) round out the other defenders.
- Sixteen people make up a group of noncombatant adults and children. Half can carry ammunition, tend the injured, or watch over the elderly and very young.



The Characters' Role

Let the characters take the lead on how to set up the defense of the ranch. The rest of the defenders listen to them and do their best to carry out the characters' plans. Give the players a few minutes to situate themselves, then begin the attacks.

Running the Siege

You have a few options on how to run the battle. Consider the following:

- You can treat each defender and orc as an individual, and run the combat as a long, complex encounter. If you do so, the players should control some of the NPCs.
- You can streamline parts of the fight. The map of the ranch has been divided into specific zones, and you can run regular battles only in the zone(s) player characters occupy, summarizing results from the other zones based on how you'd like the narrative to work. This method increases speed of play and lowers complexity.
- You can concentrate solely on the characters and their foes, glossing over all of the other fighting and just making an educated guess as to the outcome. This method is the quickest for resolving the battle.

The orcs could easily defeat twice their number of commoners, but with the defenses available to the ranchers, the odds improve considerably. The ranchers don't have to defeat the orcs outright. They just have to survive. You want to create tension and make it seem like the outcome teeters on the brink of disaster. Near the end of the battle, the elves show up as described in the "Relief Arrives" section.

Initial Surge

The first sign that the orcs have arrived occurs when their scouts appear on the low ridges all around the compound. Soon after, small bands of orcs spread out, surrounding the buildings. With the blast of a horn, they all rush the structures simultaneously. The battle is on.

The war band includes forty **orcs** led by a lone **orog** and his second-in-command, an **orc Eye of Gruumsh.** When the orcs are within range, they throw javelins at any visible targets. The next round, they charge to close the distance and attack with melee weapons. After two or three rounds, the orcs retreat.

The orcs repeat this pattern several times, perhaps breaching a spot here or there before the defenders push them back. Then they start trying different tactics.

Smoke Screen

Late in the day, the orcs start a grass fire upwind from the compound to create cover for themselves. Thick white smoke drifts through the compound and makes the area lightly obscured. Anything more than 30 feet from a viewer is heavily obscured by the smoke. The orcs use the smoke to move closer before launching their attacks.

Starting a Fire

During the night, the orcs sneak close enough to the buildings to set them on fire. They hope the defenders are unable to put the fires out and protect the perimeter from breaches.

Relief Arrives

At dawn, the orcs make a final push. It should seem like they might overwhelm the defenders in several spots, and get inside the compound. Suddenly, the melodious tone of an elven war horn sounds, and a company of twenty-five elven soldiers (a mix of **guards, acolytes, scouts,** and a few **veterans**) arrives to help.

Conclusion

The orcs are slain, scattered, or sent running back to their lodges. Farmers and ranchers hail the characters as heroes and pool meager resources to offer a reward of 25 gp per character. Members of the Emerald Enclave or Order of the Gauntlet receive appropriate kudos. Those could include renown, if you're using the optional rule described in chapter 1, "A World of Your Own," of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Increase the reward from the faction, and the locals' opinion of the adventurers, if the characters refuse to take money from the farm and ranch folk. Those people immediately set about rebuilding their lives.

The Long Road

This side trek begins when the characters learn from worried Zhentarim shopkeepers of Bargewright Inn that they've been having supply problems recently. This side trek happens only if the characters sign on to the Zhentarim caravan.

Customarily, a barge from Yartar arrives on a regular schedule to deliver the wares that the Bargewrighters order to sell, including buckles, swivel-rings, nails, sheaths, finished leatherwork, and food and drinkables. However, last month the barges came late, orders were short changed, and the prices for what little did arrive went up steeply.

The Zhentarim believes intrigue in Yartar is to blame: someone wants to harm the Black Network's profits. Zhentarim sgents first suspected the Harpers, but trusted spies recently reported back that an unknown organization seems to be at work in Yartar.

None of the reports that reach the Bargewright Inn contain any hint of the truth, but the troublemakers are members of the Kraken Society, trying to destabilize Yartar so they can replace the current waterbaron with their own stooge. Then the new waterbaron can swiftly fix the troubles and thereby win local support. The Black Network is an incidental casualty in this scheme.

Regardless of why the "troubles" are occurring, the Zhentarim wants the situation fixed fast. The Black Network intends to mount two expeditions to Triboar, one by river on a barge and one by overland caravan. Both missions take coin to purchase new supplies, recruit new suppliers, and fund their spies in Triboar to identify who's behind the supply problems in Yartar.

The characters become involved in the overland caravan, because the Zhentarim think they're perfect for the job. Any fast caravan guarded by a sizable contingent of armed Zhentarim mercenaries indicates a rich target to anyone in this part of the North. For the same reason, the Zhents dare not hire the retired bodyguards, adventurers, and mercenaries who live in and around Beliard, for fear rumors might spread all over the Dessarin Valley about a pay caravan.

Setup

The Zhentarim wants to start a small caravan from Womford and use its usual contingent of guards and drovers. They hire the characters as armed escorts for Ascaleld Marurryn, a negotiator for a

new Sembian-sponsored merchant coster called the Rolling Wheel.

Shopkeepers affiliated with the Black Network approach the characters. They are prepared to do so several times, with each potential employer making a separate offer of around 20 gp per character. The characters could arrange to be paid several times over for the same work. Their terms are the standard "quarter up front, second quarter when we get to Triboar, and the last half when the wagons return to Bargewright." If pressed, the patrons add up-front bonuses, lump sums paid at the first rest stop on the outbound journey.

The three encounters don't occur in Red Larch, Westbridge, or within sight of Triboar, but the "Cult Attack" encounter might.

The Caravan

The caravan consists of six wagons, each pulled by two oxen and equipped with an axe, a shovel, two buckets, and a three-pointed-iron-rod fire spit that can readily be used as three improvised spears. Each wagon carries two Black Network **thugs** as armed guards, a drover (female Tethyrian human **commoner**), and a drover's lad (male Tethyrian human **commoner**) who tends the beasts and can handle the wagon if anything happens to the drover.

Five of the six wagons carry hidden treasure. Each treasure wagon has 100 gp in thin wooden coffers concealed under a false floor. All the vehicles are filled with mundane wares to sell in Triboar. The Zhents aren't happy about traveling overland with large amounts of gold.

During attacks on the caravan, the thugs defend themselves first, and then their wagon and drover. They don't leave the wagons to hunt down attackers, and they assist the characters in battle only if doing so offers minimal risk to what the thugs consider to be their primary duties. If characters decry this behavior, the thugs curtly remind them that they all have their orders.

Commanded by Haeler Thommadur (male Tethyrian human **veteran**), the caravan sets out in good weather. The route is over the Stone Bridge. It takes a minimum of three days for a fast caravan in the best weather and without delays.

The caravan makes good time, and although the sky turns overcast, it doesn't rain. Well-established campsites are plentiful beside the Long Road wherever reasonably level ground and a water source can be found together. Haeler doesn't post sentinels outside the camp. Instead, he rings the wagons and has the thugs watch from within them.

Bandit Attack

Bandits watch for an opportunity to waylay caravans on the Long Road. When the characters stop for their first night, a large gang of outlaws closes in to try its luck. The band is made up of sixteen **bandits** led by one **bandit captain**.

The bandits try to take out sentinels outside the camp perimeter first. Otherwise, the attack starts with a volley of sixteen bolts, lit on fire and all directed at one wagon. The wagon starts to burn, and the attackers flee back toward their camp. Anyone pursuing them is led up over a ridge, straight into an ambush of the massed bandits waiting below the crest.

Haeler and his guards are preoccupied by the burning wagon, because they need to focus on removing the coin coffers. Fire attracts the monsters in the next encounter.

If no one from the encampment rushes to find who fired on them, the bandits return. They use the light of the burning wagon to target individuals. The bandits prefer to harry the caravan from cover and mount an attack once the defenders are weakened.

None of the bandits is willing to die. They retreat so they can attack the caravan again later.

Second Bandit Attack

Before the second bandit attack, Haeler comes to the characters and asks for advice on defending the caravan. He's sure surviving bandits will attack again.

The bandits attack again on the second night, repeating the same tactics but refining their targets to reflect what they've learned of the caravan's strengths and weaknesses.

Oxen are of little use to the bandits except as food, so they target the beasts this time around, hoping to strand the wagons along the road so they can harry the caravan defenders at will. Use the **rhinoceros** statistics for the oxen, but remove the Charge feature.

Again, the bandits aren't willing to die to win. The wounded retreat as soon as they can.

Howling Hatred Attack

Just before dawn on the third morning, four **Howling Hatred initiates** (see chapter 7) try to prove their usefulness to the air cult by attacking the caravan. They've been watching the group for awhile, so they bide their time, especially if the characters acquit themselves well in the second bandit attack. They swoop in, riding **giant vultures**, and hurl javelins at the characters (not the Zhentarim NPCs or drovers). They try for at least one kill, making a second pass before flying away.

Conclusion

The return journey is much quieter, except for random encounters. The bandits are still licking their wounds, and cultists have been reined in by their superiors.

Curse of the Fire Witch

Wiggan Nettlebee, miserly patriarch of the Nettlebee halfling family, amassed a fortune through shrewd trade and inheritance. When earth cultists first started to explore the region, Wiggan took their money for information and occasional aid. As he got to know the cultists, the earth powers they had intrigued him. Control over the earth could be valuable for a farmer. Wiggan's cult contacts helped remove a couple of his rivals, and assured him his wealth and influence could only increase as the cult ascended to power.

Among the Nettlebees, Wiggan's secret is known only to his son, Bertram, now an initiate in the earth cult. The cult has begun its slow indoctrination of the whole

Nettlebee clan, starting with Bertram's son Watson. Watson is receptive to his father's and grandfather's new religion, but he remains unaware of its true nature. In fact, Wiggan and Bertram don't know the cult's ultimate aims, only that it reveres a mighty earth power.

After the adventurers infiltrate the Sacred Stone Monastery, the cult gives Wiggan a mission. He and his family must play the parts of meek halflings, lure the party to their isolated ranch, and kill the characters. For his part, Wiggan wants the characters to pay dearly for any harm they inflicted on his mentor, Hellenrae, the Abbess of Stone (see chapter 7).

Setup

As part of their assassination plot, Wiggan and Bertram Nettlebee have constructed an elaborate ruse. They unearthed a nearby Uthgardt barrow mound and set it aflame. This plan was risky, since even Wiggan knows the Uthgardt barbarians have no tolerance for those who desecrate their burial mounds.

Bertram branded the Nettlebee livestock with the fire symbol. Wiggan claims the mark to be that of a "fire witch," frightening his family with the wild tale. By keeping their relatives ignorant and scared, Wiggan and Bertram feel they can maintain the ruse and more easily lure the characters into their trap.

As the characters adventure in the Sumber Hills, rumor reaches them of a fire witch dwelling in an Uthgardt barrow and terrorizing the Nettlebees. Locals who visited the ranch confirm the scorched barrow mound and describe the symbol. Fearful talk of an evil fire cult operating in the nearby hills fills every taproom in the vicinity. The gossip includes much pity for the Nettlebees, who are known for prize livestock. A helpful citizen might ask the characters to lend a hand.

Nettlebee Ranch

> Nettlebee Ranch sprawls over a series of low, rolling hills where the forest has been cleared away for crops of oats and barley. The Nettlebees' prize livestock—sheep, ponies, and cattle—grazes in multitudes upon the hillside pastures. The ranch consists of a large two-story house and several low stalls and granaries. In the distance, an unnatural mound of earth rises over the ranch, its balding crown sparsely stubbled with the charred remnants of trees.

Characters might investigate the ranch, the pasture, or the fields. They can also go to the barrow mound, which is described later in its own section.

Ranch. The ranch consists of a barn, granaries, and a half-story house that rambles up and down a small hill. The house, barn, and granaries are ordinary and contain equipment standard for a farm.

Pasture. The Nettlebees own one hundred sheep, twelve cows, twelve oxen, and fifteen ponies. A quarter of the them have been branded upon the rump with the fire symbol.

Fields. Oats and barley sprawl over two fields in the hilly country near the ranch. Bertram has hidden the cult brand, made at the ranch's forge, under a scarecrow in the barley field.

The Nettlebees

The Nettlebee family includes the following people:

- The Nettlebee patriarch, **Wiggan Nettlebee** (see chapter 7) is a miserly, cantankerous misanthrope and bitter widower.
- Wiggan's only son, Bertram (a **cult fanatic**), is set in his ways and full of bluster.
- Bertram's wife, Jayne (a **commoner**), is a no-nonsense lady who knows how to handle Wiggan, Bertram, and other loudmouths. She is afraid, though, and is most concerned for her children.
- Bertram's heir and oldest child, at twenty-three, Watson (a **scout**) is brave, honest, and forthright. He takes more after his mother than his father or grandfather, and he's angry about the mistreatment of the cattle. Bertram knows about Wiggan and Bertram's new religion, but thinks it's not important, so he's unlikely to mention it. He knows nothing about Wiggan's plans.
- Just a year younger than Watson, Darrow (a **commoner**) is Bertram's next son. He is good natured, but his grandfather's bluster over inheritance has him thinking about his future. He might take to the adventurers a little too readily for Jayne's liking.
- Bertram's and Jayne's only daughter, Elisa (a **commoner**), is nineteen. She's like her mother and very open about disliking her "old goat" of a grandfather.
- The youngest Nettlebee, at twelve, Ignatius is really just a little boy. Everyone (even Wiggan) favors him, so he's a happy kid, but the fire witch has him so scared that he has night terrors.

Interviewing the Nettlebees

Bertram and Wiggan avoid the characters. Wiggan plays the role of a cantankerous old halfling, locked in his study dealing with matters of trade. If the characters talk to him, he rails on about how much this crisis is costing him. He pushes the characters to do something about it rather than bothering an old halfling. Bertram inspects his crops, staying out of the way unless he is called upon to speak. Then, he makes a blustering speech about how confident he is the characters can make the fire witch pay for what she has done.

Jayne, Darrow, Elisa, and Ignatius remain at the ranch, doing their chores. Watson patrols the pasture, watching the livestock. When the characters question these innocent Nettlebees about the events, their terror and anger are genuine. They beg the characters to investigate the barrow and do away with the fire witch that haunts them.

They know the following information:

- Two weeks ago, the barrow mound went up in a blaze.
- A few days later, Watson noticed the brand on the cattle.
- Nettlebees took turns guarding the livestock by night. Slowly but surely, the brands continued to appear.

- Watson investigated the barrow and found it open. The massive fieldstone that once stood in the archway had been sundered, and the halls were limned in flame. Watson heard terrifying whispers from the darkness. When he conveyed what he had seen to the family, Wiggan spoke of legends of fire witches that once were said to roam these hills. They fear a fire witch has returned.
- The Nettlebees feel powerless against the fire witch and fear she might soon burn down their ranch. Watson and Jayne are desperate about avoiding that outcome.

Barrow Mound

Long ago, Uthgardt barbarians built the barrow mound to hold the body of a chieftain, now forgotten. When Wiggan Nettlebee joined the Cult of the Black Earth, he looted the barrow mound's altars, upsetting the spirit of the chieftain.

A few days before the characters arrived, Wiggan and Bertram set the barrow ablaze to lend credence to their fire witch ruse. When the characters go to the barrow mound, Wiggan and Bertram follow them. They keep their distance unless the characters invite them to come along.

When the characters approach the barrow, they see the following:

> The barrow mound caps a high hill overlooking the surrounding countryside. The area around the barrow is still and charred. Burned trees reach like dark fingerbones from the bald earthen mound. It's noticeably chilly here.

If they accompany the characters openly, Wiggan and Bertram cower at the edge of the hill. The halflings refuse to set foot upon the "cursed" ground.

Barrow Mound Entrance

When the characters move to the barrow entrance, read the following:

> Tall monoliths line the earthen corridor that connects the barrow's entrance to the burial chamber far within. Motes of flame light the corridor and the chamber beyond. The air is cold and heavy with the scent of ash.

In the barrow, the structure is made of monoliths set into the earth and capped with other fieldstones. The ceilings are corbeled fieldstone 10 feet high and supported by carved stone pillars.

Motes of *continual flame* light the passage and chambers. The flames produce no heat. They're Wiggan's addition, since the Uthgardt detest magic. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check knows of the Uthgardt prejudice.

From the barrow entrance, the characters can see little within the burial chamber at the end of the hall, except vague details of the stone bier and the Elk beast altar at the bier's head.



Burial Chamber

When the characters can see the burial chamber better, read the following:

> A crude fieldstone arch forms the entrance to the burial chamber. In three branching alcoves are three scorched altars—one of a tiger, another of an elk, and another of a bear. In the center of the chamber is a stone bier upon which rests a broken and blackened skeleton, its skull and limbs scattered about the chamber. The air of the sepulcher is deathly cold and scented with ash.

The three alcoves contain altars to beast spirits with early depictions of the Red Tiger totem (west alcove), the Elk totem (north alcove), and the Blue Bear totem (east alcove) . Red Tiger and Elk still survive as totem beasts of contemporary Uthgardt tribes.

The stone bier was the resting place of the Uthgardt chief's bones, which now lay scattered across the pedestal and upon the ground beside it.

Cold. The burial hall is cold due to the presence of the chieftain's restless spirit. This cold is extreme, as described in chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The Chieftain's Return

After the characters have a minute to look around, read the following:

The temperature drops further, and with a crackling sound, frost coats the entire chamber. Flames on the walls and in the hall go out, and a point of blue light appears over the bier and expands into a faintly humanoid form. The bones in the tomb, as well as antlers on the elk altar, stir then fly together into the light. In a flash, a massively built but very pale human male stands before you, his face darkly bearded, and his head crowned with the antlers. His milky eyes burn with blue flame briefly as he casts his gaze on you.

His voice is deep, resonant, and oddly accented. He says, "I return from a warrior's rest among the spirits to find my tomb burned and my bones desecrated. I know the desecraters are not among you, but who are you and why are you here?"

The chieftain, Javor, was allowed to come here from the afterlife due to the overt and callous desecration of his tomb—a terrible insult among the Uthgardt. In this form, he is a **revenant**.

Javor doesn't attack, and he is willing to briefly listen to the characters, whom he knows to be innocent of crimes against him. He doesn't know the name of the desecraters, but his Vengeful Tracker trait means he knows where to find Wiggan and Bertram. If asked the right question, he can tell the characters the desecraters are just outside the tomb.

Meanwhile, Wiggan uses a scroll of *conjure elemental*. It takes him 1 minute to cast the spell, and he doesn't start until all the characters are deep inside the barrow mound. An **earth elemental** answers the summons, and Wiggan commands it to collapse the entry tunnel and slay anyone inside the barrow.

The elemental easily collapses the centuries-old entry tunnel. When it does, read the following text:

Sunlight coming through the barrow's entry hall dims, as if a shadow has been cast on the entrance. Right afterward, a grinding of stone is followed by cascade of dirt and stone in the hall. A collapse!

As the elemental collapses the entry tunnel, Wiggan and Bertram run for the ranch. Javor senses his quarry on the move and rushes to the barrow's exit. The elemental emerges from the earth in the main chamber. It attacks those it can see, rather than pursuing Javor.

While the party fights the elemental, Javor works with supernatural fervor to clear the rubble choking the exit to the barrow. He finishes making an opening near the top about 2 minutes later, and he leaps into the sunlight. The opening is big enough for the massive chieftain, so it's big enough for the characters.

Uthgardt Vengeance

When the characters emerge from the barrow, read the following text:

A dozen barbarians surround Javor, forming a semicircle in front of the barrow. Two are mounted on horses. All but ignoring your arrival, they look on the returned chieftain with awe. One of the riders, her forehead marked with a tattoo of elk horns, dismounts.

She says, "My daughter's vision was true. This one is the ancient. He is one of us!"

She kneels before Javor, and her fellows follow her lead. "We come to see you avenged, ancient one," she says.

Javor nods with grim approval. He says, "You are in time for blood. The desecrater dwells there."

He points to the Nettlebee ranch in the valley below the barrow. Then, he begins to run in that direction.

Uthgardt of the fierce Elk tribe, as can be discerned from their garb and markings, this barbarian raiding band is led by a female **berserker** named Fennor. Other members include ten **tribal warriors** and a male **berserker** named Padraich. Fennor wears a chain shirt (AC 14), wields a greatsword that deals 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage on a hit, and has the Multiattack action, allowing her to use an action to make two attacks with her sword. She has a challenge rating of 3. Padraich wields a maul that deals 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage on a hit. The two berserkers ride **warhorses**.

Anyone native to the area knows Uthgardt of the Elk tribe are dangerous raiders. Most locals consider them to be savage bandits. Those who are from other regions know the Elk tribe reputation with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check.

Roleplaying the Uthgardt. The barbarians follow Javor. Fennor assumes (only somewhat rightly) that the party emerged from the barrow unscathed only because Javor allowed them to, showing tacit approval. The Uthgardt and the returned chief are willing to talk while on the move.

Javor plans to find and slay the desecraters. He knows two of the Nettlebees are culpable, but he is able to identify them only when he sees them. The returned chief shows no concern for the other Nettlebees.

Fennor plans to "aid" the chief's justice, destroying and looting the ranch in the process. The strong implication is that the Uthgardt intend to allow no Nettlebee to survive. This intention can be confirmed if the characters ask the right questions.

If the adventurers bargain for the safety of innocent Nettlebees, Javor can be swayed. He is willing to stay Fennor's bloodlust. However, if he agrees, he demands recompense. The characters must aid in the capture of the desecraters, as well as find Javor's treasure and return it to his barrow, sealing the barrow's entry tunnel thereafter. For their part, the Nettlebees must willingly give the raiders supplies for the road and some livestock. (The halflings do so if it means their survival.)

Fennor adds, "All the ones with this liar's mark!" She makes the fire symbol with her hands. Her uncanny knowledge also comes from her daughter's vision. The berserker isn't willing to share more about her child.

Final Confrontations

The characters have many choices. They can do nothing, which allows the barbarians to loot and destroy the ranch and kill every Nettlebee. (The Uthgardt show no mercy.) If the party chooses to attack the Uthgardt before they arrive at the ranch, the adventurers must also battle the revenant. At the ranch, Javor focuses on finding and killing Wiggan and Bertram, giving the characters a better chance against the raiders. For their part, the Uthgardt, despite portentous visions, are unwilling to perish to serve Javor. If they suffer significant losses, including either berserker, they make a fighting retreat through the pastures to steal sheep and ponies.

Nettlebees in Hiding. Once the barbarians make it to the ranch, Javor bursts into the house's cellar. The Nettlebees, having seen the raiders on their way over the hills, hide there. The undead chief points to Wiggan and Bertram as the guilty ones. How the scene then plays out is up to you and the players, but halfling pluck and dark devotion make the wicked Nettlebees unlikely to back down easily. In fact, Wiggan tries to bribe the characters into defending Bertram and him "against these savages." He also uses his secrets to try to influence the characters, promising to tell them everything if saved. Javor might be influenced to stay his hand to allow Wiggan to tell his tale, but the revenant's reprieve is only temporary.

Wiggan's Gambit. If the party defends the Nettlebees and Wiggan survives, the characters are still in danger. Wounded foes make tempting targets, especially if the party knows of Wiggan's guilt. Wiggan is even braver if Bertram is there to help him. Watson might try to stop an open battle, but he is unwilling to fight his relatives.

If defeated but left alive, Wiggan can be coerced into telling the truth. The party has to promise to let him live to get him to talk.

Conclusion

If Wiggan or Bertram somehow survive, they later flee to the Temple of Black Earth to report. The characters might encounter them again there. It's up to you whether the cult leaders spare them or punish them for the failure.

The Barbarians. Javor makes sure the other Uthgardt abide by any agreement. Fennor willingly follows "the ancient's" wishes. If Wiggan and Bertram are slain, Javor reminds the characters of promises they made (see the "Treasure" section). In exchange, the Uthgardt don't bother the surviving Nettlebees.

If Javor is slain before Wiggan or Bertram are, he returns to life after 24 hours to resume his pursuit of the desecraters. He, too, might appear in the Temple of the Black Earth. Further, Uthgardt of the Elk tribe could continue to harass the Nettlebees, probably driving them from their ranch to live, much diminished, in a nearby settlement.

Final Clues. Wiggan and Bertram know the location of the Temple of Black Earth, as well as the pass phrase for entering the temple ("I serve the Black Earth"). Although they know of the prophet, neither halfling has met Marlos Urnrayle. The corrupted Nettlebees' main contacts are Hellenrae in the Sacred Stone Monastery and, to a lesser extent, Miraj Vizann, the "mud sorcerer" in the Temple of the Black Earth.

Journals, letters, and transaction records in Wiggan's study link him to the earth cult, revealing connections to the aforementioned leaders. Wiggan also writes of his conversion of Bertram, his slow influence of Watson, and the fire witch plan. If the characters fail to uncover this damning evidence, Watson later does.

Family Repercussions. The Nettlebee family is horrified and shocked by the brutal and supernatural barbarian attack, and later by the truth the characters or Watson uncover. Jayne and Watson see the signs of corruption in retrospect. Jayne takes over as matriarch of the clan. The Nettlebees expand by inviting relatives, as well as hiring a few tough ranch hands.

Treasure

The Nettlebee's wealth is hidden in an iron chest. Walled in with large, unmortared fieldstones that match the walls, the chest is hidden in a niche in the basement. Finding the niche requires a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If the characters promised to return Javor's treasure, the revenant pulls the chest out and remains to identify his property. Once the characters return his treasure to the barrow, Javor disappears, leaving only his bones behind.

The chest is locked, but Wiggan has the key.

Prominently on top of the chest's contents is Javor's ornate helmet made of leather, rope, and bone. It combines a bear skull, deer antlers, and a saber-toothed tiger's lower jaw. The object is in good condition, but it is worth only 10 gp.

An oiled hide under the helmet wraps Javor's ornate greatsword of ancient Besilmer make. The sword's grip is bound in worn leather that doesn't look original, and is marked with sequential notches. Bear claws are tied to the pommel. The sword is worth 100 gp.

In addition, Javor has four animal figurines the size of a human fist—a bear carved of lapis lazuli, a tiger carved of red obsidian, and an elk carved of banded agate (each worth 150 gp), and a *figurine of wondrous power* (silver raven).

The Nettlebee family hoard includes 775 cp, 2,512 sp, 1,553 gp, and 196 pp, as well as nine rose quartz crystals (50 gp each) and an old, worn *bag of holding* of halfling make that is an heirloom.

Restoring the Barrow. To keep their word about restoring the barrow, the characters need only take Javor's items there and leave them in the burial hall. Those who do receive a supernatural charm (see "Other Rewards" in chapter 7, "Treasure," of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), which is a spiritual blessing that mimics a potion or spell of your choice, as appropriate for each character and the source (an Uthgardt chief). If the characters place the sword, raven, and helmet on the bier with the bones and place each figurine on its matching altar, each charm can be used twice before vanishing. In either case, a character of your choice later finds the raven figurine among his or her belongings, sensing Javor's favorable opinion.

If the characters fail to keep their word to Javor, the consequences are up to you. A curse in the reverse of the supernatural charms is appropriate. Word of the characters' duplicity might spread among the Uthgardt. At worst, Javor returns to "remind" the characters of their promise.

Watson's Visit. If the Nettlebees feel they owe the characters, after a month or so, Watson meets them in a nearby town. He gives them an iron brand of the fire symbol, which he found in the fields. Watson also tells the adventurers any information about Wiggan, Bertram, and their relationship to the earth cult that the party doesn't already know. In addition, as a memento of the bond between them, he gives the party the *bag of holding*. Each Nettlebee has helped restore and decorate the bag, and it contains some homemade supplies and a letter of thanks from Jayne. Watson then jokes about how it will be harder to get bales of wool to market in the future.

Vale of Dancing Waters

The dwarves of the North have long held the hidden Vale of Dancing Waters to be a sacred place. Rumored to once hold the summer palace of Besilmer's dwarven king, it is now a place of contemplation and worship for dwarves who wish to pay homage to their goddess of fertility and love, Sharindlar. They allow few outsiders access, but those who are fortunate enough to be invited find a wondrous sight in the secret gorge and its splashing creeks.

Shrine of the Tender Oath

Revered sites within the Vale of Dancing Waters include temples and shrines positioned throughout the gorge, rather than a single consolidated structure. Most of these spots a require a hike to reach from the main trail that follows the gorge. One such location is known as the Shrine of the Tender Oath, a small retreat where devotees can dwell for a time and contemplate the nature of love.

Recently, two unscrupulous treasure hunters, an oni named Obratu and a duergar named Reulek, discovered evidence of the lost cellars of King Torhild Flametongue's summer palace. The fragmentary map sketches and journal entries they recovered suggested two possible entrances. One is in close proximity to the Shrine of the Tender Oath, and another is beneath the Sumber Hills.

Reulek opted to seek the subterranean route, and he subsequently died in the Black Geode (see chapter 5, area G8). Obratu cut a deal with a dwarf named Grumink and his crew of renegade miners. The oni and its allies sneaked into the shrine, used deceit and magic to overcome the few worshipers, and began digging. They have gone unnoticed by other dwarves in the region.

Setup

A dwarf acquaintance asks the characters to go to the Vale of Dancing Waters. Which NPC asks the characters is up to you. He or she might need help due to infirmity, which might be eased by holy water from the vale, or might instead be honoring the characters with a visit to this sacred place. In any case, it should be made clear that the vale is usually off limits to non-dwarves.

Once the characters agree, they receive instructions on how to find the vale. The group must ride on the Dessarin River to a certain bend, climb next to a waterfall toward a prominent bluff, and a hike along a narrow trail through heavy underbrush. The dwarf asking for aid also gives the characters a signed and sealed document proclaiming them friends of the dwarves who have permission to visit the vale. Lastly, he or she explains that the side path to the Shrine of the Tender Oath is subtly marked with a pair of Dethek runes, the first letter of the dwarven words for "Tender" and "Oath."

The trip to the vale can be as eventful as you like, but once the characters reach the right spot, start with area D1.

D1. Switchbacks

The approach to the Shrine of the Tender Oath begins as a short but steep flight of steps cut into the side of the gorge. Two of the creeks in the Vale of Dancing Waters meet near the steps before tumbling on toward the Dessarin River. The trail continues upriver to other parts of the vale, so unless the characters know about the runes, it's easy to miss the beginning of the steps; it takes a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice them.

After twenty steps, the stairs turn into a narrow path that follows switchbacks up the wall of the gorge. The characters must walk single-file. The journey takes half an hour.

Two-thirds of the way up, at a switchback turnaround, Grumink's miners constructed a trap. Its purpose is to make noise and warn the lookouts in area D2 above, but it's also dangerous. A character who has a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher notices a steel tripwire fastened between boulders about two inches from the ground. A character who is looking for traps instead finds the tripwire with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

If the tripwire is sprung, it tumbles one boulder along with a rush of smaller stones and gravel down the path. The first two creatures ascending the trail must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the creature is knocked prone and takes 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage. A failure by 5 or more results in the creature being knocked from the pathway, sliding and falling to the next lower level of the path, and taking an additional 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

Cutting the tripwire triggers the trap. To disarm it, the wire must be disconnected, kept tight, and traced back to the wood panel it holds, shoring up the loose boulder and rocks. Then the boulder must be further supported until it can't fall due to lack of tension on the tripwire. Reworking the trap this way can be done in a few ways, but checks to do so are no worse than DC 10.

D2. Shrine Entrance

As the characters reach the top of the switchbacks, read the following text:

> The path levels off and widens before an arch cut from the dark stone of the mountain. Flanking the arch are two statues of dwarves offering a greeting. Beyond the archway is an open courtyard with a statue on a raised platform in the center. All these features have been chiseled out of the side of the mountain rather than built from fitted stonework.

Two dwarf **guards** stand watch atop this stony shelf. Instead of spears and shields, they carry warhammers that they wield with two hands (1d10 + 1 bludgeoning damage on a hit). Without shields, they have AC 14. Whether or not the guards are present depends on how quietly the characters approach:

- If the characters trigger the trap in area D1 or make no attempt to approach quietly, the dwarf guards detect them and aren't here. They have retreated to the courtyard (area D3).
- If the characters don't trigger the trap in area D1 and make an effort to be stealthy, the guards are here, talking quietly in Dwarvish.

In the latter case, the faint sound of hammering can be heard from somewhere beyond the courtyard (see area D7).

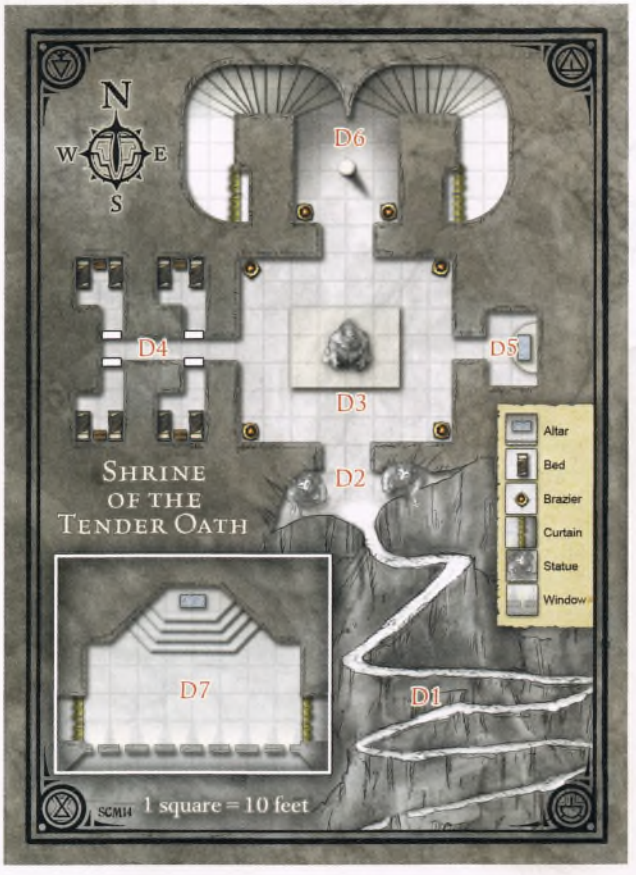
D3. Courtyard

> This courtyard is open to the sky, and its walls have been carved with scenes of dwarves engaged in rituals, often in pairs, of a friendly or amorous nature. A twenty-foot-tall statue of a female dwarf in a gown stands atop a stone dais in the middle of the courtyard, her arms outstretched in a welcoming gesture, her face carved with a warm smile. Unlit stone braziers stand in each corner, while archways leading into dark interior spaces pierce the center of walls to the east, north, and west. Carved into the rock above the northern arch is a row of windows.

If the characters took out the guards in area D2, the courtyard is unguarded, and they can hear hammering from somewhere north of the courtyard (area D7).

Windows. The windows that run along the north wall, overlooking the courtyard, are 20 feet up. They run the length of the south wall of area D7. Each window is an open rectangle 7 feet tall and 2 feet wide.

Ruse. If the characters triggered the trap in area D1 or otherwise forecast their arrival to the guards in area D2, the renegade dwarves have time to prepare a ruse. Grumink sends six dwarf **guards** from area D7 to the courtyard, bolstered by the two dwarf **guards** from area D2. These eight dwarves don disguises to look like robed dwarves attending a private wedding ceremony.



The **oni**, Obratu, is also present and uses Change Shape to appear as a female dwarf officiating the ceremony:

> East of the statue are several robed dwarves engaged in a ceremony. As they turn toward you, smiles light up their faces.
>
> "Ah! More guests!" says the female dwarven priest officiating the ceremony. "Welcome to the wedding." The rest of the wedding party beckons for you to join in.

If the characters seem suspicious or threaten them in any way, the dwarves end their ruse and attack.

If the characters think the ceremony is real and join the festivities, the dwarves wait for them to get close before drawing hidden weapons and taking the characters. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or higher notice that the dwarves are wearing chain shirts under their robes; these characters aren't surprised when the dwarves attack. Instead of spears and shields, the dwarves carry warhammers that they wield with two hands (1d10 + 1 bludgeoning damage on a hit). Without shields, these guards have AC 14.

Once combat erupts, the oni casts *invisibility* on itself, gathers its glaive from behind the dais, and uses the statue of Sharindlar for cover while casting spells, doing its best not to affect its allies. The oni reveals its true form only if doing so might terrify the party. When



Grumink
the Renegade

reduced to half its hit points, the oni casts *gaseous form* on itself and flies through a window into area D7.

D4. Dormitory

The passage west from the courtyard becomes a long hallway with a series of stone doors on either side. Read the following aloud the first time a character enters one of the rooms:

> A short hallway widens into a square room with a plain set of furniture. Each piece has been carved directly from the rock that makes up this place. A pair of beds line opposite walls, while a table with benches rests in the middle. Shelves and open cupboards are chiseled out of the walls, all of it smooth and perfectly formed. Cushions cover the benches, and mattresses rest on the beds. A variety of knickknacks sit here and there—everyday items common to someone's tidy and simple home.

If the characters make a point of poking around, they spot a trace of blood or other signs of violence on a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Southwest Room. The renegade dwarves dumped the bodies of everyone they slew in the southwestern cell. Even before the door is open, read the following aloud to the players:

> A faint but foul stench makes it obvious something rots beyond this door.

Once the characters enter, read the following text:

> The bodies of a dozen dwarves are stacked along the far wall. Judging from the smell and the decay, they died close to a tenday ago.

Checking the bodies reveals that they are all robed dwarves, likely the inhabitants of the shrine. Most were killed by the renegade dwarves' warhammers, although some are rent by long wounds from the oni's claws.

D5. Chapel

> The short, arched passage leads into a chamber with a raised stone dais and altar at the far end. Above the altar is a carving of the same smiling, beckoning dwarven woman depicted in the courtyard statue. Two small braziers rest upon a white cloth draped over the altar, though neither is currently lit. An empty stone bowl sits in the altar's center. Cloth cushions are strewn haphazardly on the floor.

This chapel is dedicated to Sharindlar. The renegade dwarves left this place alone.

Treasure

If characters poke around the altar, a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a silver chain worth 25 gp tangled on one of the braziers. Near the chain is a small bloodstain.

D6. Hall of Vows

> Two unlit braziers flank the entrance just inside this wide hall. Detailed carvings of dwarves decorate both side walls. These images depict ceremonies, rituals of romance, love, and even passion. Two sets of stairs, side by side but spiraling away from each other, rise at the north end.

If the characters have come this far without alerting the creatures in area D7, they can hear hammering from upstairs. The carvings continue along the walls of the stairs as they rise toward the temple. Each flight of stairs ends at a wide brown curtain.

Treasure

Leaning against the corner behind the western brazier is a *+1 greataxe*. Its owner left it there while attending a ceremony in the greater temple, but the oni slew the

dwarf and overlooked the axe in the aftermath. The axe has Dethek runes on it, reading, "A beacon in the dark depths." The axe's wielder always knows the way to the nearest passage leading from underground toward the surface, as well as the approximate depth the axe is underground.

D7. Temple

> Passing through the curtain, you find yourself in a large ceremonial chamber. Steps rise toward a wide alcove in the north wall, where a dais and altar face forward. Along the opposite wall, light streams through a row of tall, narrow windows.

This chamber serves as the main ceremonial hall for dwarven worship of Sharindlar. The windows that line the south wall are open rectangles 7 feet high by 2 feet wide.

Grumink and his team have been hard at work, trying to dig through the stone behind the altar. If Grumink is unaware of the characters, refer to the "Dwarves at Work" section. If Grumink knows the characters are coming, refer to the "Dwarves Alerted" section instead. Grumink is hostile toward the characters in either scenario, mistaking them for competitors.

Dwarves at Work

Read the following text aloud:

> A team of dwarves is hard at work, pounding on the stone behind the altar with stout tools. Watching them intently is another dwarf wearing black leather armor. Next to him, tapping its foot impatiently, is a blue-skinned ogre.

The leather-clad dwarf is **Grumink the Renegade** (see "Other Villains" in chapter 7), and the "blue-skinned ogre" is the **oni**, Obratu. Eight dwarf **guards** are hammering at the stone wall behind the altar. Instead of spears and shields, the guards carry warhammers that they wield with two hands (1d10 + 1 bludgeoning damage on a hit). Without shields, these guards have AC 14.

Dwarves Alerted

If the characters are coming from a big fight in the courtyard (area D3), **Grumink the Renegade** (see chapter 7) is here with two dwarf **guards**, ready to make his final stand. If the **oni** survived the courtyard battle, it is here as well, in the guise of a female dwarf.

Development

Grumink carries fragmentary maps and partial journal entries that, when studied together, suggest that King Torhild Flametongue's summer palace could be hidden behind the temple (area D7). The maps and journal entries appear genuine but are, in fact, false. ("They're digging in the wrong place!")

Obratu carries a folded scrap of paper with the following message written on it, in Common:

Obratu,

There's too much sunlight up here. I'll try the route from the Underdark. Maybe we'll meet in the palace.

Reulek

Conclusion

Characters who defeat Grumink, Obratu, and their minions can explore the rest of the shrine. If the find the bodies of the slain priests and acolytes in the dormitory (area D4), they can search the Vale of Dancing Waters for other dwarven enclaves. During their search, they stumble upon a group of dwarves traveling through in the vale. The dwarves are horrified to learn what has transpired in the Shrine of the Tender Oath. They hold burial ceremonies for their slain kin and provide safe sanctuary for the characters. The shrine is then closed to visitors for the foreseeable future.

Dark Dealings in Yartar

The city of Yartar is renowned as a place to make deals. Merchants, smugglers, mercenaries, and spies from all over the North meet in Yartar's taverns and alleyways to do business. Trade is the lifeblood of the city, and wherever trade flourishes, thieves are never far behind. The guild known as the Hand of Yartar is the largest and most fractious collection of scoundrels between Waterdeep and Luskan. When the Hand finds itself in possession of a *devastation orb*, the guild does what any self-respecting thieves' guild might do: They auction it off to the highest bidder.

Background

Two tendays ago, the Cult of the Eternal Flame dispatched a group of cultists armed with a *devastation orb* to strike at the large town of Triboar. A patrol of the Twelve, the militia of Triboar, met and defeated the cultists in the nearby hills. Not knowing what the cultists were carrying, they brought the *devastation orb* in its containment case back to Triboar. Shortly thereafter, it disappeared.

Nareen Dhest, a member of the Hand of Yartar operating in Triboar, pilfered the lord protector's vaults and smuggled the orb in its case back to Yartar.

The Hand of Yartar had no particular use for a fiery orb, so the thieves decided to sell it. Nareen put out the word that interested parties could submit their offers at the Wink and Kiss, a tavern in Yartar's market square. However, another Hand by the name of Haliyra Ravenfast found a different buyer: the Kraken Society, a sinister secret network with spies throughout the North. Haliyra cut a deal with society operatives to sell them the orb. They just need to eliminate Nareen and leave the Harpers, Zhentarim, and anyone else interested in the orb blaming one another for dealing in bad faith.

Setup

You have several good options to involve the characters in this side trek. Consider one or more of the following:

- If a character is allied with the Harpers, a known contact sends a message through a *sending* spell. The message says, "Dangerous orb of fire stolen from Triboar. Hands of Yartar auctioning orb to highest bidder. Please recover orb and return it to Triboar."
- The Zhentarim sends word to an allied character through a local contact or a messenger. The Black Network needs to secure a magic orb the Hand of Yartar is trying to sell. The character is to obtain the orb at any cost.
- Characters who keep up with underworld news hear that the Hand of Yartar found an elemental weapon. The thieves are auctioning it off.
- Characters passing through Yartar hear rumors that the Hand of Yartar stole something dangerous. Now the thieves want to get rid of it.

Arrival in Yartar

Yartar is a small, walled city that stands on the east bank of the Surbrin River. Extensive docks line the city's riverfront. The city bustles with trade, and wagon trains constantly come and go along the Evermoor Way. West of the city, a wide bridge spans the river, leading to a walled citadel.

Characters looking for a place to stay find two decent choices in the Pearl-Handled Pipe (good), and the White-Winged Griffon (poor). In addition, characters affiliated with the Lords' Alliance are welcome at the Waterbaron's Hall, where they are provided with guest quarters at no charge.

If the party was sent to Yartar by the Harpers or the Zhentarim, local contacts for those factions quickly confirm that the Hand of Yartar has let it be known that anyone interested in bidding on a strange magical orb should inquire at the Wink and Kiss and ask for Nareen. The Wink and Kiss is a tavern of low repute near the city's central market square.

Characters who lack any local connections can find out the same information by spending a few hours asking questions in local taverns and spending 10 gp in bribes and drinks.

The Wink and Kiss

The Wink and Kiss is a large tavern staffed by a dozen dancers, servers, and cooks (all **commoners**) protected by two human **thugs** who serve as bouncers. Nareen Dhest and her group are in a private room in the back. Everybody working in the Wink and Kiss is friendly toward the Hand of Yartar, and they know their regular clientele. Any suspicious-looking strangers are likely to be spotted at once. The staff pretends nothing is out of the ordinary and waits on newcomers, but they quietly warn Nareen and her group. Nareen might send a server to ask such folk whether they're here to talk business and invite them to join her.





When the characters meet Nareen, read:

> A server leads you to a private room in the back of the Wink and Kiss. Inside is a dark-haired human female with icy blue eyes, dressed in traveler's garb. She is seated behind a large wooden table with empty chairs across from her. Two big human mercenaries in armor lean against the walls close by. She studies you for a moment, and smiles.
>
> "The bidding starts at a fifteen hundred gold pieces," she says. "What's your offer?"

The woman is Nareen Dhest (female Tethyrian human **spy**), the thief who stole the *devastation orb* in Triboar. She is protected by two mercenary **veterans**. In addition, the two **thugs** guarding the tavern are ready to come when called. The room has two small leaded-glass windows and a barred door facing the alley behind the tavern. Nareen made sure to set up in a room with two ways out, just in case.

Acquiring the Orb

The orb is hidden in a nearby mausoleum. Nareen can describe the orb in great detail if questioned, reporting that it's a thick glass orb, dull red in color and warm to the touch. It is packed in a small wooden cask filled with water and sealed with wax. A mage hired by the Hand of Yartar identified it as a powerful weapon of elemental fire magic, but worries it might be unstable. She knows that soldiers of Triboar took it from strange orange-robed cultists near that town. If asked how she got the orb, Nareen just smiles.

Nareen expects 1,500 gp, but characters who negotiate well and bring up good points can talk her down to 1,100 gp with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Her guards are vigilant for use of magic to charm or coerce her, and attack at once if they see it used. If the party attacks and defeats Nareen and her guards, she grudgingly buys her life by surrendering the orb's location.

When Nareen agrees on a price, she requires the characters to leave half the sum with the barkeep at the Wink and Kiss. She tells the characters that she can take them to where the orb is, or send someone to fetch it.

Rival Seller

When the characters conclude dealing with Nareen, matters take a new turn. Haliyra Ravenfast (female Illuskan human **assassin**), another Hand of Yartar, has already sold the orb to the Kraken Society. She has a good hiding spot in the alley behind the tavern that gives her a view through the small, dirty panes of the window in the back room where the characters meet Nareen.

When a deal appears imminent, or the characters defeat Nareen and her guards, Haliyra fires a crossbow bolt through the window from the alley outside. She targets Nareen. Nareen's guards assume the characters are responsible and attack, unless the characters immediately aid Nareen or take other actions showing their innocence.

Haliyra attempts to escape by fleeing through the nearby market. The market is crowded with people. Spotting her requires a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. If none of the characters spot her, Haliyra makes her way to Thorn Alley, one of the streets leading into the market square, and disappears into Yartar's crowds.

Background. Haliyra has been skulking about the Wink and Kiss for days, watching carefully to see who is involved in the bidding. She has already arranged for her chosen buyers to pick up the orb from its hiding place. To cover her tracks, she hopes to incite a fight between Nareen and the characters.

Treasure. Haliyra is carrying the Kraken Society's payment for the orb—six emeralds worth 250 gp each. She also has a simple sketch map of a nearby graveyard, with an X marked on one of the mausoleums.

Dealing with Nareen. After the encounter with Haliyra, Nareen wants out. She agrees to tell the characters where the orb is if they pay her up front.

Meeting at the Tomb

When the characters successfully deal with Nareen and Haliyra, they learn where the *devastation orb* is hidden. The next step is to take possession of the orb, but Haliyra's buyers are already on the scene.

> The overgrown cemetery sprawls beneath the eastern wall of the city. Gnarled trees and crumbling mausoleums break line of sight all around. Three humans are gathered around the door of the crypt you're looking for, along with someone—or something—that stands almost eight feet tall and hides itself under a huge, sodden cloak.

The Kraken Society agents here at the tomb include a large sahuagin named **Ghald** (see "Other Villains" in chapter 7), Unferth (male Tethyrian human **priest**), and two bodyguards (male Tethyrian human **veterans**). The bodyguards are working with crowbars to open the crypt door, while Ghald keeps watch. Unferth is the group's spokesman, although Ghald is in command.

If the Kraken Society agents see the party coming, Unferth calls out a warning, saying, "No closer, friends! This is a private matter, and we don't wish to be disturbed." Unferth presents himself with a false joviality, making light of the fact that two groups of upstanding citizens should find themselves engaged in an ugly bit of skulduggery involving opening a tomb. Underneath the self-deprecating manner is a stern resolve. The Kraken Society paid good money for the orb, and they intend to keep it.

Ghald waits and watches to see if the adventurers can be scared away. When he decides conflict is likely, he attacks without warning. This act forces the others to join the battle. Unferth hangs back and uses his spells to support his allies.

If the characters accepted Nareen's offer to guide them here, and she is uninjured from Haliyra's attack, she and one of her veterans are here. They fight as the party's allies.

The Orb. The crypt is a small stone building with a locked iron door. Nareen has the key; the Kraken Society agents don't have a key, so they must break in. The crypt holds the remains of a minor lord and lady, buried here centuries ago. The orb sits in a wooden containment cask in plain sight on the floor. See chapter 7 for more information on *devastation orbs*.

Conclusion

When the characters recover the *devastation orb*, they must decide what to do with it. The Harpers want to see the orb returned to Triboar. Zhentarim agents want to smuggle the orb out in a Zhentarim-sponsored caravan, intending to study the device. Otherwise, the characters can turn it over to the authorities or detonate it in the countryside away from any populated area.



The Dark Lady

Rundreth Manor

One of the most powerful creatures in the Dessarin Valley is a shadow dragon named Nurvureem, who dwells in caverns under Rundreth Manor. Nurvureem has no interest in allying with the cults. After emissaries failed to return from Rundreth Manor, the elemental cults have learned to give Nurvureem a wide berth. The Harpers, the Zhentarim, and the Lords' Alliance believe the elemental cults are courting the Dark Lady, so they send the characters to investigate.

Background

The Dark Lady—a nickname for Nurvureem often whispered in shuddering fear—received a delegation of elemental cultists months ago. They came seeking the Dark Lady's aid. Nurvureem not only declined their offer but also feasted on the delegation. She allowed a few cultists to escape and report on the terrible outcome of their "negotiations."

The surviving cultists' hasty departure didn't go unnoticed. A spy from the Harpers, the Zhentarim, or the Lords' Alliance (your choice) saw them leave and jumped to the wrong conclusion by assuming the elemental cults were in league with the Dark Lady.

Although based on a faulty premise, this side trek is hardly a waste of time for the characters. If they play their cards right, they can obtain a historical perspective on Elemental Evil that only Nurvureem can provide.

Setup

This adventure is best used late in the campaign for two reasons. First, the characters know more about the elemental cults and have a better perspective to understand the Dark Lady's information. Second, it strains credulity for any of the factions to send inexperienced agents into the Dark Lady's lair.

The characters receive a *sending* spell, telling them to meet a faction agent at a local inn. When they do, read the following text:

> Just as the spell said, your contact—a hard-looking woman—is waiting at a back table in the inn. After pleasantries are exchanged, she unfurls a map of the Dessarin Valley.
>
> "A powerful shadow dragon called the Dark Lady lairs underneath Rundreth Manor, right here." She points to a spot on the map. "One of our agents saw robed cultists leaving the manor. We've never seen anyone leave Rundreth Manor alive, so that could mean our enemies have a shadow dragon on their side." Her eyes narrow. "Your goal is to shatter this alliance any way you can. I recommend negotiation."

If the characters ask, their contact says the other agent saw half a dozen figures leaving Rundreth Manor in haste. That agent tried to follow the cultists but lost them in the dark.

If the characters request payment, the contact is authorized to negotiate on her faction's behalf. Tailor the reward to the characters' needs. While the characters are traveling to and from the manor, faction agents can send word to their superiors and get whatever coin or magic the characters negotiate for.

The Ruins

> What's left of Rundreth Manor stands on a small, steep-sided wooded hill just east of the Long Road, with a carriage drive opening off the caravan road just south of the hill and climbing its southern side to curve around and approach the back of the manor house from the east.
>
> On the surface where the manor once stood are heaps of fallen stone blocks and the tumbled lines of walls, which form a T-shaped outline with two rectangular wings thrusting north and south out of an enormous east-west rectangular room. This room has three-floor-high remnants of walls in two places, clinging to soaring stone chimneys. It looks like it was once a truly impressive hall.

The two wings of the manor are fallen stones and forest now. Bits of flagstone floor can be seen amid the bushes and trees growing in the feast hall. With a little exploring, the characters find a hole that leads to a stairway down into the earth.

The flagstones within 10 feet of the top of the stair are laid loosely atop flimsy boards concealed with dirt. They collapse under 100 or more pounds. A character searching for traps can spot these loose stones with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful check also reveals the lip at the end of the loose flagstones that forms the top step of the stair is solid. If the trap triggers, those in its area can attempt a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to catch the edge. On a failed save, the character falls 40 feet to the dirt floor of the pit, landing prone in the undercroft.

Undercroft

> Gloom pervades a chamber seventy feet wide and a hundred feet long. The room is littered with the rotting remnants of long trestle tables fitted with sinks and littered with rusted-out metal platters, carry-bowls, and tureens. Its ceiling is a magnificent series of vaulted arches that crisscross to hold up a stone block ceiling, pierced in many places by the hanging roots of trees growing above.
>
> The air shimmers, and a female drow appears in the center of the chamber.

The drow is an illusory projection, like a *major image* spell, that Nurvureem uses to speak with interlopers without exposing herself to danger. The Dark Lady's image opens conversation by saying, "Welcome to Rundreth Manor."

The image ignores any attacks the characters make against it, although such interaction reveals it to be an illusion.

Conversing with the Dark Lady

The Dark Lady plays the menacing femme fatale to the hilt, verbally fencing with the adventurers. Use her to feed the adventurers any lore you wish. She knows only the basics of what the elemental cults are planning, but she'd like to know more. She's willing to trade information to get it.

The exchange of information can take two forms. If your players enjoy verbal repartee with an evil shadow dragon, then roleplay the conversation as it naturally develops. The Dark Lady subtly pumps the characters for information. She reveals what she knows to keep the flow of information coming. If your players prefer a straightforward negotiation, then the Dark Lady offers an overt information trade. For every interesting fact the characters reveal about the cults, the Dark Lady reveals one, too.

Skipping anything the players already know, the Dark Lady might begin by revealing some of the following points:

- Four elemental cults have moved into the Sumber Hills: an air cult called the Cult of the Howling Hatred; an earth cult, the Cult of the Black Earth; a fire cult called the Cult of the Eternal Flame; and a water cult, the Cult of the Crushing Wave.
- Nurvureem hasn't seen elemental cultists in several tendays. She says, "I taught them in blood to leave this place alone."
- Her recent visitors sought an alliance with her. She says, "Those I allowed to went away disappointed. Well, disappointed once the terror wore off, I imagine."
- The cults are led by self-styled prophets and are using the Haunted Keeps as their bases. The air cultists use Feathergale Spire, the earth cultists are in the Sacred Stone Monastery, the fire cult holds Scarlet Moon Hall, and the water cultists are in Rivergard Keep.
- The four Haunted Keeps were built by adventurers who explored the ruins of Besilmer, an ancient dwarven kingdom. Each one sits on or near an entrance to underground dwarven ruins.
- The cults are here because of an ancient drow shrine to the Elder Elemental Eye, which lies underneath Tyar-Besil, one of the last dwarven strongholds of fallen Besilmer.
- All the cults fear the Elder Elemental Eye. Its symbol looks like a vertical eye set within an inverted step pyramid. The Dark Lady can use illusion magic to show the characters what the Elder Elemental Eye symbol looks like (see chapter 1).
- Centuries ago, a drow named Vizeran DeVir used the power of the shrine to make four elemental weapons, one each of air, water, earth, and fire. Each weapon is connected to an extraplanar Prince of Elemental Evil. These weapons can open or close a portal to the Inner Plane of that element.
- The Dark Lady can supply names and descriptions of each of the four elemental princes (described in chapter 7).

Nurvureem is curious about the prophets. She also wants to know about signs of division or rivalry among the four cults. Her curiosity is also piqued about how the cults are spreading their influence across the Dessarin Valley. She doesn't really care about the communities themselves, but she's keenly interested in the techniques the cults are using to sow fear and exert control. If the characters mention the *devastation orbs*, the Dark Lady expresses a keen interest in them.

The Dark Lady wants the characters to attack the elemental cults and leave her alone. Nurvureem tries her utmost to manipulate the characters into attacking the four elemental cults. She doesn't lie out of malice, though Nurvureem has plenty of that, but because she's trying to motivate the adventurers. She invents details to entice the characters onward.

The Dark Lady converses with the characters as long as she's interested in the information they're providing. When she concludes that the characters have nothing further to offer, the illusion of the drow disappears.

> A new but familiar voice, an octave lower and far more menacing than the drow's, echoes through the chamber, saying, "Now depart, and never return! You are no longer useful to me. No longer useful alive, at any rate."

Nurvureem doesn't respond to further entreaties, ignoring characters who tarry in the undercroft.

If the characters refuse to leave or go out of their way to provoke a violent confrontation, Nurvureem emerges from the shadows in her draconic form and attacks, holding nothing back. To create Nurvureem's statistics, apply the shadow dragon template to the **adult black dragon** statistics in the *Monster Manual*.

Conclusion

Nurvureem's hoard is beyond the characters' reach. When the party returns from Rundreth Manor, whatever faction they were dealing with honors the bargain the characters struck. Their contact expresses surprise that the characters survived the trip to Rundreth Manor.

Halls of the Hunting Axe

The Halls of the Hunting Axe stand as a reminder of the long-forgotten dwarven kingdom of Besilmer. A gateway between the underground and surface worlds, the halls were once a magnificent complex with soaring, arched walls, beautiful stained-glass windows, and impeccable craftsmanship. The only things left standing now are a few crumbling ruins upon a prominent outcropping that survey the plains for leagues around. Rumors claim the ruins of the halls hide an entrance to the tomb of the king of Besilmer himself, Torhild Flametongue, along with his magical axe, *Orcsplitter*. Others insist the place serves only as a hideout for bandits and beasts.



Background

Gargosh Blusterhelm, a young shield dwarf from Mithral Hall, has made it his life's quest to find the legendary axe *Orcsplitter* and present it to the elders of Clan Blusterhelm in the hopes of restoring his family's lackluster reputation. Most of the elders believe Gargosh's plan is a fool's quest.

Gargosh has developed and maintained an extensive diary of his quest, filling it with notes, drawings, rubbings of ancient stone tablets, and so on, all holding clues pointing toward the secret location of the tomb of Torhild Flametongue. Convinced at last that he has enough to go on, Gargosh has set out to find the axe. Now he just needs a few trustworthy souls to assist him in his quest.

Gargosh's greedy cousin, Drannin Splitshield, is also interested in finding the axe for his own glory. Drannin has put a separate plan into motion, one that involves stealing Gargosh's diary and tricking Gargosh's allies into doing all the dirty work before Drannin claims the axe himself.

Gargosh's other problem is the Harpers. That faction feels that the legendary axe should remain exactly where it is, hidden away and undisturbed, so that its power will not fall into the wrong hands. They have taken steps to prevent treasure hunters from getting too close, keeping vigilant agents in the vicinity of the Halls in order to head off any serious digging.

Setup

This adventure is designed for a party of 11th-level characters. Yartar is an ideal starting point because it's a gathering point for allies of the Lords' Alliance.

Gargosh approaches the characters and pleads with them for their help. If one of the player characters is a member of the Lords' Alliance, someone from the faction introduces Gargosh to them. The Lords' Alliance has connections to Mithral Hall and would like to do the dwarves a favor by helping Gargosh find the axe.

> "It is very kind of you to hear my tale," Gargosh says. "I am looking for a great weapon, a legendary axe wielded by my ancestors, and I want you to help me find it. I would try and find it myself, as is proper to bring honor to my family and clan, but I simply cannot hope to succeed alone. The risks are more than I could overcome with my wits and talents. There, I said it. I'm just not good enough to try it by myself.

> "Everyone else thinks this is a fool's errand," he continues. "The king's tomb, where the axe lies, was hidden even from his own people, but I believe we can find it together!"

Gargosh continues in detail, giving the adventurers a crash course on Besilmer history (see the "Ancient Bones" section of chapter 1 for an overview) and explaining what he is trying to accomplish. During the conversation, he reveals that he has "an extensive collection of notes and evidence" pointing to the location of the tomb, but he has not brought it with him out of caution for the diary's safety. He promises that they can see it next time. Gargosh agrees to meet them the next day at the same spot, equipped and ready to go.

The Gargosh Deception

Between the time the characters first meet with Gargosh and when they are to reconvene, Drannin and his misfit team take Gargosh prisoner and get the diary. Liking the idea of letting the characters set off the traps and fight all the deadly monsters, Drannin and his crew hatch a plan to dupe the characters. One of Drannin's companions, a doppelganger, assumes the guise of Gargosh and goes along with the characters, urging them to hurry with a story of theft and betrayal. The rest plan to stay out of sight, and when the axe is found, they hope to step in and take it from the characters. The doppelganger doesn't know everything that Gargosh knows. However, it can read surface thoughts and, if questioned, might be able to glean the expected answer from characters who interrogate it. If all else fails, the doppelganger resorts to blackmail, telling the characters to press on "lest great harm befall the real Gargosh."

Starting Out

A **doppelganger** in the guise of Gargosh meets the characters at the appointed hour:

> When you spot the young dwarf at the agreed-upon time and place, he seems beside himself with consternation. "Unbelievable!" He fumes. "Someone stole my diary! Right out from where I had hidden it last night! I swear, you can't trust anyone these days!" He peers at you as if considering whether you might have had something to do with it, then dismisses the thought. "Doesn't matter," he says. "I have all my notes memorized!"

Gargosh's Route. "Gargosh" tells the characters that their destination is the Halls of the Hunting Axe, and that he plans on taking the following route:

- Travel west along the Evermoor Way from Yartar to Triboar (60 miles)
- Travel south along the Long Road from Triboar to Westbridge (80 miles)
- Travel southeast along the Stone Trail from Westbridge to the Stone Bridge, then continue east to Beliard (80 miles)
- Follow the Dessarin Road south from Beliard for about forty miles, then cut east through the hills to the Halls of the Hunting Axe (50 miles)

Characters can suggest alternative routes, but Gargosh assures them his route is the safest. If the characters recommend a shorter route, Gargosh agrees to follow their lead. Check for random encounters (see chapter 2) regardless of the route the characters decide to take.

Drannin's Route. Drannin and his crew take a much more dangerous and direct route through rugged, hilly terrain:

- They travel south from Yartar, through the Dessarin Hills, to the Stone Trail, staying west of the Dessarin River (110 miles)
- They cross the Stone Bridge, then continue east to Beliard (20 miles)
- They cut through the hills southeast of Beliard to the Halls of the Hunting Axe (30 miles)

Drannin and his crew arrive in Beliard one day ahead of Gargosh and the characters if the characters opt to take Gargosh's route. In addition, Drannin leaves a small force at the Stone Bridge to harry the characters (see "The Stone Bridge" below).

The Stone Bridge

See chapter 2 for more information on the Stone Bridge. When the characters reach the middle of the bridge, read the following text:

> You see half a dozen figures on the bridge ahead—five dwarves in leather armor and a human in wizard's robes. They appear to be sitting on the edge of the bridge, facing north and enjoying the view. When they see you, they stand, move away from the edge of the bridge, and draw their weapons. The robed fellow pulls out a wand.

The figures on the bridge include five **thugs** (male shield dwarves) and a mercenary **mage** named Cavil Zaltobar (male Tethyrian human). Cavil is armed with a *+1 wand of the war mage*. If the characters don't attack immediately, Cavil tosses a few words at them before ordering the thugs to attack:

> "Well met!" says the wizard. "Finally caught up with us, eh? Your adventure ends here, I'm afraid."

Drannin left these forces here knowing that they were unlikely to defeat the characters, but he wanted to play up the idea that someone is trying to stop Gargosh from completing his quest. Cavil chose this spot because it's where Torhild Flametongue, the dwarf king of Besilmer, reportedly fell to his death long ago. "Not a bad place to die," the mage says with mild amusement.

The doppelganger posing as Gargosh doesn't take part in the fight, remaining on the fringes of the battle and rooting for the characters to triumph. Once three of



the thugs are defeated, the remaining two surrender and the mage casts *fly* on himself to escape.

Interrogations. If the characters take prisoners, they can interrogate their captives and learn that they were hired by a dwarf named Drannin. "Gargosh" feigns amazement:

> "My cousin Drannin? That cad! He stole my diary because he wants the axe and all the glory for himself! We need to make haste and catch up with him!"

Characters who have reason to suspect Gargosh might be lying or holding back information can make a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character who succeeds on the check realizes that Gargosh's amazement seems a little rehearsed, suggesting that Gargosh knew Drannin was involved all along. If one or more characters accuse Gargosh of withholding information from them, he admits that he has long suspected Drannin capable of such treachery, but denies knowing of Drannin's plot.

If Gargosh gets the sense that the characters might turn against him, he suggests they all press on to Beliard and get a good night's rest. The doppelganger then tries to slip away in the night.

The Ruins

When the characters finally reach the ruined Halls of the Hunting Axe, "Gargosh" explains that the next step in the treasure hunt is to find four symbols displayed somewhere within the ruins. These symbols, he says, are the key to opening Torhild Flametongue's tomb. The doppelganger has no more information than that.

X1. Owlbear Greetings

> You find a road of broken stone that meanders through hills, stands of trees, and ancient ruins. The road passes under the occasional stone arch as it weaves northward. One such arch stands ahead of you, and perched on a rocky escarpment to the left of the arch is an owlbear. It shrieks at you but doesn't leave its perch.

The **owlbear** has been hunting in the area and has fed recently, so it's not hungry enough to attack a group of well-armed travelers. If the characters leave it alone, the owlbear lets them pass. If they attack it, it leaps down and fights back, fleeing when reduced to half its hit points.

This ancient road merges with a ravine that has a small stream flowing at the bottom of it. Characters who follow the road come to a plaza surrounded by crumbled ruins.



X2. Crumbling Arch

The road passes through a free-standing arch—an example of how some of the Besilmer stonework has withstood the ravages of time.

> This grand arch is half-demolished, but what remains suggests that it was once a great, blocky edifice carved with runes, most of which are too weatherworn to be deciphered. Beyond the arch stands the crumbling shell of a once impressive hall and, to its right, the lower half of a monolithic statue.

The Dethek runes on the arch once told visitors that they were standing amid the mighty works of the Besilmer dwarves. The statue is described in area X3, the ruined hall in area X4.

X3. Watchtower

> This massive structure was once a building topped by a great statue—a dwarf standing proudly with one arm outstretched, brandishing his greataxe. The head, shoulder, and arm of the statue have crumbled down and lie in a pile of rubble around the base of the building now; only the legs, waist, outstretched arm, and weapon remain.

A stairway inside the building rises through the statue, and though it was originally designed to ascend all the way to the statue's head, it stops suddenly at the shattered torso.

X4. Ancient Hall

> Though mostly tumbled down now, this hall must once have been a shining example of Besilmer's architectural mastery. The jagged remnants of thick, soaring walls with high, narrow stained-glass windows can still be seen, and some of the collapsed great dome still sits on top.

The four entrance arches (in the center of each wall) are more or less intact, though the doors themselves are smashed or fallen. Set into each arch is a narrow doorway leading to an equally narrow spiral staircase that descends into the earth. Each staircase leads to a small underground chamber containing dwarven machinery. When the characters first discover one of these four rooms, read the following aloud:

> This dark room contains a large stone flywheel connected to a series of gears. More of the machinery must be hidden behind walls or beneath the floor. Carved into the ceiling is a symbol.

The symbol carved into the ceiling is one of the four elemental symbols (see chapter 1):

Room	Symbol
Northwest	Air
Northeast	Earth
Southeast	Fire
Southwest	Water

If the players want to know what the symbol in each room looks like, sketch out the symbols as they appear on the corners of the Halls of the Hunting Axe map.

No matter how hard the characters push, the flywheel doesn't move. Close inspection accompanied by a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a disengaged sprocket that can be slid along an axle to engage a different part of the machinery. If the sprocket is set in place, the flywheel does move when a character pushes it, and the characters can hear the sound of grinding stone echoing off in the distance. If the characters move the flywheel and then let go, it reverses and spins back to its original position when it is released. There is no apparent way to stop this motion with raw strength; characters who push against the reversal don't even slow it down.

While brute force won't work, mechanical ingenuity will. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a small hole on the rim of the flywheel into which a typical weapon hilt or bundle of arrows will fit. If something at least six inches long extends from the flywheel at that point, the flywheel can't reverse.

Along the edge, the flywheel has faint etchings of the elemental symbols of air, earth, fire, and water. If the characters turn the flywheel so that its symbol lines up with a matching symbol on the ceiling, then lock the flywheel into place using the hole on the flywheel's rim, one of the four locks on the secret door in area X9 opens. Once all four flywheels are properly aligned, the secret door in area X9 becomes unlocked.

The doppelganger impersonating Gargosh can't figure any of this out on his own, and is both surprised and impressed when the characters figure it out.

X5. Cistern

> Water, green with algae, partially fills a fifty-foot-wide cistern dug into the earth. The water's surface sits thirty feet below ground level. The remains of an aqueduct that come from a point higher up the bluff are still visible, but most of that has fallen into ruin.

The Besilmer dwarves once had extensive waterworks, though little of it remains.

South of the cistern are some old ruins perched on the edge of the bluff. Hidden in these ruins are three good-aligned agents of the Harpers—a **mage** named Ariana Riverlost (female moon elf) and two half-moon elf **scouts** named Elifar (male) and Lorendil (female). They've heard rumblings of a dwarven plot to loot the tomb of King Torhild Flametongue. They emerge from their hiding spot and confront characters who emerge from the crypts with *Orcsplitter* (see "Aftermath").

X6. Amphitheater

> A large, semicircular amphitheater built into the side of the bluff takes advantage of the natural rise and the acoustics. It is still structurally sound, though a few weeds, shrubs, and small trees grow up in cracks between the stones.

Drannin Splithelm (see "Other Villains" in chapter 7), his **shield guardian**, and three dwarf **veterans** armed with battleaxes instead of longswords hide here. They keep a watchful eye on the entrance to the crypts (area X7). Unless they are confronted and defeated here, Drannin and his retinue follow the characters into the crypts (see area X10).

X7. Entrance to the Crypts

> This structure isn't so much a building as it is a facade built into a bluff. Two alcoves flank an opening, and life-sized statues carved from the stone stand within each alcove: a pair of dwarves in full regalia, perhaps as an honor guard. The statues are badly weathered and have suffered damage from vandals and treasure hunters.

The opening leads into a hallway that extends back about 60 feet before coming to a long staircase that descends into the darkness for 200 feet, with landings positioned every 20 feet. On either side of each landing, a small alcove holds a stone brazier. Though none have been lit in many years, touching a torch to one causes all of them to magically burst into flame, as well as the braziers in area X8, which lies at the bottom of the staircase.

X8. Hall of the Fallen

> The stairs open at last into a great hall filled with massive square columns twenty feet thick that rise to a ceiling thirty feet overhead. Stone braziers stand at the intersection of each pathway between the columns. Each column serves as a mausoleum, with an alcove carved into each side, offset so that the alcove takes up only the right-hand half of the facing. The alcoves once held stone effigies of the interred dead. Many of the tombs have been smashed open, revealing the bones of the dead inside. The crumbled and ruined stonework of the broken effigies lies smashed on the floor.
>
> "Methinks we're in the right place," Gargosh says plainly, strolling among the crypts. "Somewhere in here is the secret entrance to King Flametongue's tomb. We just have to find it!"

The floor here is made of smooth, cut stone.

Each column holds four crypts, and each crypt is hidden behind an alcove that either contains or once contained a stone slab carved with a bas-relief of the dwarf entombed within. Crypts that have already been searched stand open, their doors and effigies smashed. Only eight crypts remain sealed, and they contain nothing but the bones of the ancient dead.

X9. False Crypt

This particular crypt looks unremarkable among the others, but it reveals a secret.

> The effigy on this tomb depicts a dwarven king in full regalia clutching a stone scepter with one hand and pointing toward the floor with the other.

Close inspection of the effigy reveals that there are no seams to indicate that a crypt lies behind it. In fact, there is none. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check also reveals that the scepter is a separate piece of stonework that can be easily removed from the dwarf king's grip. The scepter is 2 feet long with a handle 2 inches thick; it weighs 25 pounds.

Inspection of the floor reveals that the 20-foot-square section in front of the crypt is different from the smooth stone found elsewhere in the hall. It consists of ten 20-foot-long, 1-foot-wide stone slabs neatly fitted together. Drilled next to the southernmost slab is a 2-inch wide, 6-inch deep hole, which can be found with a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

The stone slabs are actually the topmost steps of a secret staircase that descends to area X10. Four locks hidden under the floor prevent the slabs from lowering. However, if the flywheels in area X4 are properly lined up, these locks are now open. Once the locks are open, inserting the stone scepter or a similarly sized "key" into the hole causes the stone slabs to sink, forming the steps of the hidden staircase. The staircase remains open as long as the key (the scepter or some other object) remains in place.

"Gargosh" might be helpful at noticing the hidden staircase and the hole cut into the floor, but he's not much help when it comes to figuring out how to lower the stairs. If the characters have not yet turned the flywheels in area X4, Gargosh suggests that they look elsewhere for the symbols needed to open the way. Characters can also "cheat" by casting four *knock* spells on the secret staircase.

If Gargosh is present when the characters open the secret staircase, read the following:

> Gargosh stares in amazement. "We found it," he whispers. "The axe will soon be mine at last! See, I didn't need the stupid diary! Let's go!"

X10. False Tomb

The characters reach this area by descending the stairs from area X9.

> The wide stairs open into an odd-shaped room. Set into the wall next to the stairs is a stone lever in the "down" position. Braziers similar to the ones above burn with mysterious blue flames that give off no heat. In alcoves to either side, large dwarven statues stand at attention, saluting the beautifully engraved marble sarcophagus that sits alone against the far wall, which is carved with runes.

Any character who reads Dwarvish can translate the Dethek runes on the wall:

Here lies His Noble Majesty
King Torhild Flametongue.
He raised a kingdom in the sun,
Defending it with his dying breath.

The dwarf statues are two **stone golems**. The moment anyone attempts to open the sarcophagus, the golems animate and attack, returning to their alcoves once all intruders retreat up the stairs. If he is still with the characters, "Gargosh" flees up the stairs to escape the golems' wrath, and to reunite with Drannin (see "Development" below).

Torhild's Dying Breath. Opening the sarcophagus releases a cloud of poisonous gas that fills the room. Any creature in the chamber must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails the saving throw is also poisoned for 1 minute.

The sarcophagus is empty.

Lever. The stone lever protruding from the wall can be used to raise or lower the staircase leading up to area X9. Moving the lever up raises the stairs and seals the tomb; pulling the lever down opens the tomb again.

Secret Door. A secret door in the southwest corner swings open to reveal a dusty, 10-foot-high, 10-foot-wide

stone tunnel leading to area X11. Characters searching the walls for secret doors find the well-hidden door with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Development

Once the characters defeat the golems, **Drannin Splithelm** (see "Other Villains" in chapter 7) arrives with his **shield guardian** and his retinue—three dwarf **veterans** armed with battleaxes instead of longswords. If the **doppelganger** posing as Gargosh yet lives, it tries to reunite with its true companions. Drannin's crew isn't stealthy, so the characters can hear the dwarves and shield guardian approaching.

Once Drannin and his retinue come into view, read the following aloud:

> A wall of dwarves wearing splint armor and brandishing axes marches into view. Behind them, a handsome dwarf encased in plate armor claps while standing in the shadow of a 9-foot-tall construct. "Well done, my friends," says the clapping dwarf. "Well done. You found ol' Flametongue's tomb. I had my doubts. I can't wait to see the expression on poor Gargosh's face when he discovers that I, Drannin Splithelm, retrieved *Orcsplitter*, not him!" The dwarf is beaming, but his smile fades quickly. "So, I guess this is farewell."

Drannin imbibes a *potion of frost giant strength* prior to confronting the characters and is spoiling for a fight. He couldn't be bothered to read Gargosh's diary in detail, so he has no idea that this tomb is false, or that the sarcophagus might be trapped. If the characters allow Drannin to plunder the tomb, he triggers the gas trap (if it hasn't already been triggered) and is furious to find the sarcophagus empty.

Drannin and his cohorts don't fight to the death. If a battle erupts and things aren't going well, they retreat and leave the shield guardian to cover their escape. If he is cornered with no one left to protect him, Drannin surrenders.

Treasure

Drannin wears the control amulet keyed to the shield guardian, as well as a *ring of cold resistance*. He also carries Gargosh's diary which, among other things, contains a note about a false tomb with a secret door.

X11. The True Tomb of King Torhild Flametongue

> This simple chamber has a slightly raised, circular marble dais in its center. Carved on the stone circle is an effigy of a dwarf lying in state, clutching a greataxe to his breast. An inscription is carved in runes around the perimeter of the dais.

Any character who reads Dwarvish can translate the Dethek runes:

> Here lies His Noble Majesty
> King Torhild Flametongue.
> He raised a kingdom in the sun.
> May his reign never be forgotten.

The dias is a heavy stone lid covering the king's tomb. Lifting and moving the dais requires three characters acting in concert and each succeeding on a DC 20 Strength check. For each additional creature that helps, reduce the DC by 2. Beneath the dias is a circular stone crypt, 8 feet wide and 3 feet deep, containing a simple stone coffin.

Treasure

Within the stone coffin lie the remains of the dwarf king, his skeletal hands clutching his axe, *Orcsplitter*, to his breast. *Orcsplitter* is described in chapter 7. The king's bones lie atop a bed of 500 gold ingots stamped with the king's face on one side and the rising sun on the other. Tiny runes on each ingot testify to the greatness and longevity of the ancient kingdom of Besilmer. The gold ingots are worth 10 gp each.

Aftermath

Captured members of Drannin's crew can divulge the location of the real Gargosh. He is imprisoned in a small cave on the riverbank near Yartar, locked in a large trunk with air holes and water. Gargosh can survive for four more days inside the trunk.

If the characters emerge from the dwarven crypts with *Orcsplitter* in their custody, the Harpers hiding in area X5 confront them under the open sky. They point out that *Orcsplitter* belongs in the hands of dwarven scholars. They'll first appeal to the characters' sense of altruism, but if that doesn't work, the Harpers try to arrange an exchange of magic items. This is an opportunity for your players to ask for something—a specific weapon or two, perhaps—that suits their particular characters. If an agreement is reached, Ariana Riverlost promises to meet the characters again in two weeks, at a location chosen by them, with the agreed-upon payment.





Chapter 7: Monsters and Magic Items

This chapter presents new monsters, villains, and magic items. The monster section concludes with descriptions of the Princes of Elemental Evil, beings of overwhelming power and malice.

After the monster and villain descriptions are magic items the characters find during the adventure. Some of these are much like the magic items described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Others are elemental items, made using the power of the elemental nodes. Cultists of Elemental Evil make extensive use of these quasi-magical devices. The item descriptions conclude with descriptions of the four elemental weapons carried by the prophets of Elemental Evil. These weapons are unique magic items offering great power to those who wield them.

Monsters

Power-hungry humanoids see Elemental Evil as a principle deserving of worship and form cults around the destructive magic Elemental Evil offers. Evil creatures that come from the elemental planes are likewise ready servants of Elemental Evil. Finally, monsters of the Material Plane that have an affinity for one of the elements also fall under the sway of Elemental Evil, especially in areas where a strong elemental node is present. Earth cults easily ally with creatures such as bulettes or umber hulks, water cults ally with merrow and sea hags, and so on.

Monsters and NPCs by Challenge Rating

Monster	Challenge
Howling Hatred initiate	1/8
Crushing Wave reaver	1/2
Sacred Stone monk	1/2
Feathergale knight	1
Crushing Wave priest	2
Black Earth guard	2
Eternal Flame guardian	2
Fathomer	2
Howling Hatred priest	2
Hurricane	2
Oreioth	2
Black Earth priest	3
Dark Tide knight	3
Eternal Flame priest	3
One-eyed shiver	3
Skyweaver	3
Thurl Merosska	3
Wiggan Nettlebee	3
Windharrow	3
Burrowshark	4
Grumink the Renegade	4
Shoalar Quanderil	4
Stonemelder	4
Elizar Dryflagon	5
Ghald	5
Hellenrae	5
Razerblast	5
Flamewrath	6
Miraj Vizann	6
Aerisi Kalinoth	7 (9 with lair actions)
Drannin Splithelm	7
Elemental myrmidon	7
Bastian Thermandar	8
Marlos Urnrayle	8 (12 with lair actions)
Gar Shatterkeel	9 (13 with lair actions)
Vanifer	9 (12 with lair actions)
Olhydra	18
Yan-C-Bin	18
Imix	19
Ogrémoch	20

Howling Hatred Cultists

Most air cultists are idealists lured to the cult by lofty notions such as detachment from material possessions, bodily addictions, and physical desires. Some find their way to the cult in pursuit of rumors that they can learn to fly, tame the wind, or shed their obesity. Whatever their reasons, they eventually succumb to the cult's subtle indoctrination, surrendering their worldly goods to the cult's coffers and the hardiness of their bodies to the cult's emaciating rites. Cultists that survive their initiation usually gain all the things the cult promised—at the cost of their free will.

The Cult of the Howling Hatred relies upon deception and trickery both to recruit its members and defeat its enemies. Even so, those that underestimate the air cult for their mysticism shouldn't forget the wild destructive power the cultists wield when they unleash cyclones and tornadoes.

The Cult of Howling Hatred cooperates with the fire and water cults but they loathe the Cult of the Black Earth, viewing its members as stubborn, unenlightened drones without vision or imagination.

Feathergale Knight

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (scale)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Animal Handling +2, History +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Auran, Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spellcasting. The knight is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *gust,* light, message, ray of frost*
1st level (2 slots): *expeditious retreat, feather fall*

Actions

Multiattack. The knight makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

The Feathergale Knights are ambitious, wealthy folk from cities such as Waterdeep seduced by the air cult's promises of power. From the backs of hippogriffs or giant vultures, they survey the land around Feathergale Spire, guarding the entrance to the air cult's hidden temple.

The knights are contemptuous of other elemental cultists, whom they view as depraved lunatics. Under lord commander Thurl Merosska, the Feathergale Knights see themselves as elite men and women who can make hard choices for the good of their realms. In reality, they are bound to Yan-C-Bin and are blind to their own corruption and decadence. Despite their refined manners and social sophistication, each has sealed that pact with the murder of a sentient being—deaths the knights have dubbed necessary for the security of the realm.

The knights have access to *wingwear*, as described in the "Elemental Magic Items" section. They are often wearing it when encountered.

Howling Hatred Initiate

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (leather)
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (–1)	11 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Guiding Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the initiate gains advantage on the next ranged attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn.

Hold Breath. The initiate can hold its breath for 30 minutes.



Howling Hatred Priest

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Howling Hatred initiates are attracted by the cult's philosophy of non-attachment and the rejection of material things, unaware of the cult's true nature. The cult attracts adherents of all kinds, from dreamy-eyed youths with little property to world-weary folk eager to put their faith in something as tangible and powerful as an elemental force.

Initiates live on little but air for a month, believing that this regimen purifies them of bodily needs. In truth it makes their bodies so desperate for sustenance that they become susceptible to indoctrination. Soon, they can justify heinous acts within the context of the cult: Human sacrifice isn't an act of murder, but a freeing of the soul from the limitations of a physical shell; conjuring a whirlwind to destroy unbelievers isn't an act of terror but a demonstration of true faith.

Howling Hatred Priest

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 45 (10d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +4, Religion +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Auran, Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hold Breath. The priest can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *gust*,* *light*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *feather fall*, *shield*, *witch bolt*
2nd level (3 slots): *dust devil*,* *gust of wind*
3rd level (2 slots): *gaseous form*

Actions

Multiattack. The priest makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

The most fanatical of the air cultists, the priests push their bodies to physical extremes in order to decrease their density and mass and become as light as leaves. Gaunt and sallow faced, with concave bellies, bulging eyes, and taut skin that enunciates every bone, these living skeletons sustain themselves on nothing more

than air and fanatical devotion to the teachings of the cult. The wind serves them at a gesture.

Howling Hatred priests see themselves as living extensions of Yan-C-Bin, and they help new recruits cast off the shackles of their old lives and embrace a "higher purpose." Once the new recruits are thus purified, the priests decide whether they are worthy for indoctrination as initiates or would better serve the Howling Hatred cult as sacrifices. The priests also uphold the doctrine of their prophet, Aerisi Kalinoth, and harshly punish any initiate who strays from the path.

Most other air cultists hate the priests, though none dares to speak out against them. Those that challenge the priests often end up the subjects of rigorous new attempts at purification.

Hurricane

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Auran, Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The hurricane is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *gust*,* *light*, *prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *feather fall*, *jump*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (2 slots): *gust of wind*

Unarmored Defense. While the hurricane is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Unarmored Movement. While the hurricane is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its walking speed increases by 15 feet (included in its speed).

Actions

Multiattack. The hurricane makes two melee attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Deflect Missiles. When the hurricane is hit by a ranged weapon attack, it reduces the damage from the attack by 1d10 + 9. If the damage is reduced to 0, the hurricane can catch the missile if it is small enough to hold in one hand and the hurricane has at least one hand free.

Hurricanes profess their disgust with decadence, and they dedicate their bodies and their minds to the world's destruction. Through breathing exercises and ascetic philosophy, skilled Howling Hatred initiates learn to imitate the cycling patterns of the hurricane. They believe the physical world must be shattered so that the creatures of the Material Plane can live unshackled by physical things.

Hurricanes see the frenetic activity of the world in slow motion, and themselves at the calm center of the storm. Through meditation and mysticism they learn to summon powerful blasts of wind, catch missiles with ease, and fall like feathers.

Skyweaver

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Persuasion +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Auran, Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The skyweaver is an 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *light*, *message*, *ray of frost*, *shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *feather fall*, *mage armor*, *witch bolt*
2nd level (3 slots): *gust of wind*, *invisibility*
3rd level (3 slots): *fly*, *lightning bolt*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Skyweavers brim with rage and desire, which makes them perfect vessels for the wildly destructive magic of the Cult of the Howling Hatred. In contrast to their hurricane counterparts in the air cult, skyweavers embrace the worship of Elemental Evil for a quick path to power. With little experience wielding the might of the elements, skyweavers thrill with the rush of releasing raw elemental energy.



Thurl Merosska

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)
Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 21)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Animal Handling +2, Athletics +5, Deception +4, Persuasion +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Auran, Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. Thurl is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Thurl knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *friends, gust,* light, message, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat, feather fall, jump*
2nd level (3 slots): *levitate, misty step*
3rd level (2 slots): *haste*

Actions

Multiattack. Thurl makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Parry. Thurl adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Thurl must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Thurl Merosska is the leader of the Feathergale Knights. Once a griffon rider of Waterdeep, Thurl retired after a storm nearly claimed his life. Obsessed with his near-death experience, Thurl learned of Yan-C-Bin and swore an oath to serve the elemental prince in exchange for power.

Thurl realized that there were others among the wealthy of Waterdeep who might make worthy servants of Yan-C-Bin. He formed the Feathergale Society to lure likely individuals into the air cult. He indoctrinated his Feathergale knights, one by one, into the cult's beliefs.

When Aerisi Kalinoth arose as the chosen prophet of air, Thurl reluctantly pledged the Feathergale Knights to the cause. He resents Aerisi Kalinoth's rulership of the cult, but tells himself that he can use her and her followers to make the Feathergale Society strong enough to rule Waterdeep as it should be ruled.

Windharrow

Medium humanoid (half-elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +7, Persuasion +5, Performance +7, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Auran, Common, Elvish
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Windharrow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

Spellcasting. Windharrow is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Windharrow knows the following bard spells:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, prestidigitation, vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *disguise self, dissonant whispers, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter, silence*
3rd level (3 slots): *nondetection, sending, tongues*
4th level (2 slots): *confusion, dimension door*

Actions

Multiattack. Windharrow makes two melee attacks.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

An opportunistic half-moon elf rake and bandit formerly known as Harald Grayspear, Windharrow was given his new name by Aerisi Kalinoth. When Aerisi was still with her family, Harald charmed and flattered his way into her favor. When Aerisi ran away from home to become the air prophet, she took Windharrow with her.

At Aerisi's insistence, Windharrow recruited a band of flutists from the ranks of new converts to the air cult, calling them the Windwyrds. Most have no musical talent whatsoever, and their music is often a shrill cacophony. Of all the air cultists, the Windwyrds are the least fanatical and the most fearful for their lives. Aerisi disposes of these minstrels on a whim, replacing them with other initiates. Those that master some skill with their instruments survive the longest, but the cost of failure creates a highly competitive environment among the minstrels.

Windharrow is loyal to Aerisi Kalinoth as long as he fears her power. If his life is threatened or a richer offer presents itself, Windharrow betrays the air cult without a backward glance.



Aerisi Kalinoth

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Perception +3
Damage Resistances lightning
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Auran, Common, Elvish
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP), or 9 (5,000 XP) with lair actions

Fey Ancestry. Aerisi has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Howling Defeat. When Aerisi drops to 0 hit points, her body disappears in a howling whirlwind that disperses quickly and harmlessly. Anything she is wearing or carrying is left behind.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Aerisi fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Aerisi is an 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Aerisi has the following wizard spells prepared (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *gust,* mage hand, message, prestidigitation, ray of frost, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, feather fall, mage armor, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *dust devil,* gust of wind, invisibility*
3rd level (3 slots): *fly, gaseous form, lightning bolt*
4th level (3 slots): *ice storm, storm sphere**
5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill, seeming* (cast each day)
6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning*

Actions

Windvane. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20 ft./60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage, or 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) lightning damage.



Aerisi Kalinoth

Aerisi Kalinoth is the air prophet of the Elder Elemental Eye and leader of the Cult of the Howling Hatred. Tall and slender, with dark hair and (illusory) feathered wings that gently fan the air, Aerisi Kalinoth speaks to her people in a whisper that belies her violent temper, which reveals itself whenever she is denied.

Aerisi was a sheltered moon elf princess named Dara Algwynenn Kalinoth who grew up in a remote Faerie realm. Her parents had wished to protect her from the harsh realities of the world, but they only succeeded in spoiling her. When they tried to discipline their willful daughter, she used the power of elemental air against them. Soon after, her dreams led her to the ancient dwarven ruins where the spear *Windvane* awaited her.

Dara changed her name to Aerisi and pretended to be an avariel (winged elf) princess like the ones from her storybooks. Then Aerisi used her talents for enchantment magic to sway mortals into joining her cult. She has convinced all her followers that she is in fact an avariel, and believes it herself even though she must cast *seeming* each day to "reveal" her wings.

Aerisi is prone to deluded flights of fancy and impulsive decadence. She sees herself as a beautiful, fierce, and just ruler who wields elemental power because she deserves it.

In the Air Node

When danger threatens the Temple of Howling Hatred, Aerisi retreats to the Howling Caves, the air node. Within this node, Aerisi gains one additional use of her Legendary Resistance trait.

Lair Actions

If Aerisi is in the air node while Yan-C-Bin isn't, Aerisi can take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Aerisi uses a lair action to cast one of her spells, up to 3rd level, without using components or a spell slot. She can't cast the same spell two rounds in a row, although she can continue to concentrate on a spell she previously cast using a lair action. Aerisi can take no other lair actions while concentrating on a spell cast as a lair action.

If Aerisi casts *invisibility* using this lair action, she also draws the power of the air node into herself. By doing so, she regains 15 (3d8 + 2) hit points.



Black Earth Cultists

Murderers, lunatics, hateful nihilists—these are the sort of people drawn to worship the might of Elemental Evil. The followers of evil elemental earth call themselves the Cult of the Black Earth, and dream of the day when earthquakes reduce the world of mortals to rubble. They seek to recruit evil or destructive monsters that burrow or dwell in the ground, and in fact emulate subterranean creatures to the greatest extent possible, using burrowing magic to carve out their hidden lairs.

Black Earth cultists are slow to act, but when they do, they are utterly implacable. They are single-minded and stubborn, working tirelessly to undermine their enemies. They get along well with the Cult of the Crushing Wave, but they hate the Howling Hatred cult—elemental air is fickle and insubstantial compared to the power of elemental earth.

Black Earth Guard

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (–1)

Skills Intimidation +1, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The guard makes two melee attacks.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Unyielding. When the guard is subjected to an effect that would move it, knock it prone, or both, it can use its reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.

Black Earth guards are the warriors of the earth cult. They are brutal, heavily armored thugs devoted to Ogrémoch. That devotion has granted them an uncanny ability to hold their ground against the buffeting assaults. It has also earned them the right to wear special plate armor of elemental stone, which breaks down when the guard is slain.

These guards are fanatically loyal to the Black Earth priests and the leaders of the cult. They fight to the death if commanded to do so by their superiors. Those with more potential become burrowsharks.

Black Earth Priest

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Intimidation +5, Religion +3, Persuasion +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Terran
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *blade ward*, *light*, *mending*, *mold earth**
1st level (4 slots): *earth tremor,** *expeditious retreat*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *shatter*, *spider climb*
3rd level (2 slots): *slow*



Black Earth Guard

Actions

Multiattack. The priest makes two melee attacks.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage.

Reactions

Unyielding. When the priest is subjected to an effect that would move it, knock it prone, or both, it can use its reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.

The priests of the Black Earth are the drivers and organizers of Ogrémoch's cult. They are the true believers, seeing Ogrémoch as a divine force, and they have developed a twisted dogma to explain how the evil of elemental earth is destined to remake the world and rule over all. The Black Earth priests form a cabal of leaders whose fanaticism and magical power serve as the backbone of the cult. Individuals of unusual power hold higher rank in the cult, but the priests provide the cult leader with his or her authority over the rest of Ogrémoch's followers.

Burrowshark

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Animal Handling +2, Athletics +6, Intimidation +3, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Bond of the Black Earth. The burrowshark is magically bound to a bulette trained to serve as its mount. While mounted on its bulette, the burrowshark shares the bulette's senses and can ride the bulette while it burrows. The bonded bulette obeys the burrowshark's commands. If its mount dies, the burrowshark can train a new bulette to serve as its bonded mount, a process requiring a month.

Actions

Multiattack. The burrowshark makes three melee attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Reactions

Unyielding. When the burrowshark is subjected to an effect that would move it, knock it prone, or both, it can use its reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.

Elite warriors of the earth cult, burrowsharks are fierce champions who ride trained bulettes into battle. While their powerful mounts rend and tear foes to pieces, burrowsharks leap to the ground and cut down their foes without mercy.

Burrowsharks are much like Black Earth guards, since both have uncanny footing and special armor. For burrowsharks, an additional gift of Ogrémoch's might establishes a magical bond between the burrowshark and a bulette, allowing the rider to burrow with its mount and sense what its mount senses.

Sacred Stone Monk

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (–1)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +3, Perception +4
Senses tremorsense 10 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Unarmored Defense. While the monk is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Unarmored Movement. While the monk is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its walking speed increases by 10 feet (included in its speed).

Actions

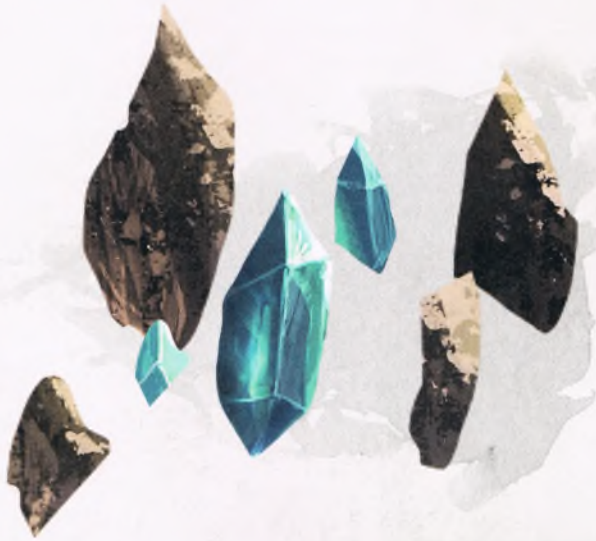
Multiattack. The monk makes two melee attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Parry. The monk adds 2 to its AC against one melee or ranged weapon attack that would hit it. To do so, the monk must see the attacker.

Sacred Stone monks are followers of a martial philosophy that seeks to emulate the strength of rock and stone. They don gargoyle masks and use a finely honed sense of touch to measure their surroundings by contact with the ground. They avoid speaking, or extraneous thought for that matter. They live only to test themselves with deprivation and to punish those who doubt the strength of elemental earth.



Stonemelder

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +2
Senses tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Terran
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Death Burst. When the stonemelder dies, it turns to stone and explodes in a burst of rock shards, becoming a smoking pile of rubble. Each creature within 10 feet of the exploding stonemelder must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spellcasting. The stonemelder is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

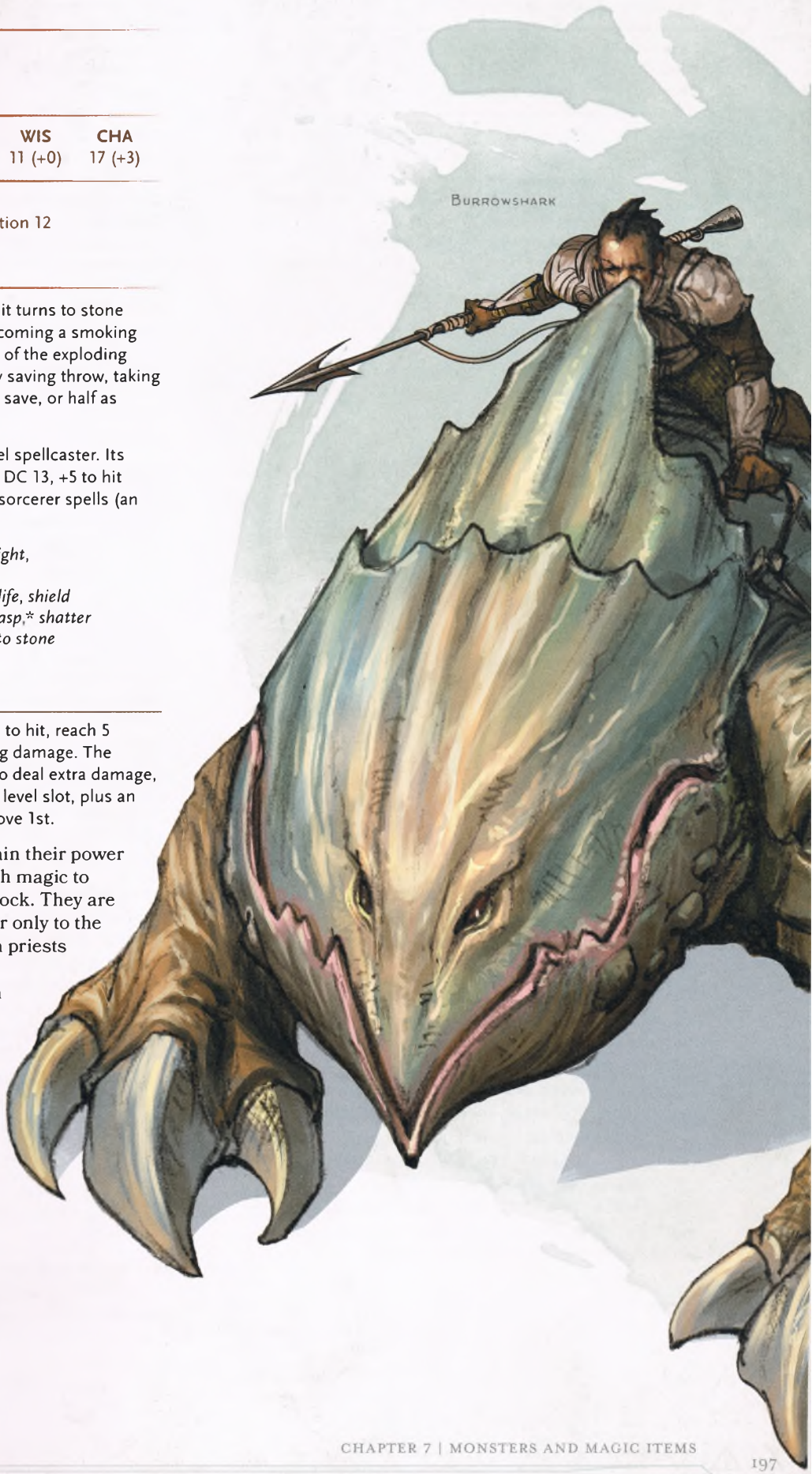
Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *blade ward*, *light*, *mending*, *mold earth**
1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat*, *false life*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *Maximilian's earthen grasp*,* *shatter*
3rd level (3 slots): *erupting earth*,* *meld into stone*
4th level (1 slot): *stoneskin*

Actions

Black Earth Rod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. The stonemelder can also expend a spell slot to deal extra damage, dealing 2d8 bludgeoning damage for a 1st level slot, plus an additional 1d8 for each level of the slot above 1st.

Stonemelders are spellcasters who gain their power from Ogrémoch, using elemental earth magic to sheathe their bodies in carapaces of rock. They are elite champions of the cult and answer only to the cult leaders. Not even the Black Earth priests tell stonemelders what to do.

Each stonemelder carries a weapon known as a Black Earth rod. Such a rod is like an ordinary mace, but in the hands of a stonemelder, it serves as a conduit for Ogrémoch's wrath.



Hellenrae

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +4, Insight +5, Perception +5
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities blinded, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Terran
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Evasion. If Hellenrae is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Stunning Strike (Recharge 5–6) When Hellenrae hits a target with a melee weapon attack, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of Hellenrae's next turn.

Unarmored Defense. While Hellenrae is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, her AC includes her Wisdom modifier.

Unarmored Movement. While Hellenrae is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, her speed increases by 20 feet (included in her speed).

Actions

Multiattack. Hellenrae makes three melee attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Parry and Counter. Hellenrae adds 3 to her AC against one melee or ranged weapon attack that would hit her. To do so, she must be able to sense the attacker with her blindsight. If the attack misses, Hellenrae can make one melee attack against the attacker if it is within her reach.

The chief lieutenant of Marlos Urnrayle, Hellenrae lost her sight as a child. A bitter, angry orphan, she was taken in by a monastic order and trained to use her other senses to compensate. However, she took the monks' philosophy of self-denial and emptiness of mind to extremes, seeking to fill herself with the dark power she sensed sleeping in the earth and rock around her.

Hellenrae is a dour, unsmiling woman who habitually wears drab robes and a golden gargoyle mask with no eye holes. She despises weakness in any form. Therefore, she hates just about everybody, and barely tolerates the other Black Earth cultists.

Miraj Vizann

Medium humanoid (earth genasi), neutral evil

Armor Class 10 (13 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +7
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Primordial
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Earth Walk. Moving through difficult terrain made of earth or stone costs Miraj no extra movement.

Innate Spellcasting. Miraj's innate spellcasting ability is Constitution (spell save DC 14). He can innately cast the following spell, requiring no material components:

1/day: *pass without trace*

Spellcasting. Miraj is an 11th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, blade ward, friends, light, message, mold earth**
1st level (4 slots): *chromatic orb, mage armor, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *Maximilian's earthen grasp,** *shatter, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, erupting earth**
4th level (3 slots): *polymorph, stoneskin*
5th level (2 slots): *wall of stone*
6th level (1 slot): *move earth*

Actions

Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage when used with two hands.

Miraj is an earth genasi from Calimshan. He is a perfectionist who oversees the Black Earth cult's tunneling operations and specializes in magic and alchemical processes that shape stone. He also has an affinity for the element of water and styles himself a "mud sorcerer."

Though he is the most accomplished spellcaster in the Cult of the Black Earth, he has no interest in challenging Marlos Urnrayle for leadership. He knows that he is no match for the medusa and is happy to pursue his experiments while Marlos leads.

Marlos Urnrayle

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +6, Perception +4
Damage Resistances acid
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Terran
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP), or 12 (8,400 XP) with lair actions

Earthen Defeat. When Marlos drops to 0 hit points, his body transforms into mud and collapses into a pool. Anything he is wearing or carrying is left behind.

Earth Passage. Marlos can move in difficult terrain composed of anything made from earth or stone as if it were normal terrain. He can move through solid earth and rock as if it were difficult terrain. If he ends his turn there, he is shunted into the nearest space he last occupied.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Marlos fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Petrifying Gaze. When a creature that can see Marlos's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of him, Marlos can force it to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw if Marlos isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see Marlos until the start of its next turn, when it can decide to avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at Marlos in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

If Marlos sees himself reflected on a polished surface within 30 feet of him and in an area of bright light, Marlos is, due to his curse, affected by his own gaze.

Actions

Multiattack. Marlos makes three melee attacks, one with his snake hair and two with *Ironfang*.

Snake Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Ironfang. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) thunder damage.

Marlos Urnrayle is the earth prophet of Elemental Evil and the leader of the Black Earth cult in the Sumber Hills. He is a medusa of unusual power who was once a vain and cruel human nobleman. Marlos delights in petrifying his foes, especially those of great physical beauty, and smashing the remains to rubble.



Marlos wields the magical war pick *Ironfang*, which he found in the Fane of the Eye after being drawn to the spot by a vision. Because of his medusa curse and his possession of the elemental weapon, the other Black Earth cultists believe that he stands high in Ogrémoch's favor and are fanatically loyal to him.

In the Earth Node

When the Temple of Black Earth is threatened, Marlos Urnrayle retreats to the Black Geode, the earth node. Within this node, Marlos gains one additional use of his Legendary Resistance trait.

Lair Actions

If Marlos is in the earth node while Ogrémoch isn't, the medusa can take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Marlos uses a lair action to cast *earthquake* without using components. As long as he maintains concentration on *earthquake*, initiative count 20 is the start of Marlos's turn for the purpose of the spell. He can take no other lair actions while concentrating on *earthquake*.

Marlos's second option for a lair action is to draw power from the earth node to heal. When he does so, he regains 30 (6d8 + 3) hit points.

Eternal Flame Cultists

It is often said that fire is a dangerous servant and a fearful master. So too it is with the Eternal Flame cultists. Low-ranking members of the cult love the destructive power of fire. The cult leaders harness fire to cleanse their surroundings of anything impure and anyone who's insufficiently dedicated to the cause.

It's perhaps too facile to say that those who follow elemental fire are pyromaniacs who were obsessed with flame as children, but there's a grain of truth behind the stereotype. Eternal Flame cultists are fascinated with fire of all sorts and sometimes stare into a torch for several minutes, carefully studying each flicker of flame. Many have an experimental streak, eager to see what happens when something—a barrel of pitch, a hunter's cabin, an annoying merchant—is set ablaze.

Like the flames they adore, Eternal Flame cultists are quick to act. In a fight, they rarely take prisoners or retreat; they strive to be like an ever-advancing wildfire as they march forward. More broadly, they favor the direct approach and the simple plan to more oblique machinations. That's one reason they loathe the cultists of elemental water, with all their supposed subtleties and ruses. Often it's better put the target to the torch, then sift through the ashes afterward.

Eternal Flame Guardian

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (breastplate, shield; 15 while using a crossbow)
Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (–1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +2
Damage Resistances fire
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Flaming Weapon (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the guard can wreath one melee weapon it is wielding in flame. The guard is unharmed by this fire, which lasts until the end of the guard's next turn. While wreathed in flame, the weapon deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage on a hit.

Actions

Multiattack. The guard makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Eternal Flame guardians are dullards fascinated by the power of fire and eager to show the cult's enemies firsthand what it feels like to burn. They light things aflame to honor elemental fire and just for entertainment, but they don't always think ahead about what else nearby might catch fire.



Eternal Flame Priest

Eternal Flame Priest

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Religion +2
Damage Resistances fire
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Ignan
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *control flames,* create bonfire,* fire bolt, light, minor illusion*
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, expeditious retreat, mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *blur, scorching ray*
3rd level (2 slots): *fireball*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Eternal Flame priests see the world around them as impure and unworthy, and believe that only cleansing by fire can set it right. As a result, all fire is deemed holy, from the smallest candle flame to the greatest conflagrations. When traveling in the open, Eternal Flame priests are clever enough to hide their true beliefs, passing themselves off as druids or wizards with a knack for fire magic.

Flamewrath

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Arcana +3, Religion +3
Damage Immunities fire
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Ignan
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The flamewrath is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *control flames,* fire bolt, friends, light, minor illusion*
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, color spray, mage armor*
2nd level (3 slots): *scorching ray, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *fireball, hypnotic pattern*
4th level (1 slot): *fire shield* (see Wreathed in Flame)

Wreathed in Flame. For the flamewrath, the warm version of the *fire shield* spell has a duration of "until dispelled." The *fire shield* burns for 10 minutes after the flamewrath dies, consuming its body.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

A flamewrath is a spellcaster that has earned the favor of Imix, the Prince of Elemental Fire, through a series of painful rites. A flamewrath's skin is burned and scarred. Inured to pain, the flamewrath revels in battle, using an array of fire spells to incinerate enemies who would try to douse the power of elemental fire. Melee combatants who draw too close face fires that can dance across the flamewrath's skin and burn attackers.

Razerblast

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 75)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +4, Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Damage Immunities fire
Languages Common, Ignan
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Searing Armor. The razerblast's armor is hot. Any creature grappling the razerblast or grappled by it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the end of that creature's turn.

Shrapnel Explosion. When the razerblast drops to 0 hit points, a flaming orb in its chest explodes, destroying the razerblast's body and scattering its armor as shrapnel. Creatures within 10 feet of the razerblast when it explodes must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Actions

Multiattack. The razerblast makes three melee attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

A razerblast seethes with hate for the enemies of the fire cult. The razerblast's elemental overlords have replaced its heart with a flaming orb that detonates if the razerblast dies.

Razerblasts remember little of their life before they the power of elemental fire transformed them. Now they follow the orders of the flamewraths and the cult leaders without question. Razerblasts fight confidently because they know that even if they lose, they go out in a blaze of glory.

Bastian Thermandar

Medium humanoid (fire genasi), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	9 (–1)	18 (+4)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +7
Damage Resistances fire
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Ignan
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Bastian's innate spellcasting ability is Constitution (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells:

At will: *produce flame*
1/day: *burning hands*

Spellcasting. Bastian is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Bastian knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, message, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *mage armor, magic missile, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, scorching ray*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball*
4th level (3 slots): *dimension door, wall of fire*
5th level (1 slot): *hold monster*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Like many in the fire cult, Bastian burns with an inner fire, but his fire is ambition, rather than a wish to see the world burn. Bastian is scheming to supplant Vanifer and claim *Tinderstrike* for himself.

As a practitioner of the arcane arts who learned much of his fire magic from Vanifer herself, Bastian relies on his spells in a fight, and he is a "quick burn" sort who tries to deliver maximum impact early in the fight. If he knows a fight is coming but can't preemptively strike, Bastian becomes more cautious, casting *wall of fire* to protect himself before he hurls magic into the fray.

Elizar Dryflagon

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (hide)
Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +3
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Druidic
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Spellcasting. Elizar is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Elizar has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, guidance, poison spray, produce flame*
1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship, faerie fire, healing word, jump, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *flame blade, spike growth*
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, stinking cloud*
4th level (2 slots): *blight, wall of fire*

Summon Mephits (Recharges after a Long Rest). By puffing on his pipe, Elizar can use an action to cast *conjure minor elementals*. If he does so, he summons four smoke mephits.



Actions

+1 Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Elizar was a druid who claims to be a member of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. However, Elizar is really in service to Imix, maintaining some druidic power through a connection to the elements.

Vanifer

Medium humanoid (tiefling), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)

Skills Arcana +5, Deception +8, Performance +8
Damage Immunities fire
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Ignan, Infernal
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP), or 12 (8,400 XP) with lair actions

Funeral Pyre. When Vanifer drops to 0 hit points, her body is consumed in a flash of fire and smoke. Anything she was wearing or carrying is left behind among ashes.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Vanifer fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Vanifer is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Vanifer knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, fire bolt, friends, mage hand, message, produce flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, chromatic orb, hellish rebuke, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *darkness, detect thoughts, misty step, scorching ray*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, hypnotic pattern*
4th level (3 slots): *wall of fire*
5th level (2 slots): *dominate person*

Actions

Multiattack. Vanifer makes two attacks.

Tinderstrike. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Vanifer's rough childhood has hardened her heart against others. The world is a corrupt, painful place, she thinks, and deserving of a fiery end. For years, she was a dancer and concubine in a pasha's court in Calimshan. Later, she took up the mantle of prophet when she found *Tinderstrike*, and the same ruthless ambition and practiced manipulation that enabled her to escape a life of servitude serves her well as the head of a growing cult.

For Vanifer, battle is best observed at a distance. She prefers to hurl destructive magic from afar. Those who challenge Vanifer in melee learn a painful lesson, as she and *Tinderstrike* make a formidable pair.

In the Fire Node

When enemies threaten the Temple of Eternal Flame, Vanifer withdraws to the Weeping Colossus, the fire node. Within this node, Vanifer gains one additional use of her Legendary Resistance trait.

Lair Actions

If Vanifer is in the fire node while Imix isn't, the tiefling can take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Vanifer uses a lair action to cast one of her spells, up to 3rd level, without using components or a spell slot. She can't cast the same spell two rounds in a row, although she can continue to concentrate on a spell she previously cast using a lair action. Vanifer can take no other lair actions while concentrating on a spell cast as a lair action. Her favorite use of this capability is casting *fireball* or *hypnotic pattern*.

If Vanifer casts *misty step* using this lair action, she also draws the power of the fire node into herself. By doing so, she regains 15 (3d8 + 2) hit points.





Crushing Wave Cultists

The Cult of the Crushing Wave venerates the element of water as a force of destruction and evil. Only fools or lunatics worship the idea of destruction, and many of the Crushing Wave cultists can be described as such. Others are more calculating and deliberate in their evil, and see the power of Elemental Evil as a tool by which they can sweep away the existing order of things and make themselves rulers over all.

While the Crushing Wave cultists take in many people who are bitter, lost, or mad, they also seek alliances with evil or destructive sea creatures. They perform rites designed to sink ships, cause terrible floods, or summon destructive rainstorms, seeking to make all who live nearby bow to the power of elemental water. Cult lairs usually feature great pools or lakes, where devotees use water-breathing magic to immerse themselves in the element they worship.

Crushing Wave cultists embrace a philosophy of elusiveness, patience, and opportunism. They are quick to retreat when challenged, but soon return to strike again. They admire the patience and endurance of the Black Earth cult, but despise the Cult of the Eternal Flame. They see the followers of elemental fire as reckless and short-tempered.

Crushing Wave Priest

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Religion +2, Stealth +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Aquan, Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat*, *ice knife*,* *magic missile*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *hold person*
3rd level (2 slots): *sleet storm*

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Crushing Wave priests are the fanatical core of the cult. Gathering in secretive cabals, they perform dark rituals to glorify Olhydra as the embodiment of water's destructiveness. They believe that using water to kill their enemies, such as through ritual drowning, earns them Olhydra's favor.

Crushing Wave Reaver

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (shield)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (–1)

Skills Athletics +4, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Sharktoothed Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands. Against a target is wearing no armor, the reaver deals an extra die of damage with this sword.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

The foot soldiers of the Crushing Wave cult are vicious sea reavers. Many of them were pirates before they fell in with the cult, and they remain eager for blood and plunder. Crushing Wave reavers appreciate the value of stealth and surprise, and look for chances to launch sudden attacks from positions of concealment whenever possible. The soldiers of the Crushing Wave cult are highly loyal to the cult priests, but they rarely fight to the death if an avenue of retreat is open to them.

Reavers carry shields made of giant crab shells, and the blades of their swords are lined with shark's teeth.

Dark Tide Knight

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Bonded Mount. The knight is magically bound to a beast with an innate swimming speed trained to serve as its mount. While mounted on this beast, the knight gains the beast's senses and ability to breathe underwater. The bonded mount obeys the knight's commands. If its mount dies, the knight can train a new beast to serve as its bonded mount, a process requiring a month.

Sneak Attack. The knight deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the knight that isn't incapacitated and the knight doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The knight makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker the knight can see hits it with an attack, the knight can halve the damage against it.

Dark Tide knights are the elite warriors of the Crushing Wave cult. By drawing upon Olhydra's dark power, they gain the ability to ride sea-creatures that normally wouldn't be suitable as mounts, and can even breathe underwater and share their mount's senses. The knights prefer to fight from or in the water, since they don't like to leave their mounts behind, but they can be fierce opponents on foot at need.

Unlike most other knights, Dark Tide knights disdain heavy armor, relying on the speed and ferocity of their attacks to carry them to victory.



Fathomer

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 10 (13 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Arcana +2, Perception +4, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Aquan, Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Shapechanger (2/Day). The fathomer can use its action to polymorph into a Medium serpent composed of water, or back into its true form. Anything the fathomer is wearing or carrying is subsumed into the serpent form during the change, inaccessible until the fathomer returns to its true form. The fathomer reverts to its true form after 4 hours, unless it can expend another use of this trait. If the fathomer is knocked unconscious or dies, it also reverts to its true form.

While in serpent form, the fathomer gains a swimming speed of 40 feet, the ability to breathe underwater, immunity to poison damage, as well as resistance to fire damage and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons. It also has immunity to the following conditions: exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, restrained, prone, unconscious. The serpent form can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if water can pass through a space, the serpent can do so without squeezing.

Olhydra's Armor (Human Form Only). The fathomer can cast *mage armor* at will, without expending material components.

Spellcasting (Human Form Only). The fathomer is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has two 3rd-level spell slots, which it regains after finishing a short or long rest, and knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *mage hand*
1st level: *armor of Agathys*, *expeditious retreat*, *hex*
2nd level: *invisibility*
3rd level: *vampiric touch*

Actions

Constrict (Serpent Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 12). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the fathomer can't constrict another target.

Dagger (Human Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Fathomers are cultists who have sealed a pact with Olhydra, Princess of Evil Water. In addition to their spellcasting abilities, fathomers have the ability to transform their bodies into water, taking serpent-like shapes. In their water serpent forms, fathomers gain many of the resistances elemental creatures possess, as well as the ability to grapple and crush their enemies with their watery bodies.

Fathomers often serve as spies, infiltrators, and assassins for the water cult, since they can slip under locked doors or pass through bars and similar obstacles with ease.

One-Eyed Shiver

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 49 (9d8 + 9)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Skills Arcana +3, Perception +3, Intimidation +5
Damage Immunities cold
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Chilling Mist. While it is alive, the one-eyed shiver projects an aura of cold mist within 10 feet of itself. If the one-eyed shiver deals damage to a creature in this area, the creature also takes 5 (1d10) cold damage.

Spellcasting. The one-eyed shiver is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *mage hand*
1st level (4 slots): *fog cloud*, *mage armor*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image*, *misty step*
3rd level (2 slots): *fear*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Eye of Frost. The one-eyed shiver casts *ray of frost* from its missing eye. If it hits, the target is also restrained. A target restrained in this way can end the condition by using an action, succeeding on a DC 13 Strength check.

A one-eyed shiver is a fearsome cultist who wields powers of ice and cold. To gain the frigid power of elemental water, the shiver removes one eye and replaces it with a frosty white orb that can blast foes with an icy ray. When the orb isn't in use, the shiver covers its magical eye with an eye patch. Even when hidden, the orb's magical power makes itself felt—a one-eyed shiver has ice-cold blood and is constantly surrounded by an aura of thin, cold fog.

One-eyed shivers inspire dread and fear in all who meet them, including their fellow cultists. Only the leaders of the Crushing Wave cult dare to give commands to these masters of icy magic.

Shoalar Quanderil

Medium humanoid (water genasi), lawful evil

Armor Class 10 (13 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +5, Insight +2, Persuasion +5
Damage Resistances acid
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Aquan, Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Amphibious. Shoalar can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. Shoalar's innate spellcasting ability is Constitution (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

At will: *shape water**
1/day: *create or destroy water*

Spellcasting. Shoalar is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, chill touch, friends, prestidigitation, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *disguise self, mage armor, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, misty step*
3rd level (2 slots): *tidal wave**



Gar Shatterkeel

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or ranged 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

A plump water genasi armed with a jovial manner and biting sense of humor, Shoalar Quanderil seems like the last person one would expect to be a cruel member of a destructive cult. Nevertheless, Shoalar is the captain of a pirate ship that harries the Sword Coast, and a high-ranking Crushing Wave cultist. He sees Olhydra's power as a means to making himself as rich as possible.

Gar Shatterkeel

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)

Skills Nature +8, Survival +8
Damage Resistances cold
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Aquan, Common
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP), or 13 (10,000 XP) with lair actions

Amphibious. Gar can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Gar fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Gar is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following druid spells prepared (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *mending, resistance, shape water**
1st level (4 slots): *create or destroy water, cure wounds, fog cloud, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *darkvision, hold person, protection from poison*
3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, sleet storm, tidal wave**
4th level (3 slots): *control water, ice storm*
5th level (1 slot): *scrying*

Water Walk. Gar can stand and move on liquid surfaces as if they were solid ground.

Watery Fall. When Gar drops to 0 hit points, his body collapses into a pool of inky water that rapidly disperses. Anything he was wearing or carrying is left behind.

Actions

Multiattack. Gar makes two melee attacks, one with his claw and one with *Drown*.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until the grapple ends, Gar can't attack other creatures with his claw.

Drown. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) cold damage.

Gar Shatterkeel is the water prophet of Elemental Evil and the dour leader of the Crushing Wave cult. He is embittered by a life of suffering at the hands of others. Pirates killed his family when he was young, he was forced into servitude aboard a merchant ship, and then another band of pirates left him to die at sea, where he lost his arm to a shark. Gar sees the elemental power of water as the only thing of value in his life and has gathered others who feel as he does.

Gar bears the elemental weapon *Drown*. His missing arm has been replaced by an artificial limb in the shape of a crab's claw. As the leader of Olhydra's cult, he wields her innate magic. Other Crushing Wave cultists sense her power in him and follow him out of fear.

In the Water Node

When it becomes clear that the Temple of the Crushing Wave is no longer secure, Gar retreats to the Plunging Torrents, the water node. Within this node, Gar gains one additional use of his Legendary Resistance trait.

Lair Actions

If Gar is in the water node while Olhydra isn't, he can take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Gar uses a lair action to use his Multiattack or cast one of his spells, up to 3rd level, without using components or a spell slot. He can't cast the same spell two rounds in a row, but he can continue to concentrate on a spell he previously cast using a lair action. He can take no other lair actions while concentrating on a spell cast as a lair action. His favorite use of this capability is casting *inflict wounds* or *call lightning*.

If Gar casts *cure wounds* using this lair action, he regains the maximum number of hit points from the spell (28).

Other Villains

Not every troublemaker in the Dessarin Valley is a cultist. Some prefer to keep their affiliation with the elemental cults secret, while many more have nothing to do the cults. This section presents a collection of villains from the introductory adventures and side treks in chapter 6.

Drannin Splithelm

Medium humanoid (shield dwarf), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	8 (–1)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +4
Damage Resistances cold, poison
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Action Surge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Drannin takes an additional action on his turn.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Drannin hits with it (included in the attack).

Dwarven Resilience. Drannin has advantage on saving throws against poison.

Indomitable (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Drannin can reroll a saving throw that he fails. He must use the new roll.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Drannin can use a bonus action to regain 16 (1d10 + 11) hit points.

Special Equipment. Drannin wears a control amulet for his shield guardian (see the *Monster Manual*) and a *ring of cold resistance*. He also carries a *potion of frost giant strength*.

Actions

Multiattack. Drannin makes three attacks with his greataxe.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage.

Drannin is a self-serving dwarf who has always felt that, due to his heritage, he was owed better than he received. When he didn't receive the accolades, he began to see everyone in his way as the problem, trying to keep him down, and he vowed to do whatever it took to turn the tables. He is currently intent on claiming the legendary axe *Orcsplitter*, the weapon buried with King Torhild Flametongue of Besilmer many centuries ago. The secret doors and puzzles of the Halls of the Hunting Axe have frustrated Drannin for a long time, but he now has a plan to dupe his cousin Gargosh into finding the axe for him (see the "Halls of the Hunting Axe" side trek in chapter 6). Drannin believes that with *Orcsplitter* in his possession he can establish himself as a powerful lord among his clan, and finally win the respect he thinks he deserves.

Drannin's most prized possession is his shield guardian. He stole the amulet that controls the shield guardian from a sorcerer some years back.

Ghald

Large humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)
Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +6, Int +5, Wis +4
Skills Insight +4, Perception +7
Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Sahuagin
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Assassinate. During its first turn, Ghald has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit Ghald scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Limited Amphibiousness. Ghald can breathe air and water, but he needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. Ghald can magically command any shark within 120 feet of him, using a limited telepathy.

Sneak Attack. Ghald deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Ghald's that isn't incapacitated and Ghald doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. Ghald makes three attacks, one with his bite and two with his shortswords.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Garrote. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or Small creature against which Ghald has advantage on the attack roll. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target can't breathe, and Ghald has advantage on attack rolls against it.

Ghald is an 8-foot-tall, four-armed sahuagin who works with a partner, Unferth, for the Kraken Society in Yartar. He's careful not to emerge from his hiding place beneath the docks unless it's dark and rainy, and even then he hides under a bulky cloak. He and Unferth serve as the Kraken Society's top operatives in this part of the North, and specialize in advancing the agenda of the society through theft, intimidation, and assassination.

When the thieves' guild known as the Hand of Yartar comes into possession of a powerful elemental weapon (see the "Dark Dealings in Yartar" side trek in chapter 6), Ghald and Unferth make sure the Kraken Society comes in with the top bid. They then make sure that no one else interferes.

Grumink the Renegade

Grumink is a dwarf gone bad. He is a chaotic evil gold dwarf **assassin** with dwarf racial traits. Bloodthirsty, callous, and mercenary, Grumink is a vile outlaw who stops at nothing to get what he wants. Most thieves don't bother to take on heavily-armed opponents, preferring to avoid unnecessary fights. Grumink delights in building his reputation as a cold-blooded killer, and goes out of his way to slay people when doing so might add to his notoriety or attract the attention of the law. He might claim that it isn't personal, but it is.



Grumink is currently working for an oni named Obratu, who seeks the treasure vaults of Besilmer's long-lost summer palace. The oni believes that the palace lies near the Shrine of the Tender Oath, a secret dwarven retreat in the Vale of Dancing Waters. It hired Grumink and his crew of cutthroats to seize the shrine and start digging (see "The Vale of Dancing Waters" in chapter 6). The thought of defiling one of his people's holy places troubles Grumink not at all.

Oreioth

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (14 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Wis +1
Skills Arcana +5, Investigation +5, Medicine +1
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Abyssal, Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Grim Harvest. Once per turn when Oreioth kills one or more creatures with a spell of 1st level or higher, he regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level.

Spellcasting. Oreioth is a 6th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *false life*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of sickness*
2nd level (3 slots): *crown of madness*, *misty step*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *vampiric touch*

Swift Animation (Recharges after a Long Rest). When a living Medium or Small humanoid within 30 feet of Oreioth dies, he can use an action on his next turn to cast *animate dead* on that humanoid's corpse, instead of using the spell's normal casting time.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

A lean, black-bearded young noble from Baldur's Gate, Oreioth is more at home among the dead than the living. He was cruel almost from the time he could talk, catching small creatures and killing them in hideously inventive ways to savor the power of life and death. He grew to be an embarrassment to his well-off family, who paid a tutor to channel his undeniable intelligence and curiosity into more positive outlets. They didn't know they had apprenticed the young Oreioth to a necromancer in need of an assistant for his researches.

When Oreioth's master decided he had no more use for his apprentice, he sent Oreioth off to make his own way in the world. Oreioth worked his way northward, robbing graves and using his magic to intimidate or rob anyone weaker than him. Driven out of one decent town after another, he finally sought refuge in an old outlaw's lair he discovered near Lance Rock. There he commenced his newest round of experiments, avoiding all other living souls.

What few social graces Oreioth once possessed are fading rapidly. He has become a megalomaniac, styling himself the Lord of Lance Rock and surrounding himself with zombies and skeletons compelled to heed his every whim. Oreioth barely recognizes his own name anymore, and he harbors dreams of founding a kingdom of undead servitors with himself on the throne.

Wiggan Nettlebee

Small humanoid (halfling), neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)
Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

Skills Deception +3, Insight +4
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Brave Devotion. Wiggan has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. Wiggan is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *shillelagh*, *thaumaturgy*
1st Level (4 slots): *animal friendship*, *cure wounds*, *healing word*, *inflict wounds*, *speak with animals*
2nd Level (3 slots): *barkskin*, *spike growth*, *spiritual weapon*

Actions

Multiattack. Wiggan makes two attacks with his wooden cane.

Wooden Cane (Club). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit (+4 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 (1d4 – 1) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.

Wiggan Nettlebee is the patriarch of the Nettlebee clan, a wealthy family of halflings that raise livestock and farm their land. He presents the outward appearance of a modest rancher, and he forbids extravagance on his farm. Thinking he had found a cult dedicated to the dominating nature and utilizing its darker aspects, Wiggan joined the Cult of the Black Earth. He still doesn't know the full extent of the cult's plans.

Wiggan dislikes and distrusts outsiders. He believes they are all evildoers who would steal from him if they could. He sees the earth cult as a powerful and necessary ally toward securing his finances and sustaining his position. A greedy miser, Wiggan becomes visibly upset at the thought of parting with even a few spare coins from his hoard.

Elemental Myrmidons

Elemental myrmidons are elementals conjured and bound by magic into ritually created suits of plate armor. In this form, they possess no recollection of their former existence as free elementals. They exist only to follow the commands of their creators.

Air Elemental Myrmidon

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	9 (–1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Auran, one language of its creator's choice
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Magic Weapons. The myrmidon's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The myrmidon makes three flail attacks.

Flail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Lightning Strike (Recharge 6). The myrmidon makes one flail attack. If the attack hits, it deals an extra 18 (4d8) lightning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the myrmidon's next turn.

Earth Elemental Myrmidon

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	8 (–1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Terran, one language of its creator's choice
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Magic Weapons. The myrmidon's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The myrmidon makes two maul attacks.

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Thunderous Strike (Recharge 6). The myrmidon makes one maul attack. If the attack hits, it deals an extra 16 (3d10) thunder damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



Fire Elemental Myrmidon

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	9 (–1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Ignan, one language of its creator's choice
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Illumination. The myrmidon sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light in a 40-foot radius.

Magic Weapons. The myrmidon's weapon attacks are magical.

Water Susceptibility. For every 5 feet the myrmidon moves in water, it takes 2 (1d4) cold damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The myrmidon makes three scimitar attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Fiery Strikes (Recharge 6). The myrmidon uses Multiattack. Each attack that hits deals an extra 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Water Elemental Myrmidon

Medium elemental (water), neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)
Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+3)	8 (–1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Aquan, one language of its creator's choice
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Magic Weapons. The myrmidon's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The myrmidon makes three trident attacks.

Trident. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Freezing Strikes (Recharge 6). The myrmidon uses Multiattack. Each attack that hits deals an extra 5 (1d10) cold damage, and the target's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the end of the myrmidon's next turn.



Princes of Elemental Evil

For the most part, the elements that make up the world are indifferent to good or evil as mortals understand the concepts. Creatures such as fire elementals can be dangerous and destructive, but they have no particular aim other than to exist. However, some of the primordial powers of the elemental plane are tainted with true evil. These are the princes of Elemental Evil, old and jealous elemental beings that despise the world of living things. Each of the princes is a unique elemental lord of terrible power, and each commands the loyalty of many lesser elementals that have likewise been corrupted by their evil—as well as mortal worshipers who likewise seek to scour the world with the wrath of the elements.

Each prince of Elemental Evil is a unique being unlike any other elemental, or any of the other princes. Some embody the combination of elements—for example, Bwimb, the Lord of Ooze, or Cryonax, the Prince of Evil Cold. However, the four princes most strongly associated with the cult of Elemental Evil are malicious embodiments of the four base elements. They are:

- Imix, Prince of Evil Fire (the All-Consuming Fire, the Eternal Flame)
- Ogrémoch, Prince of Evil Earth (Tyrant of Black Earth, the Mountain of Doom)
- Olhydra, Princess of Evil Water (the Crushing Wave, Well of Endless Anguish)
- Yan-C-Bin, Prince of Evil Air (the Shadow of the Four Winds, the Howling Hatred)

Forces of Destruction. The princes aren't concerned with spreading wickedness among mortals or making any kind of order or philosophy dominant in the world. Their evil is blind, destructive, and hungry. They hate the way the world is made and the natural laws that constrain their favored elements. They resent the gods who shaped the world, and the mortals for whom the world was shaped, especially mortals who seek to impose their will on the elements. The princes unleash natural catastrophes at every opportunity, and gladly crush or devour mortals to assert their mastery over the world.

Uncooperative. While the princes of Elemental Evil share a love of destruction and hatred of mortals, they don't cooperate with each other. Each is concerned only with advancing his or her own favored element. At best they are indifferent to each other, but each prince hates the prince representing the element opposite to its own (fire and water, or air and earth), and often goes to great lengths to block its enemy's efforts or destroy its enemy's followers.

The Elder Elemental Eye. While the princes of Elemental Evil act independently of each other, there is a mysterious force that seems to link them together: the Elder Elemental Eye. Some sages believe that the Eye is a dark, primordial god that corrupted the elements in the beginning of the world, giving rise to each of the princes. Others hold that the Elder Elemental Eye is a binding force—a common fate, or perhaps a curse—that ties the princes together. Whenever one aspect of Elemental Evil takes root in the world, the other three soon follow, and the four cults are often found together despite their mutual antipathy.

Elemental Nodes. The princes of Elemental Evil seek to spread their power by sowing the seeds of elemental nodes throughout the world. Elemental nodes are places in the Material Plane that are suffused with energy from the Elemental Planes. For example, a subterranean magma chamber or a swamp with flaming gas seeps might be an elemental node of fire. Elemental nodes are like beachheads for the elemental princes, places from which they can reshape part of the world to their own tastes and wreak destruction on whatever is nearby. When an elemental prince succeeds in establishing a node, it channels its power—and its elemental minions—to that spot, spreading Elemental Evil like a cancer in the firmament of the world.

Worshiped by Cults. The princes of Elemental Evil are indifferent to mortal followers. They aren't gods and don't crave worship, but evil mortals find that Elemental Evil is a ready source of magical power and lends itself to destructive uses. Cultists often gather near elemental nodes and attempt perilous rituals to tap into the power of Elemental Evil or attract the attention of one of the princes. These fell beings don't hear prayers or grant spells, but they can serve as sources of power to those who learn to draw on their might. More often than not, the princes of Elemental Evil wind up destroying the mortals who called on them. Until they do, clever (or crazed) cultists can do a great deal of harm with the elemental power they borrow.

Imix

Huge elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 17
Hit Points 325 (26d12 + 156)
Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	24 (+7)	22 (+6)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Con +13, Cha +13
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Ignan
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

Empowered Attacks. Imix's slam attacks are treated as magical for the purpose of bypassing resistance and immunity to nonmagical weapons.

Fire Aura. At the start of each of Imix's turns, each creature within 10 feet of him takes 17 (5d6) fire damage, and flammable objects in the aura that aren't being worn or carried ignite. A creature also takes 17 (5d6) fire damage if it touches Imix or hits him with a melee attack while within 10 feet of him, and a creature takes that damage the first time on a turn that Imix moves into its space. Nonmagical weapons that hit Imix are destroyed by fire immediately after dealing damage to him.

Fire Form. Imix can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. He can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without squeezing if fire could pass through that space.

Illumination. Imix sheds bright light in a 60-foot radius and dim light for an additional 60 feet.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Imix fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Innate Spellcasting. Imix's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *fireball*, *wall of fire*
3/day each: *fire storm*, *haste*, *teleport*

Magic Resistance. Imix has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Imix makes two slam attacks or two flame blast attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (5d6) fire damage.

Flame Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, range 250 ft., one target. Hit: 35 (10d6) fire damage.

Summon Elementals (1/Day). Imix summons up to three fire elementals and loses 30 hit points for each elemental he summons. Summoned elementals have maximum hit points, appear within 100 feet of Imix, and disappear if Imix is reduced to 0 hit points.

Legendary Actions

Imix can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Imix regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Heat Wave. Imix creates a blast of heat within 300 feet of himself. Each creature in the area in physical contact with metal objects (for example, carrying metal weapons or wearing metal armor) takes 9 (2d8) fire damage. Each creature in the area that isn't resistant or immune to fire damage must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

Teleport (Costs 2 Actions). Imix magically teleports up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space he can see. Anything Imix is wearing or carrying isn't teleported with him.

Combustion (Costs 3 Actions). Imix causes one creature he can see within 30 feet of him to burst into flames. The target must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 70 (20d6) fire damage and catches fire. A target on fire takes 10 (3d6) fire damage when it starts its turn, and remains on fire until it or another creature takes an action to douse the flames. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage and doesn't catch fire.

Imix, the Eternal Flame and the All-Consuming Fire, is the Prince of Evil Fire. His natural form resembles a 30-foot-tall, 10-foot-wide pillar of fire with smoldering black pits for eyes. Imix rarely speaks, but he crackles and roars with terrible laughter as anything combustible within his grasp bursts into flame and feeds his hate. Mortal beings are mere objects of contempt to Imix, and he burns alive any he can catch for nothing more than the wicked glee of watching them writhe and die in his flames.

Like his native element, Imix is fickle, temperamental, and highly destructive. Anything combustible stokes his hunger, but he takes special delight in feeding on the handiwork and possessions of intelligent beings, such as crops, buildings, or goods. Imix doesn't even spare his own followers or those who placate him with gifts and sacrifices—he is capricious and unpredictable, and often turns on those who think they have earned his favor.



Imix

Imix's Lair

Imix's home is a fiery inverted pyramid within a volcano on the Elemental Plane of Fire. This fortress-palace is known as the Temple of Ultimate Consumption. Imix is quick to answer calls from the Material Plane, since he hungers eternally for new forests, plains, and kingdoms to burn.

Lair Actions

Imix is master of heat and flames in his vicinity. He can take lair actions on the Elemental Plane of Fire, or in any elemental fire node (such as the Weeping Colossus in chapter 5). On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Imix uses his lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Any fires in the lair flare up drastically, quadrupling in size (for example, a fire blazing in a 5-foot by 5-foot area expands to a 10-foot by 10-foot area). Pools or streams of lava or other molten material are also affected. Creatures caught in the area of an expanded fire are subject to the normal damage for entering or being in the fire. Creatures caught by a sudden flood of lava must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone, in addition to the normal damage for contact with molten rock.
- A thick cloud of black smoke and burning embers fills a 40-foot-radius sphere within 120 feet of Imix, lasting until initiative count 20 of the next round. Creatures and objects within or beyond the smoke are heavily obscured. A creature that enters the cloud of embers for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 10 (3d6) fire damage.
- A wave of searing heat fills the lair in a 300-foot radius around Imix for an instant. Each creature other than Imix in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 1d8 fire damage. Creatures that take fire damage from this effect gain one level of exhaustion. In addition, there is a fifty percent chance that any container of fluid held or carried by an affected creature (for example, a magic potion) is destroyed.

Regional Effects

The region containing an elemental node in which Imix is present becomes vulnerable to the influence of fire. This creates the following effects:

- A dry, baking heat wave strikes the region within 10 miles of Imix's location. At first, effects are minor—grass turns brown, animals become listless, work and travel become very tiring. The longer Imix remains, the worse the heat becomes; after 5 days, crops die and ponds dry up; after 10 days, unprotected livestock dies, and wells and small rivers dry up; after 20 days, large lakes and rivers are reduced in depth by 20 feet and shrink accordingly.
- Wildfires erupt within a 5-mile radius of Imix's lair. Every hour, there is a ten percent chance that characters in this area are caught in the path of a wildfire moving 50 feet per round. Each character must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) fire damage. A wildfire continues to threaten the characters for 1d10 rounds or until they get out of its path. Wooden structures caught in the wildfire are destroyed.
- Lava fountains erupt from the ground within 1 mile of Imix's lair. Every hour, there is a ten percent chance that characters in this area are close enough to an erupting lava fountain to be in danger. A lava fountain creates a vent 20 feet in diameter, and hurls globs of lava up to 200 feet away. Each character within this area must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage plus 17 (5d6) fire damage. A fountain lasts for 2d10 rounds before subsiding.
- Wildfires or volcanic fissures within 1 mile of Imix's lair form intermittent portals to the Elemental Plane of Fire, allowing elemental creatures into the mortal world to dwell near those points.

If Imix is destroyed or banished back to his home plane, the regional effects fade over the next 1d10 days.

Ogrémoch

Gargantuan elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 526 (27d20 + 243)
Speed 50 ft., burrow 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	11 (+0)	28 (+9)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +15, Wis +8
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone
Senses blindsight 120 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Terran
Challenge 20 (24,500 XP)

Empowered Attacks. Ogrémoch's slam attacks are treated as magical and adamantine for the purpose of bypassing resistance and immunity to nonmagical weapons.

Innate Spellcasting. Ogrémoch's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *meld into stone*, *move earth*, *wall of stone*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Ogrémoch fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Ogrémoch has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Siege Monster. Ogrémoch deals double damage to objects and structures with his melee and ranged weapon attacks.

Actions

Multiattack. Ogrémoch makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Boulder. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 500 ft., one target. Hit: 46 (7d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Summon Elementals (1/Day). Ogrémoch summons up to three earth elementals and loses 30 hit points for each elemental he summons. Summoned elementals have maximum hit points, appear within 100 feet of Ogrémoch, and disappear if Ogrémoch is reduced to 0 hit points.

Legendary Actions

Ogrémoch can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ogrémoch regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Illuminating Crystals. Ogrémoch's crystalline protrusions flare. Each creature within 30 feet of Ogrémoch becomes outlined in orange light, shedding dim light in a 10-foot radius. Any attack roll against an affected creature has advantage if the attacker can see it, and the affected creature can't benefit from being invisible.

Stomp (Costs 2 Actions). Ogrémoch stomps the ground, creating an earth tremor that extends in a 30-foot radius. Other creatures standing on the ground in that radius must succeed on a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

Create Gargoyle (Costs 3 Actions). Ogrémoch's hit points are reduced by 50 as he breaks off a chunk of his body and places it on the ground in an unoccupied space within 15 feet of him. The chunk of rock instantly transforms into a gargoyle and acts on the same initiative count as Ogrémoch. Ogrémoch can't use this action if he has 50 hit points or fewer. The gargoyle obeys Ogrémoch's commands and fights until destroyed.

The Prince of Evil Earth is Ogrémoch (pronounced *oh*-gray-mock), the Mountain that Walks. His natural form is a shambling, 50-foot-tall colossus of rock, with crystal growths embedded throughout his body. When he bothers to speak, his voice sounds like grinding stones.

Ogrémoch is a miser who regards all the resources and treasures found in the ground as his own. He holds nothing but contempt for mortals (or any other denizens of the Material Plane) and desires nothing more than to crush and subjugate whomever he encounters. What he can't crush, he endures and outlasts.

Ogrémoch especially resents any mortals that dare to remove valuable metal or stone from the earth, and those who shape or build things of stone. He notices each nugget of gold or raw gemstone removed from areas under his influence, seeking to reclaim treasures "stolen" from him—and to punish the thieves. When the Prince of Evil Earth gains access to the Material Plane through an elemental node, he begins to methodically locate and destroy every mine, quarry, town, or fortification in the area. It's not that he needs the wealth, but the principle of the thing—extracting treasure from the earth—is anathema to Ogrémoch.

Ogrémoch's Lair

Ogrémoch is normally found in the depths of elemental earth, choosing caverns with black crystals and jagged rock spikes to serve as his throne room. He can enter the Material Plane through large and well-established nodes of elemental earth, with a little help from the proper rituals. Within such a node, Ogrémoch wields great power.



Ogrémoch

Lair Actions

Ogrémoch can assert his dominion over the rock and stone around him to take lair actions on the Elemental Plane of Earth, or in any elemental earth node (including the Black Geode, described in chapter 5). On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Ogrémoch uses his lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- A 10-foot-radius area of rocky or earthy ground within 60 feet of Ogrémoch turns to sticky mud. Any creature on the ground in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or sink 5 feet into the mud and be restrained. A creature can take an action to make a DC 15 Strength check, ending the effect on itself or another creature within its reach on a success.
- Crystalline spikes grow from the ground in a 20-foot-radius area within 60 feet of Ogrémoch. The area becomes difficult terrain. A creature that moves through the affected area takes 1d8 piercing damage for every 5 feet it moves there. Creatures that are knocked prone in the area also take this damage.
- A violent tremor shakes the lair in a 120-foot-radius around Ogrémoch. Each creature other than Ogrémoch on the ground in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone.

Regional Effects

The region containing an elemental node in which Ogrémoch is present is seriously affected, becoming geologically unstable. This creates the following effects:

- Earth tremors strike the region within 10 miles of Ogrémoch's location every 2d12 hours, each lasting 1d10 rounds. At first, damage is minor—broken windows, cracked plaster, items toppled off shelves. The longer Ogrémoch remains, the stronger the tremors become. After 5 days, the tremors are strong enough to destroy flimsy structures. After 10 days, they are strong enough to destroy ordinary wooden buildings. After 20 days, they can seriously damage or destroy reinforced or fortified structures.
- Magnetic disturbances within 10 miles of Ogrémoch prevent compasses from functioning there.
- Hidden sinkholes and fissures form within 1 mile of Ogrémoch's location. A hidden sinkhole can be spotted from a safe distance by any creature with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher or spotted with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. Otherwise, the first creature to step on the thin crust covering the sinkhole must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall 1d6 × 10 feet into the sinkhole or fissure.
- Natural caves and tunnels within 1 mile of Ogrémoch's lair form intermittent portals to the Elemental Plane of Earth, allowing elemental creatures into the mortal world to dwell near those points.

If Ogrémoch is destroyed or banished back to his home plane, the regional effects fade over the next 1d10 days.

Olhydra

Huge elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 324 (24d12 + 168)
Speed 50 ft., swim 100 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	22 (+6)	24 (+7)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +13, Wis +10
Damage Resistances lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities acid, cold, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Aquan
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Empowered Attacks. Olhydra's slam attacks are treated as magical for the purpose of bypassing resistance and immunity to nonmagical weapons.

Innate Spellcasting. Olhydra's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *wall of ice*
3/day: *ice storm*
1/day: *storm of vengeance*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Olhydra fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Olhydra has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Water Form. Olhydra can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. She can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Actions

Multiattack. Olhydra makes two slam attacks or two water jet attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 19). Olhydra can grapple up to four targets. When Olhydra moves, all creatures she is grappling move with her.

Water Jet. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage, and the target is knocked prone if it fails a DC 19 Strength saving throw.

Summon Elementals (1/Day). Olhydra summons up to three water elementals and loses 30 hit points for each elemental she summons. Summoned elementals have maximum hit points, appear within 100 feet of Olhydra, and disappear if Olhydra is reduced to 0 hit points.

Legendary Actions

Olhydra can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Olhydra regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Crush. One creature that Olhydra is grappling is crushed for 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Fling (Costs 2 Actions). Olhydra releases one creature she is grappling by flinging the creature up to 60 feet away from her, in a direction of her choice. If the flung creature comes into contact with a solid surface, such as a wall or floor, the creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was flung.

Water to Acid (Costs 3 Actions). Olhydra transforms her watery body into acid. This effect lasts until Olhydra's next turn. Any creature that comes into contact with Olhydra or hits her with a melee attack while standing within 5 feet of her takes 11 (2d10) acid damage. Any creature grappled by Olhydra takes 22 (4d10) acid damage at the start of its turn.



Olhydra

Olhydra is the Princess of Evil Water. Sometimes known as the Crushing Wave, the Dark Tide, or the Well of Endless Anguish, she takes the form of a great wave, 20 feet high and 15 feet wide, with opalescent eyes. She prefers to remain in or near large bodies of water—seas, lakes, rivers, or sometimes great subterranean pools. When she needs to, she can surge onto dry land, moving much like a wave rushing up onto the shore, but only great anger or desperation would drive Olhydra to move more than a few hundred feet from her native element.

Olhydra surges forth tirelessly and relentlessly. She delights in creating dangerous and destructive manifestations of elemental water, especially maelstroms and floods. She is eager to assert her power by smashing any vessel that dares to venture into her realm, and lays waste to villages or towns established within her reach. Olhydra erodes that which she can't batter and drown; she is patient, retreating in the face of adversity only to return stronger than before.

Of all the Princes of Elemental Evil, Olhydra is the one most interested in mortals. She recognizes that pirates and raiders who redden the waters with mortal blood (and occasionally send treasure-laden ships into her clutches) are agents of her hateful outlook, whether they know it or not. Consequently, Olhydra sometimes spares the worst sort of seafarers from her wrath, patiently waiting for the day when they deliver others into her power.

Olhydra's Lair

The Princess of Evil Water is native to the Elemental Plane of Water, where she can be found in the black depths of vast seas or enthroned among jagged reefs. Olhydra waits for the chance to enter the Material Plane through elemental water nodes or when called by the proper rituals. Whether she is in her elemental domain or temporarily occupying a water node, Olhydra commands the waters around her and can shape them to her will.

Lair Actions

Olhydra can command the waters around herself to take lair actions on the Elemental Plane of Water, or in any elemental water node (such as the Plunging Torrents, described in chapter 5). On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Olhydra uses her lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Pools of water in the lair surge outward in a grasping tide. Any creature within 20 feet of such a pool must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 20 feet into the water and knocked prone.
- Water within 120 feet of Olhydra becomes murky and opaque until initiative count 20 of the next round. A creature with darkvision can't see through the water, and light can't illuminate it.
- A freezing fog fills a 40-foot-radius sphere within 120 feet of Olhydra, lasting until initiative count 20 of the next round. Creatures and objects within or beyond the fog are heavily obscured. A creature that enters the freezing cloud for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 10 (3d6) cold damage.

Regional Effects

Olhydra's presence in an elemental node creates a number of widespread effects—bad weather, strong tides, and increasing aggression from dangerous sea life.

- Violent downpours become frequent within 10 miles of the lair. A downpour occurs once every 2d12 hours, and lasts 1d3 hours. Downpours are so heavy that creatures moving overland travel at half normal speed.
- Within 5 miles of the lair, currents and tides are exceptionally strong and treacherous. Any ability checks made to safely navigate or control a vessel moving through these waters has disadvantage.
- Aquatic creatures that have an Intelligence score of 2 or lower within 1 mile of the lair must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw when they enter the area. If the saving throw succeeds, the creature is frightened and attempts to leave the area, remaining frightened while within it. On a failure, the creature becomes highly aggressive and remains in the area for 24 hours. While in this state, the creature gains advantage on saving throws against charm and fear effects.
- Natural springs and pools within 1 mile of the lair form intermittent portals to the Elemental Plane of Water, allowing elemental creatures into the mortal world to dwell near those points.

If Olhydra is destroyed or banished back to her home plane, the regional effects fade over the next 1d10 days.

Yan-C-Bin

Huge elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)
Hit Points 283 (21d12 + 147)
Speed 50 ft., fly 150 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	24 (+7)	24 (+7)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +13, Wis +11, Cha +12
Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities lightning, poison, thunder
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Auran
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Air Form. Yan-C-Bin can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. He can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing if air could pass through that space.

Empowered Attacks. Yan-C-Bin's slam attacks are treated as magical for the purpose of bypassing resistance and immunity to nonmagical weapons.

Innate Spellcasting. Yan-C-Bin's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *gust of wind, invisibility, lightning bolt*

2/day each: *chain lightning, cloudkill, haste*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Yan-C-Bin fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Yan-C-Bin has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Yan-C-Bin makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) force damage plus 10 (3d6) lightning damage.

Thundercrack (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Yan-C-Bin unleashes a terrible thundercrack in a 100-foot- radius sphere centered on himself. All other creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or take 31 (9d6) thunder damage and be deafened for 1 minute. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and is deafened until the start of Yan-C-Bin's next turn.

Change Shape. Yan-C-Bin polymorphs into a Medium humanoid. While in polymorphed form, a swirling breeze surrounds him, his eyes are pale and cloudy, and he loses the Air Form trait. He can remain in polymorphed form for up to 1 hour. Reverting to his true form requires an action.

Summon Elementals (1/Day). Yan-C-Bin summons up to three air elementals and loses 30 hit points for each elemental he summons. Summoned elementals have maximum hit points, appear within 100 feet of Yan-C-Bin, and disappear if Yan-C-Bin is reduced to 0 hit points.

Legendary Actions

Yan-C-Bin can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Yan-C-Bin regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Peal of Thunder. Yan-C-Bin unleashes a peal of thunder that can be heard out to a range of 300 feet. Each creature within 30 feet of Yan-C-Bin takes 5 (1d10) thunder damage.
Teleport (Costs 2 Actions). Yan-C-Bin magically teleports up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space he can see. Anything Yan-C-Bin is wearing or carrying is teleported with him.
Suffocate (Costs 3 Actions). Yan-C-Bin steals the air of one breathing creature he can see within 60 feet of him. The target must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target drops to 0 hit points and is dying. On a successful save, the target can't breathe or speak until the start of its next turn.

Yan-C-Bin (pronounced yan-see-bin) is the Prince of Evil Air. A being of great wisdom and malice, Yan-C-Bin's plots began at the forging of the worlds. Subtler than the other elemental princes, Yan-C-Bin operates unseen, studying his enemies from afar, ambushing them swiftly, and vanishing before his foes can retaliate. His natural form is an invisible vortex of howling, swirling air 30 feet high and 15 feet wide, but Yan-C-Bin sometimes takes the shape of a gaunt, venerable, dark-skinned human with wispy white hair and glowing white eyes. When he wishes to remain unseen, Yan-C-Bin manifests only as a gust of cold wind flowing silently past.

From his floating palace in the endless, cloudy skies of the Plane of Air, Yan-C-Bin watches worlds as they

change over millennia. Evil aerial creatures worship the elemental prince as a god, and claim to see Yan-C-Bin's eyes in swirling storms. Yan-C-Bin doesn't care for their offerings, their sacrifices, or their worship. His only concern is the annihilation of the material realms as they are ripped apart by the superior elemental might of air and wind.

Yan-C-Bin's Lair

Yan-C-Bin dwells in a palace of air on the Elemental Plane of Air. In his palace and in air nodes on the Material Plane (including the Howling Caves, described in chapter 5), Yan-C-Bin is master. He can use the following actions in his lair.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Yan-C-Bin takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Yan-C-Bin drops the temperature of the air, covering all surfaces with ice. This effect is identical to the *sleet storm* spell.
- Yan-C-Bin controls the surrounding air as an extension of himself. Each creature Yan-C-Bin designates must succeed at a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or be hoisted or flung 3d6 × 10 feet through the air. A creature smashed into a solid object or released in mid-air takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet moved or fallen.
- Yan-C-Bin creates a torrent of debris within 120 feet of him that lasts until initiative count 20 on the next round. The debris lightly obscures every creature and object in the area for the duration. All creatures in the area must succeed at a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or be blinded until initiative count 20 on the next round.

Regional Effects

When Yan-C-Bin inhabits an elemental node, the air is at his command. Temperatures fluctuate from blistering hot to freezing cold; thunder rolls and lightning cracks; powerful gales bear heavy creatures and objects aloft and hurl them with incredible force; cyclones touch down randomly, obliterating whatever they touch.

- Gale force winds tear across the landscape in a 5-mile radius, whisking away small or light objects, dismantling roofs and fences, tearing branches from trees, and making flight impossible. Small and Medium creatures move at half speed through the wind; Tiny creatures exposed to the wind are carried away with it at a rate of 40 feet per round unless they succeed at a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.
- Thunderstorms erupt in a 5-mile radius centered on Yan-C-Bin's lair, creating deafening cracks of thunder and constant lightning. Every ten minutes the storm rages, creatures standing beneath the open sky have a five percent chance of being struck by lightning. A creature struck by lightning must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



Yan-C-Bin

- Cyclones touch down within a 5-mile radius of Yan-C-Bin's lair. Every hour, there is a five percent chance that characters in this area are caught in the path of a cyclone moving 250 feet per round. Each character must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or take 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage. Wooden or flimsy structures in the path of the cyclone are destroyed.
- Natural caverns and windblown canyons within 1 mile of the lair form intermittent portals to the Elemental Plane of Air, allowing elemental creatures into the mortal world to dwell near those locations.

If Yan-C-Bin is destroyed or banished back to his home plane, the regional effects fade over the next 1d10 days.

Magic Items

Player characters find many strange new magic items over the course of the adventure, including relics of the long-lost dwarf kingdom or Besilmer and devices created by the evil elemental cults.

Elemental Magic Items

Elemental power has allowed the cults to have more magic items than is normal for groups of their size, yet there still aren't enough magic items for each cultist to have one. Every member of the air cult, for example, would love to be able to soar on the wind, but only certain members have a magical ability or an item that confers that blessing.

The cults have some special items that harness the power of the elemental nodes themselves. These items rely on energy siphoned from a node, and some of them must be recharged inside the appropriate type of node, as noted in the items' descriptions. Otherwise, such an item ceases to function. Adventurers who recover a node-fueled item will, therefore, only be able to recharge it when an appropriate node is nearby.

Balloon Pack

Wondrous item, uncommon

This backpack contains the spirit of an air elemental and a compact leather balloon. While you're wearing the backpack, you can deploy the balloon as an action and gain the effect of the *levitate* spell for 10 minutes, targeting yourself and requiring no concentration. Alternatively, you can use a reaction to deploy the balloon when you're falling and gain the effect of the *feather fall* spell for yourself.

When either spell ends, the balloon slowly deflates as the elemental spirit escapes and returns to the Elemental Plane of Air. As the balloon deflates, you descend gently toward the ground for up to 60 feet. If you are still in the air at the end of this distance, you fall if you have no other means of staying aloft.

After the spirit departs, the backpack's property is unusable unless the backpack is recharged for 1 hour in an elemental air node, which binds another spirit to the backpack.

Bottled Breath

Potion, uncommon

This bottle contains a breath of elemental air. When you inhale it, you either exhale it or hold it.

If you exhale the breath, you gain the effect of the *gust of wind* spell. If you hold the breath, you don't need to breathe for 1 hour, though you can end this benefit early (for example, to speak). Ending it early doesn't give you the benefit of exhaling the breath.

Claws of the Umber Hulk

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

These heavy gauntlets of brown iron are forged in the shape of an umber hulk's claws, and they fit the wearer's hands and forearms all the way up to the elbow. While wearing both claws, you gain a burrowing speed of 20 feet, and you can tunnel through solid rock at a rate of 1 foot per round.

You can use a claw as a melee weapon while wearing it. You have proficiency with it, and it deals 1d8 slashing damage on a hit (your Strength modifier applies to the attack and damage rolls, as normal).

While wearing the claws, you can't manipulate objects or cast spells with somatic components.

Devastation Orb

Wondrous item, very rare

A *devastation orb* is an elemental bomb that can be created at the site of an elemental node by performing a ritual with an elemental weapon. The type of orb created depends on the node used. For example, an air node creates a *devastation orb of air*. The ritual takes 1 hour to complete and requires 2,000 gp worth of special components, which are consumed.

A *devastation orb* measures 12 inches in diameter, weighs 10 pounds, and has a solid outer shell. The orb detonates 1d100 hours after its creation, releasing the elemental energy it contains. The orb gives no outward sign of how much time remains before it will detonate. Spells such as *identify* and *divination* can be used to ascertain when the orb will explode. An orb has AC 10, 15 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Reducing it to 0 hit points causes it to explode instantly.

A special container can be crafted to contain a *devastation orb* and prevent it from detonating. The container must be inscribed with symbols of the orb's opposing element. For example, a case inscribed with earth symbols can be used to contain a *devastation orb of air* and keep it from detonating. While in the container, the orb thrums. If it is removed from the container after the time when it was supposed to detonate, it explodes 1d6 rounds later, unless it is returned to the container.

Regardless of the type of orb, its effect is contained within a sphere with a 1 mile radius. The orb is the sphere's point of origin. The orb is destroyed after one use.

Air Orb. When this orb detonates, it creates a powerful windstorm that lasts for 1 hour. Whenever a creature ends its turn exposed to the wind, the creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or take 1d4 bludgeoning damage, as the wind and debris batter it. The wind is strong enough to uproot weak trees and destroy light structures after at least 10 minutes of exposure. Otherwise, the rules for strong wind apply, as detailed in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Earth Orb. When this orb detonates, it subjects the area to the effects of the *earthquake* spell for 1 minute (spell save DC 18). For the purpose of the spell's effects, the spell is cast on the turn that the orb explodes.

Fire Orb. When this orb detonates, it creates a dry heat wave that lasts for 24 hours. Within the area of effect, the rules for extreme heat apply, as detailed in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. At the end of each hour, there is a ten percent chance that the heat wave starts a wildfire in a random location within the

area of effect. The wildfire covers a 10-foot-square area initially but expands to fill another 10-foot square each round until the fire is extinguished or burns itself out. A creature that comes within 10 feet of a wildfire for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 3d6 fire damage.

Water Orb. When this orb detonates, it creates a torrential rainstorm that lasts for 24 hours. Within the area of effect, the rules for heavy precipitation apply, as detailed in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. If there is a substantial body of water in the area, it floods after 2d10 hours of heavy rain, rising 10 feet above its banks and inundating the surrounding area. The flood advances at a rate of 100 feet per round, moving away from the body of water where it began until it reaches the edge of the area of effect; at that point, the water flows downhill (and possibly recedes back to its origin). Light structures collapse and wash away. Any Large or smaller creature caught in the flood's path is swept away. The flooding destroys crops and might trigger mudslides, depending on the terrain.

Seeker Dart

Weapon (dart), uncommon

This small dart is decorated with designs like windy spirals that span the length of its shaft.

When you whisper the word "seek" and hurl this dart, it seeks out a target of your choice within 120 feet of you. You must have seen the target before, but you don't need to see it now. If the target isn't within range or if there is no clear path to it, the dart falls to the ground, its magic spent and wasted. Otherwise, elemental winds guide the dart instantly through the air to the target. The dart can pass though openings as narrow as 1 inch wide and can change direction to fly around corners.

When the dart reaches its target, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d4 piercing damage and 3d4 lightning damage. The dart's magic is then spent, and it becomes an ordinary dart.

Storm Boomerang

Weapon, uncommon

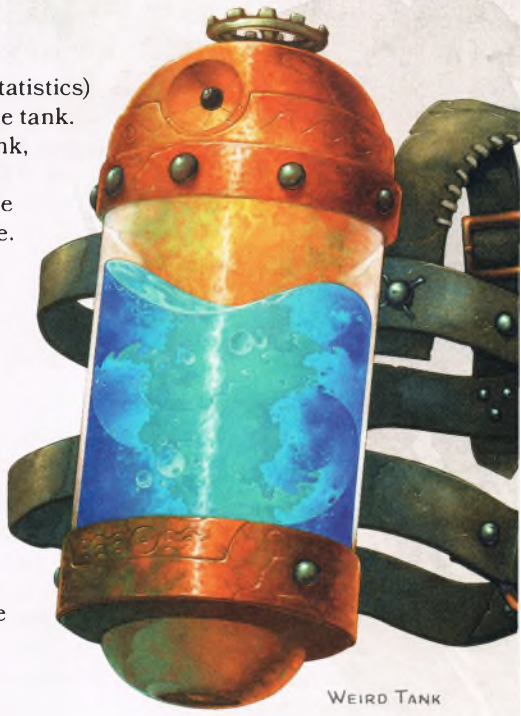
This boomerang is a ranged weapon carved from griffon bone and etched with the symbol of elemental air. When thrown, it has a range of 60/120 feet, and any creature that is proficient with the javelin is also proficient with this weapon. On a hit, the boomerang deals 1d4 bludgeoning damage and 3d4 thunder damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn. On a miss, the boomerang returns to the thrower's hand.

Once the boomerang deals thunder damage to a target, the weapon loses its ability to deal thunder damage and its ability to stun a target. These properties return after the boomerang spends at least 1 hour inside an elemental air node.

Weird Tank

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

A *weird tank* is a ten-gallon tank of blown glass and sculpted bronze with a backpack-like carrying harness fashioned from tough leather. A water weird (see the *Monster Manual* for statistics) is contained within the tank. While wearing the tank, you can use an action to open it, allowing the water weird to emerge. The water weird acts immediately after you in the initiative order, and it is bound to the tank.



Weird Tank

You can command the water weird telepathically (no action required) while you wear the tank. You can close the tank as an action only if you have first commanded the water weird to retract into it or if the water weird is dead.

If the water weird is killed, the tank loses its magical containment property until it spends at least 24 hours inside an elemental water node. When the tank is recharged, a new water weird forms inside it.

The tank has AC 15, 50 hit points, vulnerability to bludgeoning damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Reducing the tank to 0 hit points destroys it and the water weird contained within it.

Wingwear

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This snug uniform has symbols of air stitched into it and leathery flaps that stretch along the arms, waist, and legs to create wings for gliding. A suit of *wingwear* has 3 charges. While you wear the suit, you can use a bonus action and expend 1 charge to gain a flying speed of 30 feet until you land. At the end of each of your turns, your altitude drops by 5 feet. Your altitude drops instantly to 0 feet at the end of your turn if you didn't fly at least 30 feet horizontally on that turn. When your altitude drops to 0 feet, you land (or fall), and you must expend another charge to use the suit again.

The suit regains all of its expended charges after spending at least 1 hour in an elemental air node.

Relics of Besilmer

The following items were crafted by the dwarves of Besilmer for their king, Torhild Flametongue.

Lost Crown of Besilmer

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This dwarven battle-helm consists of a sturdy open-faced steel helmet, decorated with a golden circlet above the brow from which seven small gold spikes project upward. You gain the following benefits while wearing the crown:

- You have resistance to psychic damage.

- You have advantage on saving throws against effects that would charm you.
- You can use a bonus action to inspire one creature you can see that is within 60 feet of you and that can see or hear you. Once before the end of your next turn, the inspired creature can roll a d6 and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. This uses 1 charge from the crown. It has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Orcsplitter

Weapon (greataxe), legendary (requires attunement by a good-aligned dwarf, fighter, or paladin)

A mighty axe wielded long ago by the dwarf king Torhild Flametongue, *Orcsplitter* is a battered weapon that appears unremarkable at first glance. Its head is graven with the Dwarvish runes for "orc," but the runes are depicted with a gap or slash through the markings; the word "orc" is literally split in two.

You gain the following benefits while holding this magic weapon:

- You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it.
- When you roll a 20 on an attack roll with this weapon against an orc, that orc must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or drop to 0 hit points.
- You can't be surprised by orcs while you're not incapacitated. You are also aware when orcs are within 120 feet of you and aren't behind total cover, although you don't know their location.
- You and any of your friends within 30 feet of you can't be frightened while you're not incapacitated.

Sentience. *Orcsplitter* is a sentient, lawful good weapon with an Intelligence of 6, a Wisdom of 15, and a Charisma of 10. It can see and hear out to 120 feet and has darkvision. It communicates by transmitting emotions to its wielder, although on rare occasions it uses a limited form of telepathy to bring to the wielder's mind a couplet or stanza of ancient Dwarvish verse.

Personality. *Orcsplitter* is grim, taciturn, and inflexible. It knows little more than the desire to face orcs in battle and serve a courageous, just wielder. It disdains cowards and any form of duplicity, deception, or disloyalty. The weapon's purpose is to defend dwarves and to serve as a symbol of dwarven resolve. It hates the traditional foes of dwarves—giants, goblins, and, most of all, orcs—and silently urges its possessor to meet such creatures in battle.

Elemental Weapons

Each of the four prophets who leads a cult of Elemental Evil is armed with a mighty elemental weapon. These potent objects are infused with the essences of the Princes of Elemental Evil. In addition to the weapon's obvious usefulness in battle, they serve as keys that allow the prophets to channel the power of the elemental nodes and rip open the boundary between the planes. The weapons also bring out the worst in their wielders, twisting their minds toward evil ends.

Drown

Weapon (trident), legendary (requires attunement)

A steel trident decorated with bronze barnacles along the upper part of its haft, *Drown* has a sea-green jewel just below the tines and a silver shell at the end of its haft. It floats on the surface if dropped onto water, and it floats in place if it is released underwater. The trident is always cool to the touch, and it is immune to any damage due to exposure to water. *Drown* contains a spark of Olhydra, the Princess of Evil Water.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls you make with this magic weapon. When you hit with it, the targets takes an extra 1d8 cold damage.

Water Mastery. You gain the following benefits while you hold *Drown*:

- You can speak Aquan fluently.
- You have resistance to cold damage.
- You can cast *dominate monster* (save DC 17) on a water elemental. Once you have done so, *Drown* can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Tears of Endless Anguish. While inside a water node, you can perform a ritual called the Tears of Endless Anguish, using *Drown* to create a *devastation orb of water* (see the *devastation orb* description for the time and cost of the ritual). Once you perform the ritual, *Drown* can't be used to perform the ritual again until the next dawn.

Flaw. *Drown* makes its wielder covetous. While attuned to the weapon, you gain the following flaw: "I demand and deserve the largest share of the spoils, and I refuse to part with anything that's mine." In addition, if you are attuned to *Drown* for 24 consecutive hours, barnacles form on your skin. The barnacles can be removed with a *greater restoration* spell or similar magic, but not while you are attuned to the weapon.

Ironfang

Weapon (war pick), legendary (requires attunement)

A war pick forged from a single piece of iron, *Ironfang* has a fang-like head inscribed with ancient runes. The pick is heavy in the hand, but when the wielder swings the pick in anger, the weapon seems almost weightless. This weapon is immune to any form of rust, acid, or corrosion—nothing seems to mark it. *Ironfang* contains a spark of Ogrémoch, the Prince of Evil Earth.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls you make with this magic weapon. When you hit with it, the target takes an extra 1d8 thunder damage.

Earth Mastery. You gain the following benefits while you hold *Ironfang*:

- You can speak Terran fluently.
- You have resistance to acid damage.
- You have tremorsense out to a range of 60 feet.
- You can sense the presence of precious metals and stones within 60 feet of you, but not their exact location.
- You can cast *dominate monster* (save DC 17) on an earth elemental. Once you have done so, *Ironfang* can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Shatter. *Ironfang* has 3 charges. You can use your action to expend 1 charge and cast the 2nd-level version of *shatter* (DC 17). *Ironfang* regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

The Rumbling. While inside an earth node, you can perform a ritual called the Rumbling, using *Ironfang* to create a *devastation orb of earth* (see the *devastation orb* description for the time and cost of the ritual). Once you perform the ritual, *Ironfang* can't be used to perform the ritual again until the next dawn.

Flaw. *Ironfang* heightens its wielder's destructive nature. While attuned to the weapon, you gain the following flaw: "I like to break things and cause ruin."

Tinderstrike

Weapon (dagger), legendary (requires attunement)

A flint dagger, *Tinderstrike* is uncommonly sharp, and sparks cascade off its edge whenever it strikes something solid. Its handle is always warm to the touch, and the blade smolders for 1d4 minutes after it is used to deal damage. It contains a spark of Imix, Prince of Evil Fire.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls you make with this magic weapon. When you hit with it, the target takes an extra 2d6 fire damage.

Fire Mastery. You gain the following benefits while you hold *Tinderstrike*:

- You can speak Ignan fluently.
- You have resistance to fire damage.
- You can cast *dominate monster* (save DC 17) on a fire elemental. Once you have done so, *Tinderstrike* can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Dance of the All-Consuming Fire. While inside a fire node, you can perform a ritual called the Dance of the All-Consuming Fire, using *Tinderstrike* to create a *devastation orb of fire* (see the *devastation orb* description for the time and cost of the ritual). Once you perform the ritual, *Tinderstrike* can't be used to perform the ritual again until the next dawn.

Flaw. *Tinderstrike* makes its wielder impatient and rash. While attuned to the weapon, you gain the following flaw: "I act without thinking and take risks without weighing the consequences."

Windvane

Weapon (spear), legendary (requires attunement)

A silver spear, *Windvane* has dark sapphires on the filigreed surface of its polished head. Held by its shining haft, the weapon feels insubstantial, as if clutching a cool, gently flowing breeze. The spear contains a spark of Yan-C-Bin, the Prince of Evil Air.

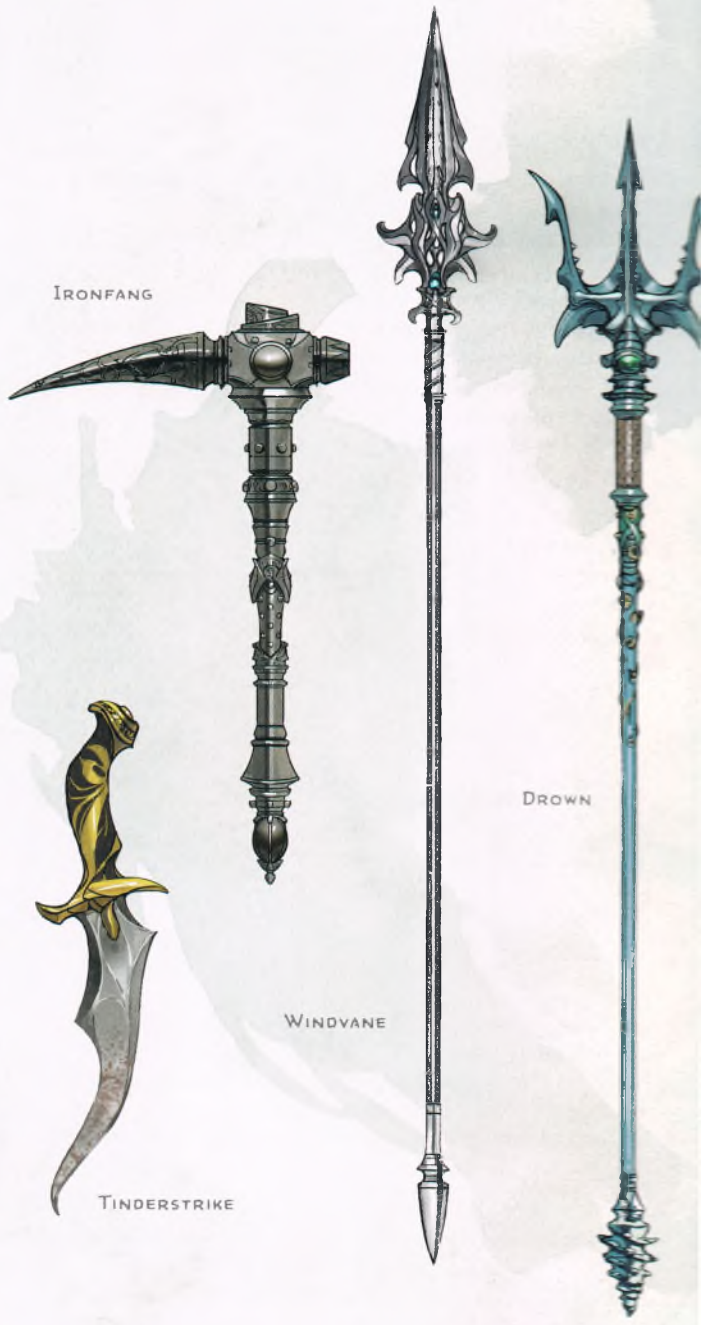
You have a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls you make with this magic weapon, which has the finesse weapon property. When you hit with it, the target takes an extra 1d6 lightning damage.

Air Mastery. You gain the following benefits while you hold *Windvane*:

- You can speak Auran fluently.
- You have resistance to lightning damage.
- You can cast *dominate monster* (save DC 17) on an air elemental. Once you have done so, *Windvane* can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Song of the Four Winds. While inside an air node, you can perform a ritual called the Song of the Four Winds, using *Windvane* to create a *devastation orb of air* (see the *devastation orb* description for the time and cost of the ritual). Once you perform the ritual, *Windvane* can't be used to perform the ritual again until the next dawn.

Flaw. *Windvane* makes its wielder mercurial and unreliable. While attuned to the weapon, you gain the following flaw: "I break my vows and plans. Duty and honor mean nothing to me."





Appendix A: Genasi

Those who think of other planes at all consider them remote, distant realms, but planar influence can be felt throughout the world. It sometimes manifests in beings who, through an accident of birth, carry the power of the planes in their blood. The genasi are one such people, the offspring of genies and mortals.

The Elemental Planes are often inhospitable to natives of the Material Plane: crushing earth, searing flames, boundless skies, and endless seas make visiting these places dangerous for even a short time. The powerful genies, however, do not face such troubles when venturing into the mortal world. They adapt well to the mingled elements of the Material Plane, and they sometimes visit—whether of their own volition or compelled by magic. Some genies can adopt mortal guise and travel incognito.

During these visits, a mortal might catch a genie's eye. Friendship forms, romance blooms, and sometimes children result. These children are genasi: individuals with ties to two worlds, yet belonging to neither. Some genasi are born of mortal–genie unions, others have two genasi as parents, and a rare few have a genie further up their family tree, manifesting an elemental heritage that's lain dormant for generations.

Occasionally, genasi result from exposure to a surge of elemental power, through phenomena such as an eruption from the Inner Planes or a planar convergence. Elemental energy saturates any creatures in the area and might alter their nature enough that their offspring with other mortals are born as genasi.

Heirs to Elemental Power

Genasi inherit something from both sides of their dual nature. They resemble humans but have unusual skin color (red, green, blue, or gray), and there is something odd about them. The elemental blood flowing through their veins manifests differently in each genasi, often as magical power.

Seen in silhouette, a genasi can usually pass for human. Those of earth or water descent tend to be heavier, while those of air or fire tend to be lighter. A given genasi might have some features reminiscent of the mortal parent (pointed ears from an elf, a stockier frame and thick hair from a dwarf, small hands and feet from a halfling, exceedingly large eyes from a gnome, and so on).

Genasi almost never have contact with their elemental parents. Genies seldom have interest in their mortal offspring, seeing them as accidents. Many feel nothing for their genasi children at all.

Some genasi live as outcasts, driven into exile for their unsettling appearance and strange magic, or assuming leadership of savage humanoids and weird cults in untamed lands. Others gain positions of great influence, especially where elemental beings are revered. A few genasi leave the Material Plane to find refuge in the households of their genie parents.

Wild and Confident

Genasi rarely lack confidence, seeing themselves as equal to almost any challenge in their path. This certainty might manifest as graceful self-assurance in one genasi and as arrogance in another. Such self-confidence can sometimes blind genasi to risk, and their great plans often get them and others into trouble.

Too much failure can chip away at even a genasi's sense of self, so they constantly push themselves to improve, honing their talents and perfecting their craft.

Genasi Lands

As rare beings, genasi might go their entire lives without encountering another one of their kind. There are no great genasi cities or empires. Genasi seldom have communities of their own and typically adopt the cultures and societies into which they are born. The more strange their appearance, the harder time they have. Many genasi lose themselves in teeming cities, where their distinctiveness hardly raises an eyebrow in places accustomed to a variety of different people.

Those living on the frontier, though, have a much harder time. People there tend to be less accepting of differences. Sometimes a cold shoulder and a suspicious glare are the best genasi can hope for; in more backward places, they face ostracism and even violence from people who mistake them for fiends. Facing a hard life, these genasi seek isolation in the wilds, making their homes in mountains or forests, near lakes, or underground.

Most air and fire genasi in the Realms are descendants of the djinn and efreet who once ruled Calimshan. When those rulers were overthrown, their planetouched children were scattered. Over thousands of years, the bloodlines of those genasi have spread into other lands. Though far from common, air and fire genasi are more likely to be found in the western regions of Faerûn, along the coast from Calimshan north up to the Sword Coast, and into the Western Heartlands to the east. Some remain in their ancient homeland.

In contrast, water and earth genasi have no common history. Individuals have difficulty tracing their own lineage, and bloodlines occasionally skip a generation or two. Many earth genasi originated in the North and spread out from there. Water genasi come from coastal areas, the largest concentration of them hailing from the regions surrounding the Sea of Fallen Stars.

The distant land of Zakhara is known only in legends to most inhabitants of Faerûn. There, genies and spellcasters enter into bargains, and genasi can result from such pacts. Those genasi have been sources of great weal and woe in the history of that land.

Genasi Names

Genasi use the naming conventions of the people among whom they were raised. They might later assume distinctive names to capture their heritage, such as Flame, Ember, Wave, or Onyx.



Genasi on Athas

Although any world that includes one or more elemental planes can feature genasi, on Athas, the world of the Dark Sun campaign setting, elemental forces hold greater sway than they do on other worlds. As a people touched by elemental power, genasi are viewed as seers, prophets, and chosen ones. The birth of a genasi, whether a slave, a noble, or a member of a desert tribe, is an auspicious event. Most Athasians believe a given genasi is destined for greatness—or infamy.

Genasi Traits

Your genasi character has certain characteristics in common with all other genasi.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 2.

Age. Genasi mature at about the same rate as humans and reach adulthood in their late teens. They live somewhat longer than humans do, up to 120 years.

Alignment. Independent and self-reliant, genasi tend toward a neutral alignment.

Size. Genasi are as varied as their mortal parents but are generally built like humans, standing anywhere from 5 feet to over 6 feet tall. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Primordial. Primordial is a guttural language, filled with harsh syllables and hard consonants.

Subraces. Four major subraces of genasi are found among the worlds of D&D: air genasi, earth genasi, fire genasi, and water genasi. Choose one of these subraces.

Air Genasi

As an air genasi, you are descended from the djinn. As changeable as the weather, your moods shift from calm to wild and violent with little warning, but these storms rarely last long.

Air genasi typically have light blue skin, hair, and eyes. A faint but constant breeze accompanies them, tousling the hair and stirring the clothing. Some air genasi speak with breathy voices, marked by a faint echo. A few display odd patterns in their flesh or grow crystals from their scalps.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Unending Breath. You can hold your breath indefinitely while you're not incapacitated.

Mingle with the Wind. You can cast the *levitate* spell once with this trait, requiring no material components, and you regain the ability to cast it this way when you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Earth Genasi

As an earth genasi, you are descended from the cruel and greedy dao, though you are not necessarily evil. You have inherited some measure of control over earth, reveling in superior strength and solid power. You tend to avoid rash decisions, pausing long enough to consider your options before taking action.

Elemental earth manifests differently from one individual to the next. Some earth genasi always have bits of dust falling from their bodies and mud clinging to their clothes, never getting clean no matter how often they bathe. Others are as shiny and polished as gemstones, with skin tones of deep brown or black, eyes sparkling like agates. Earth genasi can also have smooth metallic flesh, dull iron skin spotted with rust, a pebbled and rough hide, or even a coating of tiny embedded crystals. The most arresting have fissures in their flesh, from which faint light shines.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1.

Earth Walk. You can move across difficult terrain made of earth or stone without expending extra movement.

Merge with Stone. You can cast the *pass without trace* spell once with this trait, requiring no material components, and you regain the ability to cast it this way when you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Fire Genasi

As a fire genasi, you have inherited the volatile mood and keen mind of the efreet. You tend toward impatience and making snap judgments. Rather than hide your distinctive appearance, you exult in it.

Nearly all fire genasi are feverishly hot as if burning inside, an impression reinforced by flaming red, coal-black, or ash-gray skin tones. The more human-looking have fiery red hair that writhes under extreme emotion, while more exotic specimens sport actual flames dancing on their heads. Fire genasi voices might sound like crackling flames, and their eyes flare when angered. Some are accompanied by the faint scent of brimstone.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. Your ties to the Elemental Plane of Fire make your darkvision unusual: everything you see in darkness is in a shade of red.

Fire Resistance. You have resistance to fire damage.

Reach to the Blaze. You know the *produce flame* cantrip. Once you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *burning hands* spell once with this trait as a 1st-level spell, and you regain the ability to cast it this way when you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Water Genasi

The lapping of waves, the spray of sea foam on the wind, the ocean depths—all of these things call to your heart. You wander freely and take pride in your independence, though others might consider you selfish.

Most water genasi look as if they just finished bathing, with beads of moisture collecting on their skin and hair. They smell of fresh rain and clean water. Blue or green skin is common, and most have somewhat overlarge eyes, blue-black in color. A water genasi's hair might float freely, swaying and waving as if underwater. Some have voices with undertones reminiscent of whale song or trickling streams.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Acid Resistance. You have resistance to acid damage.

Amphibious. You can breathe air and water.

Swim. You have a swimming speed of 30 feet.

Call to the Wave. You know the *shape water* cantrip (see appendix B). When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *create or destroy water* spell as a 2nd-level spell once with this trait, and you regain the ability to cast it this way when you finish a long rest. Constitution is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Genasi Backgrounds

Each genasi subrace has its own temperament, which might make some backgrounds more suitable than others.

Air genasi are proud of their heritage, sometimes to the point of haughtiness. They can be flamboyant, and are keen to have an audience. They rarely stay in one place for long, always looking for a new sky to see and breathe. Air genasi who don't live in cities favor open lands such as plains, deserts, and high mountains. Fitting backgrounds include charlatan, entertainer, and noble.

Earth genasi are more withdrawn, and their connection to the earth keeps them from being comfortable in most cities. Their uncommon size and strength makes them natural soldiers, though, and with their stoic demeanor, they can encourage others and become great leaders. Many earth genasi live underground, where they can be in their favored element. When they emerge from their caves, they might roam the hills and mountains or lay claim to old ruins. Appropriate backgrounds for earth genasi include hermit, outlander, and soldier.

Fire genasi often get themselves into difficulty with their fiery tempers. Like their air genasi cousins, they sometimes flaunt their perceived superiority over common folk. But they also want others to share their high opinion of themselves, so they constantly seek to enhance their reputations. Likely backgrounds for a fire genasi include criminal, folk hero, and noble.

Water genasi almost all have some experience aboard or around sea vessels. They make excellent mariners and fishers. Like earth genasi, though, water genasi prefer quiet and solitude; the wide shores are their natural homes. They go where they want, do what they want, and rarely feel bound to anything. Good backgrounds for water genasi include hermit and sailor.

Appendix B: Spells

This appendix presents new spells that you can make available to your players. Some of the spells are used by creatures in chapter 7.

It's up to you whether these spells are available at character creation, whether they are discovered over the course of the adventure, or whether they don't end up in the characters' hands at all. Many players are fine sticking with the spells in the *Player's Handbook*, whereas other players will be excited to gain new spell options.

Spell Lists

The following spell lists show which of the new spells are for a class. A spell's school of magic is noted in parentheses after its name. If a spell can be cast as a ritual, the ritual tag also appears within the parentheses.

Bard Spells

Cantrips (0 Level)
Thunderclap (evocation)

1st Level
Earth tremor (evocation)

2nd Level
Pyrotechnics (transmutation)
Skywrite (transmutation, ritual)
Warding wind (evocation)

Druid Spells

When druids prepare their spells, they have access to the entire spell list for their class. Given that fact, beware of making all of these new spells available to a player who is easily overwhelmed when presented with many options. For such a player, consider adding only story-appropriate spells to druid's list.

For example, if the player's druid is from a coastal region, you could grant the druid access only to the new water-themed spells. Similarly, being near an elemental node in the adventure could unlock spells associated with that node's element.

Cantrips (0 Level)
Create bonfire (conjuration)
Control flames (transmutation)
Frostbite (evocation)
Gust (transmutation)
Magic stone (transmutation)
Mold earth (transmutation)
Shape water (transmutation)
Thunderclap (evocation)

1st Level
Absorb elements (abjuration)
Beast bond (divination)
Ice knife (conjuration)
Earth tremor (evocation)

2nd Level
Dust devil (conjuration)
Earthbind (transmutation)
Skywrite (transmutation, ritual)
Warding wind (evocation)

3rd Level
Erupting earth (transmutation)
Flame arrows (transmutation)
Tidal wave (conjuration)
Wall of water (evocation)

4th Level
Elemental bane (transmutation)
Watery sphere (conjuration)

5th Level
Control winds (transmutation)
Maelstrom (evocation)
Transmute rock (transmutation)

6th Level
Bones of the earth (transmutation)
Investiture of flame (transmutation)
Investiture of ice (transmutation)
Investiture of stone (transmutation)
Investiture of wind (transmutation)
Primordial ward (abjuration)

7th Level
Whirlwind (evocation)

Ranger Spells

1st Level
Absorb elements (abjuration)
Beast bond (divination)

3rd Level
Flame arrows (transmutation)

Sorcerer Spells

Cantrips (0 Level)
Create bonfire (conjuration)
Control flames (transmutation)
Frostbite (evocation)
Gust (transmutation)
Mold earth (transmutation)
Shape water (transmutation)
Thunderclap (evocation)

1st Level
Catapult (transmutation)
Ice knife (conjuration)
Earth tremor (evocation)

2nd Level
Aganazzar's scorcher (evocation)
Dust devil (conjuration)
Earthbind (transmutation)
Maximilian's earthen grasp (transmutation)
Pyrotechnics (transmutation)
Snilloc's snowball swarm (evocation)
Warding wind (evocation)

3rd Level
Erupting earth (transmutation)
Flame arrows (transmutation)
Melf's minute meteors (evocation)
Wall of water (evocation)

4th Level
Storm sphere (evocation)
Vitriolic sphere (evocation)
Watery sphere (conjuration)

5th Level
Control winds (transmutation)
Immolation (evocation)

6th Level
Investiture of flame (transmutation)
Investiture of ice (transmutation)
Investiture of stone (transmutation)
Investiture of wind (transmutation)

8th Level
Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting (necromancy)

Warlock Spells

Cantrips (0 Level)
Create bonfire (conjuration)
Frostbite (evocation)
Magic stone (transmutation)
Thunderclap (evocation)



2nd Level
Earthbind (transmutation)

4th Level
Elemental bane (transmutation)

6th Level
Investiture of flame (transmutation)
Investiture of ice (transmutation)
Investiture of stone (transmutation)
Investiture of wind (transmutation)



Wizard Spells

One of the best ways to introduce these new wizard spells is to include some of them spellbooks that appear as treasure.

Cantrips (0 Level)
Create bonfire (conjuration)
Control flames (transmutation)
Frostbite (evocation)
Gust (transmutation)
Mold earth (transmutation)
Shape water (transmutation)
Thunderclap (evocation)

1st Level
Absorb elements (abjuration)
Catapult (transmutation)
Ice knife (conjuration)
Earth tremor (evocation)

2nd Level
Aganazzar's scorcher (evocation)
Dust devil (conjuration)
Earthbind (transmutation)
Maximilian's earthen grasp (transmutation)
Pyrotechnics (transmutation)
Skywrite (transmutation, ritual)
Snilloc's snowball swarm (evocation)

3rd Level
Erupting earth (transmutation)
Flame arrows (transmutation)
Melf's minute meteors (evocation)
Tidal wave (conjuration)
Wall of sand (evocation)
Wall of water (evocation)

4th Level
Elemental bane (transmutation)
Storm sphere (evocation)
Vitriolic sphere (evocation)
Watery sphere (conjuration)

5th Level
Control winds (transmutation)
Immolation (evocation)
Transmute rock (transmutation)

6th Level
Investiture of flame (transmutation)
Investiture of ice (transmutation)
Investiture of stone (transmutation)
Investiture of wind (transmutation)

7th Level
Whirlwind (evocation)

8th Level
Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting (necromancy)

Spell Descriptions

The spells are presented in alphabetical order.

Abi-Dalzim's Horrid Wilting

8th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 150 feet
Components: V, S, M (a bit of sponge)
Duration: Instantaneous

You draw the moisture from every creature in a 30-foot cube centered on a point you choose within range. Each creature in that area must make a Constitution saving throw. Constructs and undead aren't affected, and plants and water elementals make this saving throw with disadvantage. A creature takes 10d8 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Absorb Elements

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you take acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage
Range: Self
Components: S
Duration: 1 round

The spell captures some of the incoming energy, lessening its effect on you and storing it for your next melee attack. You have resistance to the triggering damage type until the start of your next turn. Also, the first time you hit with a melee attack on your next turn, the target takes an extra 1d6 damage of the triggering type, and the spell ends.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

Aganazzar's Scorcher

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a red dragon's scale)
Duration: Instantaneous

A line of roaring flame 30 feet long and 5 feet wide emanates from you in a direction you choose. Each creature in the line must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d8 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

Beast Bond

1st-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a bit of fur wrapped in a cloth)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You establish a telepathic link with one beast you touch that is friendly to you or charmed by you. The spell fails if the beast's Intelligence is 4 or higher. Until the spell ends, the link is active while you and the beast are within line of sight of each other. Through the link, the beast can understand your telepathic messages to it, and it can telepathically communicate simple emotions and concepts back to you. While the link is active, the beast gains advantage on attack rolls against any creature within 5 feet of you that you can see.

Bones of the Earth

6th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You cause up to six pillars of stone to burst from places on the ground that you can see within range. Each pillar is a cylinder that has a diameter of 5 feet and a height of up to 30 feet. The ground where a pillar appears must be wide enough for its diameter, and you can target ground under a creature if that creature is Medium or smaller. Each pillar has AC 5 and 30 hit points. When reduced to 0 hit points, a pillar crumbles into rubble, which creates an area of difficult terrain with a 10-foot radius. The rubble lasts until cleared.

If a pillar is created under a creature, that creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or be lifted by the pillar. A creature can choose to fail the save.

If a pillar is prevented from reaching its full height because of a ceiling or other obstacle, a creature on the pillar takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage and is restrained, pinched between the pillar and the obstacle. The restrained creature can use an action to make a Strength or Dexterity check (the creature's choice) against the spell's saving throw DC. On a success, the creature is no longer restrained and must either move off the pillar or fall off it.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, you can create two additional pillars for each slot level above 6th.

Catapult

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 150 feet
Components: S
Duration: Instantaneous

Choose one object weighing 1 to 5 pounds within range that isn't being worn or carried. The object flies in a straight line up to 90 feet in a direction you choose before falling to the ground, stopping early if it impacts against a solid surface. If the object would strike a creature, that creature must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the object strikes the target and stops moving. In either case, both the object and the creature or solid surface take 3d8 bludgeoning damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the maximum weight of objects that you can target with this spell increases by 5 pounds, and the damage increases by 1d8, for each slot level above 1st.

Create Bonfire

Conjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create a bonfire on ground that you can see within range. Until the spells ends, the bonfire fills a 5-foot cube. Any creature in the bonfire's space when you cast the spell must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 1d8 fire damage. A creature must also make the saving throw when it enters the bonfire's space for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there.

The spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

Control Flames

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: S
Duration: Instantaneous or 1 hour (see below)

You choose nonmagical flame that you can see within range and that fits within a 5-foot cube. You affect it in one of the following ways:

- You instantaneously expand the flame 5 feet in one direction, provided that wood or other fuel is present in the new location.
- You instantaneously extinguish the flames within the cube.
- You double or halve the area of bright light and dim light cast by the flame, change its color, or both. The change lasts for 1 hour.
- You cause simple shapes—such as the vague form of a creature, an inanimate object, or a location—to appear within the flames and animate as you like. The shapes last for 1 hour.

If you cast this spell multiple times, you can have up to three of its non-instantaneous effects active at a time, and you can dismiss such an effect as an action.

Control Winds

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 300 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You take control of the air in a 100-foot cube that you can see within range. Choose one of the following effects when you cast the spell. The effect lasts for the spell's duration, unless you use your action on a later



turn to switch to a different effect. You can also use your action to temporarily halt the effect or to restart one you've halted.

Gusts. A wind picks up within the cube, continually blowing in a horizontal direction that you choose. You choose the intensity of the wind: calm, moderate, or strong. If the wind is moderate or strong, ranged weapon attacks that pass through it or that are made against targets within the cube have disadvantage on their attack rolls. If the wind is strong, any creature moving against the wind must spend 1 extra foot of movement for each foot moved.

Downdraft. You cause a sustained blast of strong wind to blow downward from the top of the cube. Ranged weapon attacks that pass through the cube or that are made against targets within it have disadvantage on their attack rolls. A creature must make a Strength saving throw if it flies into the cube for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there flying. On a failed save, the creature is knocked prone.

Updraft. You cause a sustained updraft within the cube, rising upward from the cube's bottom edge. Creatures that end a fall within the cube take only half damage from the fall. When a creature in the cube makes a vertical jump, the creature can jump up to 10 feet higher than normal.

Dust Devil

2nd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of dust)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose an unoccupied 5-foot cube of air that you can see within range. An elemental force that resembles a dust devil appears in the cube and lasts for the spell's duration.

Any creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of the dust devil must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d8 bludgeoning damage and is pushed 10 feet away. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed.

As a bonus action, you can move the dust devil up to 30 feet in any direction. If the dust devil moves over sand, dust, loose dirt, or small gravel, it sucks up the material and forms a 10-foot-radius cloud of debris around itself that lasts until the start of your next turn. The cloud heavily obscures its area.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

Earthbind

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 300 feet
Components: V
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose one creature you can see within range. Yellow strips of magical energy loop around the creature. The target must succeed on a Strength saving throw or its flying speed (if any) is reduced to 0 feet for the spell's duration. An airborne creature affected by this spell descends at 60 feet per round until it reaches the ground or the spell ends.

Earth Tremor

1st-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self (10-foot radius)
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You cause a tremor in the ground in a 10-foot radius. Each creature other than you in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. If the ground in that area is loose earth or stone, it becomes difficult terrain until cleared.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

Elemental Bane

4th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose one creature you can see within range, and choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be affected by the spell for its duration. The first time each turn the affected target takes damage of the chosen type, the target takes an extra 2d6 damage of that type. Moreover, the target loses any resistance to that damage type until the spell ends.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 4th. The creatures must be within 30 feet of each other when you target them.

Erupting Earth

3rd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a piece of obsidian)
Duration: Instantaneous

Choose a point you can see on the ground within range. A fountain of churned earth and stone erupts in a 20-foot cube centered on that point. Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d12 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Additionally, the ground in that area becomes difficult



terrain until cleared away. Each 5-foot-square portion of the area requires at least 1 minute to clear by hand.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d12 for each slot level above 2nd.

Flame Arrows

3rd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You touch a quiver containing arrows or bolts. When a target is hit by a ranged weapon attack using a piece of ammunition drawn from the quiver, the target takes an extra 1d6 fire damage. The spell's magic ends on the piece of ammunition when it hits or misses, and the spell ends when twelve pieces of ammunition have been drawn from the quiver.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the number of pieces of ammunition you can affect with this spell increases by two for each slot level above 3rd.

Frostbite

Evocation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You cause numbing frost to form on one creature that you can see within range. The target must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 1d6 cold damage, and it has disadvantage on the next weapon attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn.

The spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

Gust

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You seize the air and compel it to create one of the following effects at a point you can see within range:

- One Medium or smaller creature that you choose must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 5 feet away from you.
- You create a small blast of air capable of moving one object that is neither held nor carried and that weighs no more than 5 pounds. The object is pushed up to 10 feet away from you. It isn't pushed with enough force to cause damage.
- You create a harmless sensory affect using air, such as causing leaves to rustle, wind to slam shutters shut, or your clothing to ripple in a breeze.

Ice Knife

1st-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: S, M (a drop of water or piece of ice)
Duration: Instantaneous

You create a shard of ice and fling it at one creature within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d10 piercing damage. Hit or miss, the shard then explodes. The target and each creature within 5 feet of the point where the ice exploded must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 cold damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the cold damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

Immolation

5th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Flames wreathe one creature you can see within range. The target must make a Dexterity saving throw. It takes 7d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. On a failed save, the target also burns for the spell's duration. The burning target sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet. At the end of each of its turns, the target repeats the saving throw. It takes 3d6 fire damage on a failed save, and the spell ends on a successful one. These magical flames can't be extinguished through nonmagical means.

If damage from this spell reduces a target to 0 hit points, the target is turned to ash.

Investiture of Flame

6th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Flames race across your body, shedding bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet for the spell's duration. The flames don't harm you. Until the spell ends, you gain the following benefits:

- You are immune to fire damage and have resistance to cold damage.
- Any creature that moves within 5 feet of you for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there takes 1d10 fire damage.
- You can use your action to create a line of fire 15 feet long and 5 feet wide extending from you in a direction you choose. Each creature in the line must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 4d8 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Investiture of Ice

6th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Until the spell ends, ice rimes your body, and you gain the following benefits:

- You are immune to cold damage and have resistance to fire damage.
- You can move across difficult terrain created by ice or snow without spending extra movement.
- The ground in a 10-foot radius around you is icy and is difficult terrain for creatures other than you. The radius moves with you.
- You can use your action to create a 15-foot cone of freezing wind extending from your outstretched hand in a direction you choose. Each creature in the cone must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 4d6 cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails its save against this effect has its speed halved until the start of your next turn.

Investiture of Stone

6th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Until the spell ends, bits of rock spread across your body, and you gain the following benefits:

- You have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.
- You can use your action to create a small earthquake on the ground in a 15-foot radius centered on you. Other creatures on that ground must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- You can move across difficult terrain made of earth or stone without spending extra movement. You can move through solid earth or stone as if it was air and without destabilizing it, but you can't end your movement there. If you do so, you are ejected to the nearest unoccupied space, this spell ends, and you are stunned until the end of your next turn.

Investiture of Wind
6th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Until the spell ends, wind whirls around you, and you gain the following benefits:

- Ranged weapon attacks made against you have disadvantage on the attack roll.
- You gain a flying speed of 60 feet. If you are still flying when the spell ends, you fall, unless you can somehow prevent it.
- You can use your action to create a 15-foot cube of swirling wind centered on a point you can see within 60 feet of you. Each creature in that area must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 2d10 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If a Large or smaller creature fails the save, that creature is also pushed up to 10 feet away from the center of the cube.

Maelstrom
5th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (paper or leaf in the shape of a funnel)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A mass of 5-foot-deep water appears and swirls in a 30-foot radius centered on a point you can see within range. The point must be on ground or in a body of water. Until the spell ends, that area is difficult terrain, and any creature that starts its turn there must succeed on a Strength saving throw or take 6d6 bludgeoning damage and be pulled 10 feet toward the center.

Magic Stone
Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 minute

You touch one to three pebbles and imbue them with magic. You or someone else can make a ranged spell attack with one of the pebbles by throwing it or hurling it with a sling. If thrown, it has a range of 60 feet. If someone else attacks with the pebble, that attacker adds your spellcasting ability modifier, not the attacker's, to the attack roll. On a hit, the target takes bludgeoning damage equal to 1d6 + your spellcasting ability modifier. Hit or miss, the spell then ends on the stone.

If you cast this spell again, the spell ends early on any pebbles still affected by it.

Maximilian's Earthen Grasp
2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a miniature hand sculpted from clay)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You choose a 5-foot-square unoccupied space on the ground that you can see within range. A Medium hand made from compacted soil rises there and reaches for one creature you can see within 5 feet of it. The target must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage and is restrained for the spell's duration.

As an action, you can cause the hand to crush the restrained target, who must make a Strength saving throw. It takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

To break out, the restrained target can make a Strength check against your spell save DC. On a success, the target escapes and is no longer restrained by the hand.

As an action, you can cause the hand to reach for a different creature or to move to a different unoccupied space within range. The hand releases a restrained target if you do either.

Melf's Minute Meteors
3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (niter, sulfur, and pine tar formed into a bead)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create six tiny meteors in your space. They float in the air and orbit you for the spell's duration. When you cast the spell—and as a bonus action on each of your turns thereafter—you can expend one or two of the meteors, sending them streaking toward a point or points you choose within 120 feet of you. Once a meteor reaches its destination or impacts against a solid surface, the meteor explodes. Each creature within 5 feet of the point where the meteor explodes must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 2d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the number of meteors created increases by two for each slot level above 3rd.

Mold Earth
Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: S
Duration: Instantaneous or 1 hour (see below)

You choose a portion of dirt or stone that you can see within range and that fits within a 5-foot cube. You manipulate it in one of the following ways:

- If you target an area of loose earth, you can instantaneously excavate it, move it along the ground, and deposit it up to 5 feet away. This movement doesn't have enough force to cause damage.
- You cause shapes, colors, or both to appear on the dirt or stone, spelling out words, creating images, or shaping patterns. The changes last for 1 hour.
- If the dirt or stone you target is on the ground, you cause it to become difficult terrain. Alternatively, you can cause the ground to become normal terrain if it is already difficult terrain. This change lasts for 1 hour.

If you cast this spell multiple times, you can have no more than two of its non-instantaneous effects active at a time, and you can dismiss such an effect as an action.

Primordial Ward

6th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You have resistance to acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage for the spell's duration.

When you take damage of one of those types, you can use your reaction to gain immunity to that type of damage, including against the triggering damage. If you do so, the resistances end, and you have the immunity until the end of your next turn, at which time the spell ends.

Pyrotechnics

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

Choose an area of flame that you can see and that can fit within a 5-foot cube within range. You can extinguish the fire in that area, and you create either fireworks or smoke.

Fireworks. The target explodes with a dazzling display of colors. Each creature within 10 feet of the target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or become blinded until the end of your next turn.

Smoke. Thick black smoke spreads out from the target in a 20-foot radius, moving around corners. The area of the smoke is heavily obscured. The smoke persists for 1 minute or until a strong wind disperses it.

Shape Water

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: S
Duration: Instantaneous or 1 hour (see below)

You choose an area of water that you can see within range and that fits within a 5-foot cube. You manipulate it in one of the following ways:

- You instantaneously move or otherwise change the flow of the water as you direct, up to 5 feet in any direction. This movement doesn't have enough force to cause damage.
- You cause the water to form into simple shapes and animate at your direction. This change lasts for 1 hour.
- You change the water's color or opacity. The water must be changed in the same way throughout. This change lasts for 1 hour.
- You freeze the water, provided that there are no creatures in it. The water unfreezes in 1 hour.

If you cast this spell multiple times, you can have no more than two of its non-instantaneous effects active at a time, and you can dismiss such an effect as an action.



Skywrite

2nd-level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Sight
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You cause up to ten words to form in a part of the sky you can see. The words appear to be made of cloud and remain in place for the spell's duration. The words dissipate when the spell ends. A strong wind can disperse the clouds and end the spell early.

Snilloc's Snowball Swarm

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S, M (a piece of ice or a small white rock chip)
Duration: Instantaneous

A flurry of magic snowballs erupts from a point you choose within range. Each creature in a 5-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d6 cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 2nd.

Storm Sphere

4th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 150 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A 20-foot-radius sphere of whirling air springs into existence centered on a point you choose within range. The sphere remains for the spell's duration. Each creature in the sphere when it appears or that ends its turn there must succeed on a Strength saving throw or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage. The sphere's space is difficult terrain.

Until the spell ends, you can use a bonus action on each of your turns to cause a bolt of lightning to leap from the center of the sphere toward one creature you choose within 60 feet of the center. Make a ranged spell attack. You have advantage on the attack roll if the target is in the sphere. On a hit, the target takes 4d6 lightning damage.

Creatures within 30 feet of the sphere have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to listen.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the damage increases for each of its effects by 1d6 for each slot level above 4th.

Thunderclap

Evocation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self (5-foot radius)
Components: S
Duration: Instantaneous

You create a burst of thunderous sound, which can be heard 100 feet away. Each creature other than you within 5 feet of you must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d6 thunder damage.

The spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

Tidal Wave

3rd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a drop of water)
Duration: Instantaneous

You conjure up a wave of water that crashes down on an area within range. The area can be up to 30 feet long, up to 10 feet wide, and up to 10 feet tall. Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 4d8 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone. The water then spreads out across the ground in all directions, extinguishing unprotected flames in its area and within 30 feet of it.

Transmute Rock

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (clay and water)
Duration: Instantaneous

You choose an area of stone or mud that you can see that fits within a 40-foot cube and that is within range, and choose one of the following effects.

Transmute Rock to Mud. Nonmagical rock of any sort in the area becomes an equal volume of thick and flowing mud that remains for the spell's duration.

If you cast the spell on an area of ground, it becomes muddy enough that creatures can sink into it. Each foot that a creature moves through the mud costs 4 feet of movement, and any creature on the ground when you cast the spell must make a Strength saving throw. A creature must also make this save the first time it enters the area on a turn or ends its turn there. On a failed save, a creature sinks into the mud and is restrained, though it can use an action to end the restrained condition on itself by pulling itself free of the mud.

If you cast the spell on a ceiling, the mud falls. Any creature under the mud when it falls must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 4d8 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Transmute Mud to Rock. Nonmagical mud or quicksand in the area no more than 10 feet deep transforms into soft stone for the spell's duration. Any creature in the mud when it transforms must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature becomes restrained by the rock. The restrained creature can use an action to try to break free by succeeding on a Strength check (DC 20) or by dealing 25 damage to the rock around it. On a successful save, a creature is shunted safely to the surface to an unoccupied space.

Vitriolic Sphere

4th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 150 feet
Components: V, S, M (a drop of giant slug bile)
Duration: Instantaneous

You point at a place within range, and a glowing 1-foot ball of emerald acid streaks there and explodes in a 20-foot radius. Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 10d4 acid damage and 5d4 acid damage at the end of its next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half the initial damage and no damage at the end of its next turn.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the initial damage increases by 2d4 for each slot level above 4th.

Wall of Sand

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S, M (a handful of sand)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You conjure up a wall of swirling sand on the ground at a point you can see within range. You can make the wall up to 30 feet long, 10 feet high, and 10 feet thick, and it vanishes when the spell ends. It blocks line of sight but not movement. A creature is blinded while in the wall's space and must spend 3 feet of movement for every 1 foot it moves there.

Wall of Water

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a drop of water)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You conjure up a wall of water on the ground at a point you can see within range. You can make the wall up to 30 feet long, 10 feet high, and 1 foot thick, or you can make a ringed wall up to 20 feet in diameter, 20 feet high, and 1 foot thick. The wall vanishes when the spell ends. The wall's space is difficult terrain.

Any ranged weapon attack that enters the wall's space has disadvantage on the attack roll, and fire damage is halved if the fire effect passes through the wall to reach its target. Spells that deal cold damage that pass through the wall cause the area of the wall they pass through to freeze solid (at least a 5-foot square section is frozen). Each 5-foot-square frozen section has AC 5 and 15 hit points. Reducing a frozen section to 0 hit points destroys it. When a section is destroyed, the wall's water doesn't fill it.

Warding Wind

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

A strong wind (20 miles per hour) blows around you in a 10-foot radius and moves with you, remaining centered on you. The wind lasts for the spell's duration.

The wind has the following effects:

- It deafens you and other creatures in its area.
- It extinguishes unprotected flames in its area that are torch-sized or smaller.
- The area is difficult terrain for creatures other than you.
- The attack rolls of ranged weapon attacks have disadvantage if they pass in or out of the wind.
- It hedges out vapor, gas, and fog that can be dispersed by strong wind.

Watery Sphere

4th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S, M (a droplet of water)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You conjure up a sphere of water with a 10-foot radius on a point you can see within range. The sphere can hover in the air, but no more than 10 feet off the ground. The sphere remains for the spell's duration.

Any creature in the sphere's space must make a Strength saving throw. On a successful save, a creature is ejected from that space to the nearest unoccupied space outside it. A Huge or larger creature succeeds on the saving throw automatically. On a failed save, a creature is restrained by the sphere and is engulfed by the water. At the end of each of its turns, a restrained target can repeat the saving throw.

The sphere can restrain a maximum of four Medium or smaller creatures or one Large creature. If the sphere restrains a creature in excess of these numbers, a random creature that was already restrained by the sphere falls out of it and lands prone in a space within 5 feet of it.

As an action, you can move the sphere up to 30 feet in a straight line. If it moves over a pit, cliff, or other drop, it safely descends until it is hovering 10 feet over ground. Any creature restrained by the sphere moves with it. You can ram the sphere into creatures, forcing them to make the saving throw, but no more than once per turn.

When the spell ends, the sphere falls to the ground and extinguishes all normal flames within 30 feet of it. Any creature restrained by the sphere is knocked prone in the space where it falls.



Whirlwind

7th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 300 feet
Components: V, M (a piece of straw)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A whirlwind howls down to a point on the ground you specify. The whirlwind is a 10-foot-radius, 30-foot-high cylinder centered on that point. Until the spell ends, you can use your action to move the whirlwind up to 30 feet in any direction along the ground. The whirlwind sucks up any Medium or smaller objects that aren't secured to anything and that aren't worn or carried by anyone.

A creature must make a Dexterity saving throw the first time on a turn that it enters the whirlwind or that the whirlwind enters its space, including when the whirlwind first appears. A creature takes 10d6 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. In addition, a Large or smaller creature that fails the save must succeed on a Strength saving throw or become restrained in the whirlwind until the spell ends. When a creature starts its turn restrained by the whirlwind, the creature is pulled 5 feet higher inside it, unless the creature is at the top. A restrained creature moves with the whirlwind and falls when the spell ends, unless the creature has some means to stay aloft.

A restrained creature can use an action to make a Strength or Dexterity check against your spell save DC. If successful, the creature is no longer restrained by the whirlwind and is hurled 3d6 × 10 feet away from it in a random direction.

Appendix C: Adapting to Other Worlds

Old as creation itself, Elemental Evil has arisen in a thousand different worlds across the ages of the multiverse. *Princes of the Apocalypse* describes the rise of Elemental Evil in the world of the Forgotten Realms setting. However, there is no reason you couldn't adjust this adventure to fit in almost any world that is part of the Dungeons & Dragons multiverse. In this appendix, we take a look at how you can adapt this adventure to some of the well-known settings for the D&D game, or to your own campaign world.

Dark Sun

The dying planet of Athas is a world that is already deeply scarred by elemental power. Long ago the gods of Athas fought a terrible war against the mighty primordial powers of the elemental planes—and they lost. The gods were slain or driven into exile, leaving Athas under the dominion of elemental beings who took little interest in the affairs of mortals. In the grim age that followed the defeat of the gods, mighty sorcerer-kings came to power and nearly destroyed the world with their reckless use of defiling magic. They made Athas into a desert where terrible monsters roam and only the strongest survive.

One of the hallmarks of the Dark Sun setting is that the heroes don't need to seek out forgotten dungeons to find adventure—mere survival is adventure enough. But there is no reason you can't successfully adapt *Princes of the Apocalypse* to your Dark Sun campaign.

Setting

A fertile agricultural region like the Dessarin Valley does not exist in Athas, but there are several frontier areas containing small, out-of-the-way villages separated by several days' travel through the wilderness. One good example is the Great Alluvial Sand Wastes. The long-lost dwarven citadel of Tyar-Besil lies beneath the rocky badlands about 30 to 40 miles northwest of the village of Kled. The buried city does not have to change much at all; a 5,000-year old dwarven stronghold forgotten beneath the desert sands might easily date back to the Green Age, a time when the world of Athas would have looked much like the Forgotten Realms.

The four Haunted Keeps described in chapter 3 of this adventure are lonely outposts or ruins scattered throughout the badlands under which Tyar-Besil lies. Rivergard Keep is admittedly a little problematic in a desert world, but the solution is simple: It lies on the dusty banks of a river long dried up. The Crushing Wave cultists occupying the old keep aren't smugglers and pirates; they're slave traders.

Settlements nearby the area where the elemental cults are establishing themselves include the slave village of Freedom, the dwarven mining village of Kled, and Silver Spring oasis. Kled is a good base for explorations, and can serve as the "Red Larch" of a Dark Sun Elemental Evil campaign. Freedom is a good counterpart for Beliard, and Silver Spring works well in the role of Bargewright Inn and Womford. You can invent another small village or two—perhaps a merchant house outpost—to serve as Westbridge, and provide a location that can be threatened or destroyed by cult reprisals as the adventure unfolds.

Background

Instead of the delegation from Mirabar, the missing caravan that drives the heroes' initial involvement in the adventure consists of envoys from the halfling village of Ogo, bound for the recently freed city of Tyr. The city's new leaders hope to forge an alliance with the halflings of the Forest Ridge, and sent envoys bearing gifts and trade goods to the village of Ogo; a party of important halflings is returning to Tyr with the city's envoys, bringing reciprocal gifts of their own. After stopping in the village of Freedom, the delegation headed south to Kled, where they intended to turn toward Tyr. However, they disappeared in the badlands between Kled and Freedom.

The Athasian Cult

Elemental cults are widespread in Athas. In a world without gods, people instead worship the powers they see in the world around them: air, earth, fire, and water. Elemental priests hold a social position similar to that of religious hermits or tribal shamans of other worlds. Common Athasians, especially those who live outside the walls of the city-states, revere elemental priests and listen carefully when they speak. The chief difference between cultists dedicated to Elemental Evil and the elemental priests normally found in the tribes and villages of Athas is the cult's dedication to evil. An elemental priest protects and guides the common people, using elemental magic to better their lives. An elemental cultist demands abasement, sacrifice, and obedience. The element is no longer a tool of survival; it is a force for destruction and the power to dominate others.

Because elemental priests hold such an important place in Athasian society, the appearance of cultists serving Elemental Evil is not likely to seem out of the ordinary at first. In small desert villages, a cult could easily take shape and even attract popular support from a local community or tribe—at least until the cruelty and madness of its adherents make its true nature obvious to all.

In an Athasian version of the Elemental Evil campaign, the prophets first appear as especially charismatic and powerful elemental priests promising their followers a "better" way. The elemental weapons are heirlooms or lost treasures created long ago during an earlier incarnation of the cult. When the Elder Elemental Eye begins to stir beneath the dark sun and seeks new servants, the ancient weapons awake from their slumber and find their way into ready hands.



Factions in Athas

The city-states and nomadic tribes of Athas have a set of factions and alliances shaped by that world's harsh history. Here are suggestions for converting the adventure's faction references for Athas.

The Harpers

The Veiled Alliance

The Veiled Alliance is a secret society dedicated to the overthrow of the evil sorcerer-kings who dominate the Tyr Region. Like the Harpers, its ranks include a number of rogues, spellcasters, and spies. Few organizations or movements in Athas operate across multiple city-states, but the Veiled Alliance is one of them. Heroes who give their allegiance to the Veiled Alliance would primarily be interested in stopping the defilers who serve the elemental cults and making sure the sorcerer-kings do not get their hands on the secrets of elemental power.

The Order of the Gauntlet

The Free

The desert wilds are dotted with the hidden camps and strongholds of Athas's slave tribes—bands of people who have managed to escape from slavery in one or another of the city-states. The Free is a tenuous, disorganized society or fellowship of the slave tribes of the Tyr Region. Even though the tribes do not cooperate with each other, they share important common values and work toward the same end: the destruction of slavery. They fulfill something like the role of the Order of the Gauntlet in Athas.

The Free are not directly concerned with fighting threats such as Elemental Evil, but they hate slaveholders and do everything they can to punish those who enslave others. The elemental cults take captives and force them to work on their mad projects, so the Free get involved to stop this practice and punish the perpetrators for their crimes.

The Emerald Enclave

Druid circles

Athasian druids see themselves as guardians of the land and enemies to all who employ defiling magic. No great druid organizations span the entire Tyr Region, but a number of smaller, localized druid circles are concerned with the disturbances and disasters triggered by the cult's activities. One such circle roams the area between the Dragon's Bowl and the Valley of Tyr. Characters who want to fight for the forces of natural balance could be allies (or members) of the druids.

The Lords' Alliance

Templar bureaucracy

The sorcerer-kings of the Tyr Region are bitter enemies of each other, so nothing like the Lords' Alliance is possible. However, the templar bureaucracy of a specific city-state can serve a similar role in a Dark Sun conversion of this adventure. The city-state most immediately concerned with the rise of a dangerous magical cult in the Great Alluvial Sand Wastes is Tyr,

struggling to find its way after the death of King Kalak. The templars of Tyr can't allow a new threat to grow on their doorstep—or allow the templars of a rival city such as Urik to gain control of the cult's elemental magic.

The Zhentarim

House Tsalaxa

The great merchant houses of the Tyr Region maintain warehouses and emporiums in all the major city-states. All are fiercely competitive and seek out any advantage to use against their rivals, but House Tsalaxa of Draj is widely regarded as the most ruthless of them all. Agents of House Tsalaxa do not hesitate to engage in assassination, bribery, or even sponsoring raids against the caravans of rival houses. For the Tsalaxa, the Cult of Elemental Evil represents a threat to the existing order; widespread destruction is bad for business, even by House Tsalaxa's standards. If the house's agents can seize the cult's secrets in the process of eliminating the threat, so much the better.

Dragonlance

Home to the Dragonlance saga, the world of Krynn has been a favorite of many over the years. With some minor adjustments, you can adapt *Princes of the Apocalypse* to your Dragonlance campaign. The story of Elemental Evil can be recast as the forces of Chaos seeking another way to destroy the world of Krynn.

Setting

Both time and place must be considered when converting this adventure for use in a Dragonlance campaign. Each era of Krynn's history provides its own challenges. Does the adventure take place during the pre-Cataclysm Age of Might? Before or during the War of Lance? Where on Krynn will Elemental Evil arise: the hills and mountains of Solamnia? Ergoth? Or the soon-to-be destroyed Istar? We suggest setting the campaign when and where the Dragonlance saga began: in the lands of Abanasinia, near Solace and Haven, at the end of the Time of Darkness in the year or two preceding the War of the Lance.

In this scenario, the Sumber Hills are replaced by the hills and mountains between Solace and Haven. Instead of Red Larch, the starting town of the adventure is Gateway, some distance south of Solace. The forks of the White-Rage River replace the Dessarin River, and many of the adventure locations can be located north and south of Gateway along the river or in the mountains to the west. The biggest city of the region is Haven, which can serve the same role as Yartar.

The background information regarding the ancient dwarven nation of Besilmer can survive by incorporating it into the history of Thorbardin, predating the Kinslayer Wars.

Background

Before recorded history, the god known as Chaos was trapped by Reorx in the Graygem, but echoes of Chaos remained in the world. These took the form of nodes buried deep in the earth, where they should have been forgotten for all time.

Thousands of years before the Cataclysm, a group of dwarf settlers established an enclave in the mountains north of Thorbardin, which they called Tyar-Besil. Unbeknown to the dwarves, the settlement was built less than a mile from the location of one such Chaos node. After the Kinslayer Wars, the dwarves retreated south of Pax Tharkas and into Thorbardin, abandoning the underground city, but only after sealing it against any intrusion. In the Elemental Evil campaign, this city becomes the location of the four elemental temples.

The four Haunted Keeps are abandoned outposts that predate the Cataclysm. They once guarded the entrances to the ancient dwarven enclave. Rivergard Keep lies along the White-Rage River, north of Haven.

The calamitous forces of the Cataclysm destroyed and buried countless cities, but also unearthed ancient ruins and places of power. In the wake of this destruction, the perceived absence of Krynn's gods led humans to seek out other sources of magic that could rival the divine. Four of these seekers found their way into the lost city of Tyar-Besil and discovered newly opened tunnels that led to the Fane of the Eye, the ancient Chaos echo buried deep beneath the mountains of Abanasinia. These four seekers became the elemental prophets. Wielding the power of the elemental weapons, the four prophets recruited their cultist followers and began to work to further the mysterious designs of the Elder Elemental Eye.

The campaign starts off with an investigation into a missing delegation. In the Dragonlance setting, the Mirabar expedition could be replaced by a group of diplomats traveling from Haven along the Haven Road through Solace.

Factions of Krynn

Close equivalents to the factions of the Forgotten Realms don't exist in the Dragonlance setting, and so must be replaced with more suitable groups from Krynn.

The Harpers

Benevolent locals

There is no clear match for this world-spanning organization in Krynn. Instead of an established faction, treat the various Harper contacts in the adventure as friendly NPCs who are willing to help the characters along, so long as they appear to be working for the forces of good.

The Order of the Gauntlet

The Knights of Solamnia

Replace the Order of the Gauntlet with the Knights of Solamnia, who are dedicated to upholding the cause of good. Although the Knights don't exercise political power in the region, it is not unreasonable for the player characters to be their agents, on the lookout for unrest as the threat of war looms.

The Emerald Enclave

Allies of the Forestmaster

As a replacement for the Emerald Enclave, consider a cabal of Qualinesti elves, plainsfolk shamans, and regional rangers dedicated to preserving the land. These groups work together at the behest of the unicorn of the Darken Wood, a powerful creature known as the Forestmaster.

The Lords' Alliance

Community leaders in Abanasinia

What would be the Lords' Alliance instead represents the local rulers of the scattered towns of Abanasinia that are not controlled by the Seekers. These settlements mostly lie along the coastline of the Straits of Schallsea, since the inland towns are either under Seeker sway or are villages of the plainsfolk. Some nobles among Seeker-controlled towns might also be part of this alliance, working against the Theocrats politically.

The Zhentarim

The Seekers

In the Abanasinia region, the role of organized crime is mostly filled by the Seeker theocracy. While some Seekers truly do search for evidence of the gods, many are more concerned with establishing and controlling local rule, and do not shy away from using coercion and threats to get their way.

Regarding Dragons

Even with the suggested changes to the factions and locations, a key component of the Dragonlance setting is still missing: dragons! If you want to add a draconic influence to the campaign, consider the following changes and additions.

Draconic Influence

In this variant, the Dragon Highlords are also interested in the power that the elemental nodes represent. They dispatch forces to help the cultists defend themselves, but also to secure the elemental nodes when the time is right.

Draconians

These corrupted offspring of good dragons are tainted by elemental power in the Dragonlance setting. Draconians could be found in elemental temples, especially near the prophets. They should not be the first enemies the characters face when they encounter the elemental cults, but an attack by a draconian squad can replace one of the cultist responses when one of the dungeons is cleared.

There isn't space in this book to provide stat blocks for draconians, but you can make your own by adding the half-dragon template (see the *Monster Manual*) to hobgoblins or lizardfolk. Add a Death Throes trait to complete the transition: for example, baaz draconians turn to stone when killed, and kapak draconians dissolve into pools of acid.

Dragons

The power of Elemental Evil attracts dragons. You can place a young dragon or a couple of wyrmlings in or near each of the elemental temples. Good examples include a pair of blue dragon wyrmlings in the air temple, a young black dragon near the water temple, or even a corrupted copper dragon somewhere near the earth node. (The Weeping Colossus already contains a red dragon.) These dragons might be part of the dragonarmies, or might instead be drawn to the elemental power of the Chaos node. They can be integrated within the elemental cults, or might be as much a threat to the cultists as they are to the adventurers.

Greyhawk

Many long-time D&D players regard Oerth, the world of the Greyhawk campaign setting, as the natural and proper home for the Elemental Evil campaign. *The Temple of Elemental Evil*, the classic adventure, is set in the world of Greyhawk. *Princes of the Apocalypse* draws many inspirations from the original adventure, but this is not the same adventure in a new edition. New story elements such as the elemental prophets, the cults' use of *devastation orbs*, and the search for the missing delegation make this a much more far-reaching and event-driven adventure than the original site-based campaign.

Setting

The classic home of the Temple of Elemental Evil is in the Kron Hills, a lightly populated frontier between the small state of Verbobonc and the elven kingdom of Celene. The Sumber Hills are replaced by the eastern portion of the Kron Hills and the western border of the Gnarley Forest. Instead of Red Larch, the starting town of the adventure is Hommlet. The adventure content described in chapter 6 of this book is a good parallel to the classic adventure, *The Village of Hommlet*, and the various sites in and around Red Larch can easily be relocated to the surrounding Kron Hills to introduce the player characters to the region and its people.

Combine the settlements of Womford and nearby Bargewright Inn into the corrupt town of Nulb. The small river known as Imeryds Run serves as the Dessarin River, carrying the barge traffic (and river piracy) that interests the Cult of the Crushing Wave. The gnome town of Tulvar replaces Westbridge, while the Etterboek takes the place of Beliard. The city of Verbobonc can easily serve as both Yartar and Waterdeep. It's the most important city anywhere in the area, and the events described in the "Dark Dealings in Yartar" side trek could easily be set along Verbobonc's river wharves. You can add Summit Hall and the Haunted Keeps as they stand to the area around Hommlet; there is no reason places such as these couldn't be located in this corner of the Flanaess.

In the classic Greyhawk adventure, the temple wasn't built on top of dwarven ruins. Omit any mention of the ancient realm of Besilmer and the underground ruins of Tyar-Besil. Instead, the huge underground

stronghold the player characters explore in chapter 4 is the subterranean fortress constructed by an older incarnation of the Cult of Elemental Evil, which has now been reoccupied by the current group of elemental prophets and their followers.

Background

Elemental Evil is not a new threat in the world of Greyhawk. The Temple of Elemental Evil was built long ago and spawned hordes of bloodthirsty monsters that ravaged the lands between Celene and Veluna on several occasions in the past. As far as anyone in the area knows, the temple is currently abandoned and has not posed a threat for several generations. In the last year or so, the dark force known as the Elder Elemental Eye secretly called a new group of elemental prophets to its ancient stronghold. These four individuals found their way down to the Fane of the Eye and took up the elemental weapons, beginning the work of establishing their cults.

The Haunted Keeps described in chapter 3 of this adventure are old castles or strongholds that lie nearby. They were raised by the adventurers of an earlier century who dealt with one of the previous manifestations of Elemental Evil in this spot, but fell into ruin over time. They guard hidden accesses to the dungeons beneath the sprawling surface ruins of the temple. Rivergard Keep lies on the bank of the nearby Imeryds Run.

The missing delegation that serves as the adventure's initial spur to action instead hails from the Principality of Ulek, bound for the city of Dyvers or perhaps Chendl, capital of the nearby kingdom of Furyondy.

Factions in Greyhawk

Instead of the Forgotten Realms factions, the Flanaess has its own set of knightly orders, mage guilds, and elite societies that serve as power groups the player characters can ally themselves with.

The Harpers

The Circle of Eight

The closest equivalent to the Harpers is the Circle of Eight. Although membership in the circle itself is restricted to the most powerful wizards, the group employs many agents and spies to look after its interests. The Circle of Eight is much less benevolent than the Harpers; its wizards are not particularly concerned about tyranny and are more interested in preserving a balance of power throughout the Flanaess. However, major magical threats (such as the rise of Elemental Evil) are very much within the circle's purview.



The Order of the Gauntlet

The Church of Saint Cuthbert

Greyhawk is home to several different paladin orders that could serve as a substitute for this faction, but the best fit is the Church of Saint Cuthbert. The Church includes clerics, paladins, and fighters who stand for law and order and generally oppose evil, and it is found in many different lands throughout the Flanaess.

The Emerald Enclave

The Old Faith

The druids of the Flanaess belong to a great order known as the Old Faith. Each region of the continent falls under the purview of a Great Druid, who in turn oversees a hierarchy of lower-ranking druids scattered throughout the lands under his or her dominion. Among their other concerns, the Druids of the Old Faith are staunch enemies of the followers of Elemental Evil and root out its worshipers wherever they arise. Player characters who are not members of the druid class could belong to one of the societies or groups affiliated with the servants of the Old Faith; for example, the Gnarley Forest is home to the Gnarley Rangers, a fellowship that cooperates closely with the druids.

The Lords' Alliance

The Knights of the Hart

The time for a close association between good kingdoms and city-states has not yet come to pass in the Flanaess; nothing like the Lords' Alliance can be found in the lands near the Kron Hills. The closest analogue in the world of Greyhawk is the Knights of the Order of the Hart (usually referred to as the Knights of the Hart). This society of human and elf nobles has branches in Furyondy, Veluna, and the Vesve Forest. Though principally concerned with the danger posed by Iuz, the half-demon tyrant, the order seeks to defend its constituent lands against all sorts of monstrous threats.

The Zhentarim

The Thieves' Guild of Greyhawk

The Thieves' Guild of Greyhawk is a good conversion for the Zhentarim. Based in the Free City of Greyhawk, the Thieves' Guild seeks to control trade and influence events in many lands throughout the Flanaess. Like the Zhentarim, its members have a reputation as troublemakers but often are forced to meet the threat posed by truly abhorrent villains and monsters, and the cults of Elemental Evil certainly qualify.

Other Elements

Replace any mention of deities specific to the Forgotten Realms setting with appropriate Greyhawk deities. For example, the knights based in Summit Hall should be followers of Heironeous instead of Helm or Tyr. (They could be followers of Saint Cuthbert, but that would mean that one of the player character factions has an important stronghold in the region; better if they are potential allies for a character who belongs to the right faction.) In addition, the Elder Elemental Eye might be an aspect of the imprisoned god Tharizdun, a dark power of destruction, entropy, and eternal darkness. Whether the elemental prophets see themselves as worshipers of Tharizdun or only as servants of the Elder Elemental Eye is not relevant to the adventure; madness is madness, after all.

Eberron

With its emphasis on mystery and exploration, the Eberron campaign setting is a natural fit for *Princes of the Apocalypse*. Most of the work in adaptation involves changing place names to fit into Eberron. As you do, consider ways you can use the specifics of the Eberron setting to heighten certain adventure motifs.

Eberron is a place of mystery, and there's already plenty of that in *Princes of the Apocalypse*. The first part of the adventure is largely about uncovering the hidden evil that lurks in the region's small towns and frontier strongholds. You have ample ways to play up the sense of mystery. Chapter 3 starts with a missing-persons investigation, for example, and the "Cure of the Fire Witch," "Dark Dealings in Yartar," and "Halls of the Hunting Axe" side treks all involve hidden evil and betrayal.

If you make additions of your own to the adventure, you can build on the *noir* aspects of hidden evil. Make more of the ostensibly friendly NPCs secretly work for one of the four cults. Have the cults lean harder on the leadership of the communities scattered across the region, threatening, blackmailing, and corrupting them so they do the cults' bidding.

Eberron is also about exploration, which is natural fit for a sandbox adventure such as *Princes of the Apocalypse*. If you want to enhance the players' feeling of being pioneers, stretch out the distances between communities (the Eberron map is huge, so you should have plenty of room). Have the NPCs know less about goings-on beyond their backyards, and consider giving the players a more limited map of the area with key locations missing. Just finding the Haunted Keeps should feel like an accomplishment. The players (and maybe the characters as well) can gain a sense of accomplishment if they have a more-or-less complete map of the region by the time the adventure draws to a close.

Setting

Khorvaire is a sprawling continent with plenty of thinly settled frontiers, so it's relatively easy to find a good place to set *Princes of the Apocalypse*. Here are a few examples:

- In western Aundair, the wilderness around the town of Wyr is a good choice; the Eldeen Reaches function as the High Forest does in this adventure.
- In Breland, the small city of Xandrar on the northern border can take the place of Red Larch, with the Haunted Keeps existing as abandoned fortresses from the Last War and the monsters of Droaam being an ongoing threat.
- Northern and eastern Karrnath has vast tracts of frontier—plenty of room for a region the size and scope of the Dessarin Valley. Halfling barbarians from the Talenta Plains can replace the Uthgardt barbarians in the adventure.
- The border between Zilargo and Darguun is another frontier region with plenty of isolated settlements and marauding monsters.

There are enough blank spaces on the map in Eberron that you should be able to translocate the Dessarin Valley wholesale; such remapping just needs a few location name changes. To get an Eberron feel, it's more important that you come with campaign-specific equivalents for the following:

- A hilly region with a river running through it, though the Dessarin Valley is small enough that it might not show up on conventional Eberron campaign maps. Ideally, there should be analogues of the Uthgardt barbarians nearby, and the equivalent of a menacing orc horde that's more distant.
- A big city that's at least a few days' travel away, preferably reachable by both river and road. There shouldn't be airship or lightning rail access to the campaign area, though—the rural location is key to the adventure background.
- An untamed forest or other wilderness that can substitute for the High Forest, with an equivalent to the elves who live within it.

The biggest change you'll have to make is to the adventure's assumed cosmology. Eberron lacks the traditional elemental planes, so you'll have to replace them with the following (with the understanding that they aren't perfect matches):

- Syrania, the Azure Sky (air)
- Kythri, the Churning Chaos (earth)
- Fernia, the Sea of Fire (fire)
- Lamannia, the Twilight Forest (water)

Background

As the adventure begins, Eberron's sages note with interest that four planes will become coterminous with Eberron within the next several months—a rare occurrence even in the annals of astronomers and diviners. For them, it's a matter of academic interest. But for Imix, Ogrémoch, Olhydra, and Yan-C-Bin, it's the chance they've been waiting for.

Under direction of the nameless entity known as the Elder Elemental Eye (perhaps the Dragon Below, the Dreaming Dark, or the Lords of Dust), the four Elemental Princes assemble their cults as described in the adventure. Their goal isn't just to bring the region under the control of Elemental Evil, but to freeze the progression of all the planes of existence so that their four planes remain coterminous with Eberron. Then they will march vast armies from their extraplanar homes and bring all of Khorvaire—and eventually all of Eberron—under their control.

Factions in Eberron

It's not hard to find Eberron equivalents for the factions of the Forgotten Realms.

The Harpers

The Library of Korranberg or Morgrave University

It's a bit of a stretch, but consider using one of Eberron's academic organizations—the Library of Korranberg or Morgrave University—as the equivalent of the Harpers. Their purpose is less political, but they're still altruistic and stand largely outside existing power structures. And with so many mysteries of Eberron waiting to be discovered, those organizations are out in the dangerous places of the world quite a bit—just like the Harpers.



The Order of the Gauntlet

The Church of the Silver Flame

The Church of the Silver Flame is more narrowly religious than the Order of the Gauntlet, but its overall tone is similar. Because the Silver Flame is Thrane's state religion, characters of any class from that nation might work toward the Silver Flame's ends.

The Emerald Enclave

The Wardens of the Word or the Gatekeepers

The Wardens of the Wood are this faction's logical equivalent in Eberron if you're setting *Princes of the Apocalypse* anywhere near the Eldeen Reaches. Otherwise, the Gatekeepers are a good choice.

The Lords' Alliance

The Twelve or the Aurum

The Twelve serves as the defender of civilization much as the Lords' Alliance does, and its members are similarly vulnerable to occasional bouts of rivalry and infighting. The Aurum, while far less altruistic than the Lords' Alliance, fulfills a similar function in the world of Eberron, fighting to protect the status quo and ensure that those in power stay that way.

The Zhentarim

The Order of the Emerald Claw

Replace the Black Network with the Order of the Emerald Claw, though you should downplay the connection to Vol.

Dragonmarked Houses

As an alternative to the five factions, you can use Eberron's dragonmarked houses. If you do so, remember that many members of the houses don't possess dragonmarks, and that even houses dominated by one race (the half-elves of House Lyrandar, for example) include members of other races.

When you start the adventure, have every character choose a dragonmarked house in addition to a race, class, and background. House Deneith functions much like the Order of the Gauntlet, House Kundarak serves as the Lords' Alliance, House Lyrandar or House Tharashk is equivalent to the Harpers, House Phiarlan and House Thuranni are the Zhentarim, and House Vadalis fills in for the Emerald Enclave.

Other Elements

Once you've located the adventure in the world and figured out how you're going to handle the factions, only a few tasks remain.

- Give some of the magic items in the adventure an Eberron spin by connecting them to the magic of dragonshards. The four elemental weapons wielded by the prophets, for example, might be powered by Khyber dragonshards.
- Connect the economy of the Dessarin Valley to the dragonmarked houses. Kaylessa runs Red Larch's inn, the Swinging Sword, on behalf of House Ghallanda, and many of the town's wagonwrights are affiliated with House Lyrandar. The missing delegation that kicks off the adventure in chapter 3 might be organized by House Kundarak.
- Include some NPCs of Eberron-specific races. Grund in Red Larch (described in chapter 6) can be a warforged; much of the town looks down on him anyway. The doppelganger in the "Halls of the Hunting Axe" side trek could be a changeling, and it's not difficult to imagine the prophet Vanifer being one too. Some of the lycanthropes and druids at Scarlet Moon Hall (described in chapter 3) might be shifters.
- Tweak the adventure's background to connect it to the Last War. Perhaps the four prophets are war refugees—or war criminals. And they found themselves picking up their elemental weapons for the first time on the Day of Mourning.

Your Own World

If you've created a fantasy world of your own to serve as the setting for your Dungeons & Dragons game, it will work just fine for the Elemental Evil campaign. The servants of the Elder Elemental Eye might operate under different names or present themselves in new guises, but elemental corruption can strike any world at any time. Heroes are always be needed to drive back the forces of darkness and destruction.

The events of *Princes of the Apocalypse* take place in a thinly settled frontier, far from any kind of central authority. There are no power groups that can easily contest the rise of the elemental prophets—that's why the burden of action falls to the player characters. The easiest conversion is to take the whole Dessarin Valley and drop it into the map of your world. Locations such as Red Larch or the Sumber Hills are generic enough that they would fit in most D&D settings. You may want to rename deities or factions to the pantheon or power groups present in your campaign, but otherwise you can incorporate the adventure as written into a part of the world your player characters have not yet explored.

Alternatively, you can find a suitable place in your world where you can arrange towns analogous to Red Larch, Womford, Beliard, and Westbridge in the vicinity of a desolate wilderness like the Sumber Hills. In this adventure, these towns are as much as 70 or 80 miles apart, but there is no reason you couldn't fit them in a much smaller area. As long as the towns are at least a day's travel from each other, you have enough wilderness to make moving from town to town a serious decision point for the players.

The Sumber Hills are presented as an area of dry badlands, but they don't have to be hills in your campaign. A region of uninhabited moorland, a wide marsh or swamp, or even a dark and haunted forest would serve just as well as a setting for the cult outposts and the events described in the search for the missing delegation from Mirabar. Naturally, you should select a setting where old castles are likely to be reoccupied by sinister newcomers, and a huge old subterranean complex could underlie the mysterious ruins.

Afterword

For the Elemental Evil story, we tried to bring the elemental cults to life in a way that we'd never done before. We also wanted to make sure that each cult had its own identity and recurring motifs. Water cultists have scaly skin. Air cultists use elemental devices, such as *balloon packs* and *wingwear*, to fly. Fire cultists harness the forge to create all sorts of fiery implements and weird ironworks. Earth cultists meld their flesh with stone.

Because the cultists are insane, it's easy to imagine many crazy ideas. Water cultists riding giant walruses! Earth cultists with purple worm hatcheries! It's all good. This appendix contains a sampling of the concept art we commissioned for the Elemental Evil story, not all of which ended up in this adventure. Sometimes we went in directions that proved too wacky for our tastes, but hopefully you'll see something here that inspires you.

—Chris Perkins



Fire cultists are masters of the forge.

Water cultists shun armor, but they like swords lined with sharks' teeth and shields made from giant crab shells.

Aerisi Kalinoth's obsession with winged elves manifests as a set of illusory wings.

The mysterious Vizeran DeVir creates four mighty weapons imbued with elemental power.

Giant vultures are popular mounts among air cultists.

An air cultist uses a balloon pack to attack from above while staying out of melee range.



Air cultists can glide through the air using wingwear and prefer to attack at range with crossbows or javelins.



Air beacons are floating structures that double as aviaries for aerial mounts.


Earth cult robes consist of thin rock tiles, forming a fabric of flexible stone.
Earth cultists use a variety of burrowing mounts.
Earth beacons are stone citadels atop natural crags or pillars of rock. They usually appear off the beaten track near barren canyons, rocky hills, or mountains.
PARASITE FROM BELOW SOIL USED TO GAIN CLAIRVOYANT ABILITIES



A razerblast's armor is fused to the skin and can't be removed. The warrior's chest cavity has an open hole with a heart of living flame.

Fire cultists bind fire elementals to their weapons and war machines.

OBSIDIAN KNIFE



A fire cultist astride a giant fire lizard

Fire beacons typically have smoke or fire issuing from their tops, and structurally they resemble torches or lamps.



FERMENTED SEA CREATURE + SPELL MAKES DEADLY WATER GRENADE



CONCEPTS FOR GAR SHATTERKEEL'S ARTIFICIAL CLAW.



WATER CULTISTS SOMETIMES HAVE WEBBED DIGITS AND WEAR GOWNS MADE FROM KELP. THEY CULTIVATE BARNACLES ON THEIR SKIN AS A FURTHER ACT OF DEVOTION.



WATER CULTISTS TAME A VARIETY OF CREATURES TO SERVE AS MOUNTS, INCLUDING GIANT WALRUSES.



WATER BEACONS ARE USUALLY BUILT NEAR NATURAL SOURCES OF WATER AND OFTEN RESEMBLE GIANT FOUNTAINS, CONCH SHELLS, OR ANEMONES.





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> The Sword Coast is far from secure, and the adventure goes far beyond these pages.

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