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Dungeon Crawl Classics #5

Aerie of the Crow God

by Andrew Hind

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 7-8



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

In this adventure, Lady Elisabeth Pendour beseeches the heroes for their help. They must recover a key that was on her husband's body when he perished trying to clear an ancient tower. The tower was once a coastal fortress, but now it lies in ruins, occupied by black-feathered rook harpies who worship a foul carrion crow demon. Lord Pendour sought to free his subjects from fear by clearing the rampaging rooks from their nests. But he failed, and unless the heroes can recover his body and the key upon it, the crow god will come for his wife, too...

If you enjoy this adventure, look for the rest of the Dungeon Crawl Classics series!

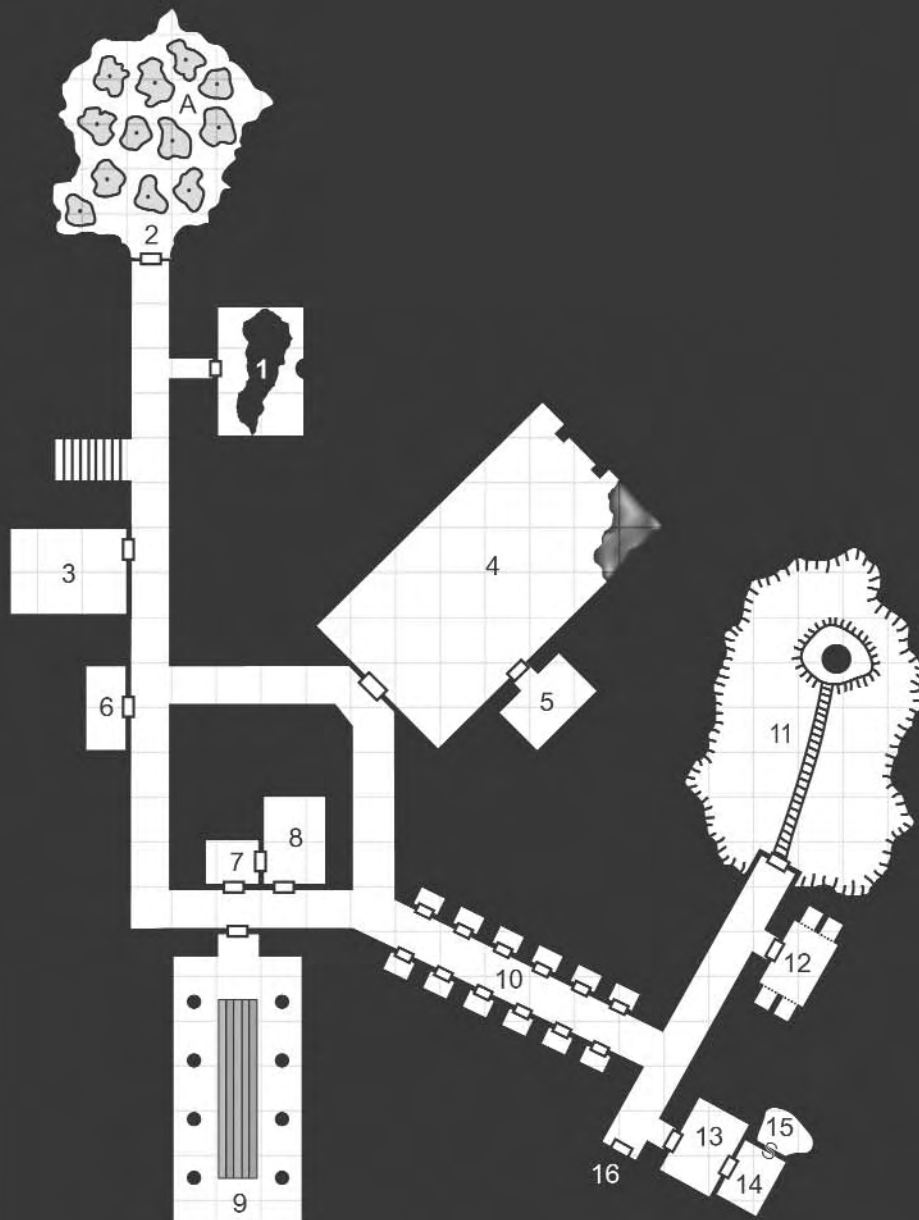


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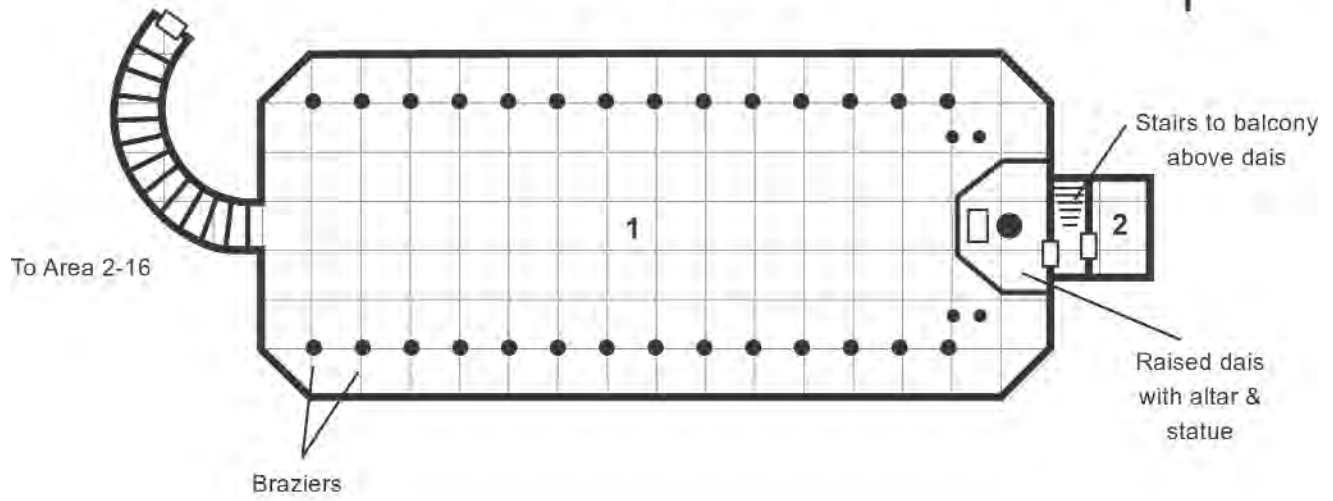
Temple Level 1



Temple Level 2



Temple Level 3



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Brad McDevitt's art in this book is dedicated to the memory of Richard E. Fox, 2/10/1955-2/12/2003, loving father and father-in-law

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Introduction

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

Aerie of the Crow God is designed for four to six players of 7th through 8th level. While the composition of the player character group is not dictated by the adventure, a bard's knowledge and the services of a good-aligned cleric may prove useful. But ultimately, as always, a healthy blend of classes is ideal. See the "Scaling Information" section for suggestions on ways to tailor the adventure to your particular party's strengths, interests, and style of play. The setting is appropriate for any saltwater coastal region and can easily be dropped into an existing campaign.

Adventure Summary

The PCs arrive at the coastal hamlet of Carnelloe. The old men huddled around a smoldering fire in the village tavern are gossiping about the assault on poor Lady Pendour, and the threat to kill her and her two young daughters. When the young mistress of the manor learns of the hardy adventurers who have arrived in town, she hires their services. Lady Pendour explains that she needs the key to her deceased husband's lockbox – and quickly – or she and her children will be killed. Unfortunately, Lord Pendour disappeared while questing to clear the ruined fortress of Gurnard's Head of the "harpies" that ravage the village sheep and defile the cemetery. It's to Gurnard's Head that the PCs must go if they are to find the key and save the beautiful lady.

The PCs soon learn, however, that Gurnard's Head is home to an evil far greater than mere harpies. Carved inside the very rock is a temple to Malotoch, the Carrion Crow Mistress, foul patron of scavengers and cannibals. The task ahead is far greater than imagined, and the danger more dire, but the desperate time limit remains. Can the PCs survive and return with the key in less than three days' time? Lady Pendour's life depends on it.

Adapting the Plot

This adventure does not specify who is threatening Lady Pendour. This has been intentionally left vague so that the GM can use a favorite villain from his own campaign. It is up to you to decide what is in the lockbox that is so important to the villain.

Depending upon the plot thread that drives the story and nature of the villain behind the threats to Lady Pendour, the lockbox can contain anything from information of great value (perhaps damning revelations that might be used to blackmail and extort) to arcane secrets, great wealth, or a powerful magic item.

If you don't have a pre-existing villain you want to use and require an antagonist, choose one of the following two options:

- Gar Ebal, the seneschal of Carnellow Manor (see page 34). In the event that Gar Ebal is the villain, the box contains some of Lord Pendour's wealth (gems to the sum of 10,000 gp) and his journal from years at court (in which Gar Ebal hopes to find information that will improve his lot).
- Tarrak, high cleric of Malotoch (see area 3-1, page 12). If Tarrak and the cult are behind the threats, the box is actually a magical item called the *Eye of Osirus*. Osirus, whose symbol is the eagle, is Malotoch's eternal enemy. The box, when opened, reveals the evil deity's machinations as per the spell greater scrying. Malotoch, for the purposes of the spell, is considered to be "familiar." The box has been passed down in Lord Pendour's family for generations. The family considers it simply a valuable family heirloom, unaware of its true power.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare for running the adventure, and for rapid accounting of experience points, we have included a quick reference table that shows all encounters at a glance. **Loc** is the encounter's location number keyed to the map, listed as room number; **Pg** is the module page number where the encounter can be found; **Type** indicates whether the encounter is a trap (T) or combat (C); **Encounter** describes the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that make up the encounter; and **EL** is the encounter level. *Italicized names* are classed NPCs.

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
A-1	7	C	Juvenile scrags (10)	6-10
A-2	7	C	Rooks (2)	6
A-3	8	C	Skeletons (5)	5
A-5	9	C	Rooks (3)	7
B-1	10	T	Trick stairs	1/2
B-3	11	T	Camouflaged pit trap	4
B-5	11	T	<i>Fire trap</i>	4
B-6	12	C	Rook	4

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
B-9	13	C, T	Ochre jelly Cave-in floor	6
B-11	13	C	Rooks (3-8)	7-9
1-1	15	C	Monstrous centipede	6
1-2	15	C	Zombies (9)	9
1-3	16	C	Ghoulish monstrous frog	3
1-5	17	C	Dire rats (20)	6
1-7	18	C	<i>Hornauer</i> , wererat Queen dire rat Dire rats (2)	7
1-9	20	C	Ghast	4
1-10	20	T	<i>Glyph of warding</i>	3
1-12	21	T	Door scythe trap	8
1-13	21	C	Plague tar elemental	5
2-1	23	C	<i>Xaxzar</i> , rook Clr3	8
2-2	24	C	<i>S'Kraa</i> , rook Exp2 Young anathaema eagles (2) Crow swarm	7
2-2A	25	C	Assassin vine	3
2-3	25	C	Acolytes (1-3)	2-5
2-4	26	C	<i>Xander</i> , duergar Exp5/Wiz5 Hell hounds (6)	9-11
2-5	27	T	<i>Fire trap</i>	5
2-8	27	C	Gibbering mouther	5
2-10	28	C	Acolytes (12)	9
2-11	29	T	Rope bridge trap	10
2-13	29	C	Acolytes	2
2-14	30	C	<i>Anselm</i> , ghastr Clr5	8
2-15	30	T	Electrical shock trap	3
2-16	31	T	Insanity mist trap	5
3-1	31	C	<i>Tarrak</i> , ghastr Clr5/Ftr3 Acolytes (2) Anathaema eagle	12

Scaling Information

Aerie of the Crow God is intended for four to six characters of levels 7th through 8th, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. The adventure is more suitable when scaled up than down, since lower-level parties are unlikely to possess the requisite abilities to defeat the varied creatures found herein. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

Weaker Parties (level 6 or lower, or three or fewer

PCs): Reduce the level of all named NPCs by two. Reduce all trap DCs by 2 (e.g., DC 18 becomes DC 16). Have the juvenile scraggs (area A-1) appear one at a time, and limit their total number to 4. Have only one rook appear in area A-2, only two appear in area A-5, and only two plus survivors appear in area B-11. Remove the skeletal crossbowmen's *screaming bolts* (area A-3). In area 1-2, remove the *eye of doom* from each of the nine zombies, or reduce their number to six. In area 1-5, reduce the total number of dire rats to 10. Make the plague tar elemental in area 1-13 weaker by eliminating his damage reduction ability, and reduce the DC of the foul air to 10 +1 per round. In area 2-4, reduce the number of hell hounds in the forge to 2. In area 2-10, reduce the total number of acolytes to 6. Finally, in area 3-1, make Tarrak a ghoul rather than a ghastr, reduce his cleric level by 2, and eliminate his plan to raise the acolytes as zombies. Also reduce the acolytes to 2nd level.

Stronger Parties (level 9 or higher, or seven or more PCs): Add two character levels to all named NPCs. Increase all trap DCs by 2. Have the juvenile scraggs appear all at once (area A-1). Double the number of rooks who appear in any given encounter, with the survivors reappearing in area B-11. Double the number of skeletal crossbowmen (area A-3). In area 1-2, increase the number of zombies and sarcophagi to 13. In area 1-5, increase all dire rats to 3 HD (CR 1). Increase the plague tar elemental to 15 HD (CR 9). In area 2-4, have Xander release all of the hell hounds at once, so that they attack the PCs from behind. Finally, on the second temple level, make all acolytes 4th level clerics.

Remember that changing the encounter levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure in the adventure. Consult the relevant pages in the DMG to determine the treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

Encounter Levels

The final encounter in this adventure is difficult. Most adventuring parties will have trouble with it, and may be forced to flee. That's okay; it creates an enduring, long-term villain who can add future plot hooks. On the other hand, if the characters complete the earlier stages of the adventure with success, they'll be getting tougher. Even though EL 12 looks awfully scary for an adventure for levels 7-8, keep in mind that unless the characters just topped 7th level prior to starting this adventure, they should advance two full levels before reaching Tarrak. This puts them in the 9-10th level range – still in for a difficult fight, but a fight that can be won.

Treasure

And speaking of difficult encounters... this adventure rewards characters quite well for defeating them. The base amount of treasure, not including the unique Star



Arms magic items (described below), is roughly 60,000 gp. That's roughly double what four 8th level characters should be getting in an adventure, according to the DMG guidelines. But this is a classic dungeon crawl, and a huge haul is part of the fun, right? Besides, a healthy chunk of the haul requires that the characters figure out the magic properties of an unusual metal (see area 1-13).

Nonetheless, it is a lot of treasure, especially when you add in the Star Arms. They're collectively worth 113,952 gp. If you're comfortable with rewarding your characters handsomely – particularly with intelligent magic items like the Star Arms, which can make the game pretty interesting – then go for it. If, on the other hand, you're hesitant about throwing around so much loot, here are some ideas for limiting the haul.

- Start by removing some of the magic items, such as the *javelin of lightning* and +1 crossbow bolts in area B-11, the +2 *shield of blinding* in area 1-1, and the *ring of jumping* in area 1-7. Removing these four items reduces the treasure value by 15,000 gp. Don't worry, the characters will still get plenty of magic, what with the Star Arms and the items carried by enemy NPCs.
- Remove the magical metal rods from area 1-13, or tie their magic to the location so they're useless if

removed from Gurnard's Head. This removes another 16,000 gp in treasure. You might not have to worry about this, though, as it's quite possible the characters won't even figure out they're valuable.

- Finally, consider limiting the power of the Star Arms. Their magic could also be tied to Gurnard's Head or the immediate area. Maybe they've been corrupted by Malotoch's influence such that they urge their users toward cannibalism, or something similarly distasteful.

Getting the Players Involved

The following hooks can be used to get the PCs to Carnelloe and ultimately involved in the plot:

- A merchant who buys wool from Carnelloe is concerned. For the past few months the quantity available in the village has dropped precipitously, cutting his supply levels. The locals claim harpies are slaughtering their sheep, but the merchant sees a conspiracy and believes that perhaps they're selling to another party or holding out to increase demand, and therefore profits. Either way, he wants the issue resolved and hires the PCs to do just that.
- If a cleric or paladin of a good-aligned deity is among the group, he could be assigned the task of putting a stop to the creatures defiling the graves in Carnelloe. If no such character exists, the overworked clerics may hire adventurers to resolve the matter.
- The PCs may simply be traveling along the road to Kerrowe and are forced to take shelter in Carnelloe from a storm that rolls in off the ocean. There they hear of Lady Pendour's plight and offer their services, or perhaps they are approached by the desperate mistress of the manor.

Character Death

If the party is knocked unconscious (or if a character is knocked below 0 hit points and the rest of the party flees), they are not left to die by the acolytes of Malotoch. Instead, the characters are stripped of their equipment and are thrown into the prison (area 2-12). Their equipment is split between Tarrak and Anselm; magical items of particular power or note are claimed by Tarrak and added to his hoard in area 3-2, while the rest is given to Anselm and kept in area 2-15. Characters awoken in the prison with one-half their total hit points and no equipment. They discover that their wounds have been bound by the acolytes, primarily so they will make suitable offerings when they are eventually sacrificed alive. Give the characters two days to escape before the cult comes en masse and sacrifices them.

Background Story

Gurnard's Head

The rock known today as Gurnard's Head has long been recognized as a strategic landmark. Its spire, which rises precipitously some 900 feet above the surrounding sea, affords a commanding view of the ocean and is nearly unassailable. Connected to the mainland by a low, narrow sand isthmus, at high tide the rock becomes an island and is all the more defensible because of it.

The tower that was built upon Gurnard's Head was not designed, as are so many such edifices, as a status symbol. It only ever had one purpose: to be a fortress. From a strategic position on a headland along the coast, the fort was built to protect the approaches to nearby harbors and serve as an impregnable bastion into which members of the royal family could retreat if necessary.

The rather modest tower one sees atop the pinnacle was only part of the rock's elaborate fortifications. A labyrinth of tunnels and strong points, designed to bleed an enemy white, were carved into the very rock. Many engineers believed Gurnard's Head to be among the most secure fortresses ever created.

The Siege of Sorrow

Such theories were soon put to the test. Conflict came to the nation, and she was caught unprepared. Enemy forces landed upon her soil and made rapid advances, isolating Gurnard's Head. When an enemy fleet approached the mighty fortress, the defenders were confident they could repulse any attack. The enemy fleet admiral concurred.

But he had no intention of beating the defenders when he could merely starve them out. The very suddenness of the war had resulted in the invaders achieving strategic surprise, and as a result the garrison of Gurnard's Head had not the time to bring in sufficient stores to endure a lengthy siege.

After months of blockade, the defenders began to fall victim to disease and starvation. Desperate, a handful – perhaps thirty – had turned to cannibalism for survival. Unwittingly, they had given themselves over to Malotoch, the carrion crow demon. Those that embraced her survived; those that did not were fallen upon by their ravenous comrades.

When at last the fortunes of war shifted and Gurnard's Head was relieved, the defense of the fort was hailed as a great victory and the defenders heroes. But to the relieving troops, it became all too apparent at what price the victory was won. The cannibalism was all too evident – and damning. Rather than risk the truth leaking

out and sapping morale, the siege survivors were ordered to remain on Gurnard's Head in garrison.

They were never relieved.

Darkness Falls

That suited them fine, for by now they had become mere pawns of their infernal mistress and they had a vital task to perform. They tunneled through to a natural cave system within the rock and built a temple to their evil deity. When at last the cultists died, they were embraced by the demon and, in reward for their services, were granted eternal life as ghouls and ghosts.

By then the tower had outlived its usefulness to the nation that built it and was allowed to go to ruin. A flock of rook harpies, black-feathered crow-like creatures that also worshiped the carrion crow demon, took over residence. All the more reason for the tower to be avoided, and so it was. As decades turned into centuries, the temple became a haven for followers of Malotoch, a place where foul plots could be hatched in safety and one could indulge in sick appetites without fear of oppression.

The nearby manor of Carnelloe had always lived under the pall of this evil. The locals had grown used to their graves being defiled and sheep slaughtered by marauding rooks. They were even unperturbed when their neighbors mysteriously disappeared. It was a way of life to these hardy folks, a destructive force of nature no different than the harsh storms that rolled in off the sea.

This morose attitude changed about a year ago, when Lord Pendour inherited the manor from his uncle. The idealistic young knight and his exuberant bride brought a renewed sense of hope to Carnelloe. Lord Pendour sought to free his subjects from fear and resolved to clear the rampaging rooks from their nests on Gurnard's Head's tower. Unfortunately, Lord Pendour was unaware of the true extent of the evil within the rocky edifice and was overcome by the dark forces within.

Lady Elisabeth Pendour has been a widow about six months now, and is only just learning to come to grips with the fact that she alone must ensure the welfare of not only herself and her two daughters, but the entire manor as well. The pain of her loss was receding when, two days ago, she was assaulted by a mysterious figure who demanded that she deliver the contents of her husband's lockbox by week's end or she and her children would share his fate. Lady Pendour had no idea as to the contents of the box but would have gladly given anything to ensure the safety of her girls. Unfortunately, the box is impregnable to thievery and magic, and the lone key to open it was on her husband's person.

In desperation, and with only three days before her deadline, Lady Pendour turns to the PCs to brave the dangers of Gurnard's Head and retrieve the key.

The Star Arms

When Gurnard's Head was at its peak of power, a mage and artificer named Icení served as one of its officers. Icení learned the location of a fallen meteorite. He arranged for the metal be recovered and brought to Gurnard's Head.

From this "star iron," Icení crafted five weapons, one for each of the officers of Gurnard's Head. Captain Tarrak received a great mace, which he named *Azurak*, which is Dwarven for "Titan's Fury." (One of Tarrak's ancestors had earned the title "Dwarf-friend" and the family favored Dwarf names ever since.) One sergeant received an off-hand dagger, which he named *Ta'kira'kerymor* ("Sword-breaker") to reflect to his half-elf heritage. The other sergeant gave his dagger an Orc name (*Kang*, "murder" or "mercy") in mockery, since he was a half-orc. The priest, Anselm, received *Qi* (Draconic, "focus") – a rod of adamantite intended to help a person hold fast to his faith as strongly as he holds fast to the rod. Icení kept *Cruel Justice* for himself; this sword was originally intended for the garrison captain, but Icení's instincts told him that its fate lay elsewhere.

When Gurnard's Head fell into apostasy, the Star Arms became scattered.

- Tarrak kept *Azurak*, even as he became a ghoul, and one wonders if the weapon's chaotic nature may have played an unwitting part in the captain's transformation (see area 3-1).
- The half-elf sergeant was killed resisting the garrison's conversion to Malotoch. *Ta'kira'kerymor* was passed from ghoul to ghoul, and eventually lost. It can now be found at the bottom of a foul cesspool (see area 1-3).
- The half-orc sergeant became a ghoul. When he was destroyed and raised as zombie, his weapon was lost in the crypt and subsequently recovered by the wererat scavenger Hornauer (see area 1-7).
- Anselm held on to *Qi* for some time, but eventually became disgusted by the object's innate goodness and persistent attempts to influence him. He ordered that it be destroyed, and it now lies within

the blazing forge of the cult's smithy (see area 2-4).

- Icení fled with *Cruel Justice*. He bequeathed this item on the lord of Carnelloe Manor, seeing in him a sense of justice and unfulfilled destiny. The sword was passed down from father to son, to the most recent Lord Pendour. This Lord Pendour felt the desire of *Cruel Justice* to be reunited with its brethren, and this was additional motivation to set out for Gurnard's Head. Lord Pendour lost his life, and the sword, fighting the rooks in the tower (see area A-5).

Full details on the Star Arms can be found on page 38. They provide a subplot to give the PCs additional motivation to explore Gurnard's Head and to prod them in the right direction when they falter. It is up to you how much of the legend of the Star Arms you wish them to discover, whether through conversations with locals or other means.

Player Beginning

The bright, dazzlingly clear seaside sky gave no hint of the ominous when you departed Carnelloe this morning. But just minutes ago, the weather suddenly changed for the worse. Jolting waves caused your stomachs to revolt, and the sound of rushing wind combined with the driving rain's powerful throbbing rhythm beats relentlessly into your heads.

You try to open your eyes against the tempest, but the onslaught is merciless and you can barely open them enough to make out the looming shape of Gurnard's Head towering before you.

Lurching helplessly with each wave-cresting plunge of the rowboat, you drive onward. The lives of good Lady Pendour and her daughters depend upon you retrieving the key to her missing husband's lock-box. And you've only three days to complete the task.

The cave entrance to the sea dock appears before you, promising safety – and danger. Somewhere within the rock and the mighty fortress atop is the missing key, the lair of the foul harpies bespoiling the region, and quite possibly the answer behind the riddle of the lost Lord Pendour.

Malotoch

Malotoch is a demonic entity favored by those who have succumbed to the lure of cannibalism. In addition to mortal followers, perhaps foremost among them harpies and rooks, many ghouls and ghosts have embraced her worship. The goddess revels in the aftermath of battles, feeding lustily on the corpses that litter the field of conflict. Crows are symbols of her power, and while Malotoch has a shapely human body, her legs and head resemble that of this carrion-feeding avian. She is therefore often referred to as the Crow Mistress. The domains she is associated with are Air, Chaos, Death, and Evil. Her favorite weapon is the short sword.

Gurnard's Head: The Way Up

The first part of the adventure is the difficult task of scaling Gurnard's Head. It is a sheer cliff face that is very slippery due to the driving rain and sea mist. Climbing the nearly 250 feet of rock to the tower is possible, but it's an extremely daunting task, requiring numerous Climb checks (DC 25) and combat against the rooks that are known to roost along the ascent. Anyone who observes Gurnard's Head will be impressed with the difficulty of this task and realize the only practical means of reaching the tower requires entering the rock through the sea cave at its base and ascending the stairs that lead up along the side of the cliff from there. There are no wandering monsters on this section of the adventure.

Areas of the Map

Area A-1 – Scrag Grotto (EL 6-10): The entrance of this cave varies in height from 14' at low tide (still far too low for most sailed vessels) to 4' at high tide (forcing the crew of a rowboat to duck). The water level varies from 3' to 13' in depth, based on the tides. At low tide, Medium characters can wade the 300 feet from shore without undue difficulty. Read or paraphrase the following text:

The persistent beating of the ocean has carved a grotto from the rock. The tunnel entrance is low, too low for sailed craft. In fact, at high tide the crew of a rowboat would have to duck their heads. But the tunnel quickly increases in height and eventually widens, leading to a grotto with a 30-foot-high ceiling. The layer of black shellfish clinging to the cavern walls and wharf pilings clearly demarcates the sea level at high tide. Frilly sea cucumbers and bright orange starfish cling to crevasses. Within the grotto, the water is calm and crystal clear. You can easily see the sandy bed below, upon which rests a sunken rowboat containing a pair of large chests.

The wharf is secured by thick pylons driven into the shallows and has two heights, to accommodate both high and low tide. While the timber is thick and the wharf solidly built, the boards are now rotting and mossy. Running or charging requires a Balance check (DC 12); failure means a fall and a Reflex save (DC 12) to avoid landing in the water. The noise of falling in the water attracts 1d3 juvenile scrag (see below).

Development: In the past couple of weeks, this grotto was the birthing site for a marine troll (scrag). Scrag do not nurture their offspring, but nevertheless females like to give birth along the coast where there is plentiful food and minimal predators (includ-

ing other scrag!). In this case, the infants are still nearby. They have strong senses of smell and hearing, enabling them to detect blood or movement within the water.

Tactics: If someone enters the water, 1d3 juvenile scrag appear every round (up to a maximum of 10). The juvenile scrag are ravenous and mindless, and attack in a pack like piranhas, biting and nipping until their prey either leaves the water or is consumed. The infant scrag will not leave the water to pursue prey.

Treasure: The chests in the sunken rowboat are both unlocked. The first contains 5,000 sp, the second a mix of 2,000 sp, 2,000 cp, and 500 gp. The cultists have had their eye on this treasure for a while, but none of them wants to risk getting eaten by a scrag to get to it. For their part, the scrag don't really have a need for treasure, only accumulating it incidentally by killing those who do collect treasure and dragging the corpses back to their lair.

For each hour spent in the water, a character can make a Spot check (DC 20). Success indicates the character notices a blue pearl (worth 200 gp) amidst the shellfish on the sandy bottom. An active Search check reduces the time to a check every 10 minutes. Up to 10 such pearls can be found. It takes 3 years before the pearls can be replenished and harvested again.

Juvenile Scrag (up to 10): CR 3; Medium Giant (aquatic); HD 2d8+8, hp 17; Init +3; Spd 20 ft, swim 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3, bite); SA Low-light vision; SQ Regeneration 5, Scent, Darkvision 90 ft; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +3.

Feats: Alertness.

Area A-2 – Stairs (EL 6):

A cold breeze laced with salt air and a slight trace of rot blows down the chasm from some point far above. The stairs themselves are carved from the rock but are showing signs of ill repair. Some are crumbling underfoot.

The stairs are 5 feet wide with no railing. They are carved out of the rock in a long spiral ascent that is brutal on the knees. While the stonework is occasionally loose around the edges, the stairs are safe for anyone moving at a normal pace. Running up the stairs requires a Balance check (DC 12) to avoid stumbling and falling off the edge. Combat on the stairs is precarious, causing anyone with less



than 5 ranks of Balance to be considered flat-footed and thus stripped of any Dexterity-related AC bonus. Each time a character is hit by an enemy, he must make another Balance check. A successful bull rush against any characters on the stairs is enough to shove them off, provided the bull rush comes from the right direction. A bull rush from above (such as from a flying rook) can push a character in any direction.

Depending on how far they have progressed up the stairs, a character that slips over the edge will plummet up to 400 feet (GM's discretion, or roll 2d20x10).

Development: At some point during the group's ascent, a pair of rooks swoops to the attack. Players may naturally mistake them for harpies, and you the GM shouldn't dispel that notion. It'll only make the subsequent encounters more tense if the players are surprised when their tried-and-true tactics for dealing with mundane harpies fail.

Tactics: After initiating combat with their frightful caw ability, the two rooks use rapid strikes from multiple directions to keep the party off balance while attempting to knock them off the stairs.

Despite their fearsome appearance, rooks are a rather cowardly lot, not used to fighting capable foes (they far prefer carrion and defenseless prey). As a result, if *either* is reduced to half its hit points, they will *both* flee up to the safety of the tower above, alerting the entire flock of the impending danger.

Rooks (2): CR 4; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8, hp 31; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +7/+2; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger) or +2 melee (1d3, claw); SA Disease, Frightful Caw; SQ -; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +6, Hide +8, Listen +7, Spot +9.

Feats: Dodge, Flyby Attack.

Area A-3 – Secret Guard Room (EL 5): As the PCs climb the stairs, they are set upon by five skeletal crossbowmen within a secret chamber located astride the stairs. They were once defenders guarding against those who would attack up the stairs, but now they are merely old undead left over from the siege. The arrow slits are expertly disguised and therefore the skeletons are almost impossible to see before the archers begin firing upon the party. They receive a +15 circumstance bonus to their Hide check. Additionally, they enjoy improved cover from their position (+8 to AC, +4 to Reflex saves). Player characters can access the skeletons' room through a secret door, which requires a Search check (DC 20) and at least one full-round action to locate. The secret door is barred from the inside and must be battered down.

Secret Door: 1 in. thick, Hardness 5; hp 10; Break (DC 20).

When the skeletons attack, read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly a horrible shrieking sound fills the air. You quake in fear as a barrage of arrows comes out of what appears to be a solid rock wall!

Tactics: The skeletons were all expert crossbowmen in life and maintain their Point Blank Shot and Rapid Shot feats. They have plenty of ammunition (at least 500 bolts) and are also armed with a total of five +2 *screaming bolts*.

The skeletons use their crossbows until their ammunition is exhausted or the PCs climb more than 120 feet past their guard position – their undead energy is bound to the room and they cannot leave, nor can they hit anything beyond 120 feet, where the stair curves out of sight.

On the first round and every other round thereafter, one of the crossbowmen fires a screaming bolt, forcing everyone within 20 feet of the path of the bolt to make a Will save (DC 14) or become shaken for 5 minutes. Those who are already shaken become frightened. Those already frightened become panicked.

Treasure: Aside from whatever +2 *screaming bolts* remain after the fight, characters searching the room find a total of 20 gp and 40 sp per skeleton, all of it scattered about the room in rotted belt pouches.

Skeletal Crossbowmen (5): CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12, hp 12; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1/+1 melee (1d3, claw); Full Atk +1/+1 melee (1d3, claw) or +3 ranged (1d10+2/19-20/x2, heavy crossbow); SA *screaming bolts*; SQ Undead, immune to cold damage, darkvision, DR 5/bludgeoning; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 14, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload.

Area A-4 – Guard Room: A wooden door set into the side of the stairway leads to another wooden door that is locked by a very simple but corroded mechanism.

Wooden Door: 1 in. thick, Hardness 5; hp 10; Break (DC 18); Open Lock (DC 20).

Once the door is open, read or paraphrase the following:

This room is cold and dark. An empty weapon rack and several rotting cots are the only furnishings. Two long-dead defenders dressed in heavy gray robes slump against the wall, the rotting skin on their faces pulled tight against jutting bone in expressions of pain and disbelief.

Clever players may realize the bodies couldn't possibly date back from the original siege, as they are not nearly decayed enough. You may allow characters to make Heal checks (DC 15) to come to the same conclusion. A character making a Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check (DC 15) recognizes that the robes do not bear the royal coat as the garrison would have. In truth, these bodies are cultists of Malotoch whom Lord Pendour met and slew during his expedition. Unwilling to see human bodies defiled by the cannibalistic rooks, he locked them in this room until such time that they could be properly buried. Obviously, Lord Pendour was unable to return to lay them to rest.

Area A-5 – Exit (EL 7): The stairs end in a locked iron door. It is plain and unadorned with symbols, though it is clear from the dents that at some point during the siege the attackers made at least one attempt to force it open. The doors are enchanted to resist magic; attempts to damage them with magic, or force them open using a *knock* spell, must overcome their spell resistance.

Iron Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 90; Break (DC 28); Open Lock (DC 20); SR 10.

When the door has opened, the PCs find themselves on a narrow ledge standing beneath the tower itself. Read or paraphrase the following:

Wind-whipped rain slashes across your body. You stand on a ledge about 30 feet wide and perhaps 80 feet across. Looming over you are the lofty battlements of the legendary Gurnard's Head Tower. It squats menacingly, almost taunting you to enter. And enter you must, for your goal lies within its grim walls. But now your attention turns to the ground in front of you, for embedded blade-first in the paving stones is a strange curved sword, the silk ribbon attached to its pommel snapping in the wind.

The sword is *Cruel Justice* (see page 39). It fell from the parapets when Lord Pendour was slain by rooks. The rooks left it here because they don't collect swords – they simply don't use them in combat and have little understanding of their worth, preferring to collect small, shiny objects like coins and gems. The few cultists who have stumbled upon the sword were overcome by its ego and forced to leave it where it lies.

The first time someone lays hold of the sword, they see a flashing image of this scene – a warrior overwhelmed by rooks on the parapets, him falling in death, his sword tumbling end over end to embed in the pavement below.

If the characters examine the tower carefully or try to see it from as many angles as possible, allow them a Spot check (DC 14) to notice the body swinging from the top. If the check is successful, read or paraphrase the following. (See area B-13 for full details on the corpse.)

You carefully examine the tower, noticing several holes in the wall and a particularly large hole near the roof. It looks as if the tower has seen several battles. But what keeps your attention most is the 30-foot-tall flagstaff that rises from the topmost portion of an observation post on the tower's roof. Swinging in the wind and rain from this flagstaff is a limp humanoid corpse, though the stormy weather and distance prevent you from making out any details.

The movement and sound of the characters' approach is largely masked by the raging storm (+3 circumstance bonus to Move Silently and Hide checks). If the rooks dwelling in the tower do detect them, three will take flight to attack.

Tactics: These rooks attack in a manner identical to those in area A-2, attempting to drive the intruders over the cliff face to their death. They retreat individually as each is reduced to half its original hit points.

Rooks (3): CR 4; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8, hp 31; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +7/+2; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger) or +2 melee (1d3, claw); SA Disease, Frightful Caw; SQ –; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +6, Hide +8, Listen +7, Spot +9.
Feats: Dodge, Flyby Attack.

Gurnard's Head: The Tower

The tower measures 20 feet wide and 25 feet tall at the eaves (35 feet to the steeply pitched, peaked roof). It appears to have four floors, not including the barrel-vaulted basement or ceiling. A stone stair leads up to the main entrance on the second floor.

Stone steps wind around the tower's perimeter up to the main door. Fighting on the stairs is difficult; those above get a +1 bonus for higher ground and everyone on the stairs is considered flat-footed unless they have 5 or more ranks in Balance.

The door into the tower is secured by a permanent *arcane lock* spell. The PCs must employ a *dispel magic* or *knock* spell, or brute force (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25). Alternatively, someone can climb the tower's outer wall, but it's a rough, slightly slippery surface (Climb DC 22).

Entering the tower through the main door places the characters into area B-6. There are no wandering monsters in this section of the adventure.

Areas of the Map

Area B-1 – Inner Stairs: Built into one wall, this spiral stair runs from basement to rooftop in a clockwise direction. It grants access from area 1-3 all the way up to area 1-11. The stairs provide the same fighting modifiers as the outside stair (described above).

There is a trip step – much steeper than its fellows – between the second and third floors. It is designed to trip the unwary. Characters advancing cautiously receive a check (Spot DC 18 or Search DC 12), but those running or fighting on the stairs simply stumble right into it (Reflex DC 16 or fall, tumbling 1d6x10 feet down the stairs (1d3 damage per 10 feet fallen) and landing prone). The fall could prove particularly hazardous to someone walking around with a drawn sword or notched arrow, at the GM's discretion. Additionally, the noise may alert the resident rooks; they get to make Listen checks (DC 15) to hear the noise.

Trick Stair Trap: CR 1/2; mechanical, location trigger; automatic reset; DC 16 Reflex save avoids; 1d6x10 ft. fall (1d3 per 10 feet); Search DC 12; Disable Device DC – (successful search avoids trap). Market Price: 50 gp.

Area B-2 – Dumbwaiter: The dumbwaiter is a 3' x 3' shaft in the tower wall that extends the entire height of the tower. Cupboard doors in rooms B-3, B-5, B-6, and the third floor hallway conceal the openings. The opening into B-11 isn't concealed. Winches next to each opening allow someone to raise or lower the dumbwaiter, which is nothing more than a reinforced wooden box suspended by a rope-and-pulley system. When the characters enter the tower, the dumbwaiter is located just below area B-6. The rooks in B-11 use the shaft as a garbage chute, and so the top of the box is choked with refuse and bones (mainly sheep but some humanoid).

The dumbwaiter goes up to area B-11 (in addition to the stairs), but unless the shaft is cleared from B-6, the dumbwaiter will get jammed before reaching the top, making it difficult to squeeze through the opening into B-11. Characters can travel through the dumbwaiter shaft. Small characters can actually sit in the dumbwaiter itself with some effort (Escape Artist, DC 10), but Medium characters are hard pressed to squeeze through the crack (Escape Artist, DC 20). Once someone is in the dumbwaiter, their allies can raise or lower them with the pulley. Using the dumbwaiter has the potential of alerting the rooks in area B-11 (Listen check, DC 12, for them to hear the squeaking of the pulleys). Optionally, a character could forego the dumbwaiter and climb up the shaft; the same Escape Artist check applies to getting into the shaft, then it's a DC 15 Climb check.

Treasure: If someone sifts through the bones on top of the dumbwaiter (Search, DC 15), he finds a wide platinum necklace with two sapphires and an empty third socket (2,500 gp).

Area B-3 – Stores (EL 4):

This room has a bare earthen floor. The air is cool and musty. Crates, barrels and sacks are stacked haphazardly, although something of a path winds through the center of the clutter. The opposite wall is smattered with fibrous blobs of decomposing, milk-colored matter that have capped fungus growing out of them.

A well has been dug into the bare earthen floor, but it is difficult to see because it blends in with the rest of the clutter (Spot DC 25). The well is marked by the circle on the map of this room. The stone lip is only six inches high and the hole is covered with an old tarp, the edges held down with stones. If a character steps onto the covered well and fails a Reflex save (DC 20), she falls 20 feet into cold water, pulling the tarp and stones with her. Adjacent characters must make Reflex saves as well (DC 15) to avoid being pulled in by the withdrawing tarp.

The water is 10 feet deep. Treading water normally requires a Swim check at DC 10. Being wrapped in the tarp and weighed down by stones makes this more difficult: add a –2 penalty to the check. The well's stone walls are slick with moss, making them difficult to climb (DC 25).

The white fungus on the opposite wall is harmless, as dwarves can immediately testify. However, it does serve to conceal a pair of cupboard doors and a winding wheel for the dumbwaiter (see area B-2). Noticing the shrouded doors requires a Spot check (DC 18) or Search check (DC 14).

Anyone who rummages through the clutter (firewood, furniture, a barrel of water, old clothes and weapons, block and tackle, rope, iron pot, lanterns, old gray blankets) finds a number of rat skeletons and a small sack with a red "X" painted on the side. The sack has been chewed open and violet powder spills onto the floor. An Alchemy check (DC 20) identifies this substance as violet fungus essence, a popular vermin-killing poison (DC 14, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Str and 1d4 Con). The bag contains four doses.

The door on the far wall requires a Search check (DC 10) to locate. It's hard to notice due to the clutter, but easy to find once someone makes an effort. It leads to area 1-1.

Camouflaged Pit Trap: CR 1/2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 30 ft. deep (10 feet of water cushions fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent squares); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC – (detection recognizes trap). Market Price: 50 gp.

Area B-4 – Smithy:

The smithy has obviously not been used or even visited for decades, if not longer. It is covered in a dense shroud of dust and webs, and while all the implements of the trade remain in neat array, they have clearly not been maintained and many appear useless. The forge is choked with ash but is cold and dark, while a pile of charcoal that was used for firing the forge stands off to one side. A splintered door hanging on bent hinges stands opposite you.

Treasure: A Search check (DC 12) turns up four enchanted *arrowheads of undead slaying*. Iceni suspected the changes that were overcoming the garrison and initially sought to arm loyal troops with magic weapons to overthrow the cult. The followers of Malotoch moved too quickly, however, and forced Iceni to flee (via a *teleport* spell) before his plans could be advanced. Building usable arrows from the arrowheads requires a Craft (bowmaking) or Craft (weaponsmithing) check (DC 12).

Area B-5 – Artificer's Quarters (EL 4): When those who had fallen to Malotoch learned that Iceni was courting members of the garrison to stand against them, they moved quickly to counter the threat. Iceni retreated to his personal chambers here and, just as the door was battered down, managed to affect an escape via a *teleport* spell. Give out players' handout A, then read or paraphrase the following:

A small, simple room with few remains, the room appears to have once been the personal chambers of the garrison smith. A rotting bed stands against one wall, beside which is a night stand lying on its side, its legs having rotted out. Black soot extends out from the nightstand in a five-foot arc. In the center of the room the cold, rough floor stones give way to a circle 5' in diameter composed of thousands of brightly colored tile pieces, creating a brilliant mosaic of intricate design. A cupboard door is set into the south wall.

This room belonged to Iceni, a powerful mage and artificer. He managed to secure a position for himself as garrison smith so that he might research the properties of the plague tar (see area 1-13), which he had located through scrying and extensive research. He kept his motivation and even his arcane abilities secret from his fellow soldiers. As there were no tunnels accessing the caves within Gurnard's Head at the time, Iceni used *teleport* spells to gain admittance. The mosaic circle was used to facilitate his teleporting, and was part of a *contingency* spell. Characters making a Spellcraft

check (DC 15) may recognize its purpose.

The drawer of the nightstand remains locked and trapped. The black soot is the remains of several cultists who attempted to access the drawer immediately after Icení fled.

Trapped Drawer: 1 in. thick, Hardness 5; hp 20, Break DC 15, Open Locks DC 20.

Treasure: The drawer contains a scroll with a single spell (*teleport*, CL 10), as well as another scroll (represented by players' handout B) detailing some of his notes regarding the siege and plague tar (area 1-13). Under the bed (Search DC 12) is a crystal wine decanter (worth 90 gp) containing three doses of a *potion of darkvision*.

Fire Trap: CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 7th-level wizard, 1d4+7 fire, DC 16 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29. Cost: 305 gp to hire NPC spellcaster.

Area B-6 – Main Hall (EL 4): The following description assumes the PCs have entered by the main door:

Ruined double bunks line the walls and floor, enough to have slept 50 people when they were still intact. To one side stands an open doorway that has been blocked by an overturned table and two wooden benches. To the other side is a huge open fireplace, cold at the moment. The floor is strewn with moor grass, heather, and herbs such as thyme and rosemary. A mound of this material has been gathered up in the fireplace, as if for kindling. Ahead, something white dangles from a dark opening in the wall.

The doorway blocked by furniture leads to the inner stairs (area B-1). The white substance (bones) and dark opening (dumbwaiter shaft) are described in area B-2 above.

This area is the lair of a single rook, an expecting mother. Due to the cruel and cannibalistic tendencies of her kind, she has holed up here to protect her new egg until it hatches. She hasn't left this room in weeks. Somewhat emaciated (note her lower hit points), she has subsisted on rats and the scraps tossed down the dumbwaiter.

Tactics: If the characters have been extremely stealthy, they catch the rook sleeping on its nest in the fireplace, its head under one wing. Otherwise, she has crawled up the chimney and hides in wait. If anyone disturbs the nest, she attacks with a fury until killed. Any combat alerts the rooks in area B-11.

Treasure: The nest contains a single egg (worth 500 gp to a collector if still alive; otherwise 50 gp).

Rook: CR 4; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8, hp 24; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +7/+2; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger) or +2 melee (1d3/x2, claw); SA Disease, Frightful Caw; SQ –; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +6, Hide +8, Listen +7, Spot +9.

Feats: Dodge, Flyby Attack.

Area B-7 – Chapel:

Dim light filters through boarded-up stained glass windows, illuminating an ancient chapel. Pews lie scattered about the floor in disarray, each defiled by angry clawing, and the entire room is coated with centuries of dust. Unlike the rest of the chamber, however, the altar remains untouched by both dust and defilement, as though impervious to the passage of time and the evil that now inhabits the fortress.

The altar can *cure light wounds* four times per day, but does so only for good-aligned characters who pray before it. The altar radiates a permanent *sanc-tuary* spell that protects all good characters within the room, and provides a +2 divine bonus to turning checks against undead.

Area B-8 – Priest's Chambers:

A small chamber that was once obviously the quarters of someone of importance, this room is now dusty and silent. There are few furnishings beyond a simple bed and a table upon which rests dusty old scale models of several well-known royal buildings. Statues depicting the god of war stand at attention on either side of the door, their eyes seeming to watch your every move.

This room was the chambers of Anselm, the priest attached to Gurnard's Head during the siege (see area 2-14). He was a noted architect, responsible for the design of several important buildings and himself the driving force behind several of the upgrades in the fortress' defenses. The models are exacting in their detail and, at the GM's discretion, may depict buildings – perhaps now in ruin – that the PCs may be tempted to infiltrate. This is a great way to introduce new adventures.

The statues of the god of war are in fact harmless.

Treasure: Beyond the scale models, which may be worth anywhere from 50 gp each as collectibles to 500 gp each for their value as floor plans (depending upon the nature of the building depicted), characters can find a silver necklace that is a holy sym-

bol of the god of war (worth 60 gp) lying forgotten in a corner (Search or Spot, DC 10). Anselm threw this once-revered item away in disgust after being corrupted by Malotoch. If a cleric uses this holy symbol in an attempt to turn Anselm, he gains a +2 divine bonus to the roll.

Area B-9 – Sergeants' Quarters (EL 6):

A rotting cot stands on either side of the room, each with a sturdy chest beside it. Cool, moist air blows in from a five-foot gap in the outer masonry. Rain has driven in through the hole and collected on the floor near the wall.

This was once the private quarters of the fortress' two sergeants. The wall was damaged during the siege and only hastily repaired in the aftermath as the garrison by then was more concerned with building Malotoch's temple than performing their duty as soldiers.

In light of the lack of care, it should not surprise anyone that the repaired stonework has not stood up well to the elements and has crumbled away in places.

The water on the floor is actually an ochre jelly. There is also a 1-in-6 chance that a rook will happen to fly by the hole and attack upon seeing the party.

Development: The floor around the hole in the wall is unstable. Any PC who makes a Spot check (DC 25), a Knowledge (architecture/engineering) check (DC 20), or a Profession (mining) check (DC 16) notices the crumbling masonry. Each round that someone walks on it, there is a chance (1 in 6 for Small creatures, or 2 in 6 for Medium) that the floor and wall collapse – see stats below.

Characters who cause enough damage to the floor from afar (hardness 8, 30 hp) can purposefully cause it to collapse as a means of defeating the ochre jelly.

Ochre Jelly: CR 5; Large Ooze; HD 6d10+36, hp 69; Init -5; Spd 10 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4; Base Atk +4; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (2d4+3/x2 plus 1d4 acid, slam); Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+3/x2 plus 1d4 acid, slam); SA –; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., Split (slashing/piercing weapons and electricity do no damage, instead causes it to split into two), Ooze; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref -3, Will -3; Str 15, Dex 1, Con 22, Int –, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Cave-in floor: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Atk +10 melee (4d6, stone blocks); Spot DC 25 or Knowledge (architecture and engineering) DC 20 or Profession (mining) DC 16;

Disable Device DC 20. Market Price: 5,400 gp.

Area B-10 – Captain's Chambers: An *arcane lock* similar to that in the main tower door seals this room. Without the key, opening it requires a *dispel magic* or *knock* spell, or brute force (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 28).

This room contains a bed, a nightstand with washing bowl and pitcher, a small table, two chairs, and an oak wardrobe. The windows are larger than in the main hall, but equipped with sturdy shutters.

Everything is tidy, if somewhat dusty. The room is otherwise unremarkable and contains nothing of value.

Area B-11 – Armory (EL 7-9):

The room is unseasonably warm, and smells foul. The high roof is lost in darkness and a crisscrossing of rafters. A portion of the far roof has collapsed, opening the chamber to the angry sky above. There seems to be a rail system attached to the underside of the central rafter, leading from the back of the tower to the front. A heavy iron cauldron hangs from the rail by chains over a bright fire. To one side is a pile of round rocks and a pile of timber. A weapon rack and three barrels stand nearby to the other side. The floor is covered in a slick white coating.

The weapon rack holds a rusted axe, 10 spears, one *javelin of lightning*, a small shield, a helmet and four heavy crossbows. One barrel contains twenty red-glazed ceramic orbs of alchemist's fire. Another barrel contains the equivalent of 50 flasks of oil. The last barrel is unsealed and contains 43 +1 crossbow bolts.

The rocks can be dropped from the tower roof as weapons. They cause 1d6 damage for every 10 feet fallen. The pile of timber is actually a dismantled ballista. A character with 1 or more ranks in Craft (weaponsmith) or Profession (engineer) can assemble it in 15 minutes.

This is the primary lair of the rooks. There are always three present, as well as any that have survived earlier encounters.

There are two staircases leading out of this room. The one by which the characters entered leads further upward to the lookout tower (area B-12). The other staircase leads to the signal tower (area B-13).

Tactics: If the rooks are aware of the intruders, they set a trap. A few rooks hop about near the opening in the roof, squawking angrily but apparently ready



to take wing if rushed. This is the bait. Meanwhile, four more rooks are perched on the rafters near the door. They attempt to grab the first character that enters the room and pull him up to the rafters, where they tear him limb from limb. Other rooks flap about in the rafters, throwing sharp bones and rocks (1d6 damage), sometimes dropping down behind a character to take advantage of a flank attack before retreating back into the rafters or out the roof opening. Other rooks may circle above the tower, using their frightful caw abilities if the PCs seem to be getting the better of the fight.

Treasure: Unless already dumped, the cauldron contains a bubbling broth of meat and bones. Dumping the foul brew gives the characters a chance to discover 12 gp, 40 sp, and 6 gems: three pink moss agates (10 gp each), a blood-red spinel (100 gp), a garnet (100 gp), and a sapphire that matches the necklace in area B-2 (1,000 gp).

Rooks (3 or more): CR 4; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8, hp 31; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +7/+2; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger) or +2

melee (1d3/x2, claw); SA Disease, Frightful Caw; SQ -; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +6, Hide +8, Listen +7, Spot +9.
Feats: Dodge, Flyby Attack.

Area B-12 – Look-out Tower:

The spiraling stair ends at a 5-foot-wide walkway that circles the shaft. A maelstrom of boiling clouds rolls above, while rain drives down upon you in blinding sheets.

The driving rain, wind, and slick footing conspire to make the tower a difficult place to fight, should the battle spill over from the armory. Characters fighting here must make a Balance check every round (DC 12) or slip and fall.

Area B-13 – Signal Tower:

Your climb brings you into the midst of a raging storm. The water hundreds of yards below mirrors the anger and darkness of the raging clouds above. A metal signal pole that resembles the mast of a sailing vessel (and leans somewhat precariously) reaches an additional 30 feet toward the heavens. Chained to the top of the pole is the body of a nobleman who can only be Lord Pendour.

Because of the rain and wind, ascending the pole is more difficult than it otherwise should be (Climb, DC 15). The view from the top encompasses many miles in all directions, including nearby Carnelloe. Desiccated and ravaged by both the elements and the savagery of his final moments, the corpse of Lord Pendour hangs as mute testimony to the unholy power invested in Gurnard's Head. Cutting him down and seeing to it that his body is returned to his wife earns the characters an additional 500 XP story reward.

Unfortunately, the PCs do not find the key to Lord Pendour's box on his corpse. But as his body is cut down, the player holding *Cruel Justice* has a sudden mental image of a large rat making off with an ornate key on a chain.

Temple Level One

This level consists mostly of natural caverns, with passages ranging from 6 to 8 feet in height depending on the width of the passage. Rooms vary even greater in height, though as a general rule they will be as high as they are wide. All cavern rooms, unless otherwise noted, have stalagmites and stalactites. Because of the rough nature of the walls, Climb checks are at DC 15.

Noise: Sound travels far throughout this level. All Listen checks have a +2 circumstance bonus, though the auditory effects are likely to confuse PCs in terms of determining direction and identifying the nature of the sound; the check must beat the DC by 5 to do so correctly.

Light: The caves are unlit, though there are simple torch sconces every 20 feet.

Wandering Monsters

Check once every 30 minutes on 1d20. No encounter, save the stirges, should be repeated:

Roll (1d20)	Encounter
1	Rooks (1d2)
2	Dire rats (1d4)
3	Zombies (1d6)
4-20	No encounter

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

Skills: Climb +11 (includes +8 racial bonus), Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11 (includes +8 racial bonus).

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Rooks (1d2): CR 4; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8, hp 31; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +7/+2; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger) or +2 melee (1d3, claw); SA Disease, Frightful Caw; SQ -; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +6, Hide +8, Listen +7, Spot +9.

Feats: Dodge, Flyby Attack.

Zombies (1d6): CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12+3, hp 16; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); SA -; SQ +2 turn resistance (see area 1-2), not limited to partial actions (see area 1-2), DR 5/slashing, Darkvision 60 ft.,

Undead Traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills: -

Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: Each zombie has a bloodstone gem in its left eye that acts as an *eye of doom* (able to cast *doom* at DC 10).

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Chasm (EL 6):

The floor drops out from under your feet, disappearing in an expanse of darkness below. The only way to proceed is via a rather unstable-looking stone bridge that spans the chasm.

The base of this chasm is 80 feet below and the ceiling is 20 feet above the ledge, which is actually quite sound. Hanging below the bridge is a Gargantuan monstrous centipede. It waits for creatures to begin crossing; the vibrations tell it that a meal has arrived. The cultists know to bring it meat in order to pass safely... but the characters don't!

Tactics: The creature has no interest in attacking an entire party of adventurers. Instead, it will charge into combat using its poison and Improved Bull Rush feat (unique to this specimen) to knock a hapless individual off the bridge, after which it will rapidly retire to feed on its meal below. Descending the chasm walls requires a Climb check (DC 15).

Treasure: If the characters descend to the chasm floor, they find many bones of the centipede's past victims. By sifting through the bones, dirt, and guano (Search DC 18, 15 minutes), they may also locate a total of 50 gp and a +2 *shield of blinding*.

Gargantuan Monstrous Centipede: CR 6; Gargantuan Vermin; HD 12d8+12, hp 66; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grp +27; Atk +11 melee (2d8+9 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (2d8+9 plus poison, bite); SA Poison (Fortitude save DC 17, damage 1d8 Dex); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Vermin; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 15, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +14, Hide -2, Spot +4.

Feats: Improved Bull Rush.

Area 1-2 – Crypt (EL 9):

This room is obviously man-made, as the walls are smooth and uniform. Twelve stone sarcophagi stand within the room, each one carved with an eerie effigy of the inhabitant.



The sarcophagi hold twelve of the original ghouls who have succumbed to various injuries over the years. True to Malotoch's promise that they would serve her for all eternity, nine have returned. These nine are now zombies that animate when either a force of good enters the room or their sarcophagi are disturbed. Because Malotoch's essence infuses the entire temple complex, these zombies enjoy +2 turn resistance and are not limited to making partial actions only.

Tactics: The zombies attack with a mindless fury, their limited consciousness secure in the knowledge that Malotoch will ensure they rise again. Unless the bodies are incinerated, or cleansed with holy water or a *consecrate* spell, they will indeed rise as zombies again the next evening.

Treasure: Each zombie has a bloodstone gem in its left eye that acts as an *eye of doom*. The properties of the bloodstone *eyes of doom* can only be activated if the gem is placed in an empty eye socket – not something a PC is likely to want to do. (One-eyed characters suffer a -2 penalty to Search and Spot checks, lose any Dexterity bonus to ranged attacks, and are considered blind when attacked from that side, suffering a -2 penalty to AC as well as losing any Dexterity bonus to AC.) However, given time a skilled craftsman may be able to craft a ring for the gems that grants the wearer the same abilities.

Otherwise, the stones are worth 50 gp each.

Zombies (9): CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12+3, hp 16; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); SA –; SQ +2 turn resistance, not limited to partial actions, DR 5/slashing, Darkvision 60 ft., Undead Traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills: –

Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: Each zombie has a bloodstone gem in its left eye that acts as an *eye of doom* (able to cast *doom* at DC 10).

Area 1-3 – Foul Pool (EL 3):

A single column rises from floor to ceiling in the center of this room, surrounded by a glassy pool of dark, brackish liquid apparently fed by water slowly dripping from the ceiling. Clinging to the shore, presumably sustained by guano from bats roosting above, are several 4-foot tall, rangy plants with a mop of pink flowers on top that almost seem to shrink from the light.

The water, which filters in through the rock after rainfall, has been contaminated by runoff from the rotting corpses in the cesspool above (see area 2-1). It is now thoroughly fouled and carries a nauseating stench of death and decay. All characters must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes, during which time they suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. The pool is so corrupted that anyone swimming or even wading in the pool is in danger of catching ghoul fever (Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex), while those drinking of it all but ensure themselves this unfortunate fate (Fortitude save DC 22). As a vile side effect, anyone who dies from the disease returns from the grave as a ghoul within 1d3 days.

The plants, which are a subterranean cultivar called dark valerian, shrink back from light and will actually shrivel and die if any light source brighter than a candle is brought within 10 feet. Dark valerian is harmless despite its unsettling aroma, but is valued by herbalists (see page 37 for more details).

Monster: Lurking in the pool, just beneath the water's surface, is a ghoulish monstrous frog. Having died from exposure to the contaminated water in the pool, it has risen from the dead and is hungrier than ever. The dark, brackish water provides the frog with a +4 circumstance bonus to Hide checks.

Tactics: The frog attacks by leaping at the nearest character, gaining a charge bonus. If it subdues a victim, it retreats with its prize into the depths of the water.

Treasure: Concealed at the bottom of the pool is *Ta'kira'kerymor*, one of the Star Arms (see page 39). The possessor of one of its brethren (such as Cruel Justice) senses this intuitively; the challenge then becomes recovering it from the muck without contracting a foul disease. *Ta'kira'kerymor* is 30 feet from shore under 10 feet of water, completely concealed from sight under a layer of thick layer of mud.

Ghoulish Monstrous Frog: CR 3; Medium Undead; HD 4d12, hp 28; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis) or +5 ranged (1d6+1 plus paralysis, tongue); SA Leap (jump 60' horizontally, 15' vertically. Serves as charge), Adhesive Tongue (20' range, grappling attack for automatic bite damage), Paralysis (Fortitude save DC 14 or paralyzed 1d6+2 minutes); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Undead, +2 turn resistance; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 16, Con -, Int 1, Wis 16, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +2, Move Silently +2, Spot +4, Swim +9 (includes +8 racial bonus).

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Area 1-4 – False Piercer Cave:

The chamber is large and irregular, with many darkened recesses along the walls. Large stalactites and stalagmites burst forth from the floor and ceiling and in the distance a faint dripping sound can be heard.

Have players make Spot checks (DC 5) to “notice” shadowy movement on the ceiling, and Listen checks (DC 5) to “realize” that the dripping seems to have stopped. The PCs will likely become paranoid and proceed with caution, but in truth there is nothing to fear from this room. The shadows dancing on the edges of their illumination are merely disturbed bats taking flight, while the cessation in the dripping is merely water dripping from the ceiling distorted by the caverns’ strange acoustics.

Area 1-5 – Rat Caves (EL 6): These passages are no more than 3 feet in height and in some cases are as little as 2 feet. Characters traversing them must make an Escape Artist check (DC 12 for Small characters, DC 20 for Medium characters) to enter the tunnels, at each bend in the tunnel, and again to enter each of the locations marked 6 on the map. The PCs can take 20 to eventually squeeze through,

but this takes 20 minutes and virtually guarantees that they have an encounter (see below).

While in the caves, Medium characters suffer –4 penalties to attack rolls. They lose any Dexterity bonus to AC and Initiative. Small characters suffer the same effects but the penalty is only –2.

There are a total of 20 dire rats living in nests scattered among these tunnels. Each minute the characters are in the caves there is a 40% chance (8 or less on 1d20) that they encounter 2d4 dire rats, either coming down the same tunnels the characters entered through, or emerging through other, smaller tunnels (inaccessible to characters) that honeycomb the area.

Tactics: The dire rats fight until half their number have fallen, at which point the survivors scatter. In their first meeting with the PCs, they attack with simple, mindless fury. However, in subsequent encounters (assuming some rats survived) they begin to demonstrate cunning tactics, such as attacking when characters have become stuck in narrow confines or in coordinated assaults from multiple tunnels. This is the result of Hornauer (see area 1-7) directing his followers from afar. After Hornauer is defeated, the rats revert to a more natural behavior.

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

Skills: Climb +11 (includes +8 racial bonus), Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11 (includes +8 racial bonus).

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Area 1-6 – Rat Nests: Nests consist primarily of scraps of old fabric, dry vegetation, and tufts of fur. Each is occupied by 1d4 dire rats at any given time, though GMs should keep a running tally and note that the entire dire rat population numbers 20.

These dire rats are included in the EL for area 1-5; the entire rat colony (excluding Hornauer) is an EL 6 encounter.

Treasure: The rats tend to collect shiny objects and other miscellany. For each nest, allow a Search roll to uncover something of interest. If the Search roll exceeds DC 12, roll on the first table that follows. If the Search roll exceeds DC 18, roll on the second table that follows.

Search Beats DC 12

1d10	Result
1-3	Coins (1d10 gp)
4-6	Non-enchanted bloodstone (50 gp)
7-9	Garrison commander's badge of office (worth 10 gp, 50 gp to collector)
10	<i>Candle of truth</i> , chewed but still salvageable (such candles would have been used by the garrison "political officer" to root out traitors among the ranks)

Search Beats DC 18

1d10	Result
1-3	Silver necklace (25 gp) and vial containing a <i>potion of cure light wounds</i>
4-6	Bloodstone <i>eye of doom</i> pilfered from a cultist's corpse
7-9	1d4 <i>flaming burst arrowheads</i> (Craft (bowmaking) or Craft (weapon-smithing) DC 10 to affix to arrow shaft)
10	Shredded scroll with <i>raise dead</i> (divine, CL 10); due to the parchment's poor condition, a mishap is guaranteed.

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

Skills: Climb +11 (includes +8 racial bonus), Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11 (includes +8 racial bonus).

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Area 1-7 – Hornauer's Nest (EL 7): Reaching this nest requires the PCs to pass through a tunnel that shrinks to less than two feet in diameter in some places. Small characters can crawl through with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 12), while Medium characters find it all but impossible to traverse (Escape Artist, DC 20; unable to attack while crawling).

The tunnel finally opens into a 10' square chamber, with a 5' ceiling. The flame of a single candle flickers, sending shadows dancing across the walls. Before you is a nest of sorts, made up of old garments and dried vegetation, suggesting inhabitation by rats, and yet you also see signs of human habitation – cutlery and cracked plates, rough woolen cloaks hanging neatly from a spike driven into the wall, and a pail of water that collects water seeping through the rock.

This chamber is the lair of a wererat named

Hornauer who presides over the rats – both dire and mundane – that infest Gurnard's Head. He shares the lair with his "queen," a female dire rat of unusual size and cunning, and her two guards.

Note that Hornauer has Lord Pendour's key in his nest. He pilfered the key from the cultists during one of his forays into the upper levels. They've yet to miss it. For his part, the wererat sees it as little more than a pretty trinket and is unaware of its true value or purpose.

Development: Hornauer is a pilfering packrat indigenous to the temple. He steals items from the cultists and scavenges food whenever he can, just as a pest would. Thus far, the priests are unaware of his presence and accept rats as an inevitable fact of life. Hornauer came to Gurnard's Head completely by accident, trapped in normal rat form amongst a crate of goods brought by cultists a few years back. He has since decided to stay, viewing the isolated rock as his own personal domain, free of interference from others of his kind.

At the GM's discretion, the PCs may encounter Hornauer outside his lair before this scene, though not in human or hybrid form, as he keeps his true nature a closely guarded secret. He'll skulk in the shadows and follow the PCs' progress, curious about them and studying their motives and abilities. He may also steal items he takes a fancy to, especially obviously magical items that provide spectacular results.

If captured, the self-styled "King of Rats" becomes a groveling, pathetic, and almost comical character. Hornauer knows a fair amount about the cult and the layout of the temples above, but he'll be loath to tell characters too much, even on pain of death, since information may be his one ace up the sleeve. Instead, he'll dole it out as required as a means of ensuring he remains alive while plotting an escape. Should he escape, the wererat will seek bitter revenge, perhaps even alerting the cultists to the composition, abilities, and location of the party.

Tactics: If Hornauer is preparing an ambush in his lair, a pair of normal dire rats will lurk on either side of the cave opening. If they achieve surprise, they gain an attack against the first PC to enter the chamber. His "queen" will fight savagely, like the cornered rat that she is.

Hornauer always calls forth a swarm of normal rats to distract and disorient opponents. Because of his high Climb skill, when in human or hybrid form he thinks three-dimensionally when fighting, clinging to walls to gain a height advantage or slinging stones from a safe vantage. He prefers ambushes and

lightning hit-and-fade tactics, but if cornered he fights ferociously. Hornauer never fights unless he has a ready escape route, which due to his ability to transform into a normal rat, need be nothing more elaborate than cracks in the stone measuring a few inches in diameter.

Treasure: His most prized possessions – a *ring of jumping* and a silver necklace (worth 10 gp) – are carefully placed in a battered cup when he's not wearing them. Hornauer cannot defy his nature, however, and much of his valuables can be found only after poking through the nest and other refuse. Three separate Search rolls (DC 12) are required to search the entire nest, each success turning up one of the following: 150 sp, two gems worth 20 gp each, and a small holy symbol worth 10 gp.

Hornauer possesses *Kang*, one of the Star Arms. He is willing to part with it in exchange for something of greater value to him, such as a bag of gems (of any value) or a flashy magic item.

Hornauer, Wererat Shifter 4th – Human Form: CR 6; Medium Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger); HD 4d8+16; hp 26; Init +4; Spd 30 ft; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4+2/19-20/x2, *Kang* (+1 *adamantine dirk*)); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4+2/19-20/x2, *Kang* (+1 *adamantine dirk*)), +5 melee (1d6+1, Bite), or +7 ranged (1d4+1/x2, sling); SA *Kang* ignores armor; Curse of Lycanthropy; SQ Alternate Form, Damage Reduction 15/Silver, Rat Empathy, Scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Dire Rat Form: CR 6; Small Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger); HD 4d8+16; hp 26; Init +7; Spd 40 ft, climb 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4+2/19-20/x2, *Kang* (+1 *adamantine dirk*)); +7 melee (1d6+1, Bite); SA Curse of Lycanthropy, Disease; SQ Low-light vision, Alternate Form, Damage Reduction 15/Silver, Rat Empathy, Scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 25, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Hybrid Form: CR 6; Small Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger); HD 4d8+16; hp 26; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4+2/19-20/x2, *Kang* (+1 *adamantine dirk*)); +7 melee (1d6+1, Bite); SA Curse of Lycanthropy, Disease; SQ Low-light vision, Alternate Form, Damage Reduction 15/Silver, Rat Empathy, Scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 25, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +12, Disguise +6, Control Shape +5, Handle Animal +7, Hide +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Search +8, Spot +8.

Feats: Alertness, Alternate Form (normal rat), Dodge, Filtheater (immune to disease, +2 save vs. poison), Improved Control Shape, Improved Lycanthropic Empathy (+6 bonus to communicate with rats), Iron Will, Multiattack, Swift Change (change forms as free action), Weapon Finesse.

Possessions: *Kang* (+1 *adamantine dirk*; see page 38) and Lord Pendour's key.

(Full details on the wererat shifter prestige class can be found in the Complete Guide to Wererats from Goodman Games.)

Queen Dire Rat: CR 1; Small Animal; HD 3d8+2, hp 19; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +1; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); Full Grp +5; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease (filth fever: Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 3, Wis 16, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +10 (includes +8 racial bonus), Hide +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +3, Spot +6, Swim +10 (includes +8 racial bonus).

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Dire Rat Guards (2): CR 1/2; Small Animal; HD 2d8+1, hp 10; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp -3; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease (filth fever: Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +10 (includes +8 racial bonus), Hide +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +3, Spot +6, Swim +10 (includes +8 racial bonus).

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Area 1-8 –Worked Cave:

Man has clearly carved this cave, as the walls are regular and far smoother than in the natural caves you've passed through. The cave is empty, save for rotting pallets, iron rings driven into the walls, and manacles attached to lengths of chain scattered across the floor. A wooden door stands in the south wall.

This chamber was the living quarters of slave laborers involved in creating the original shrine (area 1-9) that served the cult for many decades while the permanent temple facilities were painstakingly crafted above. The door isn't locked, but the wood has expanded due to the dampness of the caves and has therefore become stuck. It must be forced or broken down.

Stuck Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break (DC 15).

Area 1-9 – Old Shrine to Malotoch (EL 4):

A dais of black stone carved in the likeness of woman with a crow's head stands against the wall opposite the door. Your light seems unwilling to penetrate the gloom, almost shirking the darkness. An overwhelming stench of decay emanates from the darkness, from which emerges a humanoid figure with mottled skin and eyes burning like hot coals. It wears a shroud of chains.

The presence of Malotoch's likeness casts this room in permanent shadow. No light source will extend beyond 10 feet, and even within that distance a hazy gloom remains that provides concealment (a 20% miss chance). The dais provides ghouls and ghosts with +2 turn resistance, and good characters find their very vigor sapped by the negative energy spilling out from it. Each round that a good character remains in the room, he must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or suffer the temporary loss of 1d3 points of Constitution.

Monster: Players may assume that the chain-shrouded figure is a chain devil, and the GM should encourage this assumption. In fact, it's actually only a ghost. He was one of the early converts to Malotoch, but over time he began acting increasingly toward his own self-interest instead of the good of the cult. Knowing they couldn't kill him (only Malotoch can strip her "blessing" of eternal life) and yet unsure what else to do with him, the cultists decided to secure him in the old shrine. That was years ago. The ghost has recently torn his chains free from an iron ring driven into the wall, but hasn't been able to work himself completely free of the chains.

Tactics: Enraged, the ghost attacks anything that enters the shrine. Its arms are still wrapped in chains, so it attacks with these weapons more often than not, occasionally attempting a disarm or trip attack. The ghost cannot use its bite attack as his head is almost completely wrapped with chains. A canny combatant, it will retreat into the shadows and attack the PCs suddenly from another direction, hoping to isolate members and wear them down. Fueled by the negative energy of the shrine, it will not be lured from this room. Even if threatened with destruction it will not flee; it fears eternal Malotoch's displeasure in hell over the destruction of its corporeal form.

Experience: In addition to XP for defeating the ghost, destroying the shrine by cleansing it of its evil

with holy water and a *consecrate* spell will garner the PCs a 400 XP group story reward. Good-aligned clerics and paladins earn an additional 100 XP each for the act.

Ghost: CR 3; Medium Undead; HD 4d12+3, hp 29; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, chains) or +0/+0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, claws); SA Stench (10 foot range, Fort save DC 15 or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes), Paralysis (Fortitude save DC 15 or paralyzed 1d4+1 rounds); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Undead, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Balance +7, Escape Artist +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8.

Feats: Multiattack, Toughness.

Area 1-10 – Stairs (EL 3):

The entrance to the staircase leading to the temple proper is flanked by black monoliths worked with inlaid glyphs and holy symbols. On the stone floor between them is an obscure symbol written in blood.

A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 15) reveals the evil symbols to be that of Malotoch.

The blood glyph on the floor is actually a trap.

Trap: While most of the symbols are merely decorative, that painted on the floor is a *glyph of warding* triggered by any good character passing over it. There is a very narrow space between it and the wall, allowing Tiny characters to pass safely around the trap. Larger characters, by pressing against the wall, can avoid the glyph with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 15 for Small characters, DC 20 for Medium characters, and DC 30 for Large).

Glyph of Warding (Blast): CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding [blast]*, 5th-level cleric, 2d8 acid, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28. Cost: 350 gp to hire NPC spellcaster.

Area 1-11 – Disturbing Passageway:

Ahead is a small pile of stones, about two feet in height, propping up the limb-bone from some large beast. Fixed to the top is a grinning, misshapen humanoid skull. Its empty eye-sockets glare in your direction.

Give the players handout C. Rooks created this totem from the skull of one of their number, an unfortunate individual whose curiosity got the better

of her and fell prey to the trapped door beyond (area 1-12). It is intended as a dire warning to the remainder of the flock, and while the PCs may feel apprehensive it is actually quite harmless. Rooks, on the other hand, must make a Willpower save (DC 20) to pass this point; few are willing to do so except under the most extenuating of circumstances. A character who makes a Decipher Script roll (DC 25) may recognize its purpose and intent.

Area 1-12 – Trapped Door (EL 8):

The passage ends with an imposing iron door. A headless rook lies sprawled on the floor, caked in its own dried blood.

The body is that of a rook who – while showing an unhealthy level of inquisitiveness – attempted to open the door and was struck down by the scything trap protecting it.

Trap: Anyone touching the door triggers a deadly arcane trap. A magic blade appears at shoulder height and cleaves through the air with a crackle of infernal fire and acrid smoke. Anyone who witnesses the decapitation of an ally must make a Will save (DC 23) or is shaken for 2d6 hours.

Door Scythe Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +20 melee (2d4+8/x4, scythe); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 18. Market Price: 17,200 gp.

Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 80; Break (DC 28); Open Lock (DC 30).

Area 1-13 – Primordial Ooze (EL 5):

The narrow tunnel in which you stand opens into a massive cavern. The floor drops precipitously a full 60 feet to an uneven floor below. A lake of black tar, some 100 feet in diameter, fills most of the cavern floor, its surface occasionally roiling. The air in this chamber is hot, arid, and unpleasant. Something that resembles ball lightning flickers across the ceiling, illuminating the entire area with an eerie radiance.

Give out players handout D. The thin atmosphere is heavy with contaminants. While the air is relatively safe (if unpleasant) at the height of the tunnel, those who descend 20 feet encounter the heavy noxious fumes that cling to the cavern floor. Breathing this air provokes a Fortitude save each round (DC 15, +1 per previous check); failure results in spending the round choking and coughing. Each round of choking causes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

The lake of tar is 20 feet deep and has fissures that lead deep into the crust of the earth. The black tar

has magical properties. Casting *detect magic* results in an obvious aura, but the character also comes down with a sudden and consuming fever (character is fatigued for 1d6 minutes and must make Concentration checks at DC 12 to successfully cast spells) unless a Fortitude save (DC 20) is made. Anyone touching the tar takes 2d6 points of heat damage and must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or immediately contract the slimy doom disease (1d4 Con damage) without passing through an incubation period.

Directly below the PCs' vantage point (and thus out of their initial view) is a small tunnel five feet below the overhang that burrows into the cliff face. It's easy to locate once they examine the area (Search DC 12). This opens into a small chamber, taller than it is wide.

Once the players reach this area, give out players handout E. In this chamber stands a tower carved from pure Alexandrite. The tower is open at the top, has a small 1-1/2 foot tall door at the base, and is connected to a bellows hanging from the ceiling by copper tubing. The bellows (enchanted with *permanent gust of wind* as cast by an 8th-level sorcerer) is suspended from the ceiling by a metal frame and operated by a chain that hangs from it. A long furrow in the sand runs from the trapdoor in the tower, feeding several smaller furrows on each side of it. These smaller furrows are filled with a black metal.

Copper Tubes: Hardness 7; hp 12; Break DC 16

Characters making a successful Craft (metalworking) check (DC 10) will recognize that this machine is similar in appearance and principle to that of an iron foundry. In fact, this facility was used by a mysterious ancient people to extract a rare ore from the tar pits for crafting into weapons and other items.

Monster: Lurking within the pool of tar is a creature of pure hatred and bile given form, a plague tar elemental. This monstrosity appears as a vaguely humanoid mass of bubbling tar, with arm-like appendages on each side but lacking a discernible head. It stands 8' tall but moves with a deceptive speed and agility.

Tactics: The creature attempts to attack with surprise, either when PCs approach the tar pit or when exploring the smelting cave (and thereby preventing escape). It wades into melee with a ruthless abandon, only "throwing" its limb if spellcasters or archers stay out of range of its flailing fists. If it drops below half its hit points, the plague tar elemental will seek the safety of the primordial ooze, preferably with a victim in tow...

Treasure: There are four rods of black iron in the furrows, each of which can be crafted into a single melee weapon of medium size or a buckler. (At the GM's discretion, any weapon or armor might be crafted; for example, a small shield might require two rods, while a dagger might need only one half.) The process of smelting the tar separates much of the contagion from the finished metal, meaning it can be safely handled and crafted by a smith. Black iron is inherently magical so that any weapon or armor is automatically enchanted at +1 and imbued with the *spell storing* ability. In addition, any critical hit scored has the potential of infecting the victim with the disease slimy doom. Each rod is worth 4,000 gp if sold to someone who understands their properties. Understanding the true value of this metal requires a Craft (metalworking) or Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 30).

Plague Tar Elemental: CR 5; Medium Elemental (Fire); HD 8d8+24, hp 60; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6/+1; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (2d6+6 plus disease, slam); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+6 plus disease, slam) or +9/+4 ranged (1d6+5 plus disease, disengaged limb, re-grows in 3 rounds); SA Disease (Slimy Doom: DC 14; 1d4 Con; no incubation period); SQ Elemental, Damage Reduction 10/+1; Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Languages Spoken: Terran, Ignan.

Skills: Listen +11, Spot +11.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam).

Temple Level Two

This level is composed of a mixture of natural caves (with the same properties as those on level 1) and man-made sections. The man-made rooms and passages are smoothly carved and average 10 feet in height, rising to 15' or 20' in the larger chambers. Climbing these walls is DC 18.

Doors: All doors are wood, reinforced with iron. All have locks, and doors tend to swing shut after 1d4 rounds.

Iron-Reinforced Wooden Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break (DC 23); Open Lock (DC 25).

Noise: Because of the many angled corridors and preponderance of doors, noise doesn't travel here as well as in the level below. As such, there are no modifiers to Listen checks.

Light: Sconces are located every 20 feet, and all have torches in them. However, these are generally unlit as much of the level is unused on a regular basis. Inhabited sections are an exception.

Wandering Monsters

Check every 30 minutes, or any time the PCs make substantial noise, on the following table:

Roll (1d20)	Result
1	Acolytes of Malotoch (1d2)
2	Ghoul guards (1d3); 50% chance of led by a ghast
3	3rd level rook priest (see area 2-1 for stats)
4	Dire rats (1d4); 25% chance of being led by Hornauer (from area 1-7) if he still lives
5-20	No encounter

Acolytes of Malotoch, Male Human, Cleric 2 (1d2): CR 2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8+4, hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); SA spellcasting, Smite (see Destruction clerical domain for details); SQ control undead, +1 caster level with evil spells; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +6; AL CE; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +4, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Listen +2, Search +2, Spellcraft +1, Spot +2.

Feats: Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge: Religion).

Cleric Spells (4/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0-level – *cure minor wounds* x3, *resistance*; 1st-level – *bane*, *cause fear*, *protection from good**. * Domain spell.

Possessions: Heavy mace, chain mail, small steel shield, vial of unholy water, holy symbol of Malotoch.

Ghoul Guards, Male Ghouls (1d3): CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12, hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite) and +0/+0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7.

Feats: Multiattack

Ghast Leader, Female Ghast: CR 3; Medium Undead; HD 4d12+3, hp 29; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3

plus paralysis, bite) and +3/+3 melee (1d4+1 plus paralysis, claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8.

Feats: Multiattack, Toughness

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Cesspool and Hatchery (EL 8):

A blast of humidity hits you, the stale air and nauseating stench conspiring to choke the breath from your lungs. A crevasse filled with bloated, rotting body parts – many of them clearly humanoid – lies before you, the light from a pair of braziers casting an infernal glow across an already hellish scene. Beyond the crevasse, a raised alcove contains a man-sized statue of a crow-headed female.

Once the characters enter this room, give them players handout F. Characters within 10' of the door when it is opened (as well as those who enter the chamber) are subjected to the foul stench per a *stinking cloud* spell (DC 13). The entire room is under the effects of *unhallow* and *bless* (for followers of Malotoch).

Those looking closer at the pit (Spot DC 15) will notice five large eggs, each the size of a melon and covered in viscera. These are giant eagle eggs (Knowledge (nature), DC 20) that are being corrupted by the followers of Malotoch to create their foul servitors, the anathaema eagles (see page 35).

The statue has the likeness of Malotoch (Knowledge (religion), DC 20), and is the source of the *unhallow* and *bless* spells. The floor of the cave is slick with moisture from water that leaches through the walls. Attempts to run or charge require a Balance check (DC 12) each round to avoid slipping and falling. Anyone falling within 5' of the cre-

vasse lip should make a Reflex save (DC 12) to avoid falling in.

Should someone fall into the cesspool, or attempt to wade across it, he finds himself groped and mauled by countless arms, legs, heads and less-distiguishable body parts that seem to have a malicious life of their own. Treat this as an opposed grapple – the mass of viscera has a +8 bonus due to being Huge, and an effective Strength of 14, for a total grapple of +10. Each round that the player fails the opposed grapple, he takes 1d2+2 nonlethal damage, suffers the consequences of being grappled (e.g., losing any Dexterity bonus to AC) and sinks further into the morass. In the first round, he sinks to his waist. In the second round, he is up to his chest. On the third round, he is completely submerged and must hold his breath per the normal rules, or begin to suffocate.

Monster: Something as valuable as the anathaema eagle hatchery wouldn't be left unguarded. Xaxzar, a rook cleric, perches behind the statue of her deity, watching over her charges.

Tactics: Xaxzar remains hiding while she uses *summon monster I* to summon a fiendish crow (treat as a fiendish hawk) to serve her. She'll follow this up with *bane* and then her frightful caw ability (which also serves to alert the temple to the presence of intruders). Only then, hopefully after the odds have been tipped in her favor, will she reveal herself and attack. A cunning warrior, she'll use her ability to fly to maximum advantage. For instance, she may swoop in to engage the party for a round or so and then fly back over the cesspool, hoping to lure the characters into it. She will also attempt to fly over fighters and clerics to attack poorly-armored rogues and wizards in the rear. She will not abandon the eggs, regardless of the odds against her.

Treasure: The eye sockets of the statue of contain a pair of exquisitely cut bloodstones (worth 75 gp each). However, they are also cursed. Anyone

Alerting the Temple

If an alarm is raised, it will only be answered by those rooms immediately adjacent (assuming they succeed in an appropriate Listen check). Beyond this range, a hue and cry will likely be mistaken for screams of pain and terror from captives or the excited cries of feeding cultists, both of which are all too common within the temple.

The one sound that will always summon a vigorous response is that of a rook's frightful caw. Such a cry immediately suggests danger. Alerted cultists are harder to Bluff and are far more willing to scrutinize suspicious individuals (+2 circumstance bonus to Sense Motive checks).

If the intruders retreat into the lower caves or beyond, the cultists will respond by posting guards at the entrances to level one and barricading the positions.

removing them must make a Fortitude save (DC 30) or suffer rigor mortis-like symptoms – a permanent loss of 1d4 Dexterity points, and joints so stiff that he can only make partial actions each round. This can be cured with a *remove curse* spell or similar effect.

Xaxzar, 3rd level Cleric of Malotoch, Female

Rook Clr3: CR 7; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 10d8, hp 47; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +4 melee (1d3, claw); SA Disease, Frightful Caw, Death touch (see Death clerical domain for further details); SQ –; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +6, Hide +8, Knowledge (Religion) +3, Listen +7, Spot +9.

Feats: Dodge, Silent Spell, Flyby Attack

Cleric Spells (4/2; save DC 10 + spell level): 0 – *cure minor wounds* x2, *guidance*, *resistance*; 1st – *bane*, *cause fear**, *summon monster I*. * Domain spell.

Possessions: As with all clergy of Malotoch, she wears a bloodstone *eye of doom* in her left eye-socket.

Area 2-2 – Aviary (EL 7):

The almost maddening cacophony of caws and cries, the sound of a great flock of agitated crows, was audible well before you entered this room. Inside the massive rough-hewn cave is a thickly forested environment with a layered canopy of foliage – from grass and ground hugging plants, to shrubs, and ultimately to tall trees that reach up to the domed ceiling some 50' above. At first the ceiling appears to be translucent, as sunlight streams through to the forest below, but it soon becomes apparent that the ceiling is actually made of stone that has been enchanted to glow with the warm light of the sun.

Alive with birds, insects, and small mammals, the forest canopy is essentially a complete ecosystem. The foliage provides concealment and is considered difficult terrain, doubling the movement cost.

This is the aviary, where crows and the prized anathaema eagles are raised and trained, the latter to serve as mounts for clerics of Malotoch. Once the PCs enter the room, they disturb the dozens (if not hundreds) of crows roosting nearby, who take flight in fear. This alerts S'Kraa, regardless of how stealthy the PCs are.

Monster: S'Kraa is the rook bird-handler, responsible for the breeding, rearing, and training of the cult's avian pets. She takes her job very seriously,

and lives exclusively among her “precious” birds, which include a pair of immature anathaema eagles and over 100 crows. Since she almost never leaves the aviary, her absence would not be felt for weeks by the remainder of the cult.

Tactics: S'Kraa initially stands back and orders her charges to attack interlopers. However, if any of her “precious” birds are destroyed (i.e., one or both of the anathaema eagles killed, or the crow flock is dispersed), she is overcome with remorse and anger and throws herself into personal combat. Unlike the PCs, she can operate without difficulty amongst the swarm. S'Kraa is not as fanatical in her devotion to Malotoch as are many of her brethren, and will flee to the safety of the forest canopy if reduced to fewer than half her hit points.

Treasure: S'Kraa's nest among the tree branches is all but invisible from the ground (Search, DC 25). Those who climb the trees have a much easier time of finding it (Search, DC 15). By digging through the refuse and nesting material, a searcher may uncover a silver necklace worth 25 gp and a *ring of protection* +1, both pretty baubles that attracted S'Kraa's fancy.

S'Kraa, female rook Exp2: CR 5; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8+2d6, hp 32; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +8/+3; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4/19–20/x2, dagger) or +3/+3 melee (1d3, claws); SA Disease, Frightful Caw; SQ –; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +6, Handle Animal +8, Hide +8, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +7, Profession (falconer) +6, Spot +9.

Feats: Dodge, Flyby Attack, Skill Focus (Handle Animal)

Possessions: Leather gauntlet, dagger

Immature Anathaema Eagles (2): CR 1; Medium Magical Beast; HD 2d10+2, hp 10; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6, claws); Full Atk +3/+3 melee (1d6, claws) or -2 melee (1d8, bite); SA Disease (Filth Fever, DC 12 Fort save); SQ Evasion (on successful Ref saves for half damage, no damage); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Knowledge (undead) +1, Listen +3, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6, Survival +4.

Feats: Alertness

Crow Swarm: CR 2; Tiny Animal (Swarm); HD 3d8, hp 13; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee

(1d6, claws); Full Atk +0 melee (1d6, claws); SA distraction (spellcasting requires a Concentration check, DC 15); SQ half damage from slashing and piercing, low-light vision, swarm traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Area 2-2A – Dangerous Plants (EL 3): The forest is full of plants of all types, including vines that climb tree trunks and droop from the overhanging branches. Most are mundane; one is not. An assassin vine dangles over the shore of a small pond, waiting for prey to approach for a drink. The crows provide a steady source of food so it is quite large and healthy (note the high hit points), but as a result of the plentiful prey, the vine has become a bit lazy and its hunting skills neglected (lower Dex and initiative).

Tactics: The vine waits for a creature to approach before grabbing at them. However, it has been conditioned to know a meal will be provided eventually and so it doesn't attack as viciously as it might in the wild. If its prey puts up too much struggle (e.g., by inflicting more than 10 hit points of damage), the vine will give up and release it.

Assassin Vine: CR 3; Large Plant; HD 4d8+12, hp 30; Init +0; Spd 5 ft.; AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +12; Atk +7 melee (1d6+7, slam); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+7, slam); SA constrict 1d6+7, entangle (free action, animate plants within 30' feet as *entangle* cast by 4th level druid), improved grab (grapple bonus +12), constrict (1d6+7); SQ blindsight 30 ft., camouflage (Spot DC 20 to notice); immunity to electricity, low-light vision, plant traits, resistance to cold 10 and fire 10; SV Fort +7, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 8, Con 16; Int –, Wis 13, Cha 9.

Area 2-3 – Hall of Solace (EL 2-5):

This 30' by 20' room is devoid of furnishing save for a single smoldering brazier. The walls are decorated with unsettling frescoes depicting images of cannibalism. A 4' tall statue depicting the crow-headed woman so commonly seen throughout this complex stands against the wall. She seems to leer at you, almost as if she knows you are unwelcome pilgrims in her unholy land.

This room is designed to provide the clerics with solitude in which to contemplate the hellish path before them. To facilitate this privacy, the door is padded inside and muffles sounds; Listen checks are made at a -2 penalty. As horrid as the frescoes may appear to the PCs, followers of Malotoch find



them inspiring and feel that it speeds them on the path to "enlightenment."

Monster: There is a chance (1-6 on 1d20) that the PCs encounter 1d3 acolytes here.

Tactics: Acolytes willingly sacrifice their lives in the defense of their deity's sacred ground. They use spells to fortify themselves and weaken their enemies before wading into melee combat.

Acolyte, male human, Clr2: CR 2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8+4, hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); SA spellcasting, Smite (as Destruction clerical domain); SQ control undead, +1 caster level with evil spells; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +6; AL CE; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +4, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Listen +2, Search +2, Spellcraft +1, Spot +2.

Feats: Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge: Religion).

Cleric Spells (4/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0-level – *cure minor wounds* x3, *resistance*; 1st-level – *bane*, *cause fear*, *protection from good**. * Domain spell.

Possessions: Heavy mace, chain mail, small steel shield, vial of unholy water, holy symbol of Malotoch.

Area 2-4 – Hell Forge (EL 9-11):

The doors lead into a barrel-vaulted foundry about 40 feet across and 80 feet long. A stack of iron rods stands near a roaring forge, and a heavy iron door leans against a wall, ready to be installed in a portal somewhere. Lumps of coal tumble from a darkened alcove near the rear of the chamber. A lean, gray dwarf with blackened fists and a heavy leather apron works furiously at beating a manacle into shape on a massive anvil.

Because he is concentrating so heavily on his work and creating such a din, the duergar receives a -4 penalty to Spot and Listen attempts until the PCs make their presence known (e.g., by making extremely loud noises or attacking).

In addition to the aforementioned items, the room contains a miscellany of smithing tools and partially created items, ranging from weapons to door hinges to manacles. Beside the fire is a pair of fire pokers, one with arcane symbols etched into its handle. A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura around this poker, as well as on the fire within the forge. Anyone looking into the flames may (Search DC 20) imagine they see fleeting images of snarling canine visages. They also notice a metal rod, nestled among the coals; this is Qi, one of the Star Arms.

Monster: The smith is a duergar named Xander, a laconic individual who has little interest in Malotoch's edicts or in the relative merits of good or evil. He merely cares about his work, and has the opportunity to craft some truly memorable items while in the employ of the cult, including his personal favorite, the magically warded door in area 1-12.

Each round that someone uses the magical poker to prod the coals in the furnace, a hell hound leaps forth (a total of six are magically trapped within the forge).

Tactics: Xander begins combat by casting *true strike* on his axe-hammer, using his *enlarge person* spell-like ability, and charging the nearest opponent, making the most of his chosen weapon's impressive abilities. He'll then begin to cast defensive spells upon himself as he is able, beginning with *blur* and *bull's strength*. Xander far prefers to handle threats by himself, but if the battle turns against him he'll attempt to summon hellhounds from the forge; he will use *mage hand* to manipulate the poker if he can't actually maneuver to the forge.

Hellhounds begin combat by using their breath weapon against the greatest concentration of enemies. If the PCs flee, the hellhounds track them by scent, their baying alerting other temple denizens to their location. If reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, Xander becomes *invisible* and attempts to sneak away (alerting the cultists and their leaders if possible, but he won't risk his life to do so).

Treasure: Nestled among the coals in the forge is Qi, one of the Star Arms (see page 39). Xander assumed it would melt amid the infernal heat, and has therefore forgotten about it. Anyone possessing another one of the Star Arms can hone in on its location; the trick becomes retrieving Qi from its fiery grave, without burning oneself and without stirring up the hell hounds...

Xander, Male Duergar Exp5/Wiz5: CR 9; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6+5d4+10; hp 45; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+1/19-20/x3, +1 *duergar axe-hammer*); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+1/19-20/x3, +1 *duergar axe-hammer*) or +6 ranged (1d4 plus poison, DC 18, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str, hand crossbow); SQ Dwarven Traits, Duergar Traits, Immunities (paralysis, phantasms, and poison), Spell-like Abilities (*enlarge person*, *invisibility*), Darkvision 120 ft., Light Sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +9. Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills: Appraise +10, Concentration +6, Craft (Metalworking) +14, Handle Animal +4, Hide +4, Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering) +8, Listen +8 (includes +1 racial bonus), Move Silently +5 (includes +4 racial bonus), Open Locks +4, Spot +7 (includes +1 racial bonus).

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*duergar axe-hammer*), Improved Critical (*duergar axe-hammer*), Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration.

Spells Prepared (4/4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0-level – *arcane mark*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*; 1st-level – *endure elements*, *mage armor*, *N.'s magic aura*, *true strike*; 2nd-level – *arcane lock*, *blur*, *bull's strength*; 3rd-level – *explosive runes*.

Possessions: Leather apron (acts as leather armor), hand crossbow with giant scorpion-poisoned bolts hidden under apron, stone salve, +1 *duergar axe-hammer of spellstoring* (*hold person*), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, key to chest in his personal chambers (area 2-5).

Hell hounds (6): CR 3; Medium Outsider; HD 4d8+4, hp 22; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 fire, bite); Full +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 fire, bite); SA Breath Weapon (cone of fire,

10 ft, every 2d4 rounds, 2d6 fire damage, Reflex save DC 13 half), fiery bite; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, scent, vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +13 (includes +5 racial bonus), Jump +12, Listen +7, Move Silently +13 (includes +5 racial bonus), Spot +7, Survival +7 (+15 when tracking by scent).

Feats: Improved Initiative, Run, Track.

Area 2-5 – Xander’s Bedchamber (EL 5):

This room is quite lavishly furnished. A thick rug blankets the floor and bright tapestries adorn the walls. Against the far wall is a large and ornate wrought-iron four-poster bed, flanked by equally well-crafted tables with marble surfaces. A luxurious sofa sits in front of a low table topped with bowls of fruit in the center of the room, while a dresser and full-length mirror stands against the east wall.

Xander is paid extremely well for his services and consequently lives well, enjoying luxuries no one else in the temple can even dream of. He hand-crafted the furnishings himself and they are of the highest quality, worth a combined value of 500 gp if they could be disassembled and taken from this place.

Trap: The bottom drawer of the dresser has been warded with a *fire trap* spell.

Treasure: In addition to being trapped, the drawer is also locked and lined with lead (hardness 8, hp 15, Break DC 25) and secured with a difficult mechanism (Open Lock, DC 20). Xander carries the key on his person. The drawer contains an arcane scroll (8th-level, *fire trap* x2), a leather satchel bag holding 300 gp, and a velvet bag containing four gems, each worth 50 gp.

Fire Trap: CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 7th-level wizard, 1d4+7 fire, DC 16 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29. Cost: 305 gp to hire NPC spellcaster.

Area 2-6 – Library:

Four bookcases stand in this small room, one along each wall. The shelves are jammed full of a dizzying array of books, scrolls, loose sheets of paper, and even stone tablets. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to the collection of priceless knowledge.

The articles in this library constitute the sum of the cult’s knowledge on various subjects of interest, as well as a record of its activities – a perfect means for the GM to introduce future plot hooks. Many of

the books are esoteric but relatively uninteresting, but a few are of particular note:

- A book that describes the handling, care, and breeding of anathaema eagles so well that the reader gains a permanent +2 circumstance bonus to Ride and Handle Animal checks with regards to these beasts.
- Loose sheets from a necromancy spell book, with the following spells: *ghoul touch*, *scare*, *halt undead*.
- A yellowed and faded scroll containing two 4th-level divine spells (*death ward* and *air walk*) as prepared by a 7th-level cleric. The parchment is in such poor condition that a Concentration check (DC 15) is required to correctly cast a spell from it; a failed check results in a botched spell and a lost action.
- A book crafted entirely from human flesh, written in language only spellcasters can comprehend (*read magic*). Characters who begin reading the book may instantly become aware (Wisdom, DC 12) that the book holds secrets that offer great power but at great price. If the character chooses to continue reading, he finds the secrets to controlling undead: clerics gain a +2 insight bonus to turn and rebuke undead, while both clerics and wizards/sorcerers find that any skeletons and zombies raised with *animate dead* are so loyal they have +2 turn resistance. The price for this knowledge is high indeed, for when the character dies his soul is sold to Malotoch and he rises in 1d4 days as a ghoul. The character cannot be raised or resurrected, although the casting of *wish* or *miracle* can restore him to life.

Area 2-7 – Pantry:

A cold chill emanating from the small room before you permeates your clothes, going deep into your skin and flesh. Several corpses, both humanoid and animal, hang from meat hooks dangling from the ceiling. Shelves along the walls are lined with glass and ceramic jars.

The room is under the effects of several permanent *gentle repose* spells designed to keep food fresh. While flesh is the preferred feast of the cultists, they require other sustenance as well and so one finds cheese, milk, wine, herbs, and various dried fruit in the containers lining the shelves.

Area 2-8 – Kitchen (EL 5):

Clogged with counters, shelves, a large stove upon which rests a barrel-sized steaming pot, pans that hang from the wall, and a wash basin, this room clearly is a kitchen. The floor angles toward a drain in the center of the room and is

wet, presumably having been washed down recently.

The cultists take turns preparing meals. In the past, they have had slaves serve as cooks, but eventually the cooks themselves became the main course.

Characters who make a Listen check (DC 12) hear some kind of sloshing sound coming from the drain, and anyone who peers down sees a shiny object in the depths below – a ring or gem, perhaps?

Monster: The sound that the PCs hear is actually a gibbering mouther, and the shiny object is one of the aberration's eyes. The beast is content with feeding off blood and viscera washed down the drain, but won't pass up the opportunity for a larger feast if someone decides to pry the grate off.

Development: The pot on the stove is full of boiling water (and some bones, flesh, and other broth ingredients). PCs may elect to use the water as a weapon against the gibbering mouther. On the flip side, the gibbering mouther may bull rush an opponent into the stove. Finally, the GM may decide that when someone in any adjacent area fumbles with his attack roll (e.g., an errant swing of a sword or a desperate dodge), he jostles the pot and causes it to tip over.

Hot Water: Direct hit 2d6 damage, 2 points of splash damage to anyone within 5 feet. Reflex save (DC 15) half damage.

Gibbering Mouther: CR 5; Medium Aberration; HD 4d8+24, hp 42; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1, bite) or +4 ranged (1d4 acid plus blindness, spittle); Full Atk (6 bites) +6 melee (1, bite) or +4 ranged (1d4 acid plus blindness, spittle); SA Gibbering (Will save DC 13, confusion 1d2 rounds, 60 ft range); Spittle (Fort save DC 13, blind 1d3 rounds, 60 ft. range), Improved Grab, Blood Drain, Engulf, Ground Manipulation; SQ Amorphous (Immune to critical hits, cannot be flanked), damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 22, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +9, Swim +8.

Feats: Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse.

SA–Blood Drain (Ex): On successful grapple check after grabbing, a mouth drains 1 point of Constitution each round, mouth removed with Strength check DC 12 or severed with 2 points of damage, severed mouth continues to bite and drain blood for 1d4 rounds.

SA–Engulf (Ex): Up to Medium opponents using three mouths; foe makes Reflex save DC 14 to avoid; if engulfed 12 attacks instead of 6 and pre-

vious mouths free to attack others.

SA–Ground Manipulation (Ex): Soften earth or stone within 5'; anyone in area mired.

Area 2-9 – Eating Hall:

You find yourself in an impressive hall, almost 80 feet in length and 30 feet wide, lined with eight great pillars carved into the hideous image of hundreds of corpses piled atop one another trying to support the vaulted ceiling above. Guttering torches set in sconces illuminate this room. A single table surrounded by numerous chairs provides the only furnishing.

This is where the cultists, from high priest down to lowly acolyte, congregate to feast. There is nothing of interest in the room.

Area 2-10 – Bedroom Cells (EL 9):

The small, barren cell contains little more than a simple bed, a small desk, and a wooden chair. Rough woolen robes hang from pegs beside the door.

These are the sleeping quarters of the various priests attending the temple (a total of 12 currently). Many write journals detailing their training and enlightenments, and these will be found in the desks. Characters might use the robes to disguise themselves as members of the cult (+2 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks). There will be 1d3 robes per room. Clerics keep small chests under their beds with various personal effects, none of which amount to anything of value.

Monster: There is a 4-in-20 chance that a cell will be occupied at any given time, and if so there is an even chance that the cleric is asleep or awake.

Acolyte, male human Clr2 (12): CR 2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8+4, hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); SA spellcasting, Smite (see Destruction clerical domain for further details); SQ control undead, +1 caster level with evil spells; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +6; AL CE; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +4, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Listen +2, Search +2, Spellcraft +1, Spot +2.

Feats: Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge: religion).

Cleric Spells (4/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0-level – cure minor wounds x3, resistance; 1st-level – bane, cause fear, protection from good*. *Domain spell.

Possessions: Heavy mace, chain mail, small steel shield, vial of unholy water, holy symbol of Malotoch.

Area 2-11 – Testing Ground (EL 10):

You emerge on a small stone platform overlooking a gaping chasm. In the middle of the chasm is a stone pillar that reaches up from the darkness below and forms an island in the sea of emptiness that is this cave. Resting upon the island is a fountain, reached only by a flimsy rope bridge.

Show the players handout G. Acolytes must regularly cross this bridge to prove they are worthy. Those who stray from the pious path are destroyed, as detailed below.

Trap: The rope bridge is 60 feet across. Loyal cultists of Malotoch may pass without incident. Others (such as PCs and those straying in their devotion) reach the middle of the bridge before they find themselves engulfed in a roaring pillar of cold wind that blows up from below and fills the entire shaft. The wind causes the bridge to buck and twist, requiring a Balance check (DC 20, -5 if character is secured to the bridge or holding the railing) each round to prevent being picked up bodily by the wind and dropped into the chasm. In addition, the wind saps the strength from the unfaithful, subjecting characters to a *chill touch* each round that they remain suspended over the chasm.

Treasure: Drinking of the fountain cures 1d8 points of damage and provides the character with *guidance* that remains until discharged. It's assumed that only the faithful of Malotoch could safely cross the chasm to drink of the water, so the fountain in no way adversely affects those that do not worship the devil. However, clerics and paladins of good-aligned gods who refuse the boon should receive a 200 XP role-playing reward. Any water that leaves this room loses all special properties.

Rope Bridge Trap: CR 10; magical; divine trigger; automatic reset; DC 20 Balance check avoids; 600 ft. deep (20d6, fall); multiple targets (all on bridge); Search DC 35; Disable Device DC –.

Area 2-12 – Prison:

Your stomach heaves at the overwhelming stench of death and defecation that is thick in this room. Sucking in a breath of courage, you inch in closer to get a better view at the appalling assortment of instruments of torture that fill this room. Twin cells with barred doors line the east and west walls. A human, her body covered with blackened burns and swollen welts, hangs limply in a cage against the opposite wall. It's clear from her pallor that the captive is quite dead.

This room is quite obviously a prison and torture chamber. Captives are held here prior to being sacrificed to Malotoch, and those deemed important enough are interrogated for useful information. Captured PCs will be held here prior to their eventual torture and death. The cells are similar, with iron rings driven into the stone to secure chains and doors of barred metal.

Treasure: Characters who thoroughly search the cells (Search, DC 15) will notice one of the iron rings can be pulled free from the wall. Hidden in a tiny depression behind is a *ring of regeneration*, left behind by a former prisoner who used it to stay alive far longer than Tarrak could ever have imagined, despite the high priests' most ingenious methods of torture. Little good it did for the poor fellow in the end.

Area 2-13 – Anselm's Chambers (EL 2):

This room is of generous size, with a curtained bed in the corner to the left of the doorway, a brazier and a table with chairs nearby, and a writing desk on the opposite side of the room. There is another door opposite the one you just entered.

Anselm, the garrison's former priest and now Clerk of Works for the Temple of Malotoch, resides here.

Monster: Anselm is attended by acolyte clerks, one of whom is always present here tending to a variety of chores – cleaning, stoking the fire, arranging notes, writing minor correspondence, and so forth.

Tactics: The clerk will be adamant about any unscheduled intrusions, even if the PCs are in disguise as cultists, but isn't much of a combatant and quickly folds under any sign of superiority by the party.

Acolyte, male human, Clr2: CR 2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8+4, hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); SA spellcasting, Smite (see Destruction clerical domain for further details); SQ control undead, +1 caster level with evil spells; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +6; AL CE; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +4, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Listen +2, Search +2, Spellcraft +1, Spot +2.

Feats: Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge: Religion).

Cleric Spells (4/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0-level – *cure minor wounds* x3, *resistance*; 1st-level – *bane*, *cause fear*, *protection from good**. * Domain spell.

Possessions: Heavy mace, chain mail, small

steel shield, vial of unholy water, holy symbol of Malotoch.

Area 2-14 – Anselm’s Work Room (EL 8):

On counters along the walls and tables in the middle of the room stand models of towers, dungeons, a mill, houses, temples, and prisons. Some are large, others quite small, and some only visible by peering behind or over one of the others. They are made with wood, stones, obviously whatever material came to hand, but all have been assembled with careful measurement and attention to detail.

A priest kneels in front of a dungeon model, though whether he is praying or working cannot be immediately ascertained. Sensing your presence, he looks up and smiles – an expression that seems ill-at-ease on his taut-skinned visage.

“Welcome to my workroom, the product of my lifetime. Many lifetimes, if truth be told.” He rises, unfolding his tall, angular body, and his knees make popping sounds. “I’ve knelt too long; this complex is always cold and damp.”

Show the players handout H. The kneeling figure is Anselm, the former garrison priest and now a ghast-cleric of Malotoch. He presents as amiable a disposition as possible, hoping to catch the PCs off-guard before revealing his spiteful nature and attacking. If he was able to cast *detect magic* (see Tactics, below), he uses this opportunity to examine the magical auras around the PCs and their equipment, in order to effectively focus a casting of *dispel magic*.

Tactics: As soon as Anselm hears the PCs in his outer chambers, he kneels and begins casting defensive spells upon himself and the room. In order, they are *desecrate*, *bull’s strength*, *aid*, *shield of faith*, *entropic shield*, and *detect magic*. As soon as it is clear his masquerade has failed, Anselm will accept combat and will indeed fight to the “death”; to do otherwise, in the presence of his deity, would ensure a fate more distasteful than mere destruction. However, he will use *inflict light wounds* to heal himself and thereby stretch out the combat. He will also use *dispel magic* as a “targeted dispel” or a counterspell.

Development: Because the acolytes are so cruelly dominated by the senior priests of Malotoch, most will go out of their way to avoid them and will certainly never make eye contact. As a result, PCs who defeat Anselm and dress in his robes gain a +3 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Disguise, and Intimidation checks involving the junior cultists.

Treasure: Anselm’s existence since being corrupted by Malotoch has been split between theological pursuits and his passion: the study of architecture. Many of the models are essentially blueprints of temples, shrines, and fortresses that have been built to his specifications over the past two centuries. Some are designs sold commercially to fund the cult’s activities, while others are merely exercises in engineering done for his personal enlightenment. As a result, the potential value of these models is enormous, for they are completely accurate maps, detailing defenses, traps, and secret rooms and are therefore indispensable for anyone interested in infiltrating the buildings they represent. (Note: Many of these structures are more than a century old and may have been extensively modified in the interim, so the models may not be *perfectly* accurate.)

Anselm, Male Ghast Clr5: CR 8; Medium Undead; HD 4d12+5d8; hp 50; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Atk +7 melee (1d8+1 and paralysis, bite); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+1 and paralysis, bite) and +4/+4 melee (1d4 and paralysis, claw); SA Paralysis (Fort save DC 15 or be paralyzed 1d6+4 minutes, even elves vulnerable), Stench (within 10 feet Fort save DC 15 or suffer –2 penalty to all attacks, saves, and skill checks for 1d6+4 minutes due to nausea), Smite (see Destruction clerical domain); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Undead Traits, +2 Turn Resistance, Turn/Rebuke Undead; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +10. Str 13, Dex 13, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Climb +6, Concentration +2, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Jump +6, Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Spot +8.

Feats: Combat Casting, Multiattack, Skill Focus (Knowledge: Architecture and Engineering), Weapon Focus (bite).

Cleric Spells (5/4/3/1; Save DC 12 + spell level): 0-level – *detect magic*, *mending*, *guidance* (x2), *read magic*; 1st-level – *entropic shield*, *inflict light wounds** (x2), *shield of faith*; 2nd-level – *aid*, *bull’s strength*, *desecrate*; 3rd-level – *contagion*, *dispel magic*. * Domain spell.

Possessions: +2 *ring of protection*, holy symbol of Malotoch, key to the black doors of the temple (area 2-16).

Area 2-15 – Secret Vault (EL 3): The solid rock door has been constructed to almost perfectly mesh with the surrounding stone, making it extremely difficult to notice (Search, DC 18). The only way to open it is by lowering the drawbridge on one of the castle models. This triggers a *permanent mage hand* spell that turns a release mechanism inside the secret vault, thus opening the door. Characters who make

a thorough Search of the room (DC 20) or who specifically mention moving all the models will notice that this particular model is held fast to the counter it's placed on, providing a clue as to the means of opening the door. Similarly, a *detect magic* spell reveals a faint aura around the model.

Heavy Stone Door: 3 ft. thick; Hardness 8, hp 280; Break (DC 25).

Treasure: Anselm has embezzled a large amount of treasure from the temple works funds, caching it in this small chamber. The sum amounts to 580 gp, 730 sp, and 200 cp in four copper chests, and what seems to be an empty sack lying on the floor but which is actually a *bag of holding type 1* (which he uses to smuggle the goods out of the temple) containing 700 gp. The chests all have unusual locks, the “key” being a holy symbol of Malotoch, which makes them difficult to pick. The chests are also protected by traps that make attempts to force or pick them hazardous.

Copper Chests: 1 in. thick; Hardness 15; hp 80; Break (DC 28); Open Lock (DC 35).

Electrical Shock Trap: CR 3; No attack roll; anyone picking the lock or attempting to force/break the

chest is hit by an electrical shock; 3d8 damage; Reflex save (DC 16) for half; reset 1 minute.

Area 2-16 – Ornate Black Doors (EL 5):

The short hallway ends in an ornate door the color of pitch. Carvings of crows and strange, twisted beings cover the entire surface of the door, and a faint mist fills the hallway. The stone seems to radiate cold.

Ornate Stone Door: 10 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 120; Break (DC 28); Open Lock (DC 27).

Show the players handout I. The door is locked, and only Tarrak and Anselm have keys to open it. Attempts to force the door (or failed attempts to pick the lock) spray everyone within 10 ft. of the entrance with insanity mist. The ambient mist in the hall isn't harmful unless the trap is triggered.

Insanity Mist Trap: CR 5; no attack roll. A wet, chilled mist sprays upon everyone within 10 ft. of the door. Initial 1d4 points temporary Wisdom damage, secondary 2d6 points of temporary Wisdom damage; Fort save (DC 18) negates; Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 22). Clogging one of the carved crow's mouths prevents the release of the mist.

Temple Level Three

There are no wandering monsters on this level.

Areas of the Map

Area 3-1 – Temple of Malotoch (EL 12):

Beyond the black portals lies a temple as infused with oppressive evil as it is grand in nature. After following a winding staircase up, you enter a chamber that is 60 feet wide and nearly three times that in length, with a vaulted roof some 50 feet above. A gaping hole in the ceiling seems to lead outside, as the occasional flash of light appears beyond it and a steady stream of water drips from it. Much of the room is obscured by swirling gray mist that rises to about waist height but some of the horrid details are all too plain. A row of glowing braziers line either wall and lead the eye to a raised dais, some 20 feet square, upon which stands a gold-plated statue of Malotoch, a vicious looking crow resting on an outstretched arm and a swarm of humans in their death throes at her feet. Before her is an altar of black

stone, beside which stand flickering candles in tall, silver candleholders.

The hole in the ceiling does in fact lead outside, to the pinnacle of Gurnard's Head. It's through this hole that Tarrak's anathaema eagle is able to come and go. The black altar is heavily stained with blood, since it is upon this stone that sacrifices to Malotoch are made.

Magical Protection: The mist that cloaks the entire room acts as an *unhallow* spell, while the candles radiate an *unholy aura* that encompasses the dais. The mist can be dispersed by strong winds in two rounds, thus eliminating the effects of the *unhallow* spell, but it will gather again 1d4 rounds later. Characters not exposed to the mist – by flying or climbing walls above it, for example – are free of the spell's effect. In addition, the mist reduces the damage from all fire-based attacks and spells by half.

Monsters: When the party enters, they will encounter High Priest Tarrak (formerly the garrison commander of Gurnard's Head), his anathaema

eagle companion, and two senior acolytes who serve as Tarrak's personal clerks and temple administrators.

Tactics: When the party enters, Tarrak stands on the balcony above the statue of Malotoch where he presides over ceremonies. As soon as he is aware of the intruders, he sends the acolytes and his anathaema eagle to attack while he remains in his lofty position, assisting his followers with spells, such as *aid*, *cause fear*, *doom*, and *hold person*. He is also capable of directing touch spells, such as *inflict light wounds* and *inflict serious wounds* via his *spectral hand ring*. As each of the acolytes is defeated, he uses *death knell* to absorb their life energy. Once both acolytes are dead, he casts *animate dead* on their corpses (each acolyte had his left eye replaced with a black onyx gem for just this purpose). Before engaging in combat himself, Tarrak casts *entropic shield* on himself.

The acolytes attack directly and with religious fervor, hoping to drive the infidels from the temple of their beloved deity. If injured below 10 hp, they cast *cure moderate wounds* on themselves and then redouble the attack. They only stop to cast other spells to engage distant opponents.

The anathaema eagle fights until it has suffered injuries equivalent to 50% of his hit points, then attempts to flee through the opening in the ceiling – it knows to preserve itself in case Tarrak need to make a hasty retreat.

The High Priest enters the fray only after he has used all the spells he has to aid his followers and has fortified himself. He then confidently walks down the short stairs and makes a stand at Malotoch's feet. Unlike the remainder of the cultists who are considered expendable by their deity and therefore must fight to the death to avoid her wrath, Tarrak is of great use to Malotoch and therefore can freely flee without risking her displeasure if things turn against him.

Experience: Destroying Malotoch's influence in the temple is worthy of a sizable reward. To do so, one must cleanse the chamber of its evil with holy water (500 gp worth), and cast both *consecrate* and *hal-low* spells. This garners the PCs a 1,000 XP group story reward, while good-aligned clerics and paladins earn an additional 250 XP each for the act.

Treasure: The statue of Malotoch, while not crafted from solid gold, is gold plated. The metal would be worth 1,000 gp if melted down. The silver candleholders would be hard to sell due to their obscene nature, but the raw metal might sell for 25 gp each. The candles are made from human fat and radiate

unholy auras when burned; there is a chest full of two dozen such candles behind the altar.

Tarrak possesses *Azurak*, the last of the Star Arms.

Anathaema Eagle: CR 3; Large Magical Beast; HD 4d10+4, hp 26; Init +4; Spd 10 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, claw); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d6+3, claw) and +1 melee (1d8+1, bite); SA-; SQ -; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +3. Str 17, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +5, Sense Motive +8, Spot +11, Survival +8.

Feats: Alertness.

Senior Acolytes, male human Clr3 (2): CR 3; Medium Humanoid; HD 3d8+7, hp 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); SA spell-casting, smite (see Destruction clerical domain for details); SQ control undead, +1 caster level with evil spells; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +6; AL CE; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +4, Knowledge (Religion) +5, Listen +2, Search +2, Spellcraft +3, Spot +2.

Feats: Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge: Religion), Toughness.

Cleric Spells (4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0-level – *cure minor wounds* (x3), *resistance*; 1st-level – *bane*, *cause fear*, *command*, *protection from good**; 2nd-level – *desecrate*, *cure moderate wounds*, *shatter**. * Domain spell.

Possessions: Heavy mace, chain mail, small steel shield, vial of unholy water, holy symbol of Malotoch.

Acolyte Zombies (2): CR 1/2; Medium Undead; HD 2d12+3, hp 16; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace); SA -; SQ Damage Reduction 5/slashing, Darkvision 60 ft., Undead Traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills: -

Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: Heavy mace, chain mail, small steel shield, vial of unholy water, holy symbol of Malotoch, worthless stone in left eye socket.

Tarrak, Male Ghast Clr5/Ftr3: CR 11; Medium undead; HD 4d12+5d8+3d10; hp 75; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch, flat footed ; Base Atk +8/+3; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d8+2 and paralysis, bite) or +12 melee (1d12+4, *Azurak* (+2 *adamantine great mace*)); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+2 and paralysis, bite) or +12/+7 melee (1d12+4, *Azurak* (+2

adamantine great mace)); SA Death Touch (see Death clerical domain for details), Paralysis (Fort save DC 15 or be paralyzed 1d6+4 minutes, even elves vulnerable), Stench (within 10 feet Fort save DC 15 or suffer -2 penalty to all attacks, saves, and skill checks for 1d6+4 minutes due to nausea), Smite (see Destruction Clerical domain for further details); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Undead Traits, +2 Turn Resistance, Turn/Rebuke Undead; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +11. Str 14, Dex 13, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Climb +7, Concentration +2, Escape Artist +8, Handle Animal +4, Hide +8, Jump +6, Ride (anathaema eagle) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Spot +9.

Feats: Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Ride), Weapon Focus (bite).

Spells (5/4/ 3/1): 0-level – *detect magic, guidance, read magic, resistance, virtue*; 1st-level – *cause fear, doom, entropic shield, inflict light wounds** (x2); 2nd-level – *aid, death knell*, hold person, death knell*; 3rd-level – *animate dead*, inflict serious wounds*. * Domain spell.

Possessions: Azurak (+2 *adamantine great mace*; see page 38), +3 *chainmail, spectral hand ring*, holy symbol of Malotoch, key to the black doors of the temple (area 2-16).

Area 3-2 – Tarrak's Chambers:

This chamber is dimly lit. Looking up, you see a flock of crows etched in bas relief on the ceiling, each stone eye glowing eerily. The birds look down at you with malicious intent. A bed is set against one wall beside a small brazier that provides heat. A small chest is located at its foot, and a small writing table stands against the opposing wall.

The writing desk contains theological missives (+1 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (religion) checks in relation to Malotoch while reading it) and some idle correspondence, as well as an inkwell, pen, and sheets of blank paper. The chest contains clothing and innovative torture devices of Tarrak's own design (providing a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidation checks).

Treasure: A secret cache behind the bed (Search, DC 20) hides treasure used to fund cult activities. It contains 10 large amethysts (200 gp each) and 3,000 gp. There are also five *potions of inflict moderate wounds*, which Tarrak may use to heal himself if his life is threatened.

The End

Rewards

When awarding experience for the adventure, be sure to include the values for all objectives successfully accomplished, as outlined below. Note that these awards are given to each character who took an active role in achieving the objective and are not divided as part of the group experience pool.

- For each of the Star Arms recovered: 250 XP
- Removing the threat to Carnelloe by eliminating the rooks: 500 XP
- Returning Lord Pendour's body for burial: 500 XP
- Acquiring Hornauer's intimate knowledge of the temple: 100 XP
- Destroying area 1-9 (the old shrine to Malotoch): 500 XP for good clerics and paladins; 400 XP for other characters
- Returning with Lord Pendour's key: 500 XP
- Destroying area 3-1 (temple to Malotoch): 1,250 XP for good clerics and paladins; 1,000 XP for other characters

Further Adventures

Aerie of the Crow God can spawn numerous follow-up adventures, taking the story in entirely different and unexpected directions. From here, the GM can customize the story to match his game world and the interests of his players. Some suggestions follow:

- The loss of the temple and its inhabitants is a dreadful blow to Malotoch, but far from a crippling one. She still has numerous followers, who she now directs against the PCs in a campaign of vengeance. She may even take a personal interest in their downfall.
- Beyond being an opportunist and scoundrel, Carnelloe's seneschal Gar Ebal (described later) has also become extremely conscious of his own mortality. All too aware that he was unlikely to unlock the secrets of lichdom, he began casting about for alternatives. The solution was closer at hand than he had ever imagined. Malotoch called out to him from Gurnard's Head with promises of immortality, and he readily accepted. But in the aftermath of the epic battle that saw a party of adventurers destroy her minions and desecrate her temple, Malotoch casts blame upon Ebal for allowing them to be sent to Gurnard's Head in the first place. She demands a sacrifice of him to prove his loyalty. The Carrion Crow Goddess demands the blood of Lady Pendour's children!

- The ruins of the ancient settlement (described in Appendix 1), and in particular the burial mound, beg for exploration. What people lived her? Is there a more ancient connection between Malotoch and the area? Perhaps the ancients were a pagan tribe who worshiped the crow as their totem and were quietly

seduced by evil.

- A plague of crows befalls Carnelloe, laying waste to the fields and preying upon livestock. Has the cult of Malotoch returned or is there another explanation for the disaster?

Appendix 1: Environs of Gurnard's Head

Gurnard's Head is located on a remote section of coastline, a place where people can't help but be moved by its natural beauty. Despite constant battering by maritime storms, the small manor Carnelloe clings to the heath and ekes out an existence raising the rare Loghtan sheep, prized for the extremely warm wool they provide. Few crops grow in the shallow soil, and appropriately enough Carnelloe means "desolate place" in Elven.

Climbing up to the headlands, one finds the ruins of an ancient settlement. The two ramparts and ditches are clearly visible, as are the foundations of 16 round huts and a burial mound that the locals insist is haunted. (See map on page 46.)

Carnelloe (large thorp): Conventional; AL LN; 60 gp limit; Assets 400 gp; Population 86; Isolated (Human 80, dwarf 6).

Authority Figures: Lady Elisabeth Pendour, female human Ari4; Dorn Bronzethegn, male dwarf Exp3 (miner and smith); Gar Ebal, male human Wiz5/Exp6 (Seneschal); Sir Gareth Porthglaze, male human Ftr4 (Sheriff); Rosemergy, female human Com3 (proprietor of Gurnard's Arms, the village inn/tavern).

Militia: War1 (5)

Bronzethegn's Smithy: Old Dorn has lived in Carnelloe as long as anyone can remember, and then some. He spends only part of his day at the forges, dedicating the remainder to his moderately successful open-pit bronze mine. He won't admit it unless pressed (with an opposed Diplomacy check), but he has seen the inside of Gurnard's Head, or a few rooms anyway. It was after the fort was relieved and the garrison was scaled back to a skeleton crew, at which time Dorn received the contract to haul away unneeded metal (mostly in the form of old weapons and armor). He can provide a general description of the tower. An able if uninspired smith, he can make any normal weapon or armor and charges a fair price.

Gurnard's Arms: A low-ceilinged and smoky little watering hole, Gurnard's Arms is the only inn for several leagues and is therefore generally quite busy in the evening. It closes during the day while Rosemergy tends her sheep but the door is left ajar and there's

generally a few old coots huddled around the fire exchanging gossip and tall tales. The interior is decorated with relics from the heroic defense of Gurnard's Head purchased from Dorn Bronzethegn (one is actually a +1 *shield*, but Rosemergy will not part with it for any amount of money). Locals love sharing the epic tale with any newcomer, even if they insist they know the story. For her part, the aging proprietor considers herself a friend to everyone in the village and the deep furrow-like lines in her face seem to be ever stretched in a warm smile.

Carnelloe Manor: Carnelloe Manor has clearly been designed more with aesthetics in mind than defensibility. Gone are the solid stone walls of its ilk, replaced by the more appealing "black and white" Tudor-style timber framing. Its sole concession to fortification seems to be the low stone wall that surrounds the estate, though this is more likely to keep livestock in than invaders out. The lady of the manor, the recently widowed Elisabeth Pendour, is an attractive woman with a bright smile and a ready wit. Her warmth is somewhat forced at the moment, but she is a genuinely good woman who cares for her vassals. Recent events – the loss of her husband, the assault on herself, and the threats to her girls – have opened her eyes to the harsh realities of the world and allowed her natural courage to surface.

Gar Ebal, the seneschal of the manor, is somewhat put out by her newfound strength and conviction. He was sure that with Lord Pendour gone he would assume de facto control over the estate, but his confidence has proven unjustified. A tall man with black eyes and hair and a thin, mobile face, Gar Ebal is a scheming opportunist. Any trust afforded him is misplaced. He disguises the depth of his magical ability to make people believe he is a mere dabbler in the arts.

For the sheriff's part, Sir Gareth is as dumb and naive as he is brave and powerful. Like a huge (and extremely well-muscled) puppy, he instantly becomes the best friend of anyone who gives him even the slightest attention. People find it all but impossible to dislike the big dolt. It's a good thing Sir Gareth is as strong with his sword as he is because the almost childlike innocence he demonstrates leads him into repeated danger.

Appendix 2: New Monsters

ANATHAEMA EAGLE

	Large Magical Beast
Hit Dice:	4d10+4 (26 hp)
Initiative:	+4
Speed:	10 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect)
AC:	16 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12
BAB/Grapple:	+4/+11
Attack:	Claw +6 melee (1d6+3) or bite +6 melee (1d8+1)
Full Attack:	2 claws +6 melee (1d6+3), bite +1 melee (1d8+1)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Disease
Special Qualities:	Low-light vision, evasion
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 17, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10
Skills:	Listen +5, Sense Motive +8, Spot +11, Survival +8
Feats:	Alertness
Environment:	Any land or aerial
Organization:	Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Usually chaotic evil
Advancement:	5-8 HD (Huge), 9-12 HD (Gargantuan)

Anathaema eagles are the unholy product of giant eagle eggs that have been subjected to foul rituals known only known to clerics of Malotoch. The result is a bird that more closely resembles a crow than a raptor. Their feathers are oily black, their twisted talons are perfect for slashing skin to get at the tender flesh beneath, and their eyes burn with malicious intent.

A typical anathaema eagle stands 10 feet tall and has a wingspan of up to 20 feet. They speak Common and Abyssal.

Combat

An anathaema eagle attacks by diving down upon its opponents and making slashing attacks in an attempt to disembowel. They are ravenous feeders and will attack anything they are confident they can kill, which typically includes humans and other Medium or smaller humanoid.

Disease: Anathaema eagles are carriers of filth fever. Victims of their bite attack must make a Fortitude check (DC 12) to avoid contracting the disease: incubation time 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.



Evasion: If subject to an attack that allows a Reflex save for half damage, the creature takes no damage on a successful save. This is a reflexive ability, and therefore the anathaema eagle doesn't need to be aware of the attack prior to using this ability.

Training an Anathaema Eagle

Training an anathaema eagle as an aerial mount requires a successful Handle Animal check (DC 24 for a young creature, DC 29 for an adult), but only if the creature is willing. Typically, they will only submit to followers of Malotoch, though there are exceptions. Due to the divine influence necessary to spawn anathaema eagles, followers of Malotoch receive a +4 circumstance bonus to attempts to train these creatures. Because of their temperament and reputation, anathaema eggs and chicks are not in great demand on the open market, selling for perhaps 500 gp and 1,000 gp respectively. An anathaema eagle can fight while carrying a rider, but the rider cannot also attack unless he succeeds at a Ride check.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for the bird is up to 172 pounds; a medium load 173-346 pounds; and a heavy load 347-520 pounds.



PLAGUE TAR ELEMENTAL

	Medium Elemental
Hit Dice:	8d8+24 (60 hp)
Initiative:	+6
Speed:	40 ft.
AC:	15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13
BAB/Grapple:	+6/+12
Attack:	Slam +13 melee (2d6+6 plus 1d4 fire) or disengaged limb +9 ranged (1d6+6 plus 1d4 fire)
Full Attack:	Slam +13/+8 melee (2d6+6 plus 1d4 fire) or disengaged limb +9/+4 ranged (1d6+6 plus 1d4 fire)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Disease, fire
Special Qualities:	Elemental traits, fire subtype, damage reduction 10/+1
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 21, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11
Skills:	Listen +11, Spot +11
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Slam)
Environment:	Any underground
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	5
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Advancement:	9-15 HD (Large), 16-21 (Huge)

Plague tar elementals are creatures of pure hatred and bile given form. They are vaguely humanoid, a mass of bubbling gel with arm-like appendages on each side but lacking a discernible head. Typically, they stand 8 feet tall and possess a massive stature, yet they still move with deceptive speed and agility.

Plague tar elementals are native to the elemental plane of fire. They are the elemental equivalent of demons or undead – a corrupted form of the true elemental spirit. They are born of evil acts and a poorly understood union with the elemental plane of earth, which somehow spawns the plague-ridden tar that becomes these creatures. Once the monsters are spawned, they then journey to the plane of fire and reside there. On their home plane, they are rare creatures hunted by other elementals. They are occasionally found on the material plane when deposits of their native composition leak through. They can speak both Terran and Ignan, but rarely do so.

Combat

Plague tar elementals prefer to lie in ambush within the pools of gel that are their home, striking with surprise and devastating speed. When they enter combat, however, they do so with reckless abandon and wade into the midst of their foes, confident in their own superiority.

Plague tar elementals can “throw” their limbs as ranged weapons. The projectiles are super-hot masses of tar that literally resemble a thrown arm. They typically only do this against spellcasters who are out of reach of their slam attacks. A plague tar elemental can throw up to two limbs. Each thrown limb prevents it from making a slam attack. It takes 3 rounds for a plague tar elemental to regrow a thrown limb.

Disease: Plague tar elementals carry within their form the seed of slimy doom. Those wounded by the elemental must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) to avoid contracting this disease: incubation time 1 day, damage 1d4 Con; when a character loses a point of Con to slimy doom, he must make another Fort save or 1 point of the damage is permanent.

Elemental: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits. Darkvision to 60 ft.

Fire: Those hit by the plague tar elemental’s slam attack must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 14) or catch fire. The flame causes 1d4 damage per round and burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. Creatures hitting a plague tar elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the creature’s attack, and also catch fire unless they succeed at a Reflex save (again, DC 14).

Fire Subtype: Fire immunity, double damage from cold except on successful save.

ROOK

	Medium Monstrous Humanoid
Hit Dice:	7d8 (31 hp)
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)
AC:	13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 11
BAB/Grapple:	+7/+7
Attack:	Club +7 melee (1d6) or dagger +7 melee (1d4/19-20) or claw +2 melee (1d3)
Full Attack:	Club +7/+2 melee (1d6) or dagger +7/+2 melee (1d4/19-20) or 2 claws +2 melee (1d3)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Disease, frightful caw
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5
Abilities:	Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14
Skills:	Balance +6, Hide +8, Listen +7, Spot +9
Feats:	Dodge, Flyby Attack
Environment:	Temperate and warm land and underground
Organization:	Solitary, pair, or flock (7-12)
Challenge Rating:	4
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Usually chaotic evil
Advancement:	By character class

Some say harpies are the most wretched creatures imaginable. Those who make this claim are obviously unaware of the existence of rooks, a race of avians closely related to harpies but distinct in their appear-

ance and habits.

Unlike harpies, who prefer fresh meat and therefore hunt for their prey, rooks are predominantly carrion feeders. They may attack defenseless creatures, such as livestock, but are lazy by nature and are far more likely to scavenge from the kills of other predators. They flock to battlefields and cemeteries, desecrating graves and feeding upon the dead and dying.

A rook resembles an old human woman with a twisted visage and gaunt figure, though its lower torso, legs, and wings are that of a crow. Its hair is tangled and oily black, the same coloration of the feathers. These vile creatures wear no clothing and have wicked talons on their scaly hands, ideal for slicing the flesh of victims to get at the organs within. Rooks will sometimes also wield daggers in combat, or fight with large heavy bones as though they were clubs.

Rooks speak a grating hybrid of Auran and Common.

Combat

Rooks prefer to remain at a distance from their enemies, using their Flyby Attack and slashing with their claws. They are actually quite cunning, especially when in defense of their lairs, and have been known to drop stones and other debris upon interlopers.

Disease: Rooks are carriers of filth fever. Victims of their claw attacks must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or contract the disease: incubation time 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

Frightful Caw: The unnerving sound of a rook's cry subjects all living creatures within 300 feet to the *fear* spell as if cast by an 8th-level sorcerer (Will save DC 13).

Appendix 3: New Items

Duergar Axe-Hammer

This mighty duergar weapon is essentially an amalgam of the war hammer and battleaxe. A 30-inch-long axe-blade and a large maul sit on either end of a 4' long shaft. The weapon can thus be used to make both slashing and bludgeoning attacks. As a double weapon, you can wield it as if fighting with two weapons, but you still incur all the normal attack penalties associated with fighting with two weapons, as if you were using a one-handed weapon and a light weapon. A creature using a duergar axe-hammer in one hand, such as a duergar under the effects of his *enlarge person* spell-like ability, can't use it as a double weapon.

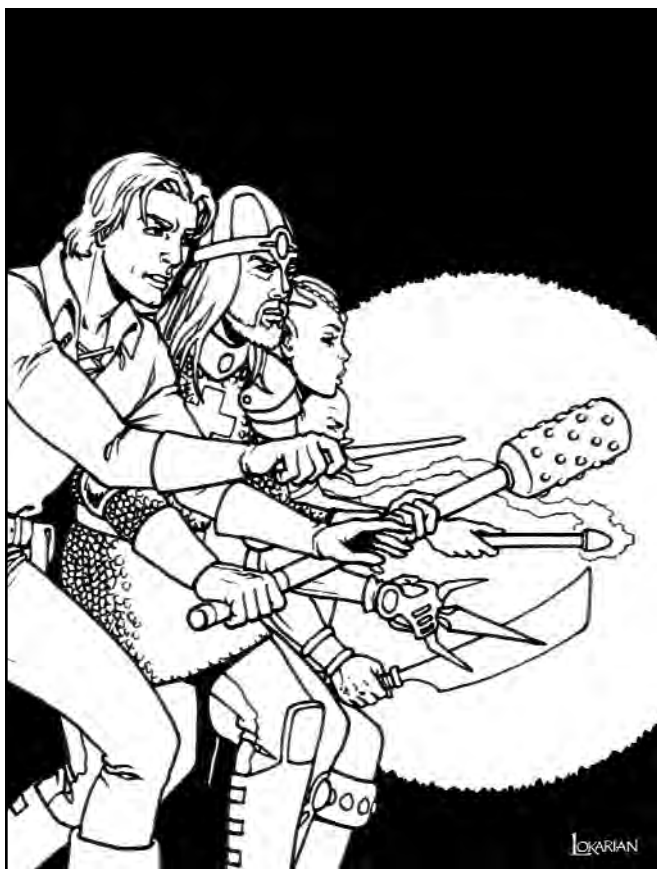
Because of its heft, few enemies can stand up to a charging character wielding a duergar axe-hammer.

When the wielder charges, he may opt to perform a bull rush as if he had the Improved Bull Rush feat and is therefore not subject to an attack of opportunity. If the character already has the Improved Bull Rush feat, he instead gets to double the charge bonus (+4 rather than +2) when he makes the opposed Strength check.

Two-handed melee weapon; Cost 150 gp; Damage 1d8/1d8 (M); Critical x3; Range Increment —; Weight 25 lbs.; Type slashing and bludgeoning; Requires exotic weapon proficiency.

Dark Valerian

Appearance: Dark valerian is a rare herb. It grows as a four-foot-tall, rangy plant with deeply divided leaves and a mop of small pinkish flowers massed at the top. It is readily distinguished by its foul smell.



Handling and Storage: There are no particulars involving storage or handling.

Effects: Rats are drawn to valerian, and a popular folk tale tells of a herbalist who lured away the rats infesting a city with the herb. It is generally prepared in pellets. All rats within 90' must make Willpower saves opposed by the character's Knowledge (herbalism) skill check or be drawn inexorably to the valerian. Wererats are similarly affected, even while in human form, but gain a +5 bonus to their Willpower save.

Spell Component Uses: *Summon monster I* (dire rats only), *summon swarm* (rats only).

Cost: 10 gp per use.

The Star Arms

Crafted of pure adamantine extracted from a meteor, these weapons provide an enhancement bonus to attack and damage rolls, but they are not enchanted as such. As a result, they are unable to harm incorporeal entities or creatures resistant to non-magical attack. On the other hand, they continue to function in anti-magic fields and are not subject to *dispel magic*.

During their creation, these weapons were somehow imbued with alien intelligence. They can communicate with their possessors via empathic urges, or even attempt to dominate their possessor. The weapons want

to be near one another. They can locate one another over any distance and will urge their possessors to seek out their brethren. At the same time, each weapon is jealous of its autonomy, and each will seek a separate possessor.

As a benefit of the weapons communicating with one another, and with their possessors, the weapons give an inherent advantage when possessed by allies. First, everyone in the party may use the highest initiative roll generated. Second, the characters have limited communication ability via empathic urges. For instance, one character can coordinate a synchronized strike on a tower. Characters also communicate intense emotions such as pain, fear, sorrow or joy.

Kang (Orc, "mercy" or "murder"): Although technically a stiletto (a stabbing weapon with no cutting edge), *Kang* is effectively a +1 masterwork dagger. The 9"-long blade ends in an unimaginably sharp and hard point, making it capable penetrating any natural or crafted armor. In combat, do not count any armor or natural armor bonus for the target when calculating AC; deflection, dodge, and enhancement bonuses still apply.

The owner of this blade is constantly aware of the physical condition of every creature within 25 ft., per the 1st-level cleric spell *deathwatch*. This can be an unnerving or even maddening sensation. Three times per day, the blade can immobilize a victim per the 2nd-level cleric spell *hold person* (save DC 12), making it easier for its wielder to deliver a coup de grace. The attacker must declare he is using this ability before he makes the attack roll. If successful, the target is subjected to the effect; if the attack misses, the attack still counts toward the daily uses.

Light melee weapon, Proficiency simple, Damage 1d4+1, Critical 19-20/x2, Range Increment 10 ft., Weight 1 lb., Type Piercing, Market Price 26,802 gp; Intelligence 13, Wisdom 6, Charisma 13; Ego 6; Alignment NE.

Azurak (Dwarven, "Titan's Fury"): *Azurak* is a +2 *great mace*, a two-handed weapon for Medium wielders. The entire weapon, including the haft, is solid adamantine, and therefore exceptionally heavy. Because of its heft and hardness, *Azurak* is ideal for smashing things. When striking inanimate objects and shields, the wielder may ignore hardness and apply damage directly to the object's hit points. *Azurak* is too slow and clumsy to be of much use in targeting an opponent's weapon.

Those who grasp the handle feel a raw energy flowing into them. With continued contact, the owner may adopt some of the weapon's personality traits, causing him to laugh in the face of danger, seek glory in combat, and revel in demonstrations of strength and power. Once

per day, the weapon can infuse its wielder with a primal fury, per the 3rd level wizard spell *rage*.

Two-handed melee weapon, Proficiency martial, Damage 1d12+2, Critical x2, Range Increment N/A, Weight 40 lb., Type bludgeoning, Market Price 23,218 gp; Intelligence 6, Wisdom 13, Charisma 13; Ego 7; Alignment CN.

Cruel Justice: This weapon functions as a +1 *scimitar*, although has an unusual appearance. The single-edged, slightly-curved blade is wider at the tip than at the base and lacks a point; it resembles nothing less than an elongated cleaver. The silk-and-silver-wrapped hilt is extra-long, allowing the weapon to be used one- or two-handed.

The adamantine blade is honed to razor sharpness, and thus considered *keen*. On a critical hit, the wielder may choose to trade the bonus damage for a chance to lop off the defender's weapon hand. The defender is entitled to a Reflex saving throw (DC 17) to pull his hand away in time, and merely drop his weapon instead. Failure indicates the target takes normal damage and also has his hand chopped off. The wielder may also attempt this maneuver intentionally, by making a disarm attempt per the normal rules (and once again a Reflex saving throw is allowed).

Cruel Justice abhors injustice and deceit, and seeks to punish wrongdoers. Unbeknownst to the wielder, the blade often scans the surface thoughts of those nearby, probing for signs of guilt. Should it detect anything of interest, it urges its owner – via telepathic images – to take action. Additionally, once per day, *Cruel Justice* will share this telepathic ability with its wielder, allowing him to *detect thoughts* per the 2nd level wizard spell.

One-handed or two-handed melee weapon, Proficiency martial, Size Medium, Damage 1d6+1, Critical 15-20/x2, Range Increment N/A, Weight 6 lb., Type slashing, Market Price 21,315 gp; Intelligence 15, Wisdom 15, Charisma 13; Ego 9; Alignment LN.

Ta'kira'kerymor (Elven, "Sword-breaker"): The weapon *Ta'kira'kerymor* appears to be a punching dagger, although of unusual workmanship and design (+1 *magical*). A person grips this weapon in his fist, so that the 8"-long diamond-shaped blade extends from his knuckles. A curved guard protects the back of the hand. By squeezing the grip, the wielder can cause two side blades to spring out on either side, forming a splayed adamantine tiger's claw. Squeezing the grip again retracts the blades, allowing the weapon to be sheathed.

Ta'kira'kerymor is intended to be used in the wearer's off hand, to parry or trap an opponent's weapon. The blade acts as a *defender* weapon, allowing the wielder to

transfer the weapon's enchantment bonus to his AC as a special bonus that stacks with all others. When *Sword-breaker* is used in the off hand, it cannot be used for a normal attack against the opponent, but it can be used to damage an opponent's weapon. Sunder attacks made by *Ta'kira'kerymor* in the bearer's off hand are made as if the bearer had the Improved Sunder feat.

The owner of this weapon gains an empathic bond with animals, and may *calm animals* at will (per the 1st level druid spell). Three times per day, he may even attempt to telepathically communicate with nearby animals, per the 1st level druid spell *speak with animals*.

Light melee weapon, Proficiency simple, Size Tiny, Damage 1d4+1, Critical x3, Range Increment N/A, Weight 3 lb., Type piercing, Market Price 20,815 gp; Intelligence 9, Wisdom 13, Charisma 9; Ego 6; Alignment N.

Qi (Draconic, "Focus"): *Qi* is a simple baton, 12" long and 1" in diameter, crafted from pure adamantine. While it can be used as a weapon, even thrown at an enemy, its abilities go far beyond a crude cudgel.

Anyone who holds this rod has clarity of thought and increased mental fortitude. Apply a +10 competence bonus to all Concentration skill checks. The wielder also benefits from a +4 insight bonus against all saving throws involving mind-affecting spells, such as enchantments (e.g., *hold person*) and divinations (e.g., *detect thoughts*).

Three times per day, the wielder can attempt to calm the emotions of those nearby, per the 2nd-level cleric spell *calm emotions*. Once per day, the wielder can focus the rod's considerable psychic power into a blast of mental energy. This attack is a cone 60 ft. long. Anyone caught in this cone must succeed at a Will save (DC 17) or be stunned for 3d4 rounds.

Qi will not tolerate cruelty or needless killing, and will attempt to gain dominance over its possessor when a witness to such. However, for the most part it is content to remain a quiet teacher, subtly nudging its possessor toward a state of harmony and enlightenment.

Light melee weapon, Proficiency simple, Size Small, Damage 1d4+1 nonlethal, Critical x2, Range Increment 20 ft., Weight 2 lb., Type bludgeoning, Market Price 21,802 gp; Intelligence 19, Wisdom 19, Charisma 13; Ego 16; Alignment NG.

Players' Handout A



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Players' Handout C



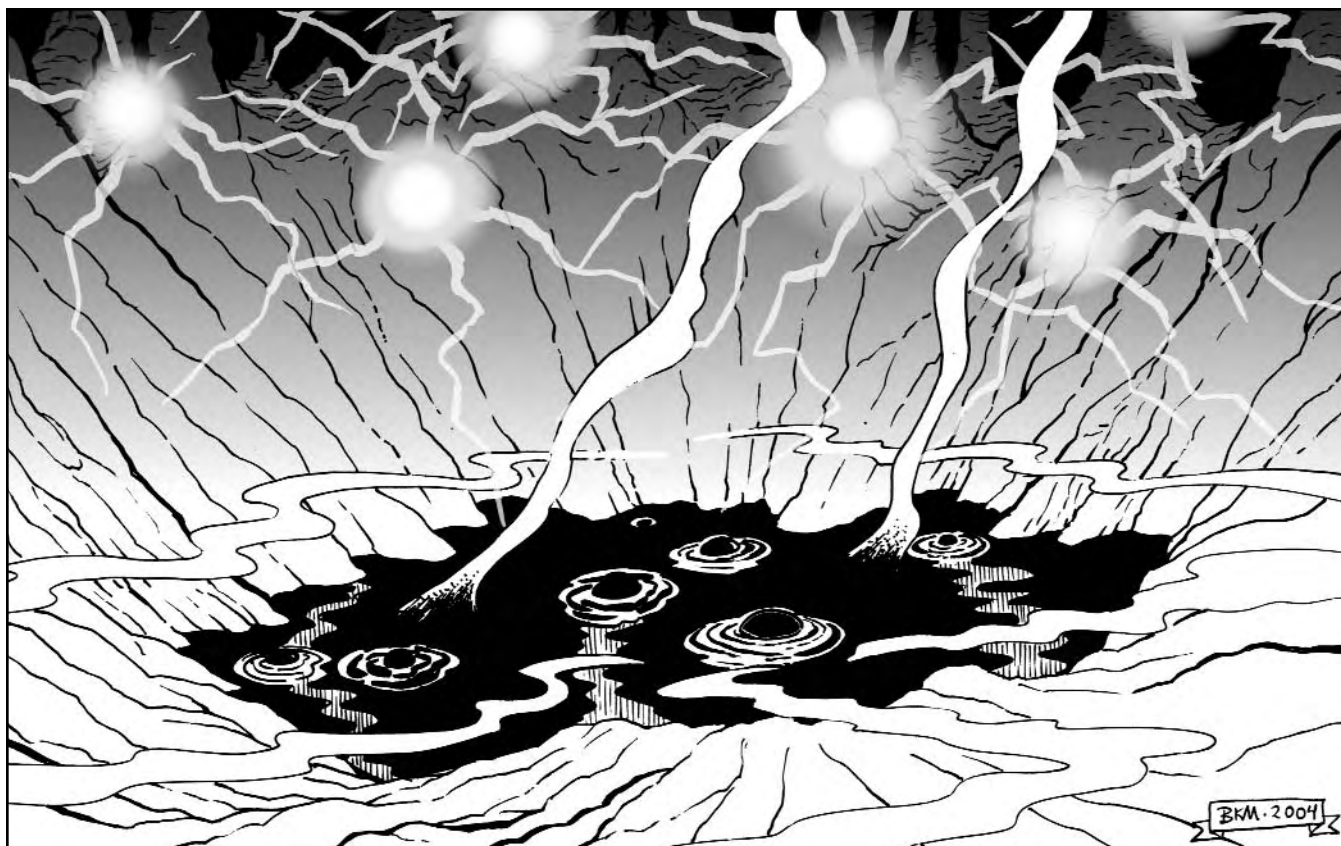
Players' Handout B

The siege continues unabated. The troops must be issued liquid courage to steel and calm nerves, for hunger is certainly driving them mad. For myself, I know that I might find salvation at any time, but I remain loyally at my post. These men are my brothers, and I will serve with them until the last. My research into the mysterious substance within the peak continues onward. Perhaps it will mean salvation for us all?

Something strange has overcome the senior officers and some of the men. They demonstrate a sudden air of cheery expectancy that belies our desperate straits. They are of the highest spirits, full of confidence, even as their fellows perish from hunger around them. I have never witnessed such a disturbing, incongruous feeling of eagerness.

I know now why the officers and their compatriots grow stronger while the rest of us wither away as faded examples of humanity. Their evil is too base to even mention. They have long since ceased to be men, and have devolved into savage animals. There is nothing more I can do here, and I fear they know that I have surmised wherein they find their sustenance. I must flee before I too become a victim.

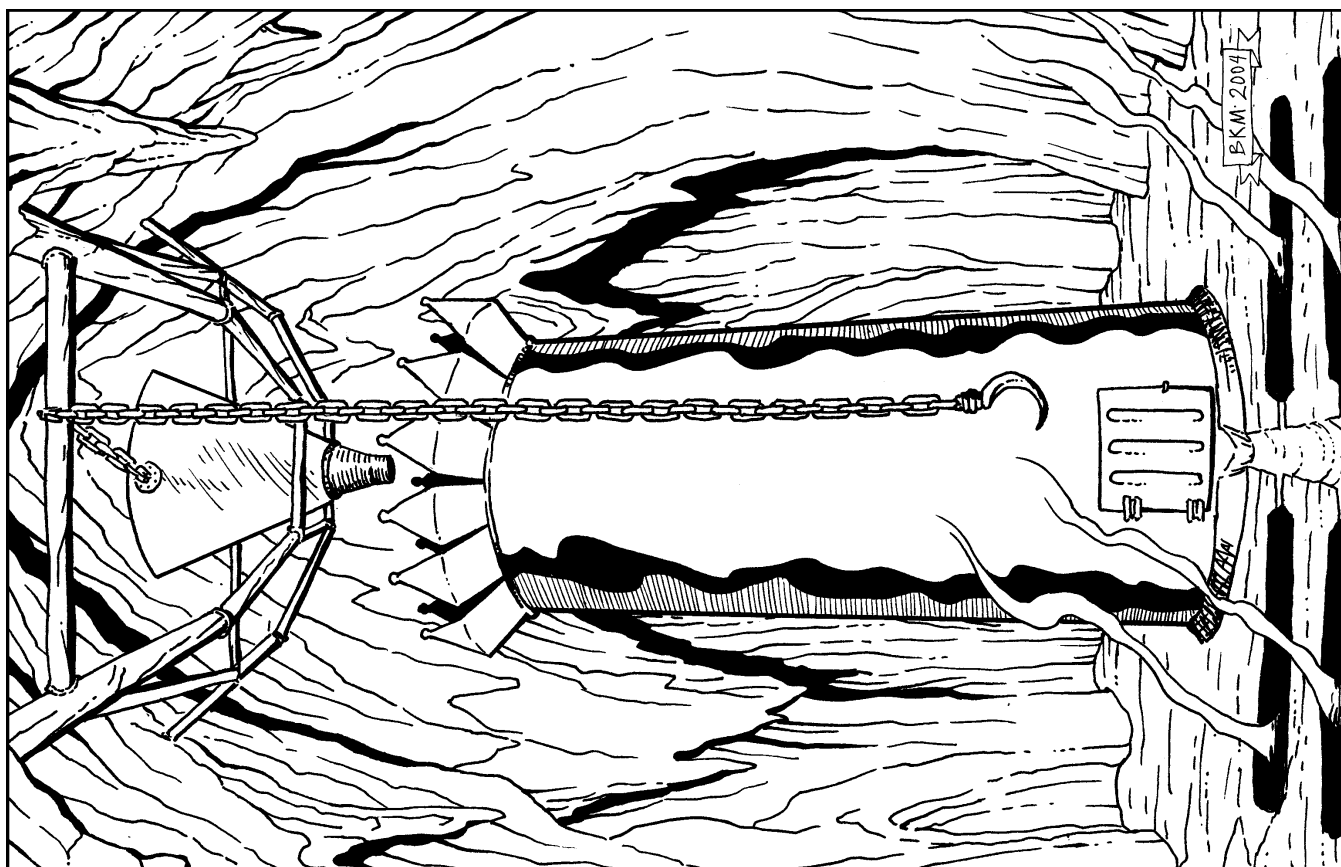
Players' Handout D

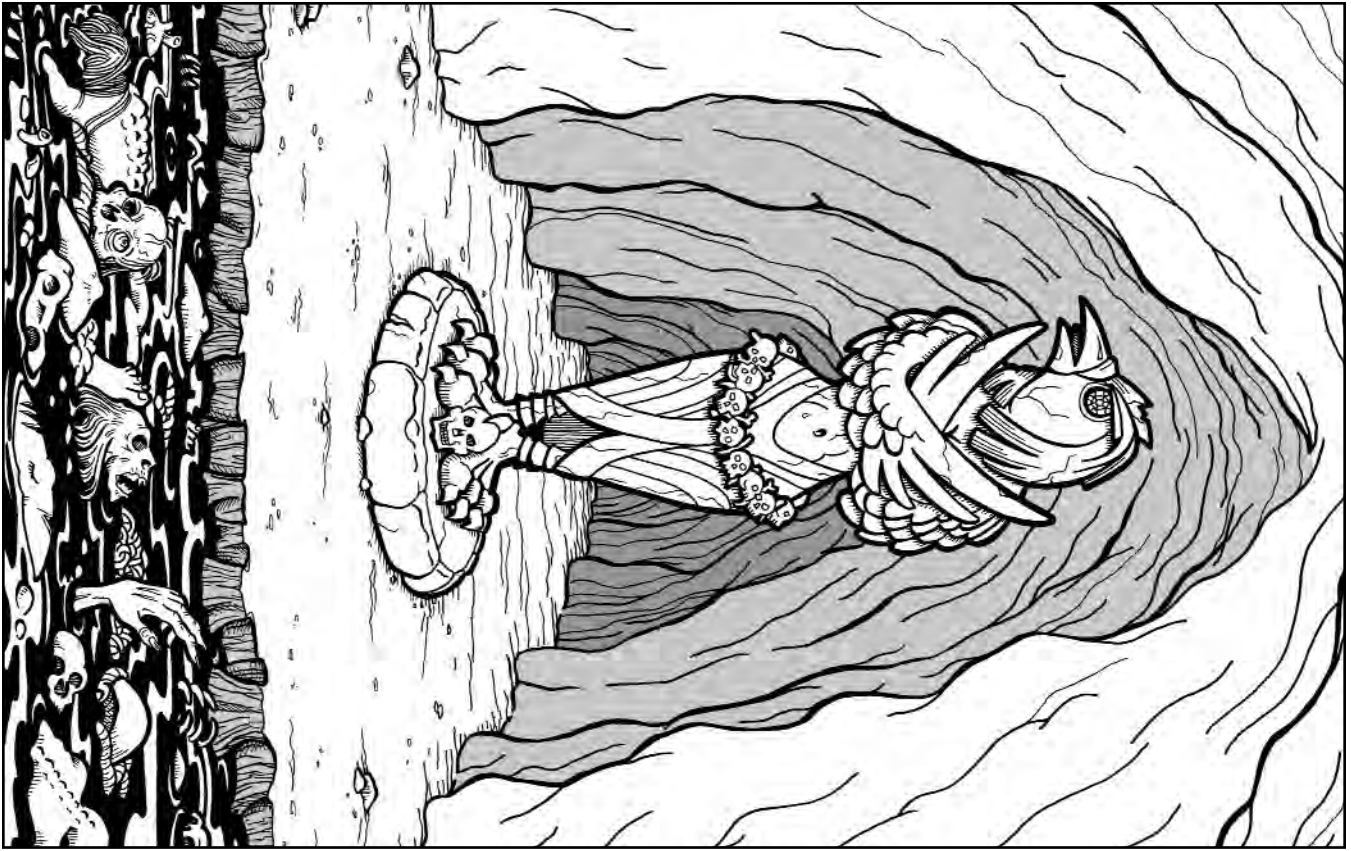


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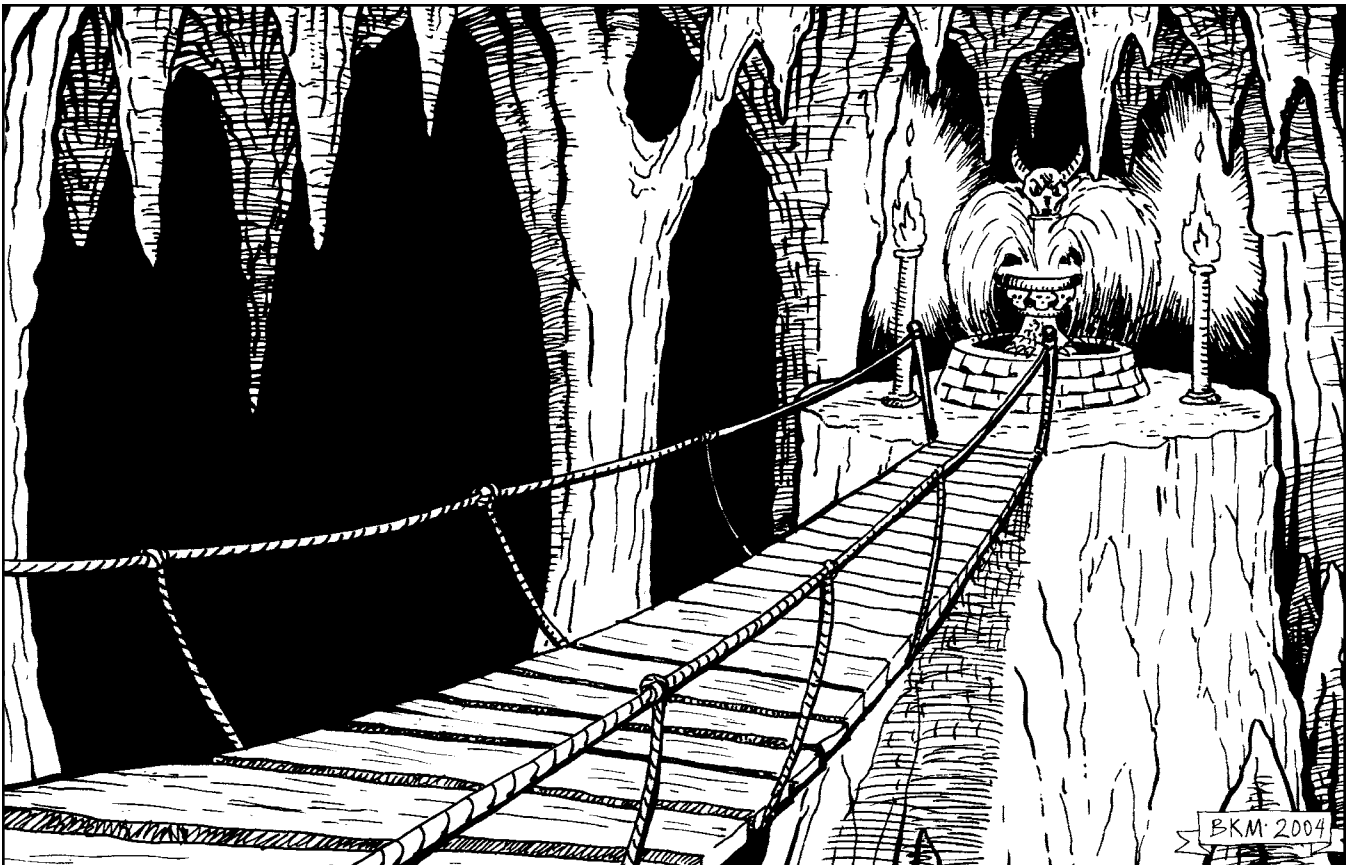
Players' Handout E





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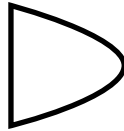
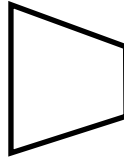
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Dungeon Crawl Classics Character Record Sheet

Player's Name _____ Character's Name _____

Race _____ Class _____ Level _____ Alignment _____

 AC _____  Hit Points _____

Tch: _____ Max: _____ Initative _____ Spell Save DC _____

FF: _____ Nonlethal: _____

 BAB _____

 Melee _____

 2nd Hand _____

 Ranged _____

 Grapple _____

Strength

Modifier: _____

Dexterity

Modifier: _____

Constitution

Modifier: _____

Intelligence

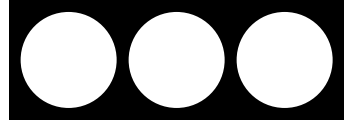
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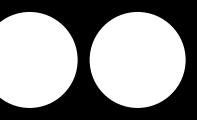
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Modifier: _____

Charisma

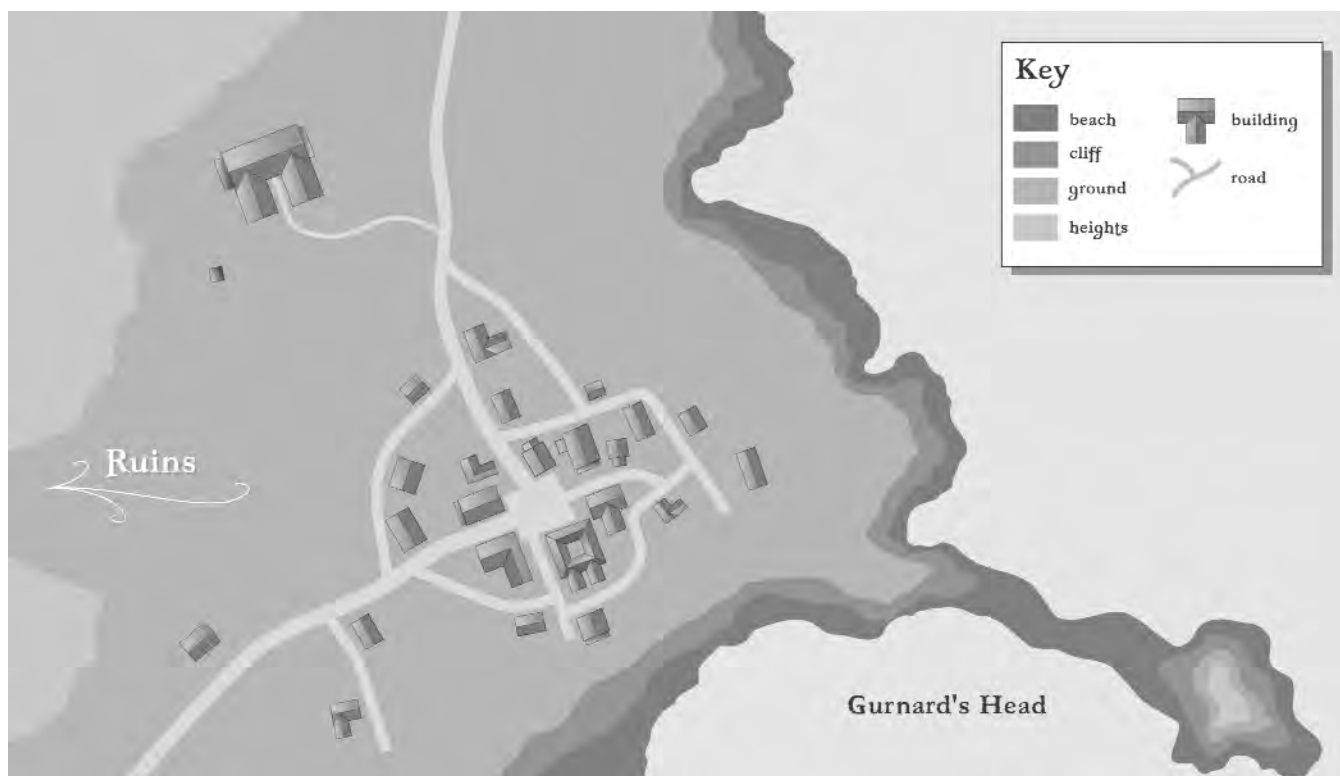
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 Fort Save _____

 Ref Save _____

 Will Save _____

Carnelloe and Environs



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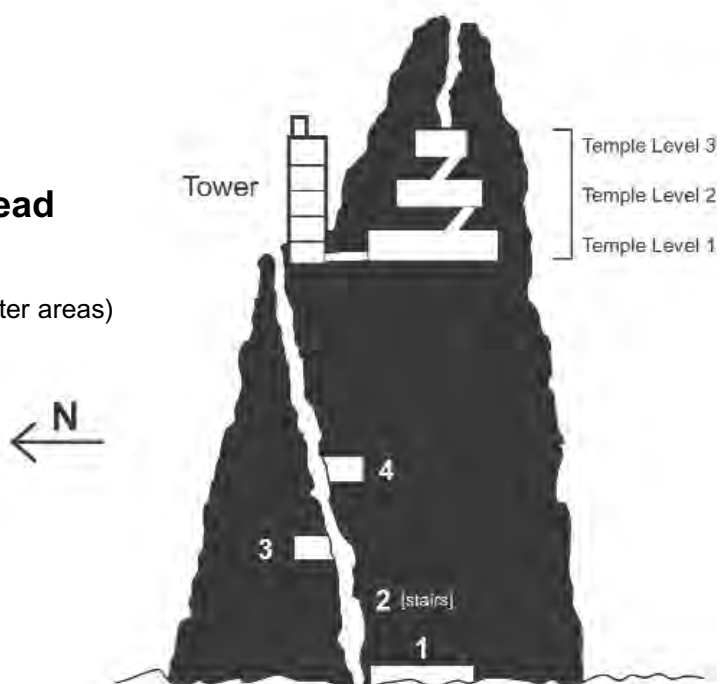
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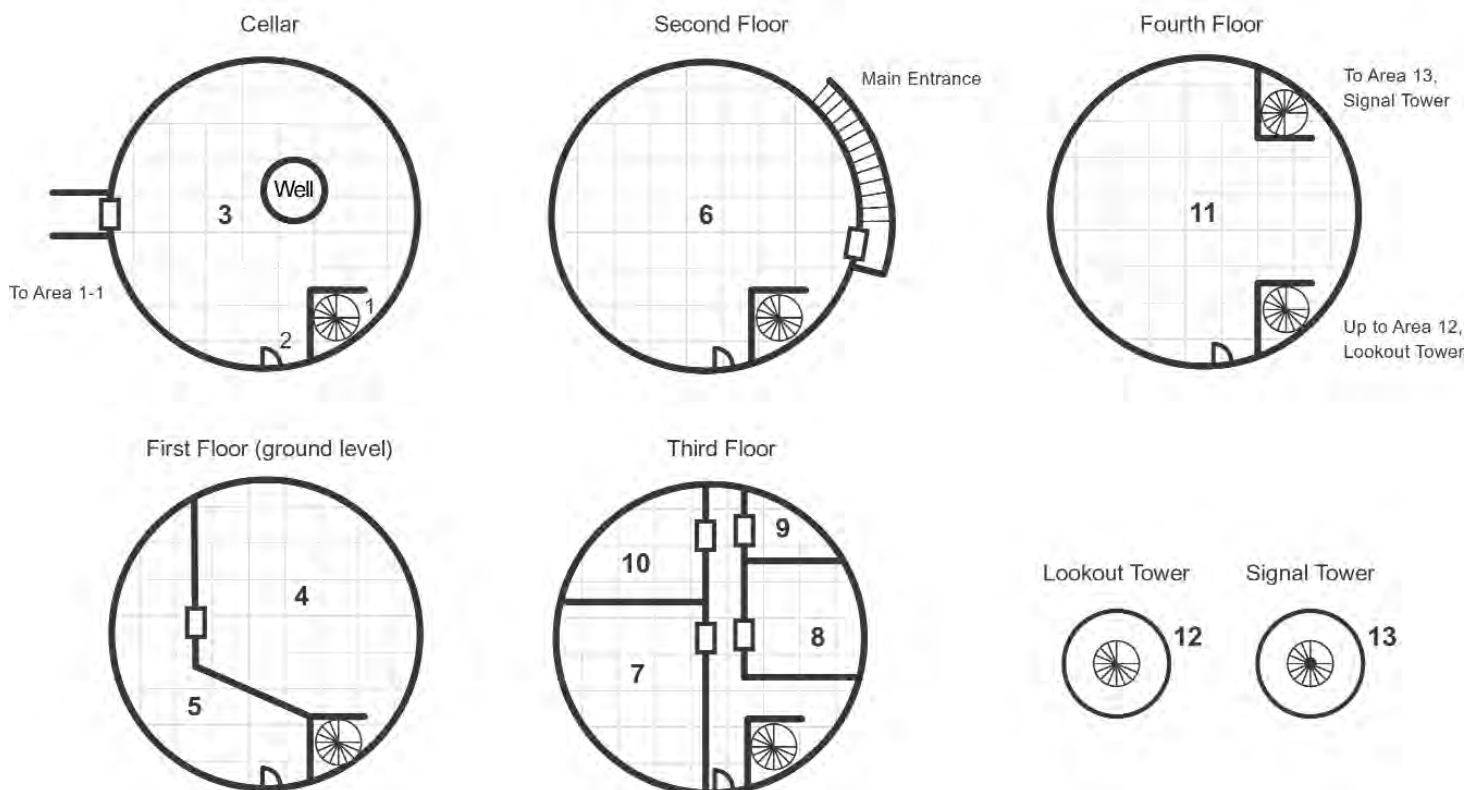
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Cross Section of Gurnard's Head (Level A)

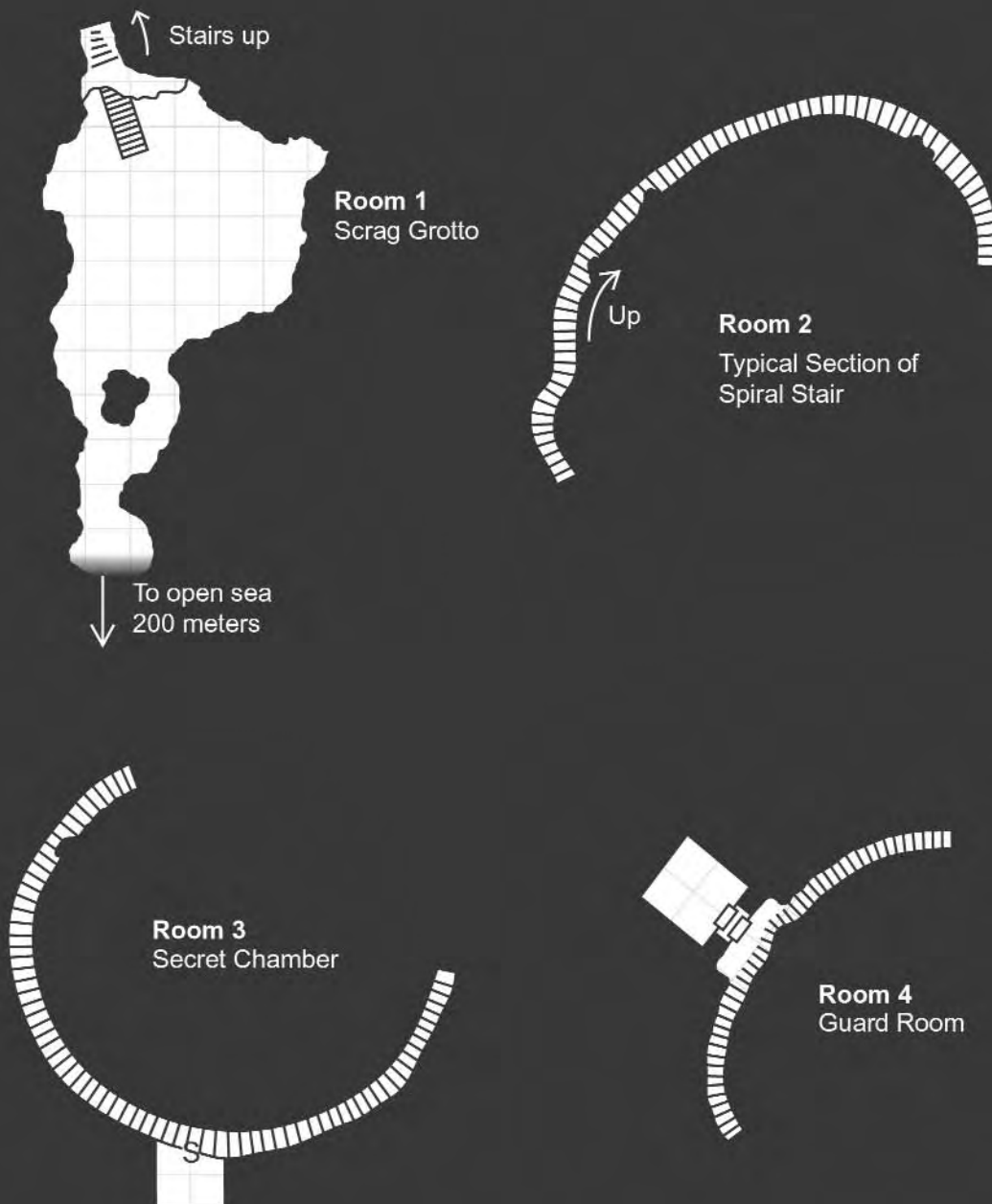
(See page 48 for overhead map of level A encounter areas)



The Tower (Level B)



Overhead View of Encounters on The Way Up (Level A)



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