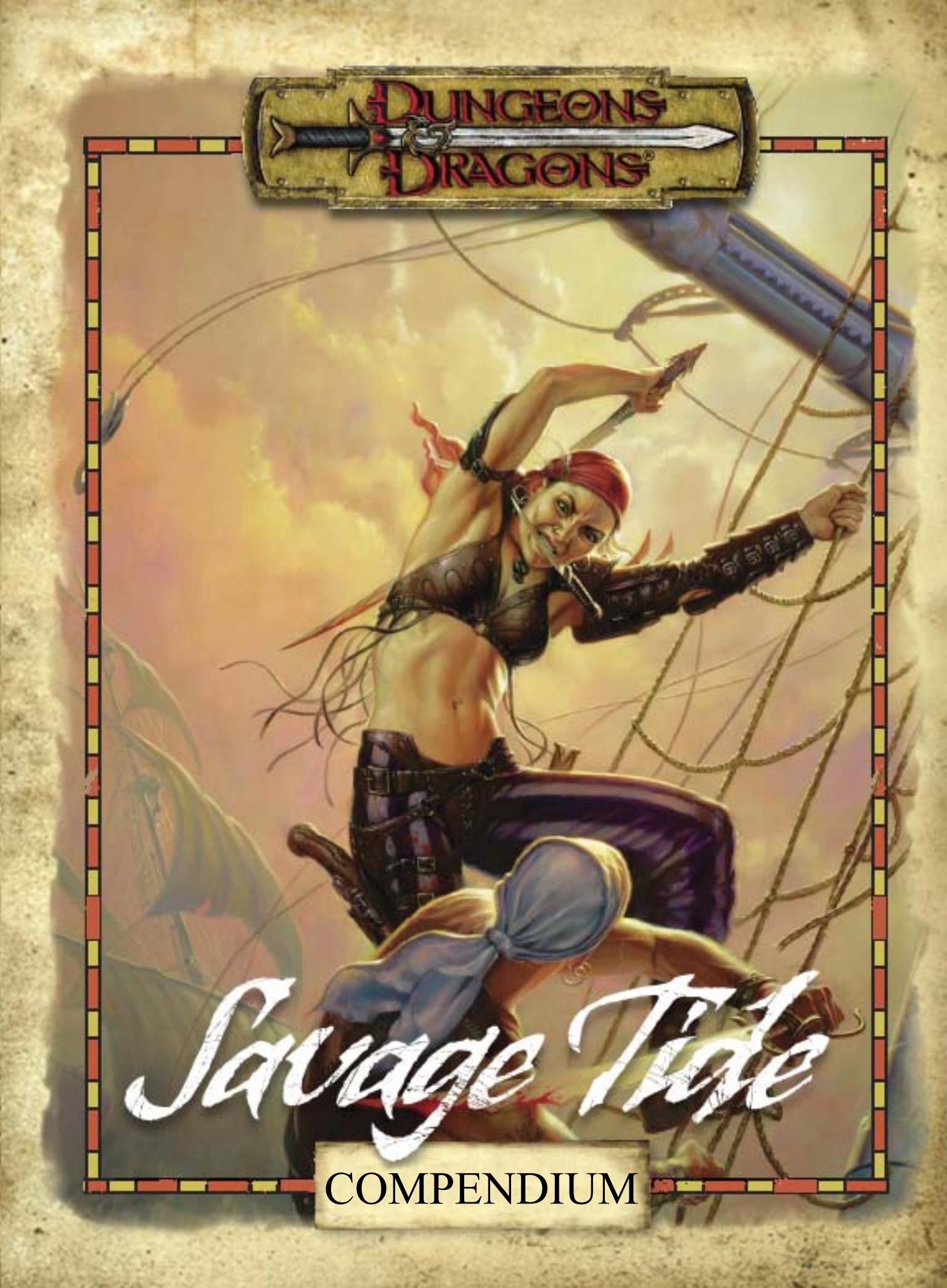
Dungeons & Dragons
Savage Tide
COMPENDIUM

Savage Tide

Player's Guide

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In the Savage Tide Adventure Path, your characters are destined to face a wide range of dangerous monsters, hostile terrain, murderous organizations, and sinister magic. Yet before you set off, you'll need to know where your character is from. This campaign begins in the exotic port city of Sasserine, and it is here that the foundations of your character will be laid. The City of Sasserine is perched on the edge of the known world, the last stop before the endless expanse of the Amedio Jungle. It is a hub of trade, and home to more than fifteen thousand souls, a bastion of civilization in a realm haunted by piracy, disease, violent weather, and monsters.

Further details on Sasserine are provided for the DM in *Dungeon* #139, which also kicks off the new Savage Tide Adventure Path. This campaign assumes your starting character is a Sasserine native, and as such you can expect to know a fair amount in advance about the city. This booklet presents everything you'll need to know about your new home town, from an exhaustive list of every major shop and tavern to the names of famous locals and the rumors currently circulating in the streets and taprooms.

Look through this booklet and pick your character's home district. Each district has an associated district feat—district feats are slightly better than standard feats. Think of them as a small bonus to your character for picking a home that matches his temperament and interests. If the DM agrees, your district feat can be a bonus feat, although this option really only works if everyone in your party qualifies for a district feat.

Sasserine itself is governed by a group of seven noble families called the Dawn Council, each representing one of the city's seven districts. Likewise, each district has a common church or faith shared by many of its citizens. When you create your character, you should bear the nature of your district's nobility and religion in mind, although you aren't required to pick the same deity or ally your interests with those of your council representative.

Sasserine (Large City): Conventional; AL NG; Population 15,650; 40,000 gp limit; Assets 31,300,000 gp; Mixed (77% human, 6% half-elf, 5% halfling, 4% gnome, 4% dwarf, 2% elf, 1% half-orc, 1% other).

AZURE DISTRICT

Azure District is Sasserine's true waterfront. Consisting of two sections, Azure District also houses the majority of the city's slums and lower-class citizens, although they aren't quite as desperate a catch as those forced to live in Shadowshore. The western section of Azure District is primarily concerned with the city's internal waterways, while the eastern section is home to the city's booming whaling industry.

Azure District's representative nobles are the Islarans. The family has held the post of harbormaster for many generations, although rumor holds that old Keltar Islaran's getting on in years and none of his children particularly want the job when he passes on. Rumors also hold that the Kellani family has designs on this post, but with relations between these two families being as choppy as they are these days, it's unlikely that such a transfer will occur while old Keltar still lives.

Pets and Guardians

Whereas the majority of Sasserine's trade occurs in the Merchant District, Azure District remains a close second. In particular, the trade of exotic animals is a lucrative (and often dangerous) facet of this district's East Market. Most of these creatures are destined for lives in the north as pets, but a few of them are more dangerous. This trade is one of the few the Azure Watch monitors (after a particularly tragic incident involving an escaped wyvern)—as a result, the black market and smuggling trade for dangerous animals does a booming business.

Listed below are prices for purchasing exotic and dangerous creatures from the Azure Markets. Other creatures may be available as your DM determines.

Availability: This lists the percentage chance on any given day that the creature in question is avialable. If a creature isn't available, you can make a DC 20 Diplomacy check to place an order—each following day, the chance that the creature becomes available increases by 5%.

Restriction: Certain creatures are dangerous to transport or keep in civilized areas—these creatures are restricted by the city watch. Before you can purchase a restricted creature, you must undergo a 3-hour interview (and pay a 50 gp application fee) with the watch at Azure Garrison to obtain a dangerous pet license. In order to convince the watch you mean no harm, you must make either a Bluff or Diplomacy check of the indicated DC (you can't take 20 on either of these checks). Success nets you a license; failure gets your name on the watch list. You can apply for a license again in one month's time. Some desperate souls seek out the black market for forged licences—see page 12 for details on Sasserine's black markets.

Cost: Two numbers are listed here; an initial cost (the price you pay when you purchase your new pet) and the training cost (the price you pay to have your pet trained not to attack you).

City Watch

The Azure Watch is concerned primarily with keeping Sasserine's whaling operations running smoothly. Whalers are generally allowed to get away with more as a result; the watch figures that they're at sea most of the time anyway. An arrested whaler is almost always returned to his captain's ship for punishment or confinement there rather than taken to the district's undersized jail. Members of the Azure Watch tend to be a bit more strict with other criminals, but transfer them to Sunrise Garrison (see page 14) if they require long-term punishment.

Water Rat [General]

Most of Azure District's citizens learn to swim at a very early age, and take to the water as easily as land.

District: Azure.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on Swim checks. When wearing light or no armor and not encumbered, fatigued, or exhausted, you can swim at one-half your speed as a move action or your full speed as a full-round action. While swimming, you gain a +2 bonus on Initiative checks.

Normal: Without the benefits of this feat, a character swims at one-quarter his speed as a move action or at one-half speed as a full-round action.

Exotic Pets

Creature	Availability	Restriction	Cost
Deinonychus	20%	DC 25	400 gp (100 gp)
Dire Bat	30%	DC 25	500 gp (100 gp)
Leopard	100%	DC 20	100 gp (50 gp)
Shocker Lizard	30%	DC 25	3,000 gp (1,000 gp)
Tiger	60%	DC 25	800 gp (200 gp)
Viper (Tiny)	80%	DC 25	100 gp (75 gp)
Viper (Small)	50%	DC 25	300 gp (150)
Wyvern	5%	DC 30	8,000 gp (3,000 gp)

Citizens

If you're from Azure District, you probably spent a fair portion of your youth at sea. You have friends or family that work in the whaling industry, and may have spent some time on a whaling ship yourself. You likely worship at the Azure Cathedral, a temple dedicated to Osprem (the goddess of ships and sailors), Procan (the god of the sea), and Xerbo (the god of sea trade). Further details on these three minor deities, of spcial interest to clerics, can be found in *Complete Divine*. Alternately, you could worship all three, in which case you have access to the domains of Luck, Strength, Travel, and Water. Clerics who worship all three of these deities may be of any alignment.

Notable NPCs

Belrain Daskeral (male human): The high-priest of the Azure Cathedral, Belrain is a soft-spoken man who tends the district church along with his twelve acolytes. Belrain is known to have a powerful temper.

Captain Shadwik (male human): Master of the Whaler's Guild, Captain Shadwik is a gruff, grizzled man who made his fortune as a whaler. Now too old to captain his own ship, he represents the whalers and fisherfolk of the city.

Heldrath Kellani (female human): Matroness of the Kellani family, Heldrath was once an adventurer (some say a pirate) who

is thought to have not quite abandoned the questionable pastimes of her youth. She is rumored to be quite ill.

Keltar Islaran (male human): Lord of Islaran Manor and representative of Azure District on the Dawn Council, Keltar is an aging noble whose children have either gone missing or have no real interest in continuing the family's traditional post as harbormaster.

Maklash Gristwhistle (male dwarf): This obese and almost maniacally cheerful dwarf runs the Dredger's Guild, the organization charged with keeping Sasserine's waterways and canals clear of obstructions and filth.

Rowyn Kellani (female human): Eldest daughter of the Kellani family, and the most likely to take over control of the estate when her mother Heldrath passes on.

Azure District Locations

1: Islaran Manor (district representative)
2: Best Bait and Deserts (bait and bakery)
3: Dredger's Guildhall
4: Nate's Nets (nets, fine fishing equipment)
5: The Empty Grave (tavern)
6: The Bloodthirsty Pelican (tavern/inn)
7: Kellani Manor (minor noble)
8: Bizwor's Balms (medicine and seasickness cures)
9: Pearldiver's Guildhall
10: The Gull's Nest (brothel)
11: Ropemaker's Guildhall
12: Azure Garrison
13: East Market (general goods, seafood, animals)
14: The Mermaid's Secret (brothel)
15: Whaleworks (fine scrimshaw art)
16: Azure Cathedral (district church)
17: The Sasserine Sleigh Ride (tavern/brothel)
18: Finback Whaling
19: Inker's Guildhall (tattoo artists)
20: Sasserine Whaling
21: The Drunken Dolphin (whaler tavern)
22: Whaler's Guildhall
23: Red Sea Whaling
24: Fishmonger's Guildhall
25: Azure Lighthouse

CHAMPION'S DISTRICT

Champion's District towers over Sasserine's western skyline, a district of soldiers, gladiators, mercenaries, and warriors who follow in the footsteps of the city's first lord-mayor, a priest of Kord named Teraknian. Champion's District has a not-so-friendly relationship with the Noble District, and citizens see themselves as the true and rightful leaders of the city.

Champion's District's representative nobles are the Lorchesters, old blood who have been established in Sasserine nearly from the city's foundation. The family's patriarch, Neldrak Lorchester, is generally thought to be a bit too scheming for his own good. The Lorchesters have recently clashed with Cudgel District's Taskerhill family over ownership of Thunder River Lumber. Closer to home, they've been at odds with another Champion's District noble family, the Toregsons. Rumor holds that the source of the conflict between the Lorchesters and the Toregsons has something to do with the Smith's Guild.

Also of note in Champion's District is the Scarlet Embassy. This relatively new structure is the home of one Anteki Alresian, an ambassador to the sinister and (some would say) untrustworthy Scarlet Brotherhood. Anteki's presence in the city, and in Champion's District, has been nothing but positive on the surface—he's donated a fair amount of resources to public works, and the Embassy has an open door policy for visitors. Still, rumors abound that the Embassy is nothing more than a front used by the Scarlet Brotherhood to lull Sasserine into a false sense of security for a Brotherhood assault from the sea.

Gladitorial Challenges

The Sasserine Arena is one of the more popular entertainment venues in Sasserine. Fights are scheduled at minimum once per week by an organization of mercenaries, hunters, and explorers known as Zelkarune's Horns. Fights in the Sasserine Arena are generally not to the death, but are often used to settle debts or conflicts between people or orginizations. At other times, Zelkarune's Horns sponsor what are known as "Dragon Challenges," in which local heroes and mercenaries fight against dangerous creatures. The Horns are said to be preparing a yearly event that pits numerous teams of gladiators against each other, modeled after the world-famous "Champion's Games" held yearly in the Free City of Greyhawk far to the north, although they have yet to anounce a date for the first competition.

City Watch

The Champion's Watch are the most militant of the seven watches. Their members patrol the streets of Champion's District in full uniform on regular schedules; their presence in the district is as much for show as for law enforcement. Members of the Watch are expected to take part in Arena events monthly, with any winnings being split with the church of Kord. The Champion's Watch looks down (literally and figuratively) on the Shadowshore Watch, regarding them as little better than the criminals they know populate that district. Of the seven watches, the Champion's Watch comprises the most loyal and incorruptible members; their high pay and morale render internal corruption all but unknown.

Arena Blood [General]

The blood of an arena champion flows in your veins, giving you a thirst for glory and a drive to succeed.

District: Champion's.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on Intimidate skill checks. In addition, whenever you successfuly demoralize an opponent using the Intimidate skill during combat you are immediately healed of 1d4 points of nonlethal damage.

You also gain a +2 morale bonus on grapple checks, sunder attempts, trip attempts, bull rush attempts, and disarm attempts if you are aware of any noncombatants observing a fight you are participating in.

Steadfast Loyalty [General]

Self control and discipline are the birthright of many who grow up in Champion's District, and you strive to uphold these ideals.

District: Champion's.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on Will saving throws against charm, compulsion, and fear effects. In addition, if you have the Leadership feat, your leadership score increases by +1.

Citizens

If you're from Champion's District, you may belong to a minor noble family, and have probably been to the Sasserine Arena several times. You might know someone who has fought in the arena, and may have desires to test your mettle there yourself someday. Alternately, you may be interested in exploring the Amedio Jungle to try to gather trophies (living or dead) for Zelkarune's Horns. If you're of a less martial bent but still hail from this district, perhaps you have some ties to the Scarlet Embassy. Although it's unlikely you're fully a member of the Scarlet Brotherhood, the Embassy has been known to accept locals as agents or apprentices from time to time. You likely worship Kord, or possibly St. Cuthbert. If you worship Wee Jas, you keep your faith personal and close to your chest.

Notable NPCs

Anteki Alresian (human male): Anteki is an ambassador from the sinister Scarlet Brotherhood. He maintains a civil and even respectable veneer, but many suspect him of having ulterior motives in Sasserine.

Neldrak Lorchester (human male): Lord of Lorchester Manor and representative of Champion's District on the Dawn Council. Neldrak has a reputation of being canny and scheming.

Tormagal Gred (human male): Tormagal, a no-nonsense and humorless man, is the high priest of the church of Kord.

Urik Toregson (human male): Master of Toregson Manor and owner of the Smith's Guildhall in Merchant District, Urik is a popular figure who's made a name for himself in staged fights at the Arena.

Zasker Grankus (human male): A likable (if intimidating) one-time barbarian, Zasker runs the group of hunters and mercenaries known as Zelkarune's Horns.

Champion's District Locations

1: Six Swords Tavern (tavern)
2: Rumblegut's (tavern/inn)
3: Sasserine Sendings (messenger service)
4: Lorchester Manor (district representative)
5: Zelkarune's Hall (museum and adjunct to Arena)
6: Redwall Stable
7: Sasserine Arena
8: The Trophy Hunter (curio shop)
9: Moneylender's Guildhall
10: Gladiator's Best (fine weapons)
11: Toregson Manor (minor noble)
12: The Tipsy Troglodyte (tavern)
13: Three Dwarves Digging (tavern/gaming hall)
14: Champion's Corner Stable
15: Aunt Kylie's (brothel)
16: Lanternlighter's Guildhall
17: Champion's Garrison
18: Museum of Mayhem (museum of Arena battles)
19: Shrine of Norebo (god of gambling)
20: House of Kord (district church)
21: Shrine of Llerg (god of beasts and strength)
22: Fendal's Pets (exotic pets and guard beasts)
23: Liomar's Links (fine chainmail products)
24: Vildivar's (bows, arrows, ranged weapons)
25: Bee in the Bottle (potions)
26: Kord's Quencher (tavern)
27: The Catapulter (tavern/gaming hall)
28: Champion's Lighthouse
29: The Hidden Vortex (fortune teller)
30: Snaver's Kennel (animal trainer)
31: Spells for Swords (magic shop)
32: Kord's Market (general goods, weapons, armor, metalwork)
33: Scarlet Embassy
34: Shrine of Kelanen (god of swords)

CUDGEL DISTRICT

Cudgel District is primarily a residential district. Due to the vigilance of the local watch and the church of St. Cuthbert, it's also the safest district in Sasserine. The citizens of Cudgel District know this, yet they are not a soft people; they remain ever vigilant to the threat of attack from without in the form of bullywugs or pirates, or from within in the form of thieves and traitors.

Cudgel District's representative nobles are the Taskerhills. Although they're hardly the oldest noble family in Sasserine, the Taskerhills are easily the richest. Their ownership of Thunder River Lumber has ensured a constant inflow of profit for hundreds of years. The current patriarch of this noble family is a man named Kalmadar Taskerhill. A recent scandal involving his older brother, a noble of the nearby city of Cauldron, has done some unfortunate damage to the family name, and Kalmadar's primary concern today is to repair this damage in any way he can. As a result, he's been spending a lot of time away from home visiting his brother's family.

Although St. Cuthbert's the official religion of Cudgel District, a smaller shrine has been attracting a fair amount of attention lately. This is the mysterious Church of the Whirling Fury, located in northern Cudgel District on the aptly named Fury Street. The front doors of this church bear a set of chains fixed with a padlock, and there are no windows in the church's stone walls. Locals say they've seen people entering and exiting the church using silver keys to unlock the chains, but no one's been brave enough to investigate further. Rumors of demon worship, live sacrifices, and worse circulate about the church, yet the priests of St. Cuthbert remain curiously close-lipped about the matter. Father Ruphus Laro of St. Cuthbert says only that he's keeping his eye on the Church of Whirling Fury, but that it does not pose a threat to the city.

The people of Cudgel District are a watchful, laconic lot. They have little patience or tolerance for the rough and coarse lifestyle led by most adventurers. Merchants, innkeepers, and bartenders in Cudgel District often charge up to 200% over normal prices for customers dressed like adventurers (typified by openly wearing weapons or armor).

City Watch

In some ways, the Cudgel Watch are similar to the Champion's Watch. Both are closely tied to their district's official faith (in this case, St. Cuthbert), both present regular patrols in uniform, and both are fiercely loyal. Yet the Cudgel Watch is more concerned with preventing criminal activity than any other watch in Sasserine, to the extent that they sometimes overstep their bounds. Tales of wrongful imprisonment abound here, although the Cudgel Watch maintains that such cases are rare as a result. The citizens of Cudgel District are the least flamboyant and outgoing of the people of Sasserine, making the district a draw for those not as interested in the bustle of city life. Criminal activity in Cudgel District is more prevalent along the borders between Cudgel and Shadowshore and Merchant District. Of the watches, the Cudgel Watch is the most likely to pursue criminals into other districts or meddle with another district's watch affairs, making them the least-liked district watches.

Suspicious Eye [General]

You are always on the lookout for treachery and wrongdoing, like many of the other people from Cudgel District.

District: Cudgel.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on Sense Motive skill checks. In addition, the DC to take an object from you through the Sleight of Hand skill is increased to 25. You still receive the normal opposed Spot skill check to notice the attempt, and if you make this Spot check, you may immediately make an attack of opportunity on the target who was attempting to pick your pocket. If someone attempts the feint combat maneuver on you, you gain a +4 bonus on your Sense Motive check to avoid the feint.

Normal: The DC to take an object from a character through the Sleight of Hand skill is 20.

Citizens

If you're from Cudgel District, it's possible you've never left Sasserine. Indeed, it's possible you've never even left Cudgel District. The outer world is a place of mystery and perhaps fear for you, yet you may be equally intrigued by its lures. You likely worship St. Cuthbert, or perhaps Kord. Another church exists in your district, the Church of the Whirling Fury, but chances are that even if you're curious about what they have to offer, you haven't figured them out... yet. If you're a ranger, your favored enemy is probably humanoid (humans), as you've learned that humanity has the greatest capacity for evil and treachery. Of the seven districts, the citizens of Cudgel are the least likely to seek an adventurous lifestyle. Those who do become adventurers are viewed by family and neighbors as black sheep.

Notable NPCs

Gerialar Divalean (human male): Abbot of the peaceful House of Violets, Gerialar admits few visitors to his monastery. Those few who have visited tell tales of a place of serenity, shielded from the bustle of the surrounding city by magical curtains that block sound.

Kalmadar Taskerhill (human male): Lord of Taskerhill Manor and representative of Cudgel District on the Dawn Council. Kalmadar is possibly the richest man in Sasserine.

Ruphus Laro (human male): Father Ruphus Laro took up the mantle of the high priest of the church of St. Cuthbert after the recent death of Father Ilthan Forn. Ruphus is kind, young, and energetic.

Tenkar Gritbeard (dwarf male): A gregarious and barrel-chested dwarf, Tenkar is the leader of the Stonemason's Guild. He and his fellow stonemasons are tasked with the upkeep of Sasserine's city wall, and as such are one of the more powerful guilds in town.

Cudgel District Locations

1: Cudgel Lighthouse
2: Streetsweeper's Guildhall
3: Carpenter's Guildhall
4: Tentooth's Taphouse (tavern)
5: Enad's Trickery (curio shop)
6: The Barrelhouse (tavern)
7: Low Market (general goods)
8: Fast Vera's (tavern)
9: Welcome Home (home sales)
10: Bent Bertha's (tavern)
11: Little Sunrises (magical light sources)
12: Cudgel Garrison Adjunct
13: The Thrice-Born Phoenix (inn)
14: Church of the Whirling Fury
15: The Silverlode (tavern)
16: Building By Design (construction)
17: Eva's Boat Rentals
18: Tharvel's Hides (fine hides and leather goods)
19: The Legless Stork (tavern)
20: Marshwarden's Hall (guides for local marshes)
21: Three Thin Cats (general goods)
22: Black Crab (brewery)
23: The Painted Hare (tavern)
24: The Sacred Hound (dog trainers)
25: Shrine of Fortubo (god of stone and guardianship)
26: Shrine of Garl Glittergold
27: Ratcatcher's Guildhall
28: Cudgel Garrison Adjunct
29: Stonemason's Guildhall
30: The Whispering Anvil (tavern/inn)
31: Shrine of Moradin
32: Temple of St. Cuthbert (district church)
33: Gondola Waystation
34: Fishfood (tavern)
35: Delthar's Protections (fine weaponry)
36: Selder's Tales (cheap novels)
37: Chimneysweep's Guildhall
38: Purifier's Guildhall (water tower maintenance)
39: The Rasp (tavern)
40: The Unexpected Monkey (tavern)
41: West Market (general goods, lumber, livestock)
42: Sesker's Whiskers (brewery)
43: Cudgel Garrison Adjunct
44: Stirge in the Stew (tavern)
45: The Burning Dragon (inn)
46: Gondola Waystation
47: Cudgel District Hall of Records
48: Taskerhill Manor (district representative)
49: Cudgel Garrison
50: Laughing Shark (brewery)
51: Crab Pond Ale (brewery)
52: Hathgak's (general goods)
53: Shrine of Yondalla
54: House of Violets (monastery)
55: Gilvery's Goods (general goods)
56: Lumberjacker Ale (brewery)
57: Emerald Journeys (guides for the Amedio Jungle)

MERCHANT DISTRICT

Sasserine's heart, and perhaps even its soul, is lodged firmly in Merchant District. The first district most visitors reach, it's often the only one they need ever explore. Merchant District shops run the gamut from simple grocers to specialized buildings like potion emporiums, dagger sellers, exotic pet dealers, and magic item bazaars.

Merchant District's representative nobility are the Arabanis. Lady Anwyn Arabani is an eccentric noblewoman who has a strange fascination with drow, and even claims to have drow ancestors (although her relatively pale skin would indicate otherwise). She's quite popular, as she goes above and beyond to ensure the people of Merchant District have fair representation in the Dawn Council. She entertains many suitors, but has yet to settle on a single person to share her estate.

City Watch

The Merchant's Watch is perhaps the most efficient of the seven watches. Corruption appears here and there, but the leadership is honest and does its best to maintain a crime-free environment. This is the busiest district in the city, and minor crimes are generally ignored, allowing the watch to focus its attention on larger problems. The Merchant Garrison isn't the largest among the seven watches (that honor goes to the Champion's Watch), but it's certainly the most justly run of the seven.

Citizens

If you're from Merchant District, you could be from anywhere. You may have grown up in Sasserine, or you might have only recently come to the city on the decks of a ship from anywhere else in the world, in which case your reasons for staying can be as varied as your actual homeland. Natives of Merchant District likely come from merchant families, or grew up the children of innkeepers or bartenders. You're probably a very social creature, and the thought of isolation or the natural world fills you with nervous fear. If you're a cleric, you might worship Fharlanghn, but in actuality this district is a melting pot of faiths.

Notable NPCs

Alma Telvanta (female human): An exotic and intriguing woman, Alma runs the prestigious Telvanta Dance Academy.

Anwyn Arabani (female half-elf): Lady of Arabani manor and representative of Merchant District on the Dawn Council.

Blisker Tittertop (male gnome): Blisker is the master of the Alchemist's Guild; his mark can be seen on nearly every potion or alchemical item sold in Sasserine.

Dhalven Miomar (male human): Lord of the Merchant's Guild, Dhalven is a gifted public speaker.

Feldus Selvant (male human): Feldus is the soft-spoken caretaker of the Seeker's Lodge. He is often gone from Sasserine for months at a time on adventures.

Lavinia Vanderboren (female human): Thrust into the responsibilities of nobility, young Lavinia's parents perished in a terrible fire and her brother has vanished from the public eye, leaving her to tend to her estate's needs all on her own.

Merchant's Tongue [General]

Growing up around the merchants of this district made you glib and gave you a keen eye for value.

District: Merchant.

Benefit: You have already made quite a bit of money, and have a knack for making more. If you take this feat at 1st level, you gain a one-time bonus of 300 gp to your starting cash. In addition, whenever you sell an object, you can make an opposed Diplomacy check to automaticaly sell an object for 5% over its asking price.

Lirali Woarali (female half-elf): Keeper of the temple of Fharlanghn, Lirali's congregation is small, but she seems like a friendly-enough woman.

Velkandar Toregson (male human): Eldest son of the Toregson family, Velkandar runs the Smith's Guildhall.

Merchant District Locations

1: The Ticklish Ogre (tavern)
2: Fenter's Place (inn)
3: Locksmith's Guildhall
4: The Dancing Monkey (curio shop)
5: The Metal-Skinned Dwarf (fine armor)
6: Seeker Lodge
7: Fishback Market (general goods, seafood, trinkets, jewelry)
8: Gondola Waystation
9: Viltashel's Favors (moneylender)
10: Baker's Guildhall
11: Temple of Fharlanghn (district church)
12: Harbor Market (general goods, imported goods, minor magic, food, entertainment)
13: Candlemaker's Guildhall
14: Marketplace Hall
15: Jeweler's Guildhall
16: Glassblower's Guildhall
17: Gemcutter's Guildhall
18: Shrine of Zilchus (god of money and business)
19: Merchant's Guildhall
20: Gondola Waystation
21: The Drunk Bear (tavern/mead shop)
22: Weaver's Guildhall
23: Glittermane's Vault (magic shop)
24: Shrine of Celestian (god of the stars and wanderers)
25: Gregair's Place (tavern/gaming hall)
26: Cobbler's Guildhall
27: Corner Groceries (general goods)
28: Gondola Waystation
29: Shrine of Geshtai (goddess of rivers and wells)
30: Spicemerchant's Guildhall
31: Tavernkeeper's Guildhall
32: Shrine of Trithereon (god of individuality and liberty)
33: Basketweaver's Guildhall
34: Orimander's Emporium of the Soul (magic shop/bookshop)
35: Tailor's Guildhall

36: Telvanta Academy (prestigious dance school)
37: Shrine of Ralishaz (god of misfortune and ill luck)
38: Costumes and Fantasies (exotic clothing/costumes)
39: Scrivener's Guildhall (scribes)
40: Venton's (sage—Knowledge [local])
41: Leatherworker's Guildhall
42: Smith's Guildhall
43: Sasserine Tours (guides to the city)
44: Shrine of Bleredd (god of metal and smiths)
45: Cooper's Guildhall
46: The Singing Rose (perfumes and oils)
47: Barber's Guildhall
48: Alchemist's Guildhall
49: Butcher's Guildhall
50: Scavenger's Guildhall (finders of lost objects)
51: Gondola Waystation
52: Teamster's Guildhall
53: The Painted Vixen (brothel)
54: Wheelwright's Guildhall
55: The Rusty Pirate (tavern)
56: Launderer's Guildhall
57: Tanner's Guildhall
58: Shrine of Dalt (god of doors, locks, and keys)
59: The Bent Goblin (inn)
60: The Upwards House (sage—Knowledge [arhitecture and engineering])
61: Rooftop Solutions (messenger service)
62: The Warden's Vault (moneylender)
63: Fifteen Horses and a Mule (tavern)
64: Cages of Plenty (exotic pets)
65: Merchant's Garrison
66: Innkeeper's Guildhall
67: Riverman's Guildhall (gondola service)
68: The Crimson Genie (brothel)
69: Heinvar's Baths (bathhouse)
70: Arabani Manor (district representative)
71: Krexin Imports (exotic imports)
72: The Strumpet's Excuse (inn)
73: Coins From Above (moneylender)
74: The Minx Market (brothel)
75: Domaskio's Consortium (puppets and toys)
76: Featherwhisper's (bathhouse)
77: Barrister's Guildhall
78: The Inner Labyrinth (occult books)
79: Vanderboren Manor (minor noble)
80: Gondola Waystation

NOBLE DISTRICT

Noble District has traditionally been thought of as the city's ruling district, even though Castle Teraknian isn't technically a part of this district. Yet Sasserine's trust in its rulers has been shaken (see Sasserine's History below), and nowhere is that loss of faith more evident than in this district. Today, the citizens of Noble District spend too much time bickering with those of Champion's District and trying to organize their district into a self-sustaining society. Idle talk of seceding from Sasserine is commonplace in Noble District bars. The other districts increasingly view the Noble District as a place of decadence and vanity, and eagerly await the district's fall under its own excesses.

Noble District's representative nobility is the Lidu family. With the end of the Teraknian family line over 100 years ago, the Lidus became the oldest noble family in the city. The family patriarch, Worrin Lidu, is a kind-hearted noble who may be too gentle and forgiving to succeed in Sasserine as a successful noble. His major concern today seems to be the reconciliation of the churches of Wee Jas and Kord.

Academy Graduate [General]

You attended one of several academies in this district, during which you were schooled in the finer arts of being an aristocrat.

Prerequisite: 1st level only.

District: Noble.

Benefit: Pick any three Charisma- or Intelligence-based skills. These three skills are always considered class skills for you.

In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (nobility and royalty) checks, and may use these skills untrained.

Knack for Magic [General]

Magic is not that mysterious to you, and its gifts have made your life a little easier.

District: Noble.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on Spellcraft skill checks. In addition, you have an innate talent for magic, granting you the following spell-like abilities as a 1st-level caster: 1/day—*detect magic*, *light*, and *prestidigitation*.

Sasserine's History

No district is more aware of Sasserine's history than the citizens of Noble District. The city was founded over 700 years ago, in the year –124 CY by pilgrims from the north. This group was led by a visionary cleric of Wee Jas named Sasserine who died on the island now known as Ancestor Island in the heroic act of defending the pilgrims from a black dragon named Zelkarune. Sasserine's lover, a man named Teraknian, founded the city in her honor. Over the next several centuries the city experienced phenomenal growth, during which a line of rulers descended from Teraknian ruled Sasserine in conjunction with advice from the churches of Wee Jas and Kord. In the year of 480 CY, Lord Mayor Orren Teraknian ruled the city—a rule that allowed for no shades of gray. For the first time in centuries, the church of Wee Jas was stripped of its power as fabricated charges of devil-worshiping saw to the arrest, imprisonment, and even execution of its faithful. Just as Orren's rule became unbearable, a great fleet of ships arrived—representatives of the Hold of the Sea Princes to the north. Promising an end to Orren's cruel rule, the invaders were aided in their assault on the city from within as the citizens rose up in rebellion. Orren Teraknian was overthrown and the Sea Princes claimed Sasserine as their own. Over the century to come, Sasserine's resources were savaged. The Sea Princes kept Sasserine a secret from the rest of the world, hoping to hide the valuable port from invaders by destroying any references to it they could find. Spies infiltrated cartographer guilds and libraries throughout the world, altering maps and sea charts with magic. Ship captains who knew the route to the city were bought off or murdered. Sasserine suffered in these 100 years, but the underlying spirit of her citizens did not die. Their prayers were finally answered in 584 CY, when the Scarlet Brotherhood assassinated nearly all of the Sea Princes. The resulting turmoil threw Sasserine into chaos. Without the support of their homeland, the leaders of the city were overthrown in a fortnight. In the decade since their freedom, the people of Sasserine have rebuilt their city with astonishing success.

City Watch

The Noble's Watch are masters of subtlety. They do not patrol the streets of Noble District openly, as the local citizens have long since made clear their distaste for seeing guards in public places. As a result, the Noble's Watch do their jobs undercover, posing as travelers, entertainers, merchants, or even petty nobles as the case demands. Newcomers to Sasserine seeking a place to ply criminal acts may be tempted by the seeming lack of guards in this district, but the Noble's Watch wastes no time in dealing with crime as it appears. This, combined with the fact that anyone nearby could be the law, makes Noble District one of the safest in Sasserine.

Citizens

If you're from Noble District, you're not necessarily the member of a minor noble house, although if you're not, you probably have friends or associates who are. You may be from the middle class, in which case your family serves one of the noble families in some regard. Or your family could be involved in the arcanist scene, in which case you are no stranger to magic. Finally, you may be a student at the House of the Dragon, recently graduated (or worse, flunked out) from higher education. Citizens of Noble District are clean, cultured, and eschew physical labor, preferring to hire muscle or use magic to take care of tough jobs. You likely worship Wee Jas. If you worship Kord, you keep your faith secret. If you're a specialist wizard, you've probably chosen conjuration, enchantment, illusion, or necromancy as your field. Other specialist wizards are not unheard of, but those who opt to specialize as evokers or transmuters are often thought of as blowhards with something to proove.

Notable NPCs

Annah Teranaki (female human): Annah is the shrill and aging high-priestess of the temple of Wee Jas. A recent scandal involving her protégé Embril Aloustinai in the city of Cauldron has tarnished the church's reputation.

Kiva Willowtop (female halfling): Kiva is the mistress of the Cartographer's Guild.

Lux Seoni (human female): Lux is the mysterious (and somewhat frightening) mistress of Witchwarden Tower.

Nylaria Absalee (human female): Nylaria, the manager of the Sasserine Opera House, is a huge woman who takes advantage of her ample frame to display outlandish dresses and hair styles. She fancies herself everyone's friend, even though the feeling is not always mutual.

Worrin Lidu (human male): Lord of Lidu manor and representative of Noble District on the Dawn Council, many worry that Worrin has grown too soft in his advancing years to be an effective leader.

Zebula Meravanchi (human male): Zebula is a minor noble whose family's interests run to the decadent and extreme ends of entertainment.

Noble District Locations

1: Highwall House (Knowledge [geography] sage)
2: Shrine of Liir (goddess of poetry and art)
3: Witchwarden Tower (arcanist's guild)
4: Shrine of Lendor (god of time and study)
5: Actor's Guildhall
6: Shrine of Myhriss (goddess of love)
7: High Market (general goods, exotic wares, jewelry, magic)
8: The Pearl and the Parrot (tavern/inn)
9: Imp's Folly (tavern/gaming hall)
10: Musician's Guildhall
11: Sasserine Opera House
12: Coffinmaker's Guildhall
13: Meravanchi Manor (minor noble)
14: House of Lords (Knowledge [nobility and royalty] sage)
15: Shrine of Lydia (goddess of music)
16: Courtesan's Guildhall
17: House of the Dragon (school and library)
18: Lidu Manor (district representative)
19: Instrument Maker's Guildhall
20: Cartographer's Guildhall
21: The Curious Chimera (bookstore)
22: Thenalar Academy (finishing school)
23: Cloudcrystal Academy (finishing school)
24: Shrine of Boccob
25: Noble Garrison
26: Callisto's Needle (tattoo parlor and Knowledge [the planes] sage)
27: Blenak's Bazaar (magic shop and Knowledge [arcana] sage)
28: Temple of Wee Jas
29: The Crystal's Whisper (curio shop)
30: Ancestor's Rest (inn)
31: Whispers on the Wind (fortune teller)
32: Sasserine Crematorium
33: Scarlet Spire (tomb of Sasserine, city founder)

SHADOWSHORE

Although relatively small, Shadowshore is perhaps the most notorious of Sasserine's districts. This strip of land nestled in the shadow of Champion's District has long been a haven for thieves, thugs, and criminals of all kind. Generally, the only people who live here are those poor enough that their homes hold no attraction to thieves or those who can ably protect their property by wit or muscle. The city watch has all but given up on Shadowshore, and as long as nothing particularly destructive arises from the district (such as fires or riots) they generally leave it to govern itself.

The representative noble of Shadowshore changes more often than any other, as the post is traditionally held by the family (or even the individual) strong enough to protect it from his enemies. Currently, the holder of this title is Emil Dracktus—certainly an assumed name. Rumor holds that the Dawn Council would rather have someone less crude and more reliable in this post. Someone like Vico Bevenin of the Amedio Trading Concern, perhaps. Yet for now, no one (Vico included) has made a move on Emil.

The Black Market

While Sasserine's markets and shops feature a wide range of goods and services, some are not offered in the light of day. Those seeking hard drugs, dangerous animals, evil magic, slaves, or cheap (and probably stolen) goods won't find them for sale in sight of the city watch. Yet this does not mean these goods and services aren't for sale.

Sasserine has a strong black market, with venues located in all seven districts. In order to gain access to the black market, a character must first make a DC 20 Gather Information check to learn the current location of that district's black market. In Azure District and Shadowshore, this is only a DC 15 Gather Information check, while in Champion's or Noble District, it's a DC 25 check. The black market is all but supressed in Cudgel District—it's a DC 30 Gather Information check to find an outlet there. Failing this check by 5 or more indicates that the district watch hears of the character's interests in obtaining illegal goods and services; the results of this failure depend upon the nature of that district's watch.

Although the black market has no restrictions on the type of its goods or services, it is still bound by Sasserine's gold piece limit of 40,000. A character who wishes to buy something in excess of this value must either travel to a larger city or enlist the aid of an agent or importer to have the item purchased and delivered from elsewhere. An agent typically charges a 5% finder's fee for such services.

Thieves' Guilds

A staple of most large cities, Sasserine is unusual in that it currently does not host a large, well-organized thieves' guild. In the years before the Sea Princes took hold of the city, a guild known as the Artful Parrots was Sasserine's largest band of robbers, cutpurses, and criminals. The Artful Parrots were also among the first victims of the Sea Princes, and within a year of their rule beginning, this guild had been obliterated completely.

Child of the Shadow [General]

You were raised in the streets and back alleys of Shadowshore and have refined several talents and tricks valuable to survival in this neighborhood.

District: Shadowshore.

Benefit: You know Sasserine's black market quite well, and need not make checks to locate its outlets. Further, in other cities, you have a knack for rooting out the underground markets. You gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks made to learn about a city's black markets.

Growing up on the filthy streets of Shadowshore has also gifted you with several tricks you can use to ensure survival. You gain a +2 bonus on Initiative checks in urban environments. You are also adept at fighting in confined areas, such as narrow city alleyways or crowded taprooms. Enemies cannot gain cover from you if they are in your reach; you can thus attack someone around a corner without penalty. A creature with total cover from you still recieves all benefits of his cover.

During the Sea Prince rule, oppressive laws made thieves' guilds impossible to form. Now that Sasserine has regained her independance, though, the city is seeing a renaissance of organized crime. At this point, the dozens of small guilds are more interested in fighting each other for dominance, and the city watch keeps a wary eye on the activites of these groups but does little to intervene as long as they don't endanger the city's citizens. Word on the street, however, is that one group in particular has managed to establish itself as a force to be reckoned with—the Lotus Dragons. While the Lotus Dragons, if indeed they do exist, have yet to make their presence known to the city watch and civilians of Sasserine, the fact that minor guild activity has been tapering off over the last year lends validity to these rumors.

City Watch

The true slums of Sasserine, Shadowshore is where the desperate come to hide or die. The smallest of the districts, it's easy for citizens of other districts to look the other way at the trouble that commonly brews here. Members of other watches who prove too unruly or insubordinate are often reassigned to Shadowshore—more of a punishment than anything else. Corruption is rife among the Shadowshore Watch, who only patrol the shoreline and are known to be in the pocket of the ship barons of the district. Only the most blatant of crimes (arson, public assaults, and other highly-visible offenses) are acted upon, making Shadowshore a haven for Sasserine's criminal elements.

Citizens

Shadowshore is where the dregs of Sasserine seep to. If you grew up here, you had a rough childhood, and may have been forced to kill someone in order to survive. You've certainly seen your fair share of dead bodies; they turn up often in the alleys or under the piers. If you're not the thuggish type, you either spent a lot of time hiding or developed a knack for fighting dirty. You may

have been taken under the wing of one of the few semi-legitimate businesses to operate here, but more likely you're a true child of the streets. Faith is hard to come by here, but if you're a cleric you probably worship Olidammara, and you know that the god of thieves has some presence within these drooping slums.

Notable NPCs

Emil Dracktus (human male): The reprehensible Lord of Dracktus Manor and representative of Shadowshore on the Dawn Council is little better than a bandit lord.

Gregar Skeen (human male): Master of the Shipwright's Guild, Gregar has somehow managed to maintain control of the family business and interests despite generations of trouble with local roughs.

Jalpe Jinn (male half-orc): Jalpe Jinn is a likeable-enough man who tends this shrine dedicated to one of Sasserine's most gifted historical figures, the dwarf Worgul (who succeeded in life as a merchant despite her hideous appearance).

Vico Bevenin (human male): Why one of Sasserine's richest men lives in Shadowshore is a mystery to everyone but him. Vico owns the Amedio Trading Concern, the most successful import/export firm in Sasserine.

Shadowshore Locations

1: Shadowshore Garrison
2: Shrine of Charmalaine (goddess of keen senses and narrow escapes)
3: The Skinned Man (tavern)
4: The Narrow House (inn)
5: Shrine of St. Worgul (district church)
6: Honest Brank's (moneylender)
7: The House of Science (freak show and museum of oddity)
8: Fishlip's Games (tavern/gaming hall)
9: The Notched Axe (mercenary guild)
10: Coffinsquatters (inn)
11: Neldrek's Goods (general goods)
12: Dracktus Manor (district representative)
13: Trapmaker's Guild
14: Gentle Nelli's (apothecary)
15: The Velvet Hatch (brothel)
16: The Plucked Parrot (inn/tavern)
17: Alinara's Vixens (gaming hall)
18: Amedio Trading Concern (import/export)
19: Sailmaker's Guildhall
20: Shrine of Kuroth (god of treasure and theft)
21: Last Ditch Lovers (brothel)
22: Gondola Waystation
23: It Still Floats! (cheap boats and ships)
24: Black Shield Company (mercenary guild)
25: Shipwright's Guildhall
26: Shank's Collectibles (cheap weapons)
27: Sasserine Distillery (rum factory)

SUNRISE

Like Cudgel District, Sunrise is primarily residential. Yet the citizens of Sunrise are generally a bit better-off than their neighbors, in no small part due to the fact that many of them have stakes in the numerous plantations that dot the region surrounding Sasserine.

Sunrise's representative noble family is the Knowlern family. Unlike the nobles of the other districts, the Knowlerns are elves. Lord Aniphastus Knowlern and his family have taken the preservation of the region's wildlands to heart, and the foundation of Sunrise's Standing Stone Park is one of their proudest achievements.

Student of Nature [General]

The wild has always excited you with its simple beauty and majestic creatures. It is no wonder that many of your talents let you better enjoy the natural world.

District: Sunrise.

Benefit: You get a +1 bonus on Handle Animal, Knowledge (nature), and Survival skill checks. You also get a +2 bonus on Fortitude saving throws to resist special attacks from plant creatures.

Affiliations

As a citizen of Sasserine, your character may also belong to one of several organizations or affiliations based in the city. The *Player's Handbook II* introduced rules for affiliations and for tracking your rank and benefits from membership. Issue #348 of *Dragon* details six new affiliations based in the city of Sasserine in the first installment of "Savage Tidings," a series of articles designed to augment the Savage Tide Adventure Path with new player options and advice on running the campaign. These six affiliations, in brief, are as follows—if one of them sounds particularly appealing to your character, speak to your DM about starting the campaign as a member of the affiliation.

Church of the Whirling Fury: Perhaps the most mysterious of the six affiliations presented here, the Church of the Whirling Fury is in fact a semi-secret group of like-minded souls who seek to oppose the advance of demonic influences into the the Material Plane while at the same time venerating their patron, the eladrin paragon Gwynharwyf (*Book of Exalted Deeds* 155). They keep their presence in Sasserine subtle, operating on the theory that to openly oppose such dangerous forces invites open retaliation—much better to gather information and strike with the advantage of surprise. The church of the Whirling Fury accepts members of all vocations and skills, although their doctrines tend to preach "all for the greater good." As such, they often find themselves operating on the shady side of the law. Barbarians, clerics, and rangers are the best suited classes for this affiliation.

Dawn Council: The ruling nobles of Sasserine are known as the Dawn Council, yet in truth this affiliation comprises all of the minor nobles, sages, scribes, clerks, and others who help in the daily business of administration of the city. The Sasserine city watch is controled by the Dawn Council, and the seven official churches have much invested in this group as well. Beyond Sasserine's walls, agents of the Dawn Council function as ambassadors, emissaries, missionaries, or even spies. Bards, clerics, fighters, and paladins are the best suited classes for this affiliation.

Scarlet Brotherhood: While the Scarlet Brotherhood itself is notorious for harboring assassins, spies, and worse, their presence in Sasserine has taken an unusual turn with the establishment of the Scarlet Embassy. This group proposes to seek less violent interactions with other nations. Recent attempts to manipulate numerous nations were a tremendous drain on the Brotherhood. Of course, many believe that the establishment of the Scarlet Embassy is merely a new stage in the Brotherhood's nefarious attempt to rule the world from within. Only members of this affiliation know the group's plans for sure—and even they may not see the whole truth of what the mysterious leaders of the Brotherhood intend. Bards, monks, and rogues are the best suited classes for this affiliation.

The Seekers: The Seekers have a presence in nearly every major city in the world, yet few know of their existance. A group of treasure-seeking adventurers at best, or a nefarious organization of thieves and grave-robbers at worst, the Seekers themselves are a loosely-knit group of explorers, adventuring scholars, and fortune hunters who scour the world for ancient secrets and lost magic for personal gain and profit. All character classes are equally suited for this affiliation.

Witchwardens: Sasserine's mage's guild was founded by a priest-mage of Wee Jas many centuries ago, but today the Witchwardens have become more secular. Their members study magic in all its forms, seeking to discover new spells or recover forgotten lore from ancient ruins across the world. They are charged with the defense of the city against magical threats, and many of their members have ties to the city's high society. Bards, sorcerers, and wizards are best suited for this affiliation.

Zelkarune's Horns: Based in the Champion's District where, among other things, they manage the hugely popular events in the Sasserine Arena, Zelkarune's Horns consists of gladiators, big-game hunters, mercenaries, and explorers of the surrounding wildlands. Beyond Sasserine's walls, members of the Horns often operate alone (or as members of small groups), seeking new creatures to populate arena fights or merely looking for adventure and treasure to further their own (and by extension, the Horns') fame and glory. Barbarians, fighters, rangers, and rogues are best suited for this affiliation.

City Watch

Like Cudgel District, Sunrise is primarily residences, although the presence of the lumberyard and proximity to the Azure District make its edges a bit more active. The Sunrise Watch are affiliated with the church of Pelor, but for the most part are left to their own devices in keeping the district safe. Their organization is the largest of the seven watches, and as a result it's more difficult for the commanders to keep everything in control. Corruption is fairly common here, yet the guards can generally be trusted to do the right thing.

Citizens

If you're from Sunrise, you pride yourself on your even temper, your friendliness, and your optimism. There are certainly a lot of rowdy folk in Sasserine, but most of them avoid Sunrise for one reason or another. You may have a healthy interest in the natural world, in which case you've spent long hours exploring the safety of Standing Stone Par). Many who live here work for one of the plantations to the south, either in the fields earning an honest day's wage or in the plantations themselves as servants or specialists. Most of the people you know worship Pelor, although any of the officially recognized faiths of Sasserine are welcome here.

Notable NPCs

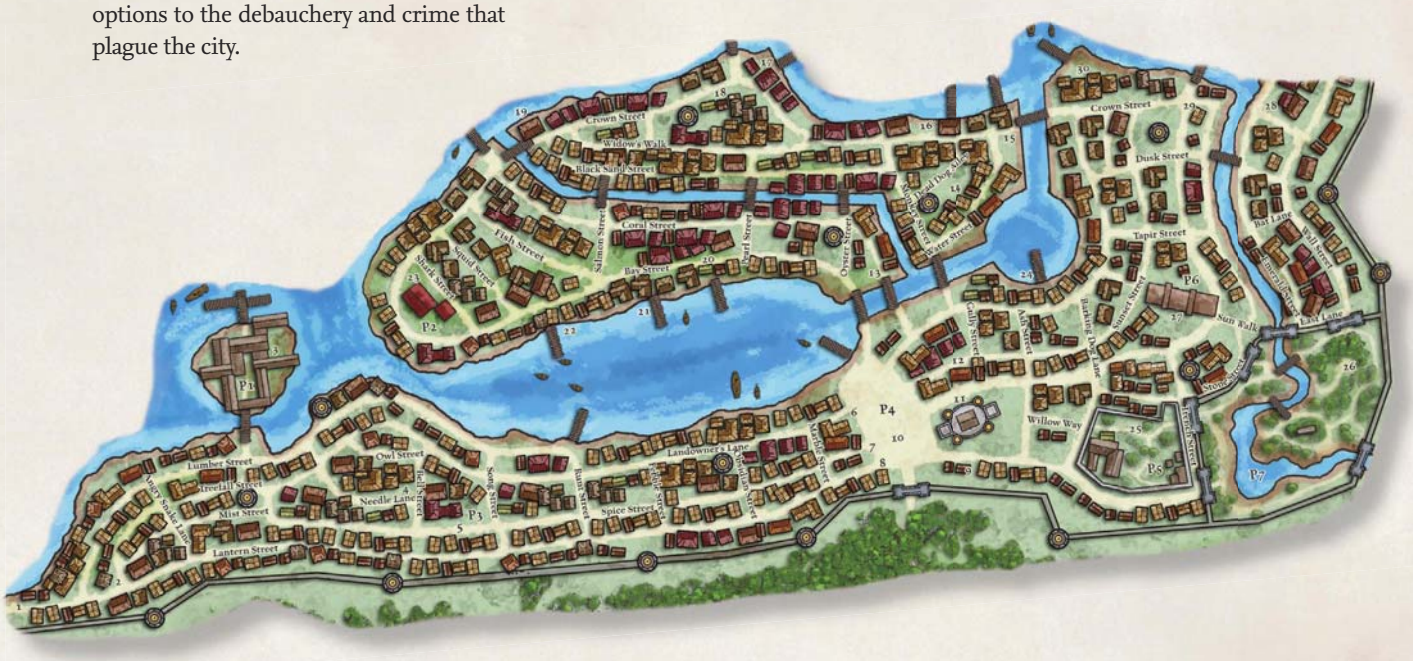
Aniphastus Knowlern (elf male): The Lord of Knowlern Manor and representative of Sunrise on the Dawn Council has lived in Sasserine longer than most every other citizen.

Basar Finn (human male): Basar represents the various plantation owners who live outside the city walls when these industrious folk are not present.

Kera Gosalar (human female): Kera is the high-priestess of the temple of Pelor. She views the vices of Sasserine as unfortunate, but rather than crusade against them she appeals to the city's decent folk, offering options to the debauchery and crime that plague the city.

Sunrise Locations

1: The Bridgehouse (gaming hall)
2: Meadowdusk's (Knowledge [nature] sage)
3: Thunder River Lumber
4: Shrine of Istus (goddess of fate)
5: Landowner's Hall (plantation owner's meeting hall)
6: The Restless Lion (tavern)
7: The Hunter's Trap (tavern/gambling hall)
8: Winmester's (inn)
9: The Siren's House (inn)
10: Dawn Market (general goods)
11: Sunrise Garrison
12: The Endless Dark (Knowledge [dungeoneering] sage)
13: Tepinal's Wares (general goods)
14: Taxidermist's Guildhall
15: Leldibar's Shop (general goods)
16: The Shivering Cat (tavern)
17: Emerald Waters Orphanage
18: The Hungry Gorilla (tavern)
19: Shrine of Heironeous
20: Tobacconist's Guildhall
21: Dawnlight Orphanage
22: Gondola Waystation
23: Historian's Guild (Knowledge [history] sage)
24: Gondola Waystation
25: Knowlern Manor (district representative)
26: Standing Stone Park
27: Dawnhouse (district church)
28: Shrine of Mayaheine (goddess of protection and valor)
29: Shrine of Rao (god of peace and serenity)
30: Gondola Waystation



Savage Tide

Player's Guide

The Savage Tide Rises!

The first Savage Tide has already touched the mortal world, yet none who live today recall this terrible time of red ruin. It swept over an ancient city, transforming beggar and noble, merchant and thief, resident and visitor, one and all into feral, ravenous fiends. What took the ancients hundreds of years to build came crumbling down in a matter of days. When the tide's final ripples faded, only ruins remained.

Now, after a thousand years, the hidden architect of the Savage Tide gazes upon new targets. This time, the doom will not be limited to one hapless city. This time, all of civilization is perched on the shore, blissfully ignorant of what the tide is about to bring in.

The Savage Tide Adventure Path is a complete campaign featured over the course of a year in *Dungeon* magazine. Running from issue #139 to issue #150, the campaign takes your PCs from their lowly beginnings at 1st level to the lofty heights of 20th, and possibly beyond. It all begins in the exotic port city of Sasserine, detailed in this booklet. The Savage Tide begins here! Will your characters stand upon its shore and protect the civilized world? Or will they succumb to its rising waters of ruinous rage?

Dungeon® **Dragon®**

The Savage Tide Adventure Path continues monthly in the pages of *Dungeon* and *Dragon* magazines.

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d20 system

Sasserine

Azure District
A1: Wheeler's Guildhall
A2: Azure Cathedral
A3: Eskaran Manor
A4: Dredger's Guildhall
A5: Reliant Manor
A6: East Market

Champion's District
B1: Dorchester Manor
B2: Zelkaringe's Hill
B3: Sasserine Arena
B4: House of Kord
B5: Kord's Market
B6: Scarlet Embassy
B7: Torgeson Manor

Guildhall District
C1: Town Market
C2: Church of the Whirling Fury
C3: Temple of St. Cuthbert
C4: Stonemason's Guildhall
C5: West Market
C6: Haskerhill Manor
C7: House of Violets

Merchant District
D1: Harbor Market
D2: Temple of Harlangdn
D3: Merchant's Guildhall
D4: Smith's Guildhall
D5: Arabard Manor
D6: Seeker Lodge
D7: Alchemist's Guildhall
D8: Vanderboren Manor
D9: Helvanta Academy

Noble District
W1: Witchwarden Tower
W2: High Market
W3: Merrymarsh Manor
W4: Sasserine Opera House
W5: House of the Dragon
W6: Elin Manor
W7: Cartographer's Guildhall
W8: Temple of Wee Jas
W9: Ancestor Island

Shadowshore
O1: Shrine of St. Worgel
O2: Dracktus Manor
O3: Amedio Trading Concern
O4: Shipwright's Guildhall

Sunrise
P1: Thunder River Lumber
P2: Historians' Guild
P3: Landowner's Hill
P4: Dawn Market
P5: Knowlern Manor
P6: Dawnhouse
P7: Standing Stone Park

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Feet

Savage Tide

There Is No Honor

The first savage tide has already touched the mortal world, yet none who live today recall this time of red ruin. Unleashed from the cruel heart of a fell seed known as a *shadow pearl*, this savage tide swept over an ancient city perched atop the crown of a remote island. The tide transformed beggar and noble, merchant and thief, resident and visitor into feral, ravenous fiends. The fruits of centuries of labor came crumbling down in a matter of days, and when the survivors tried to stem the tide by destroying the pearl, the resulting blast of power sunk their city into a boiling lake of death. Through it all, the Abyssal architect of the savage tide watched, taking pride in the ruin. When the tide's final ripples had faded, what was left became known as the Isle of Dread.

Now, after a thousand years, the true masters of the Isle of Dread look upon new targets, new cities beyond the horizon, compelled by the hateful will of their demonic lord Demogorgon to prepare for the coming glory. This time, the doom will not be limited to one hapless city. This time, all of civilization waits unknowing on the shore, blissfully ignorant of what the incoming tide brings in.

"There Is No Honor" is the first chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures that will appear in the next twelve issues of DUNGEON. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out DRAGON's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #348 of DRAGON kicks off this series with details on six affiliations based in Sasserine that your players may wish to join. And if you're running Savage Tide in the FORGOTTEN REALMS or EBERRON, make sure to check paizo.com for the latest conversion notes for each adventure.

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ADVENTURE PATH | LOW LEVEL (1ST–5TH) | URBAN AND DUNGEON CRAWL

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Adventure Background

The city of Sasserine is still finding its feet after emerging from a century of oppressive rule during which the traditional thieves' guilds were destroyed. Dozens of minor guilds now squabble for control of the city's underworld. One guild in particular has risen above the infighting, and is now poised to become a major player in city politics. This is the Lotus Dragons, a band of murderers, burglars, and smugglers led by a charismatic and ambitious woman named Rowyn Kellani—a woman who just happens to be the daughter of one of the city's noble families. When Rowyn enters an alliance with the scion of another noble family, a scoundrel named Vanthus Vanderboren, the final piece of her plan falls into place and she prepares to seize control of the city's sea trade.

Yet for all of her scheming and plotting, Rowyn's capacity for evil and cruelty pales in comparison to that of her new lover. Vanthus, in an attempt to prove his value and worth to the Lotus Dragons (and to impress its beautiful guildmistress), recently committed a horrendous crime. Knowing his parents had just purchased a new ship and were planning on taking a relaxing trip up the coast, he smuggled a dozen barrels of alchemist's fire into the ship's hold and arranged for an "accident." The resulting fire burned the ship to the waterline and left its crew (and Vanthus's parents) dead.

Alas, his plan to inherit his estate (and then use its resources to bolster the Lotus Dragons) fell through when a reading of his parents' will revealed that the estate was to be passed along entirely to his older sister Lavinia. Seething with rage but unwilling to take drastic action against his sister, Vanthus did what he could to rob the family vault before she could claim its riches. Fortunately, he was able to make off with enough money to ensure his place in the guild—and after he abandoned the competition in a series of undead-haunted smuggler's tunnels, his position high in the Lotus Dragon's ranks was ensured.

Now, the Lotus Dragons are ready to act on their nefarious plans. The only thing they aren't counting on is Lavinia Vanderboren's concern for her missing brother.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins as the PCs gather at Vanderboren Manor. Lavinia asks the PCs to aid her in securing access to her family's vault, the key to which is hidden on her father's ship. Once her estate is in order, Lavinia turns her attention to her true concern.

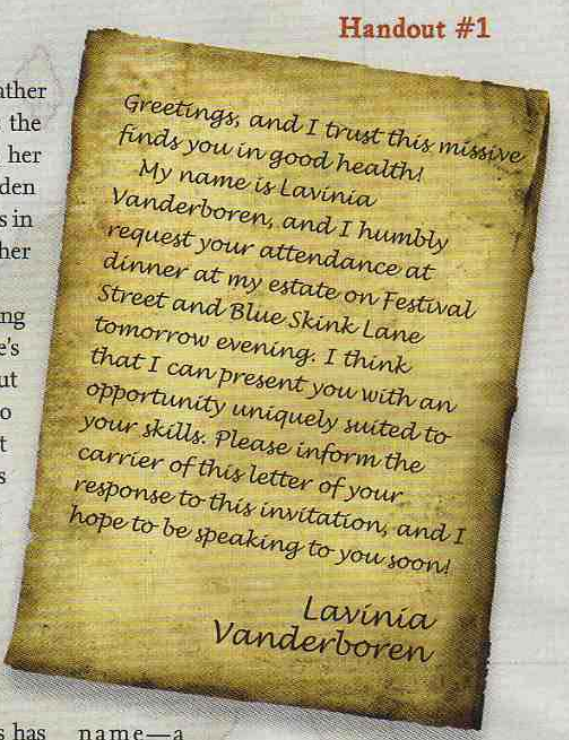
Her brother Vanthus has been missing for weeks. She's heard rumors that he's fallen in with some unsavory types, but hopes he can be convinced to return to civilized society. She sends the PCs out on his trail, and their investigations lead them to a small smuggler's complex under Parrot Island. There, Vanthus springs a trap and locks them in the tunnels, forcing the PCs to navigate an escape while dealing with the hungry undead that dwell within. They eventually emerge, having learned that Vanthus has taken up with a much more dangerous thieves' guild called the Lotus Dragons.

After locating the guildhouse, the PCs discover the guild is preparing to take control of the city's sea trade. By defeating the Lotus Dragons, the PCs can save Sasserine's harbor from falling under the control of a band of murderous scoundrels. Alas, Vanthus is nowhere to be found, although clues send the PCs onto his trail (and into the next adventure in the series—"The Bullywug Gambit").

Adventure Hook

During character creation, ask each player to come up with a notable recent event in his character's life that might mark him as an adventurer. "There Is No Honor" begins as Lavinia Vanderboren, on the hunt for affordable help of an adventurous nature, hears about these exploits. Each PC receives a letter, hand-delivered by a wizened-looking halfling woman named Kora. The contents of the letter appear as Handout #1.

Handout #1



PART ONE: A NOBLE IN NEED

Once the PCs receive their invitations to Vanderboren Manor, they may wish to ask around about their new patron. It's only a DC 10 Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check to recognize the Vanderboren name—a DC 15 check is enough to know that Lavinia is the eldest daughter of the family. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to recall news of a tragic fire a month ago that claimed the lives of Verik and Larissa Vanderboren. The Vanderborens were survived by their two children, Lavinia and Vanthus.

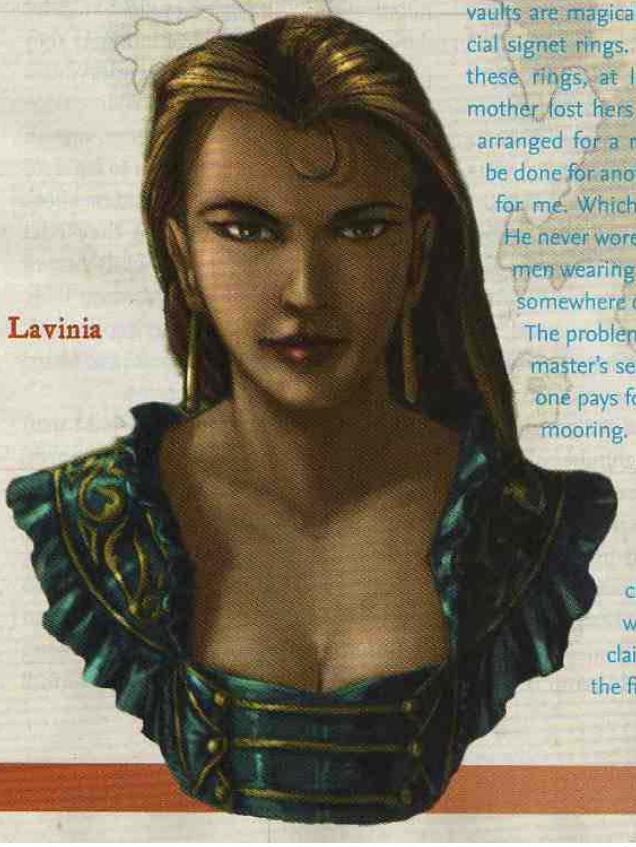
Vanderboren Manor is located in the eastern section of the Merchant District; the seven-foot-high stone wall that surrounds the estate is impossible to miss, as is the towering, gothic, three-story house that dominates the grounds within. Leering gargoyles and capering nymphs festoon the eaves of the manor's roof, and several trees give the manor grounds a nice buffer from the bustle of the city.

The front gates have been left open for the PCs, but no one greets them until they reach the front door and knock. After a few moments, the same wizened halfling woman answers the door. This is **Kora Whistlegap** (LG female halfling expert 3). She thanks the PCs for arriving on time and asks them to wait in the atrium, claiming Lady Vanderboren shall be with them shortly.

At some point after the last PC has arrived but before they are called into the private dining hall, four figures emerge from the hall and head toward the PCs. Kora races behind these figures, which

include a jaunty male half-elf dressed in leather armor and armed with a half-dozen daggers of different shapes, a dark-skinned dwarf with a sour expression dressed in green and brown robes and clutching a large curved spear, an attractive but haughty-looking woman dressed in dark purple robes and with a tattoo of a crescent moon on one cheek, and lastly, a tall and handsome man dressed in polished breastplate carrying a bastard sword.

These are the Jade Ravens, a mercenary company that's been in the Vanderboren employ for several years. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check recognizes the group. The leader of the group is the man in the breastplate, **Tolin Kientai** (LN male human ranger 3). The others include **Zan Oldavin** (N male half-elf rogue 3), **Kaskus Kiel** (LN male dwarf druid 3), and **Liamae Teslikaria** (CN female human sorcerer 3). Lavinia has been relying more and more upon this group, but she suspects that their loyalty to her family name will only last as long as she can afford to pay them, even though she also suspects (correctly) that Tolin has grown quite attracted to her lately. The mercenaries have little time or interest in the PCs now, although Tolin does stop to size up the PCs for a moment before announcing, "Hmm. You must be the help Lavinia's bringing in to do the chores. Best of luck to ya!" Lavinia has asked the Jade Ravens to travel south to the city of Cauldron to contact her aunt and uncle for aid, and they are anxious to be on their way. The Jade Ravens play a more important role in adventures to come in this campaign—this encounter should merely foreshadow these events.



Lavinia

Talking to Lavinia

The private dining hall is comfortable and cozy, softly lit by wall-mounted lanterns. A window overlooks the manor's central courtyard and the carpet is thick and soft. A large portrait hangs on the wall, a fine work depicting a handsome young man with a short beard. Standing before the portrait is an attractive human woman wearing a long, flowing blue dress. She smiles as the PCs enter, introducing herself as Lavinia Vanderboren.

"As you may have heard, I recently inherited my parents' estate. Along with this fine house, unfortunately, came a fine amount of debt owed the Dawn Council, the harbormaster, and quite a few guildhalls. It seems my parents, for all their success as adventurers, were not as skilled at finance as one might expect. If I'm to get these taxes paid, I'll need to access my family's vault under Castle Teraknian.

"And that's the problem, you see. The vaults are magically locked—keyed to special signet rings. Both of my parents had these rings, at least, until recently. My mother lost hers a few months ago. She arranged for a replacement, but it won't be done for another month or so, too late for me. Which leaves my father's ring. He never wore it—he had a thing about men wearing jewelry. He kept it hidden somewhere on his ship, the *Blue Nixie*. The problem there is that the harbormaster's seized the ship until someone pays for the last four months of mooring. I've paid the fines to the man the harbormaster's put in charge of my ship, a brute named Soller Vark. Yet when I went to claim my ship, Vark's men wouldn't let me board, claiming that I hadn't yet paid the fines. I spoke to Vark again and he denied ever receiving my payment. My complaints to the harbormaster have fallen on deaf ears—he's a doddering old fool who trusts his man and won't relent.

"Vark and his men are up to something on my ship, I know it. What I need is to find out exactly what they're up to. Unfortunately, Vark's not the type to react well to diplomacy or logic. I need someone who speaks his language... which is where you come in. If you can find out what he's using my ship for, or even better, recover the money I paid him, I'll pay each of you 200 gold in return once I've access to my vault."

Her presentation over, Lavinia is open to specific questions. Some likely ones the PCs may have for her (and her responses) follow.

"Is there no one else you can go to for resolution? The city watch, perhaps?" Lavinia admits she approached the watch and the government with her complaints, but unfortunately she has no proof of wrongdoing. She also admits it was foolish to hand over the money to Vark without allied witnesses, but what's done is done. The city watch has promised to look into the matter, but without proof, the investigation takes a back seat to other, more pressing matters.

"There could be trouble—are you prepared for the repercussions?" Lavinia's jaw sets; she asks the PCs to do their best not to throw the first punch if it comes to it, but in the end, why would Vark's men put up a fight unless they were up to no good? It's her ship, after all!

"Can you come with us?" Lavinia would rather not involve herself; if things go poorly, she'd like to maintain public distance from possible ramifications. Furthermore, she's hardly an adventuring type—her strengths lie in diplomacy, and this approach has already proven useless against Vark.

"We want more than 200 gold as payment." Lavinia nods at requests for more money, and can go as high as 300 gp each. She even hints that she has other employment offers in mind for the PCs at a later date, but until she finds out just how much her parents stashed in the

family vault, she's hesitant to promise more than 300 gp per PC.

"Who's that portrait of?" Lavinia pauses for a moment before revealing that the portrait is of her brother Vanthus. A DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that she seems distraught when the topic comes up, but at this time she has nothing to say about her brother other than that he's "left town."

What happened to your parents?" Such a direct question takes Lavinia aback. After she takes a moment to gather her thoughts, she says in a quiet voice that they burned to death in a ship fire in the harbor about a month ago—they were taking the recently purchased ship for a cruise when something caused the ship to catch fire and burn to the waterline. There were no survivors.

LAVINIA VANDERBOREN **CR 2**
Female elite human aristocrat 2
NG Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11
hp 14 (2 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +2 (1d6/18–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds, potion of resist fire*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 15
Feats Negotiator, Skill Focus (Diplomacy)
Skills Appraise +7, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +7, Perform (stringed instrument) +7, Sense Motive +6
Possessions combat gear, masterwork rapier, *ring of protection +1*, gold earrings (100 gp each), jade ring (80 gp)

PART TWO: TROUBLE ON THE BLUE NIXIE

Sasserine's Harbormaster, Keltar Islaran, is in sorry shape. Slowly succumbing to a chronic lung infection and saddled with sons and daughters uninterested or incapable of taking up the family traditions, Lord Islaran is coming to terms with the fact that he may need to pass the duties of Harbormaster to another of Sasserine's families. The very idea sickens him, consuming his thoughts by day and dreams by night. Ironically, it is his search and obsession with finding a replacement that lives up to his impossible-to-meet standards that has allowed what he feared to occur. Sasserine's harbor is falling under the control of smugglers, bandits, and thieves.

Lord Islaran's few remaining loyal employees have their hands full keeping the city harbor under control without exposing how precarious things actually are to the Dawn Council and the public. As such, they've been forced to hire out for certain tasks, and don't have time to handle relatively minor complaints and issues—such as the issues that surround Lavinia's ship, the *Blue Nixie*. Attempts to learn more meet in endless bureaucracy and red tape. If the PCs want to solve the problem, they'll need to take the law into their own hands.

Vanthus

The Blue Nixie (EL 3+)

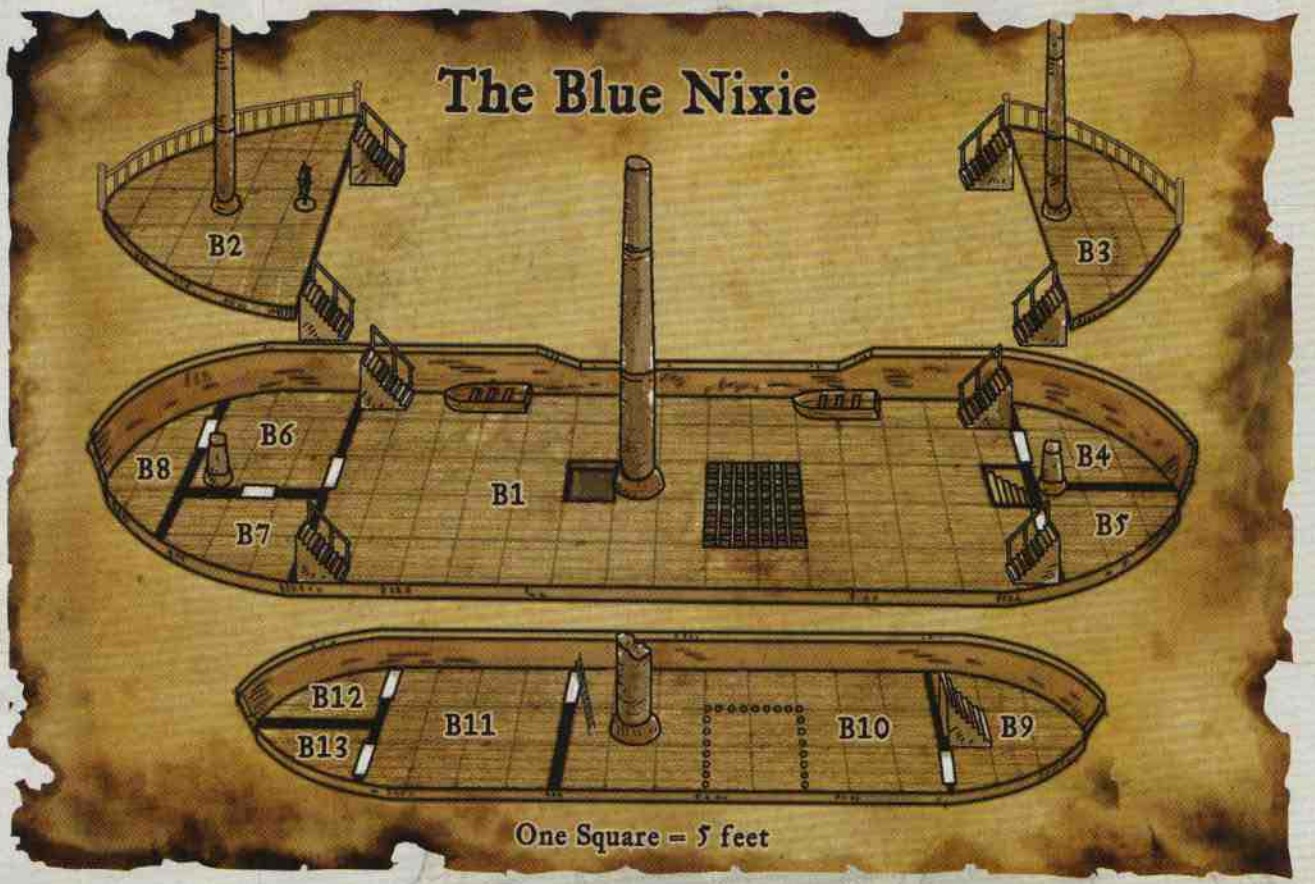
According to Lavinia, the *Blue Nixie*'s docked at pier five in the Merchant District—this pier is the long one between the Merchant's Guildhall (area **F3** on the Sasserine map) and the Smith's Guildhall (area **F4**). Alas, upon arrival it becomes apparent that the *Blue Nixie* is not docked at the pier at all, but is in fact moored to a float about 100 feet from the pier's end.

Soller Vark is indeed up to no good, and by mooring the impounded ship in the harbor he hopes to limit access to its hold. Vark and his thugs have recently come into the possession of a large number of exotic animals, but the true prize of this catch is a fully grown spider-like monster called a rhagodessa he purchased from the Lotus Dragons. The animal smugglers loaded their cargo onto the *Blue Nixie*, figuring it was a better hiding place than a waterfront warehouse, and are scheduled to transfer the animals to a ship heading north at midnight tonight.

Creatures: There are eight smugglers on board the *Blue Nixie*—seven male and female human thugs and Soller Vark. During the day, their positions are as noted in the *Blue Nixie* Key sidebar. After dark, all seven thugs are mobile as they prepare the ship for their rendezvous a mile west of the city.

The thugs have orders to let no one on board, and fear Vark too much to listen to diplomacy. A successful Intimidate check cows the thugs enough that they'll let up to two people on board while one of them heads in to area **B8** to rouse Vark. Otherwise, they began hollering for Vark as soon as any of the PCs attempt to board the *Blue Nixie* or draw weapons.

Soller Vark is a disagreeable bald man with a jagged scar running down one arm, a wound he sustained in a bar fight but which he claims was gifted to him in a battle with a hook-handed pirate. Vark's prone to making flamboyant attacks to suit his inflated sense of style; he'll often attempt to disarm or bull rush foes even when such actions aren't tactically sound.



Vark's Thugs (7) **CR 1/2**
Male and female human warrior 1
CN Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13
hp 8 (1 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +0 **Will** –1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee rapier +2 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged light crossbow +1 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Lightning Reflexes, Toughness
Skills Intimidate +3, Swim +3
Possessions leather armor, buckler, rapier, light crossbow with 10 bolts, 5 gp

Soller Vark **CR 2**
Male elite human warrior 2
CN Medium human
Init +2; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14
hp 19 (2 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +0, **Will** –1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3
Combat Gear 2 *elixirs of swimming*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13
Feats Toughness, Weapon Finesse
Skills Intimidate +6, Swim +6
Possessions combat gear, masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, masterwork rapier, light crossbow with 10 bolts, earring worth 50 gp, silver ring worth 25 gp

Tactics: This can be a difficult first encounter to the Savage Tide campaign if the PCs aren't careful. The thugs aren't that dangerous individually, but there are probably more of them than PCs. The main advantages the PCs should have over the smugglers is an element of surprise and higher morale.

Boarding the *Blue Nixie* requires a DC 10 Climb check; there are plenty of ropes to aid the climber, but they and the ship's hull are slippery in places. It's ten feet to the main deck from the waterline.

The thugs call out an alarm at the start of their turn, then use their crossbows

Blue Nixie Key

B1. Main Deck: During the day, two thugs stand watch here.
B2. Quarterdeck: During the day, one thug stands watch here.
B3. Foc's'le Deck
B4. Sail Locker
B5. Chain Locker
B6. Wardroom
B7. Officer's Quarters: During the day, two of the thugs rest here.
B8. Captain's Quarters: Soller Vark rests here during the day with one of his thugs, a foul-mouthed woman named Ketrana.
B9. Galley: The ship's galley has a small stove and storage for all kinds of foodstuffs.
B10. Hold: Two dozen cages of sickly exotic animals here; the largest cage is the one containing the rhagodessa, a five-foot-square iron cage that sits in the portside corner near the bow. One thug stands guard here at all times.
B11. Crew Quarers
B12. Brig
B13. Bilge Access

BY JAMES JACOBS

Soller Vark

against the PCs. Each round of combat, the thugs sleeping inside make DC 5 Listen checks to hear the battle and wake. The two thugs in the officer's cabin (area **B7**) join a fight on deck in one round, while Vark and his lover take an additional round to reach the deck.

Any time a thug is wounded, he panics and tries to flee. If the PCs left a boat untended, the thug tries to escape in it—otherwise, they jump into the water and swim for shore. Any thug prevented from escaping begs pitifully for his life. Soller Vark is not above such cowardice—he fights until brought below 5 hit points, at which point he attempts to flee or surrender as well.

Once it becomes obvious to the thugs that the battle is going against them (or as soon as any PC attempts to enter the hold), Vark (or one of the thugs if Vark's not present) shrieks out a command to "Burn them! Burn them all!"

Monster on the Loose (EL 2)

When the command to burn the animals is given, a thug named Mera Veskat in the *Blue Nixie*'s hold begins lighting cages of animals on fire. Fortunately for the PCs, Mera's not that good at lighting fires, and the smoke riles the animals. The sound of shrieking monkeys and parrots wells up from the hold below, and a few moments later so does the sound of a terrific crash followed by a woman's high-pitched scream and a strange, shrill keening. Mera's actions have excited the rhagodessa to a point where the arachnid threw itself against the walls of its cage, causing the poorly latched door to fly open. The monster is upon Mera in a heartbeat, killing her with one powerful bite.

Creature: Once it's loose, the ravenous rhagodessa begins killing the other animals rapidly, going from cage to cage in a fit of hunger. If it sees anything larger (like a PC) enter the hold, it fixates on the new target and attacks at once.

Rhagodessa: hp 22; see Appendix.

The Nixie Reclaimed

If interrogated, the thugs know only that their boss, Vark, was going to pay them 20 gp apiece to help load crates of animals onto the *Blue Nixie* and then a few days later onto another ship in the middle of the night. Only Vark knows that the customer was a Scarlet Brotherhood ship, and he won't reveal that unless magically compelled. In any event, the Scarlet Brotherhood ship learns of the complication and doesn't show at the rendezvous if the PCs decide to try to pose as Vark and his crew later that night.

A search of the captain's quarters uncovers a large trunk, within which is a leather pouch of 100 pp—Lavinia's missing payment to the harbormaster. Lavinia's father's signet ring is hidden in the headboard of the captain's bunk, in a secret panel that can be discovered with a DC 20 Search check. A scrap of rolled-up parchement has been threaded through the ring. Written on it in Verik Vanderboren's handwriting is a strange list of monsters (see Handout #2). This list is actually the combination for the vault in area **V3**; the number of eyes possessed by each monster indicates the sequence of numbers (6-1-2-4-2) while the sunrise/sunset indicates right/left for the combination lock. See area **V3** for more details. If the PCs don't find this for her, Lavinia finds it after several hours of searching the ship.

Handout #2

PART THREE: THE VANDERBOREN VAULT

Lavinia is overjoyed with the PCs if they manage to reclaim the *Blue Nixie*, and more so if they find her father's signet ring. At this point, she makes a job offer to the PCs—she's so pleased with their work so far that she's willing to hire them on as her personal troubleshooters, agents, and bodyguards. She offers the PCs 100 gp per month to remain in her employ, and implies that their service to one of Sasserine's noble families could have advantages and rewards beyond this monthly wage.

Assuming the PCs are interested, she already has a task for them. She needs to travel to Castle Teraknian in the Sasserine Harbor to check her family vault. All of Sasserine's nobility have vaults under the castle, but she's never seen any of them (including her own). Rumors hold that some family vaults are quite extensive and guarded by traps—based on things she overheard her father say through the years, she suspects that the Vanderboren Vault is relatively small and safe, but that there may be a construct guardian. She would like the PCs to accompany her to Castle Teraknian to provide protection and aid in investigating the vault contents.

Lavinia hires a coach to take her and the PCs from her manor to High Market in the Noble District, where the group takes a ferry over to Castle Teraknian. They spend little time in the castle itself, stopping only to speak to a clerk who verifies Lavinia's identity and her signet, and who then escorts them down a spiral staircase into a large circular chamber under the castle.

Over a dozen five-foot-wide hallways radiate out from the central vault chamber; each of these halls is ten feet long and ends at a single iron door—the entrance to the family vault. The clerk does not accompany the PCs and Lavinia into the vault; he instead bids them good day and returns to his office in the castle above.

V1. Entrance

The short passageway ends at a solid-looking iron door. The portal is emblazoned with a simple rune—an eight-pointed star. Above the door, inscribed in flowing script on a polished silver plaque, is the name "Vanderboren." A single handle protrudes from the door, just below a circular depression bearing the mark of the Vanderboren signet.

The iron door is *arcane locked* (caster level 15th) until a properly ensorcelled signet ring is inserted into the small depression above the handle by a Vanderboren. At this point, the door flashes once with blue light, then slowly swings open on creaking hinges. The door remains open until it is closed manually, at which point it locks automatically to the outside. A creature on the inside may push the door open again with ease, even without the signet ring or the proper bloodline.

Lavinia doesn't quite recognize the eight pointed star symbol, although she does admit it seems familiar. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough for a PC to place the symbol—the same star symbol appears on the sign of a building on the western edge of the Merchant's District. This building is the Seeker's Lodge, the regional base of a world-spanning group of adventurers and treasure hunters known as the Seekers. Lavinia's family has long been members of this organization, although tradition held that induction of children into the guild didn't occur until their 23rd birthday. Lavinia turns 23 in a few months—her parents died before they revealed their allegiance to the Seekers

V2. Iron Guardian (EL 2)

The floor of this domed chamber is of polished green marble. Two fifteen-foot-wide alcoves have lower ceilings and feature marble pillars carved to resemble coiling snakes. In the center of the room, five similar pillars are embedded into the walls, rising up thirty feet to a dome overhead. Looking up, the dome bears a huge representation of the same eight-pointed star that was engraved on the door to the south.

This room serves as an atrium and guardroom for the vault proper, one final defense to ward off would-be thieves. Although there doesn't seem to be an actual exit from the room, a DC 20 Search check of the northernmost pillar recessed into the chamber's walls reveals that the snake patterns on this pillar are different than those of the other pillars. A DC 15 Search of this pillar head reveals a hidden switch that, when triggered, causes the snake designs to animate. They writhe aside like living creatures, forming a coiling archway that allows access into area **V3**.

Creature: A single guardian watches over this chamber, a serpentine construct of metal called an iron cobra. The snake is three feet long and weighs about 100 pounds, looking like a cobra made of dozens of circular iron bands fitted together to form a snakelike body. The iron cobra is a master of stealth, and hides in the eastern alcove behind the pillar. Although mindless, iron cobras are capable of following complex orders from their masters. This one has been commanded to attack anyone who enters and does not bear the Vanderboren signet. Although Lavinia wears this ring, she lets the PCs go first into the vault—as a result, the cobra quickly and quietly slithers out from its hiding place to attack the first PC to enter the room.

IRON COBRA **CR 2**

N Medium construct
Fiend Folio 103

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 31 hp (2 HD); **DR** 5/adamantine
Immune construct traits
SR 19
Fort +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft.
Melee bite +2 (1d6+1 plus poison)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 12, Dex 17, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
SQ stalk victim, stealth
Skills Hide +13, Move Silently +13

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fort DC 14, 1d4/1d4 Strength. An iron cobra's poison reservoir holds three doses of poison; refilling the reservoir takes 1 minute.

Stalk Victim (Su) An iron cobra can be commanded by its creator to stalk down and attack any creature whose name is known to the creator. The iron cobra can detect this creature's location, as if by the *locate creature* spell at caster level 12th.

Stealth (Ex) An iron cobra gains a +10 enhancement bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

Tactics: If a fight with the iron cobra goes on for more than four rounds, give players a DC 15 Spot check each round to notice that the cobra seems to be taking pains to avoid Lavinia, if she's present. Although she won't think of it herself, if she boldly presents her signet ring to the construct, it immediately becomes docile and ceases attacking, returning to its post to wait for the next group of "intruders."

V3. Vault

This octagonal room is supported by a single large pillar with dozens of deep grooves along its sides. The seven walls of this room each bear fantastically detailed bas-relief carvings of exotic monsters in threatening poses. Starting at the wall immediately to the west of the entrance to the room and moving clockwise, the carvings depict a tentacled monster with a glaring red eye and a mouth full of teeth, a looming dragon, a fish-like creature with three eyes and four tentacles, a two-headed giant wielding a

pair of immense clubs, a spherical creature with four eyestalks and a bulging central eye over a drooling maw, a gorilla-like beast with a fanged maw and six eyes, and finally a towering black spider with seven eyes. Each monster's eyes consist of a glittering red stone. The ceiling above is only ten feet high, with the now-familiar eight-pointed star pattern radiating out from the grooved pillar. The arms of this star are black, save for the one pointing south toward the entrance, which is red.

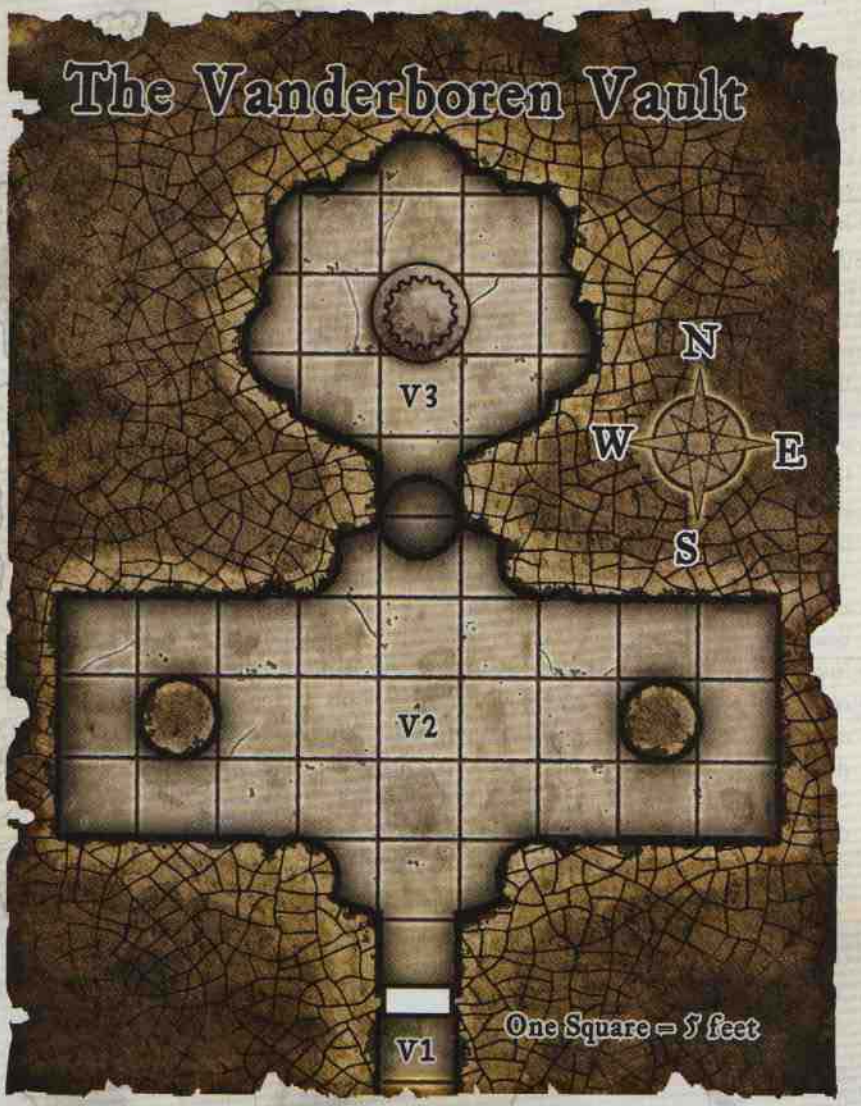
The creatures depicted (in the order described above) are a roper, a red dragon, an aboleth, an ettin, a spectator beholderkin, a gray render, and a monstrous spider.

This entire room is in fact a clever combination lock designed to hide and protect the five hidden alcoves in the walls of the chamber. The grooved pillar in the room's center is an immense stone tumbler that can be rotated in both directions, as a DC 20 Search can reveal.

The pillar doesn't rotate smoothly. Rather, it "clicks" in its socket as it rotates, eight times in the course of a single revolution. As the pillar rotates, the eight-pointed star in the ceiling rotates as well, the red arm pointing to a new wall with each click. The trick to this combination lock is the number of eyes each creature on the wall possesses. Starting from the wall immediately to the west of the entrance, the eyes number 1–7.

Although the PCs may not realize it, the scrap of paper they found with the Vanderboren signet ring actually contains the combination to this lock—Verik Vanderboren wrote it down in code for his daughter, hoping she'd be able to figure it out if something were to happen to him before her 23rd birthday. Unfortunately, his code is too clever for her. As such, it falls to the PCs to decipher the mysterious list in Handout #2.

The correct combination for this immense safe is 6 right, 1 left, 2 right, 4 left, 2 right. Although the parchment lists different creatures, the code is the same: the number of eyes each creature has corresponds to the number of the combination, while the notation of "sunrise" or "sunset" indicates east and west (right and left).



While no amount of brute force the PCs possess at this level can open the vault, a series of five DC 30 Open Lock checks can crack the safe—this is how Vanthus got into the vault (although he had to take 20 on the checks and used up several potions of *cat's grace* in the process).

Once the combination is entered, the entire room rumbles as the five alcoves rotate in place, revealing several coffers and chests.

Treasure: The red stone eyes sparkle nicely, yet are relatively worthless agates, each worth 2 gp.

Most of the 20 chests in the vault are empty—at best, only 1d4 silver coins remain scattered along the bottom of each chest. As more and more chests turn up empty, Lavinia grows increasingly distraught. Finally, in the last alcove, there's a reprieve—several of the chests here remain untouched. In all, there's 2,900 gp in coins and gems left in these chests, along with a large number of ledgers and a small iron coffer containing a thick pile of documents.

Most of the ledgers list debts owed to the Vanderborens from guilds and noble families in Sasserine—it seems that Lavinia's parents made a practice of doing dangerous favors for numerous organizations in Sasserine, yet rarely bothered to collect rewards. Instead, they allowed their patrons to keep the rewards with the understanding that they could collect at any time.

The documents in the iron coffer are another story. These documents are written in her mother's handwriting but in a strange language Lavinia doesn't

recognize (Sylvan), although she recognizes the letters as being elven. Included in the document are several maps of jungles, coastlines, and other regions that seem to represent some unknown tropical location. The document also includes dozens of sketches of strange, exotic creatures. This document was Larissa Vanderboren's journal cataloging her explorations of the Isle of Dread. Over the course of the next two adventures, this journal leads Lavinia to discover the existence of Farshore, a distant colony her parents helped to establish on this remote isle, but for now it serves as little more than a curiosity.

Between the gold and the IOUs, Lavinia now has more than enough to pay the back taxes and to begin setting her estate back in order. Nevertheless, the missing money concerns her greatly. It'll be a rough year, especially if her aunt and uncle in Cauldron can't help her out in the months to come, but at least she now has enough to carry on. She'll pay each of the PCs 200 gp as a reward for their aid, and asks them to come visit her as soon as possible regarding an even more important job when they get the time.

Development: The missing gold was stolen from the vault by Vanthus Vanderboren to aid in financing the Lotus Dragons. If the PCs don't think of it as they leave Castle Teraknian, Lavinia asks the clerk if anyone else has visited the vault recently. He replies with an affirmative, saying that her brother Vanthus visited the vault several times over the past month. The clerk is shocked if he learns that Vanthus has been missing for a month and that Lavinia didn't know he'd been visiting the vault—Vanthus had a signet ring (stolen well over a month ago from his mother) and the clerk recognized him as a Vanderboren. The clerk agrees to inform Lavinia if Vanthus tries to enter the vault again, but Vanthus has no plans to return to the Vault once his sister gains access to its contents—he's already stolen more than enough as it is.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs figure out the combination to the vault on their own without NPC help (or if they open it with Open Lock checks), award them XP as if they'd defeated a CR 2 creature.

PART FOUR: PERIL UNDER PARROT ISLAND

Once the Vault is secured and Lavinia's immediate financial problems are taken care of, Vanthus becomes her primary concern. Lavinia explains to the PCs that the two of them were quite close growing up, since their parents were rarely around. They grew to depend on each other, and got into a fair amount of trouble together. After one particularly complex prank involving several *elixirs of love* being emptied into the nearby water tower, their childhoods came to an end. Lavinia was sent to the Thenalar Academy to live out the next five years of her life, and Vanthus was shipped out to work on a plantation. When they returned to live in the family manor a year ago, they had both changed. Lavinia likes to think she benefited from her time at Thenalar. Vanthus, on the other hand, spent his time away nurturing his bitterness. He no longer had time for Lavinia, slept all day, and spent the nights with what Lavinia recalls as "associates of doubtful character." Eventually, he moved out of the house entirely—Lavinia believes he took up with a lover in Azure District, but she never learned the details.

When their parents died, Vanthus returned for a week to live at the manor, but he had changed even more. Gone was the easy sense of humor she recalled fondly from their childhood, and in its place was a bitter cynicism and a morbid streak that sent chills up Lavinia's spine. After several arguments, Vanthus struck her with his fist. Lavinia was shocked, and for a moment she thinks Vanthus was shocked as well, but an instant later he was back to his new self, all scowls and menace. He gathered his belongings and left—Lavinia hasn't seen him since.

She knows something profound happened to her brother at some point to change him, but she's not sure what this was. She believes he's fallen in with a bad crowd, perhaps smugglers, or thieves or even killers. Although his attitude might speak otherwise, she hopes that it's not too late, that if he can be brought back to her side she might be able to talk some sense into him and redeem him before he passes forever out of her reach. The problem is, she doesn't know where he's gone.

Tracking Vanthus

Lavinia has few clues as to where Vanthus has gone. She recommends asking around about him throughout the city; she doubts he's hiding out in Champion's or Noble District, but even these locations may hold clues. Her suspicion that he's been living with a woman in Azure District arose from half-heard rumors, but it remains the strongest lead she has.

The results of a DC 20 Gather Information check about Vanthus and his current location varies from district to district, as detailed below.

Azure District: A few people remember seeing Vanthus at taverns here, often in the company of a woman named Brissa Santos, a notorious pickpocket turned semi-legitimate artist who's had her fair share of brushes with the law. Like Vanthus, no one's seen Brissa lately. For this adventure, Brissa's a red herring; she's got a more important role to play in the next adventure. Attempts to track Brissa down now should universally fail, but quickly attract Shefton Rosk's attention (see The Informant).

Merchant's District: People remember seeing Vanthus here and there, although no one's seen him recently. Everyone assumes he's still living at Vanderboren Manor if asked.

Champion's District, Cudgel District, Noble District: Nothing.

Shadowshore: Inquiries made in Shadowshore actually bear the hints of fruit. A successful check made here not only indicates that Vanthus was seen in the area, but that he was often seen in the company of a known smuggler named Penkus. Inquiries about Penkus reveal that he's a semi-notorious figure in Shadowshore known for his drunken binges and violent temper. Over the last year, Penkus has been less visible in Shadowshore, leading many to believe

he'd moved on to another venue. As recently as a few weeks ago, though, Penkus and Vanthus were spotted at a boat shop called "It Still Floats!" where they got in a huge argument with the proprietor, a pessimistic dwarf named Panchi. If the PCs speak to Panchi and manage to adjust his attitude from indifferent to friendly, he'll admit he sold a boat to them. He goes on to say that they seemed excited, and loaded a lot of lamp oil, lanterns, and rope into the boat before they left. He's not sure where they went, but they headed west.

Sunrise: Although Vanthus is currently living secretly in Sunrise District, he's careful not to be seen there. Gather Information checks made here reveal nothing.

Although the PCs may find little in the way of useful information by making these checks, they do have an unintended result. Agents and allies of the Lotus Dragons quickly note that someone's asking about Vanthus, and it doesn't take him long to piece together who they are (especially if he's already figured out who was behind the recent events on board the *Blue Nixie*). Rather than risk having the PCs find him and the Lotus Dragon hideout, Vanthus decides to lure them to the same place he got rid of his competition in the guild—the smuggler's tunnels under Parrot Island.

The Informant

As word of the rising power of the Lotus Dragons spreads through Sasserine's underworld, the number of desperate would-be criminals seeking to join the guild rises as well. One such misguided soul is **Shefton Rosk** (CN male half-elf expert 1; hp 4; Bluff +8), a man who hopes to join the Lotus Dragons so he can get rich. Unfortunately for Shefton, his sponsor Vanthus sees him as nothing more than a tool to be used to get rid of the PCs.

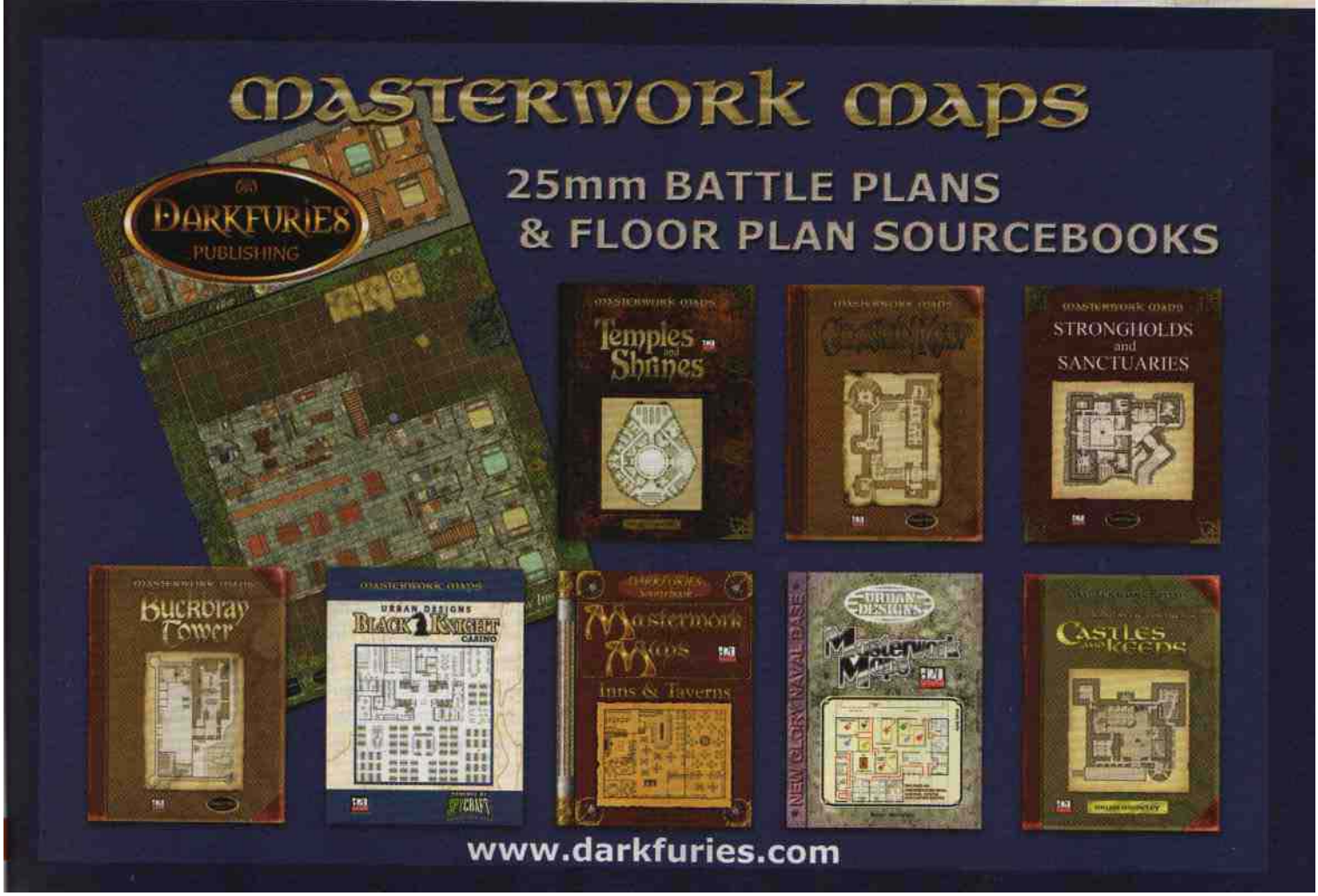
After the PCs have spent a day or two fruitlessly searching for Vanthus, a nervous-looking half-elf with messy black hair, a ragged suit of leather armor, and dirty hands approaches them. Glancing about, the man introduces himself in a quiet voice to the PCs as Shefton, and asks them if they're looking for Vanthus. If they are, and if they pay him 5 gp, Shefton claims to know where Vanthus is hiding out.

Shefton's been told by Vanthus to lead the PCs to Parrot Island, and to inform them that he's been living for the past few days in an abandoned complex of smuggler's tunnels below the isle. For an additional 5 gold, Shefton agrees to lead the PCs to the hidden trap door on the isle that Vanthus has been using to enter and exit the complex below.

Shefton's not the greatest liar, but his skill at Bluff may be enough to fool the PCs anyway. If they start asking difficult questions (such as, "How do you know so much about Vanthus anyway?"), Shefton claims that Vanthus approached him a few weeks ago to help set up a smuggling operation in the old tunnels below Parrot Island.

Parrot Island

Parrot Island has long served as a hideout for smugglers. The tunnels in the



bedrock below this narrow isle have existed nearly as long as Sasserine itself, but are now abandoned. Aboveground, the island is little more than a rocky outcropping surrounded by 30-foot-high cliffs save from the eastern end, where a narrow beach affords an easier approach. The isle is thickly vegetated, the trees above serving as the roost for hundreds of noisy, brightly colored parrots. A DC 12 Survival check is enough to note a partially overgrown trail leading up from the beach to a small clearing at the center of the island. It is up this trail and to this clearing that Shefton leads the PCs.

Hidden at the southern end of the clearing is a stone trap door. A DC 15 Search check is enough to locate the door—if Shefton is with the PCs, he can point it out to them easily. Once it's open, a five-foot-wide shaft leading down into the darkness below is revealed. A rope hangs from a hook in the wall, providing a relatively safe method of descent (DC 5 Climb). The shaft itself is just over 30 feet deep, and opens into an empty room below (area **P1**).

Vanthus waits hidden in the undergrowth nearby, and once the last PC descends into the tunnels, he emerges. Give the PCs a DC 0 Listen check (modified by 3 to account for the distance) to hear Shefton's exclamation of surprise as Vanthus approaches and stabs him in the back. A few moments later, Vanthus pushes Shefton's bleeding body into the shaft—the half-elf takes enough damage to die upon impact. Vanthus's next act is to cut loose the rope; it comes slithering down the shaft one round after Shefton's fall. Vanthus may take a few rounds to taunt any PCs he sees looking back up at him, shouting things like, "Say hi to Penkus's ghost for me while you're down there!" or "Serves you right for messing around with my sister, you thugs!" He answers any questions or threats the PCs send up at him with mocking laughter—when he grows bored (or as soon as anyone tries to attack him or climb up the shaft) he drops the trap door back in place and rolls several large boulders over on top of it, the grinding sound of which is dreadfully obvious to those trapped below.

Staging this event can be tricky, especially if the PCs insist on leaving one or more of their number topside while the others explore below. Vanthus doesn't spring his trap until he's sure he can catch all the PCs below. The adventure doesn't hinge on the plot twist of trapping the PCs in the smuggler's tunnels, and if they're clever enough to never present an opening for Vanthus, you should reward the PCs by not pulling strings to arrange their entrapment. As long as they find Penkus's body in area **P4**, things should still be on track for Part Five.

Trapped!

Once the PCs are trapped in the tunnels, they essentially have two methods of escape. They can swim to safety through the underwater tunnel from area **P3** to the harbor, or they can use the *elemental gem* from the treasury (area **P5**) to call an earth elemental to travel up to the entrance to clear the boulders and open the trap door. A canny party might engineer other methods of escaping—these two options simply represent the most likely means of escape.

For the majority of this part, the PCs must make do with what limited resources they brought with them to survive. The eastern tunnels consist of several rooms once used as barracks, storage, and meeting areas by the smugglers. Desperate characters who scavenge these rooms may find a few supplies like a barrel of drinkable (but nasty-tasting) water, a few torches, flint and steel, some rope, and the like—feel free to give them one or two pieces of old, worn-out gear for each room they search. There is no illumination in the brick-lined tunnels. Doors in the complex are of soggy wood, and most are swollen shut. All double doors hang ajar.

As the PCs explore the tunnels, they should quickly realize they've been abandoned for some time. Yet the tunnels are far from safe.

Simple Wooden Doors: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Open DC 13, Break DC 13.

The Hungry Dead (EL 1–3)

Centuries ago, these tunnels were used by a band of pirates as a base for their smuggling operation. When their enemies discovered the lair, a fantastic battle that resulted in the collapse of the sea entrance to the tunnels sealed the pirates in. A few tried to escape via the shaft in area **P1** only to find that their enemies had buried the entrance, making this route impassable. Things went from bad to worse when, in a few days, depleted food and encroaching madness drove one of the smugglers (a cleric of Olidammara named Veldimar Krund) to cannibalism. Veldimar organized a group of nine smugglers and murdered the others, and when they ran out of food again, the insane smugglers turned on themselves. Soon, only Veldimar remained, and when he perished in a gruesome attempt to amputate his foot for a meal, Olidammara cursed him, causing him to live on himself after his ignoble death in the form of an undead monster called a huecuva. The other cannibals rose from death as well, becoming ravenous zombies that now view the huecuva as their leader.

For nearly 200 years, these hungry undead wandered the tunnels aimlessly, until several Lotus Dragons (includnig Vanthus and Penkus) explored the tunnels, hoping to find a place to set up a new smuggling operation. Before long, they were attacked by the hungry dead. Vanthus saw an opportunity for advancement in the Lotus Dragons and took it. He abandoned Penkus and the others, and while the dead fed upon his allies, he escaped. His report to the Lotus Dragons conveniently omitted his actions, and the guild decided to look elsewhere for a place to stage smuggling operations (such as the *Blue Nixie*).

Penkus made it all the way to area **P4**, where he succumbed to a terrible disease inflicted upon him by the undead cleric. Before he died, he scribbled a damning testimony of Vanthus—a parchment that conveniently reveals where the missing brother has been spending his time of late.

Nine ravenous zombies and one huecuva prowl the tunnels in groups of up to three. The zombies are mindless, driven only by their hunger. Proto-memories of life prevent them from entering water (they're too stupid to realize they can't drown), making areas of water relatively safe. Use encounters with the undead to liven up

explorations of the smuggler's tunnels, throwing groups of 1–3 at the PCs at any moment where the suspense would benefit (such as just after they open a door, find a bit of treasure, or turn a corner in a hall). Once the first group is encountered and defeated, the remaining zombies mobilize—their dreadful moans and the sound of their gnashing teeth echo throughout the tunnels, making it difficult to estimate how many remain, or even from what direction they are approaching. When they attack, the fanged maws of these horrific zombies open wider than they should, revealing row upon row of jagged teeth. Veldimar himself should be the last undead encountered.

RAVENOUS ZOMBIE PIRATE (9) **CR 1**
NE Medium undead
Monster Manual 266, *Dragon Compendium* 212
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13
hp 16 (2 HD); **DR** 5/slashing
Immune undead traits
Fort +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** +3
Weakness need to feed, partial actions only

Spd 30 ft.
Melee bite +4 (1d6+3)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +4
Atk Options feed, improved grab (bite)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1
Feats Toughness
Possessions rotten studded leather (treat as padded armor)

Feed (Ex) A ravenous zombie pirate deals automatic bite damage with a successful grapple check.
Need to Feed (Ex) Whenever a ravenous zombie pirate slays a living opponent, it must make a DC 15 Will save or stop to eat its kill. When eating, the zombie can do nothing else—it loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and cannot make attacks of opportunity.

VELDIMAR KRUND **CR 3**
Male human huecuva cleric 1
NE Medium undead
Fiend Folio 94
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17
hp 15 (1 HD); **DR** 10/silver
Immune undead traits
Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft.
Melee slam +0 (1d6 plus huecuva blight)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +0
Special Actions death touch 1/day (1d6), rebuke undead 5/day (1d20+2, 2d6+3)
Spells Prepared (CL 1st)
1st—*cause fear*[D] (DC 14), *divine favor*, *shield of faith*
0—*guidance* (3)
D domain spell; **Domains** Death, Evil

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con —, Int 4, Wis 17, Cha 15
SQ divine conversion, spontaneous casting (inflict), turn resistance +2
Feats Combat Casting, Stealthy, Toughness
Skills Bluff +6, Diplomacy +8, Hide +6, Move Silently +2, Swim –2
Possessions rusted chainmail (treat as studded leather), gold holy symbol of Olidammara worth 50 gp

Divine Conversion Veldimar no longer worships Olidammara. Instead, he gains his divine power through his newfound faith in Death and Evil.
Huecuva Blight (Su) Disease—slam, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d2 Strength and 1d2 Constitution. The save DC is Charisma-based.

P1. Entrance

This ten-foot-square room seems empty. A shaft leads up through the ceiling in the northeast corner, and a brick-lined tunnel with a curved roof leads to the west.

Although the walls are made of brick, they're also slippery and slimy with moisture—climbing them requires a DC 20 Climb check. If Vanthus has closed the trap door above, its iron-plated underside should be quite difficult to batter through. If the trap door is smashed open, the boulders Vanthus stacked on top come tumbling down, striking anyone in the shaft for 2d6 damage.

Iron-Plated Stone Trap Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Open/Break DC 32.

P2. Smuggling Chamber (EL 3)

Four great wooden pillars rise up to support the ceiling, which sags dangerously in places and is thick with hanging strands of fungus. Several doors line the walls—one to the west (from which comes a muffled sloshing sound), two to the north (the western of which is badly damaged and hangs askew on its one remaining hinge), and two to the east. To the south, the ceiling has collapsed, leaving the southern part of the room choked in debris. A rippling pool of water reaches halfway into the room from this wall of stone and rubble. It seems that a wooden pier once extended into this pool, but all that remains now are several rotting wooden pilings protruding from the water. A man's body floats face down among them.

To the south, the sloshing pool of water may taunt PCs with promises of an underwater escape route. The pool is connected to the harbor, but unfortunately, the submerged tunnels are rarely wider than a foot (and in most cases much narrower). A Tiny or smaller creature could navigate one of the 50-foot-long tunnels to escape, but a Small creature must make a DC 30 Escape Artist check to move through the tunnels each round.

Creatures: Further complicating the pool as an escape route are the five foul-tempered dark brown kelp crabs that live within. Each of these crabs measures nearly two feet in diameter, with pincers the size of daggers. Fiercely territorial, they surge out of the pool to attack anything that approaches within five feet of the shore. The ravenous dead have learned to avoid this pool, but their hunger periodically draws them near enough to try to catch one of the crabs to eat.

SMALL MONSTROUS CRABS (5) **CR 1/2**
N Small vermin (aquatic)
Stormwrack 141
Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +0, Spot +4

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14
hp 8 (1 HD)
Immune vermin traits
Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0

Spd 20 ft.
Melee 2 claws +1 (1d4)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +0 (includes +4 racial bonus)
Atk Options constrict 2d4, improved grab (claw)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 2

SQ amphibious
Feats Toughness
Skills Hide +8, Spot +4

Treasure: The body in the pool belonged to one of Penkus's allies, a Lotus thief who wasn't quite fast enough to escape to safety before he was taken down by the ravenous dead. The crab-eaten, soggy body has nothing of value on it, but a DC 15 Search of the pool reveals his masterwork silver dagger, a weapon that may come in handy in a fight against Veldimar Krund

P3. The Sea Caves

The sloshing sound comes from the churning waters of a sea cave. Fueled by what must be powerful submerged currents, the water laps and splashes against the walls of the twisting natural cavern that leads to the west. A sandy slope descends from the door down to the edge of the subterranean tide. Dozens of purple and red sea urchins glisten in shallow divots along the ground and lower walls here, their spines glittering with water.

During high tide, the shallow water is about a foot deep and the deep water ten feet deep, with the transition between the two zones being a sudden drop off. At low tide (generally for three hours at sunrise and again at sunset), the "shallow" water zone is slippery but dry, and the deep section drops to eight feet deep. It costs two squares of movement to move through shallow water when it's not low tide—further, any creature that begins its turn in a square of shallow water here must make a DC 16 Strength or Balance check or fall prone from the surging current. At low tide, the slippery surface requires only a DC 10 Balance check to navigate. Swimming in the deeper water requires a DC 15 Swim check.

A character that slips and falls in the shallow water must make a DC 14 Reflex save to avoid landing on a patch of sea urchins. Failure indicates the character takes 1d3 points of damage from the spines and must make a DC 11 Fortitude save to avoid becoming nauseated from the urchins' poison for one minute, after which he must repeat the save to avoid taking 1 point of Strength damage.

A large pool of water sloshes in the western portion of the caves—this pool is twelve feet deep at its deepest point during high tide. A five-foot-wide tunnel leads north at the base of this pool; this submerged tunnel travels on a twisting course to the northwest for 70 feet before emerging from the sea bed in the harbor between Parrot Island and the gate that separates Shadowshore from Cudgel district; from here, it's only a 20 foot swim to the surface and then a 50 foot swim to shore. The currents in the tunnel are strong but not overwhelming; it's a DC 15 Swim check to navigate the tunnel. The tunnel entrance is difficult to see even underwater, requiring a DC 15 Search check to locate. From above the water surface, this increases to a DC 28 Search check.

P4. Penkus' Doom

The door to this chamber is barred from within; it can't be opened with Open Lock but can be bashed down as normal.

The smell in this chamber is horrific, a cloying stink of rotten meat rising from the bloated, seeping body slumped in the middle of the floor. The corpse's dark, almost black flesh bulges against its armor, ready to burst at the slightest touch. An intricate tattoo of a dragon clutching a flower is barely visible on his shoulder against the diseased flesh, and clutched in one hand is a crumpled scroll.

This body was once Penkus. When Vanthus locked him and his companions in these tunnels, Penkus made it all the way to the sea caves before one of the undead, the fallen cleric Veldimar, caught up to him. Penkus took two solid blows from the huecuva's claws before he made it through the pool in area **P11**. Yet even after he locked himself in this ancient guardroom, he didn't actually escape the undead menace, for he had contracted huecuva blight. As the days wore on and Penkus subsisted on fish and his dwindling water supplies, he grew more and more sickly. When he realized he was going to die, he lit his last torch and hastily scribbled a note condemning his "friend," hopefully providing anyone who found his body all the information they need to avenge his death. This note is reproduced as Handout #3.

Treasure: Penkus' suit of masterwork studded leather armor is still serviceable, although it needs to be cleaned before it is used. He used

Handout #3

These bones once be Penkus, so if ye read this, I be dead, laid low by the sick put on me by that foul dead thing! Yet even as me flesh wracks, know t'was not the dead what brought my doom, but one I 'til recently called friend!

Vanthus Vanderboren! Your name fills me with bile! Spineless, treacherous cur! You left us here to die. You left ME here to die, after all what I done t'get ye into th'Lotus! Yer designs on the Lady of the Lotus be clear now, and with meself out th'way... ye doubtless move even now into power, slithering amid my vacancy like a hermit crab in a shell, or a cadaver worm to still-warm flesh. CURSE UPON YE!

To th'one what reads this. If ye have any honor or vengeance in yer soul, know that Vanthus must die. He dwells in the lap o' th'Lotus, below th'Taxidermist's Hall. Seek him there, but 'fore he dies he must ken it were Penkus what undid him and guides yer killing blow.

And if, by some cruel spite of fate, it be ye what read this, Vanthus, know with certainty I wait for ye in Hell, where I intend t'rival the pit itself in yer torment!

most of his other gear up in his frantic attempt to escape the undead, but a gold ring on a bloated finger is worth 120 gp, and a masterwork dagger is hidden in a boot.

P7. Treasure Vault

The air in this chamber is stale, yet unlike the other chambers in the complex the place seems quite dry—even dusty. Cobwebs hang in thick sheets from the ceiling, and against the northern wall sit three large sea chests.

These three chests still contain the bulk of the smugglers' treasure, forgotten in this room for well over a century. All three chests are locked and the keys are long-lost; a DC 25 Open Lock chest gets them open. Alternately, they can be bashed open with weapons, although this automatically destroys all of the potions within.

Sea Chest: Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 25.

Treasure: The first chest is filled with copper and silver coins; 7,500 cp and 1,500 sp in all.

The second chest contains a dozen bags, 10 of which contain 100 gp. The remaining two each contain a small handful of assorted gems; each pouch contains 250 gp worth of gems in all.

The third chest contains three *potions of cure light wounds*, a *potion of lesser restoration*, a *potion of invisibility*, a *potion of barkskin +3*, a *potion of cure serious wounds*, an *elixir of swimming*, a *wand of mage armor* with 11 charges, and a small jade coffer worth 300 gp. Inside of this coffer, resting on a tiny velvet cushion, is a light brown gemstone. This is an *earth elemental gem*, identified as such by a strip of paper tucked under the cushion.

PART FIVE: THE LOTUS AND THE DRAGON

After the PCs escape from Parrot Island, it shouldn't be long before they overhear the latest news that's torn through Sasserine—namely, that old Keltar Islaran, the harbormaster of Sasserine, has been murdered! Details of how the deed was done vary wildly—the only thing the rumor mill seems to agree on is that he was killed in his bed late last night and that the body was left in an especially gruesome state of evisceration.

Depending on how long the PCs have been gone, Lavinia greets them with varying stages of relief. If the PCs are diseased and can't afford a cure, she gladly pays for *potions of remove disease* and *potions of lesser restoration* to fix them up. She reacts with shock and despair if the PCs show her Penkus' note or tell her that Vanthus was the one who sealed them into the caves, yet quickly steels her emotions. She's not willing to admit to herself that Vanthus is beyond redemption, and asks the PCs to capture him alive. If he makes this impossible, though... she only asks that his death be merciful and quick.

Finding the Lotus Dragons

Since Sasserine threw off the Sea Prince rule, countless thieves' guilds have formed and fallen in a hidden underground war. The city watch knows, and for the most part they let these guilds fight it out with each other, figuring they suppress themselves far better than the law ever could. Yet in this environment, a clear victor has silently emerged—the Lotus Dragons. Funded in secret by one of Sasserine's noble families and lead by that family's daughter, Rowyn Kellani, the Lotus Dragons are on the verge of publicly displaying their power and seizing control of Sasserine's shipping concerns, effectively establishing themselves as the controllers of the city's sea trade. The assassination of Keltar Islaran is merely the latest step in this nefarious plan. Left to their ambitions, the Lotus Assassins will become one of the most powerful organizations in Sasserine in less than a month.

Although they haven't yet publicly declared their power, word of the Lotus Dragons has already spread through Sasserine. A Gather Information check reveals the information listed below.

DC 15: "The Lotus Dragons are a new guild of thieves—they seem to be a lot more organized than the other fly-by-night guilds that have been popping up over the past few years."

DC 20: "I hear that they've got more than people working for them; they've got ties to animal smugglers, and keep the worst of the lot in their guildhall as guardians."

DC 25: "The Lotus Dragons have some sort of connection to at least one noble family. Why else hasn't the city watch done anything about them?"

Lotus Dragon Ambush (EL 2)

The first time the PCs come to the Lotus Dragons' attention (either as the result of a Gather Information check or a visit to the Taxidermist's Guildhall), a single Lotus Dragon thief approaches one of the PCs on a busy street and uses Sleight of Hand to slip one of them a note, (Handout #4). If a PC spots the thief planting the note, he tries to flee to Dead Dog Plaza.

If the PCs ignore the note, the Lotus Dragons arrange an ambush to take place at some point when the PCs are on the streets of Sasserine. They pay a street urchin to try to pick one of the PCs' pockets and then race into the alley, at which point two thieves take prepared actions to fire hand crossbows at the lead PCs while the third throws a tanglefoot bag at the alley entrance to block retreat. From their vantage points atop the roofs 10 feet above, the thieves have cover (+4 to AC, +2 to Reflex saves). It's a DC 15 Climb check to clamber up the building walls (during which time climbing PCs are flat-footed and susceptible to sneak attacks), and there are no convenient windows or doors into the buildings. As soon as one thief is slain or the PCs seem to be about to reach the rooftops, the remaining thieves flee across the roofs, taking a winding route that eventually leads to Dead Dog Plaza.

If the PCs track the thieves to Dead Dog Plaza, the thieves leap into a well in the plaza center, dropping down into area **D9** below and hoping the PCs pursue. If the PCs do, they enter a chamber known to the thieves as the Crucible; see area **D9** for the peril that awaits the PCs therein.

Lotus Dragon Thieves (3) **CR 1**

Human rogue 1

NE Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12

hp 8 (1 HD)

BY JAMES JACOBS

The Lotus Dragons

The Lotus Dragon thieves' guild is led by Rowyn Kellani, a beautiful, dangerous, and ambitious noblewoman who hopes to seize control of Sasserine's harbor and sea trade through acts of terror and mayhem. Her guild is heavily funded by her family and, more recently, through funds stolen by Vanthus from the Vanderboren vault.

All Lotus Dragon members bear a tattoo on the shoulder of a dragon wrapped around a lotus flower. Their guildhall is an extensive underground complex in Sunrise district at the junction of Crown Street, Monkey Street, and Water Street, under a plaza known as Dead Dog Alley.

During this adventure, the PCs may make multiple forays into the Lotus Dragon guildhall. In order to break the guild's back and prevent them from seeing their plans through, the PCs must slay or capture Rowyn and at least two thirds of the guild's other thieves. Keep track of their progress during the various ambushes and assaults, as the Lotus Dragons have a limited number of thieves to draw upon for ambushes and defense of the guildhall. In all, there are 22 Lotus Dragon thieves, not counting Rowyn, Vanthus, and the guild's master of torture, Kersh Reftun.

Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft.

Melee rapier +1 (1d6+1/18–20) or sap +1 (1d6+1 nonlethal)

Ranged hand crossbow +2 (1d4/19–20)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1

Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, 2 doses of urchin venom

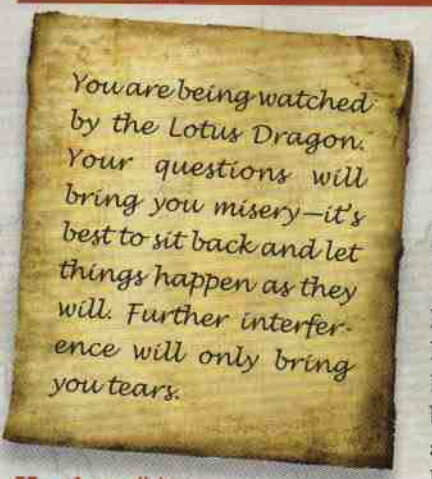
Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ trapfinding

Feats Improved Initiative , Stealthy

Skills Climb +5, Disable Device +5, Disguise +3, Hide +8, Intimidate +3, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +6, Search +5, Sleight of Hand +6, Swim +5

Possessions combat gear, leather armor, rapier, sap, hand crossbow with 10 bolts, thieves' tools, 10 gp



Handout #4

Development: Any captured Lotus Dragon has an initial attitude of hostile; he won't reveal the location of his guildhall or any other information unless his attitude can be made helpful. In this case, any captured thief can give the PCs a fairly accurate map of the guildhall that shows areas **D1—D17** and **D20—D25**; none of them know about areas **D18—D19** or **D26—D33**. They can reveal that their leader is a human woman, and that they know her only as Lady Lotus or the Dragon Mistress (depending on her mood). They can also reveal that her sub-commanders are named Vanthus Vanderboren and Kersh Reftun, and know that Nemien the Taxidermist is a guild ally.

The Taxidermist's Guildhall (EL 3)

Either from Penkus' note or after interrogating a captured thief, the PCs likely seek out the Taxidermist's Guildhall. A relatively modest building, there are two entrances—the front door into the showroom (area **G1**) opens onto Water Street and a locked service entrance from Dead Dog Alley that opens into the workshop (area **G6**).

Creature: The Taxidermist's Guild is run by a lanky, middle-aged man with a gold tooth and a penchant for looking down his nose at customers. This is Nemien Roblach, a pleasant-enough fellow as long as he suspects visitors are here to buy, but quick to anger otherwise. Nemien spends most of his time in his workshop—his current project is a partially completed jaguar on commission for the church of Kord.

When the PCs enter the showroom, they are confronted with dozens of expertly stuffed and preserved animals, ranging from parrots, monkeys, and bats to more exotic creatures like a monstrous centipede, a stirge, and even a black dragon wyrmling. A bell near the door bears a short sign—"Ring for Service."

None of the doors in the guildhall are locked, yet neither do any of the rooms hold anything suspicious that might tie Nemien to the Lotus Dragons—he knows better than to keep anything like that around. If he discovers anyone snooping, he flies into a rage and demands the PCs leave at once. He does not attack unless threatened, or unless the PCs discover the secret door to area **G8** (with a DC 20 Search check).

If he meets the PCs in the showroom, he tries to ascertain their interests quickly and bluntly—all of the stuffed creatures on display are for sale, with prices ranging from 5 gp for a bat up to 500 gp for the stuffed dragon. As soon as he realizes that the PCs aren't really here to buy or commission his work, he asks them to leave, saying, "I'm a busy man, and have no time for solicitors!"

NEMIEN ROBLACH **CR 3**

Male human illusionist 3

CE Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10

hp 9 (3 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk sickle +1 (1d4–1)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +0

Combat Gear *wand of ray of enfeeblement* (29 charges), *wand of mage armor* (20 charges), *potion of cure light wounds*

Spells Prepared (CL 3rd, +3 ranged touch)

2nd—*hypnotic pattern* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *minor image* (DC 15)

1st—*charm person* (DC 13), *color spray* (DC 14), *shield*, *silent image* (DC 14)

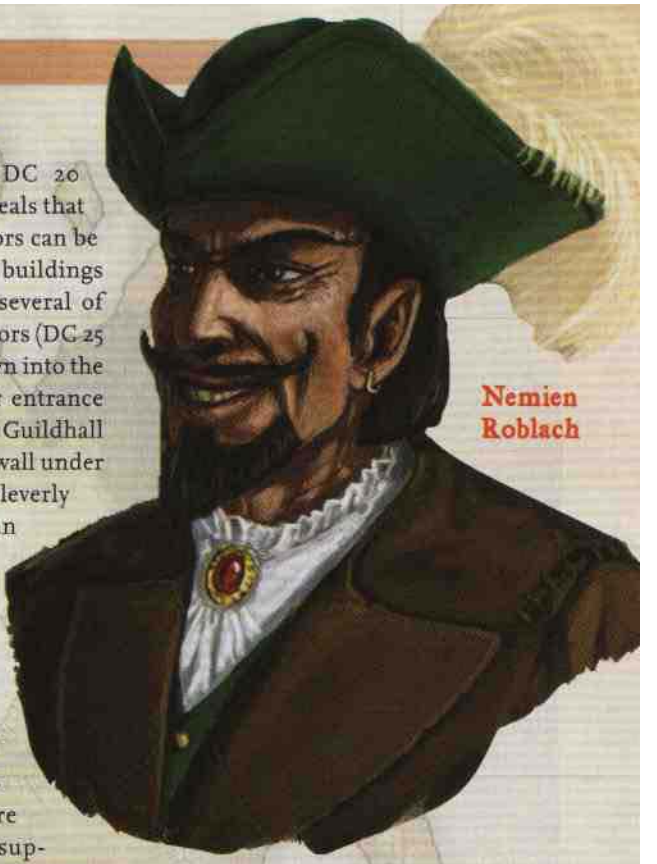
0—*detect magic*, *daze* (DC 12), *ghost sound* (DC 13), *prestidigitation*

Prohibited Schools evocation, transmutation

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13

SQ summon familiar (rat named Theophilies)

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion)



Nemien Roblach

Skills Concentration +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Profession (taxidermist) +7, Spellcraft +10

Possessions combat gear, masterwork sickle, four 100 gp pearls, key ring

Spellbook as above plus; 0—all; 1st—*alarm, disguise self, identify, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, unseen servant*; 2nd—*arcane lock, magic mouth, see invisibility.*

Tactics: Nemien is sure of his skills and confident in his magic, at least until he suffers any damage. His first action in any combat is to cast *invisibility*. On the following round, he casts *minor image* to make it appear that all the stuffed animals in the room are coming to life, hoping to trick the PCs into wasting resources. He maintains the illusion as long as it's working, after which he casts a *silent image* of himself running away, hoping to trick the PCs into leaving. If found out, he casts *shield* and then uses his attack spells as best he can to defeat the PCs.

Treasure: Nemien makes a good living as a taxidermist, but his real source of income is kickbacks from the Lotus Dragons. In a locked (DC 30 Open Lock) chest under his bed in area **G5**, he's stashed his savings—540 gp, 20 pp, and a small pouch of garnets and bloodstones worth 600 gp in all.

Development: If captured alive, Nemien quickly turns on the Lotus Dragons and admits that they pay him to act as their eyes and ears. He allows their members to come and go from his guildhall as they need, and can show the PCs the secret door to area **G8**. He's never been below, but he knows that the "boss lady" has a pet dragon (or something) that he'd dearly love a chance to stuff. Nemien has no illusions as to his fate once he gives up this information, and if not turned over to the city watch he packs a bag and flees for Cauldron as soon as the PCs let him.

Lotus Dragon Guildhall Features

The Lotus Dragon Guildhall is located under Dead Dog Alley, a collection of buildings surrounding a triangular plaza. Most of these buildings are boarded up from the outside and apparently abandoned. A DC 20 Search check of the doors reveals that the boards are a ruse; the doors can be opened with ease. Inside, the buildings are indeed abandoned, but several of them contain hidden trap doors (DC 25 Search to locate) that lead down into the guildhall, area **D10**. Another entrance leads from the Taxidermist's Guildhall to area **D1**. Finally, a wooden wall under the nearby pier is actually a cleverly disguised wide door that can be lifted to allow small boats to pass into area **D17**; this door can be discovered by anyone who makes a DC 25 Search check under the pier.

Inside, the guildhall itself consists of brick-lined tunnels and rooms; both feature numerous wooden ceiling supports. The exceptions to this rule are areas **D1**, **D9**, and **D17–D19**; these areas are of unworked stone. The entire place (with the exception of areas **D31–D33**) is quite damp, with moisture dripping down the walls to drain away through numerous lead pipes set into the floor, eventually emptying into area **D9**. Air quality is serviceable but musty. Doors are made of wood reinforced with iron, and tend to stick. The thieves keep them ajar for this reason; a closed door requires a DC 13 Strength check to open.

The Lotus Dragon Guildhall is inhabited by nearly two dozen thieves (see "The Lotus Dragons" sidebar). These thieves can be encountered in numerous areas, depending on the alert status of the guildhall.

When the guildhall is at rest, only 14 thieves are present. Of these, half sleep in the barracks (area **D3**), with the remainder either eating in the mess hall (**D20**) or training in area **D25**.

When the guildhall is on alert, all the thieves are awake; the room descriptions that follow assume the guild is on alert status and lists the locations of the thieves as appropriate. When on alert, the thieves are quick to make sure every door is closed tightly; this limits their own movement, but also slows the advance of an invading force.

Although there are no wandering monsters in the guildhall, when it's on alert there's a 20% chance every time the PCs enter a new room or hall of encountering a patrol of 3 Lotus Dragon thieves. Only two patrols will be encountered, as all remaining thieves are posted at guard points.

D1. Taxidermy Entrance

A wooden ladder leads up to a trap door in the roof of this natural passageway. Moisture drips from the walls to pool on the rough floor, draining in tiny rivulets to the east. A wooden door beckons to the west.

The trap door in the ceiling here leads up to area **G8** in the Taxidermist's Guildhall.

D2. Guardroom (EL 2)

Creatures: This room is kept empty at times of rest, but when the guild is on alert the north door is closed and the south door is left open so that the two thieves posted here can keep an eye on the door to the south for intruders. If they see any, they raise a cry to alert the rest of the guild and attack with arrows.

Urchin Venom

The Lotus Dragons extract the venom from a breed of sea urchin they farm in their guildhall. This venom is typically used to coat their crossbow bolts or arrows—while not deadly, it quickly nauseates those that succumb to it, giving the thieves a distinct advantage in combat.

Urchin Venom: Injury DC 11, Initial damage nauseated for 1 minute, Secondary damage 1 Str, Price 25 gp.

Involving the Watch

It's possible that, once the PCs get into a war with the Lotus Dragons (or even once they get Penkus' note), they'll take the logical route of reporting to the city watch. Only the Sunrise Watch responds to the PCs; all other watches send the PCs there since they don't see it as a matter involving their district. Unfortunately, the Sunrise Watch has the problem of being spread far too thin; Sunrise is Sasserine's largest district, and there simply aren't enough guards to go around. In addition, the Lotus Dragons have deep pockets, and several high-ranking officials in the Sunrise Watch receive regular "donations" to ensure that any investigations into the guild are perfunctory at best. Attempts to recruit the city watch result in more Lotus Dragon ambushes—it should become apparent to the PCs that they're on their own before long. If they report their suspicions of corruption to Lavinia, she promises to bring up the concern with the Dawn Council, but such issues take time, and by the time the Dawn Council is ready to move on even the best-researched information, it should be too late.

Lotus Dragon Thieves (2): hp 8 each; see page 31.

D3. Barracks

The walls of this long room are lined with dual bunks, eleven in all. The bunks sport sheets spotted with mildew, yet appear to be well-slept in.

The thieves sleep here, but never more than 7 at a time. If the guild's on alert, there are no thieves at all here.

D4. Rum Storage

Four large casks stand against the western wall; judging from the scent in the air, they're filled with rum.

Locked doors have little meaning in a thieves' guild, so the rum stores operate on an honor system. The thieves are allowed to drink in moderation, but drunkenness is not tolerated. Since drunk thieves are usually thrown into the Crucible (area **D9**), they're good about remaining sober.

D5. Cruncher's Pen (EL 2)

The floor of this room is cluttered with partially eaten bones and clumps of dark fur, giving the air the stink of a filthy wet dog.

Creature: A single black-furred worg named Cruncher dwells here, raised from a pup by Rowyn and given this room as his own. Cruncher's smart enough to recognize guild members and doesn't attack them—PCs might be able to slip by the monster unmolested with a good Disguise check.

Cruncher serves the guild in two ways; he helps guard the cellblock to the north, and he helps get rid of prisoners who are no longer of use. He often misses the chance to run free (even though Rowyn takes him out on a boat to race around on a nearby island two nights a month), but the comfort of being fed regularly outweighs this minor inconvenience in his eyes. Cruncher understands a few words in Common, but rarely speaks.

Cruncher is only found here if the guild isn't on alert; otherwise, he's stationed in area **D14**.

Cruncher, worg: hp 30; *Monster Manual* 257.

D6. Cellblock

Five prison cells line the western wall of this hallway. Each cell features a nasty-looking heap of straw, a wooden bucket, and little more. Iron bars close each cell off, with a narrow gate featuring a large lock allowing egress from each.

Unless one of the PCs has been captured by the Lotus Dragons, no prisoners languish in these cells. The locks on the gates can be opened with a DC 30 Open Lock check, but the bars themselves are already beginning to rust. It's only a DC 25 Strength check to break or bend them enough to allow passage.

D7. Guestroom (EL 4)

The purpose of this macabre chamber seems obvious. A stretching rack dominates the northwestern corner of the room, and an open iron maiden its southeast corner. A sizzling brazier of coals sputters in the southwest corner, giving the chamber a hellish red cast.

Jokingly referred to as the "guestroom" by the thieves, this chamber is obviously a well-kept torture chamber. Unless one of the PCs was recently captured, the Lotus Dragons haven't had a reason to use this chamber in the past several weeks, something that it's keeper, Kersh Reftun, regrets.

A DC 20 Search check reveals the secret door in the east wall.

Creature: If the guildhall is on alert, Kersh succumbs to his sense of theatrics and stages a trick here. After setting his magic armor to look like rags (making sure to cover the tattoo on his shoulder), Kersh straps himself into the rack, tying himself in with clever slipknots he can wriggle out of as a move action. (Anyone who examines these bonds and makes a DC 16 Use Rope check realizes the nature of the knots.) He then posts one of the Lotus Dragon thieves in this room to pose as the "torturer," dressing him in a stained leather apron and arming him with knives and branding irons.

When the PCs enter, they find what appears to be a torturer heating several branding irons in the nearby brazier to torment a man dressed in rags tied to the rack. The "torturer" attacks on sight and fights to the death (this thief isn't about to surrender in front of his boss!).

Kersh plays the part of the tormented victim, claiming to be a silk merchant who was kidnapped from his room at the Bent Goblin Inn weeks ago. He begs the PCs to escort him to safety, silently waiting for the best moment to turn on them and attack with surprise (likely as soon as the PCs get into a fight). If the PCs see through his Bluff check, he sneers at them and attacks.

Kersh himself is a muscular man with dark stubble on his chin and short, greasy hair. His eyes are pale and watery, and a Lotus Dragon tattoo graces one shoulder. His knuckles are badly scarred—testament to the use to which he often puts them. Kersh is a crude, foul-mouthed racist with little time or use for dwarves, halflings, or gnomes, although he does his best to hide his baser qualities when playing the part of a victim.

KERSH REFTUN **CR 3**
Male human rogue 1/fighter 2
NE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp 20 (3 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee* unarmed strike +3 (1d3+4) or red-hot branding iron +2 (1d6+4 plus 1d4 fire)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
*2-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ trapfinding
Feats Improved Bull Rush, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)
Skills Bluff +3, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +3, Heal +4, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +4, Sense Motive +5, Swim +6, Use Rope +6
Possessions *+1 glamered chain shirt*

Lotus Dragon Thief: hp 8 each; see page 31.

Tactics: If the PCs see through Kersh's trickery, he snatches up a red-hot branding iron (treat as a club) from the brazier if he can. If he can't, he's perfectly capable of fighting bare-handed. If he gets a chance, he tries to bull rush a PC into the waiting iron maiden; if he manages to do so, the PC takes 2d6 points of damage from the spikes, with a DC 12 Reflex save halving the damage. If the PC doesn't take a move action to clamber free of the iron maiden, Kersh takes a move action himself to slam the lid, automatically inflicting 10 points of damage on anyone trapped inside.

D8. Kersh's Quarters

This chamber sports a large bed covered with furs. An iron cage sits at the foot, and a low table in the southeast corner is heaped with salted fish, bread, and bottles of rum.

The cage at the foot of the bed isn't quite large enough for a Medium creature to stand or sit in. Kersh sometimes puts those who offend him in the cage for a night so they can watch him sleep comfortably and ponder the poor choices that got them put in the cage in the first place.

Treasure: A footlocker under the bed contains Kersh's wealth—234 gp and a set of silver flensing knives with ivory handles worth a total of 200 gp.

D9. The Crucible (EL 5)

Most of this circular cavern consists of a large pool of brackish-looking water, its surface greasy with filth and rotting seaweed. Dripping lead pipes protrude from the walls of the twenty-foot-high cavern, including one that's nearly two feet in diameter to the east. A five-foot-wide hole in the ceiling seems to lead up to the surface. To the west and south is a five-foot-wide beach of grit and gravel. A narrow tunnel leads up at a shallow angle to the west and out of sight.

This chamber, known as "the Crucible" to the Lotus Dragons, is both a place to test new recruits and to punish and torment the enemy. The pool of water is ten feet deep, and drains into the groundwater through numerous tiny cracks. The smaller pipes protruding from the walls provide drainage for the rest of the complex, while the larger one connects to area **D17**. A Small creature could shimmy up this pipe by making a series of DC 30 Escape Artist checks, only to reach the far end to find it closed off by a metal valve. This valve can be opened in area **D11**, at which point water from the sea cave in area **D17** sluices down into the cave. The water level rises by a foot every two minutes, eventually reaching a height of about eight feet from the cave roof above and flooding the entire cave to an equal depth.

Both secret doors to the west are five feet off the ground. Finding them takes a DC 20 Search check, and actually reaching them is a DC 10 Climb check.

Creature: If the guild is on alert, the Lotus thieves in area **D11** watch this room through the one-way *illusory wall* that separates the rooms, waiting for intruders to drop in from above. When the initial thief drops in, he quickly makes his way to one of the secret doors to the west and thence to join his fellows in area **D11**.

Once any PC lands in the pool, the thieves in area **D11** take two actions. First, they turn the valve to open the pipe to area **D17**, allowing the sea to begin flooding area **D9**. Second, they release the chain holding the crocodile at the end of the western passageway. The reptile roars in excitement as it's unleashed, then rumbles around the corner into the central room to look for food.

Crocodile: hp 22; *Monster Manual* 271.

Tactics: Of course, the PCs have more than a hungry crocodile to deal with in this encounter. The three thieves in area **D11** quickly spread out once the trap is triggered; one remains in area **D11**, while the other two move to sniper points to the east and south in area **D10**. If the PCs were lured here by a Lotus Dragon thief, he does not join in the battle, instead slipping out to warn the rest of the complex.

Starting on the first round of combat, the thief in area **D11** begins to shoot through the one-way illusory wall, targeting PCs not involved in melee with

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The Taxidermist's Guildhall
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The Lotus Dragon Guildhall
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D33
D31
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D26
D27
D28
D29
D23
D32
One Square = 5 feet

Taxidermist's Guildhall Key

G1. Showroom
G2. Storage
G3. Lavatory
G4. Private Meeting Room
G5. Guildmaster's Bedroom
G6. Workshop
G7. Supply Room
G8. Hidden Hall

the crocodile. On round 3, the second thief joins from the arrowslits to the east, and on round 5 the one in the south joins as well. Thieves firing from arrowslits have cover, while the one firing through the illusory wall has total concealment. Note that the rushing sound of the water imparts a –8 penalty on Listen checks, making it difficult to pinpoint the location of the thief in area **D11**; characters who fire blindly through the wall essentially have a 25% chance to target the right square (only then giving them a 50% chance to hit with a successful attack).

D10. The Ring of Ruin

This hallway surrounds the Crucible and connects four domed chambers, each of which sports a wooden ladder leading up to a trap door in the ceiling above. These trap doors open into the abandoned buildings surrounding Dead Dog Alley above.

D11. Observation Room (EL 2)

This narrow room overlooks a larger cave to the south—a barely-perceptible haze hangs in the air between these two rooms, almost as if some sort of membrane were stretched over the opening. Five wooden chairs are arranged before this "window." To the west sits a low table surrounded by more chairs, while to the east a large valve wheel protrudes from the wall.

The "haze" is in fact a special and permanent *illusory wall* that Rowyn paid (at great expense) to install. From this side, the wall is transparent, while from the other side it appears as a solid natural rock wall. The *illusory wall* functions at caster level 9th.

Creatures: If the guild is on alert, three Lotus Dragon thieves wait in this room to spring the Crucible trap (see area **D9** above). If caught in here before the trap can be sprung, they do their best to fight but aren't above fleeing into area **D9** and out through one of the secret doors to the west.

Lotus Dragon Thieves (3): hp 8 each; see page 31.

D12. Visitor's Lounge

This room feels a little drier than the others in the complex, and the air smells slightly less musty. The room itself is furnished as a lounge, complete with stuffed couch and low table.

Long-term visitors to the guild use this room and the one next door to rest and relax; currently, this room is empty.

D13. Visitor's Quarters

This room contains two fairly comfortable-looking bunks. The sheets on them only sport a few spots of mildew.

Visitors to the guild are allowed to sleep in this room. Vanthus spent some time in this room a little over a month ago when he first approached the Lotus Dragons with his plan to murder his parents and use the inheritance to help fund the guild. A DC 20 search of the room locates a scrap of paper wedged between one bunk and a wall, on which a map of the Vanderboren vault is sketched along with row upon row of failed combinations—one of Vanthus' worksheets he used to try to puzzle out area **V3**.

D14. Cruncher's Guardpost (EL 2)

Creature: This room is empty, unless the guild is on alert. In that case, Cruncher the worg (see area **D5**) has been placed here with orders to prevent any non-guildmembers from passing through. He howls loudly as he attacks, alerting the rest of the complex immediately.

Cruncher, worg: hp 30; *Monster Manual* 256.

D15. Meeting Room

A narrow table holds a pair of candles; a chair sits to either side.

This chamber is used by the guild to meet and interview prospective allies. It is currently empty. If the guild is on alert, the table in this room is missing.

D16. Waiting Room (EL 3)

This room contains a single long bench pushed up against the north wall. A door to the north is marked "Lavatory."

Visitors to the guild spend anywhere between half an hour to two hours waiting in this room before Rowyn decides how to proceed with them. During this time, the occupants of the room are typically observed through a hidden peephole in the southern door (DC 25 Search check to find).

Creatures: If the guild is on alert, four Lotus Dragon thieves have dragged the table from area **D15** into this room and turned it on its side. They huddle behind it, and use it as cover to fire crossbow bolts and arrows at anyone who tries to enter the room from the east. They are ill-prepared to handle any intrusion from the south unless Cruncher's howl alerts them, in which case they shift the table's position as appropriate.

Lotus Dragon Thieves (4): hp 8 each; see page 31.

D17. Smuggler's Pond (EL 3 or 5)

The sound of lapping waves fills this chamber, a natural sea cave that incorperates a large sloshing tidepool. To the north, a low sandy beach seethes with brightly-colored crabs. To the south, a larger sandy beach slopes up to a glistening wall. A short wooden pier protrudes from this beach into the pool, and the cavern winds around the corner beyond. To the north, a large wooden door blocks the cave exit, although the waters flow unimpeded through a large space under the door.

The Lotus Dragons use this cavern to stage smuggling operations or (less often) to recieve visitors to the guildhall. Generally, a visitor has a black bag pulled over his head late in the night before being rowed around the city canals for an hour to disorient him. When he arrives here, he is led into area **D16** through the secret door in the south wall (Search DC 20 to locate from the north side, automatic from the south) before the hood is removed. The crabs on the north shore clatter and clack menacingly, but they are relatively small and harmless. The current denizens of the water are not.

Creatures: To aid in their takeover of Sasserine's sea trade, the Lotus Dragons managed to contact a local tribe of ixitxachitls, intelligent and cruel aquatic monsters that look similar to rays. Six ixitxachitls have taken up residence here. As needed, they swim out into the harbor to take care of any aquatic missions Rowyn requires, and as a result these six are well practiced in the art of gnawing holes in the hulls of offending ships. If the guild is on alert, four of these evil fish patrol this cave while two swim back and forth between this area and **D18**. If either group

finds intruders, they call out to their allies in Aquan for aid and attack at once.

An ixitxachitl has a plain brown or black topside with a lighter colored belly. Its large mouth is filled with razor-sharp teeth and its eyes are intelligent and cruel. The scout, a base class that excels at skirmish-style combat, is detailed in *Complete Adventurer*.

IXITXACHITLS (4) **CR 1**
Male ixitxachitl scout 1
CE Small aberration (aquatic)
Monster Manual II 128
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Aquan

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 13
hp 11 (1 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1

Spd swim 30 ft.
Melee bite +3 (1d6+2)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +2
Atk Options skirmish +1d6

Abilities Str 15, Dex 21, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding
Feats Dodge
Skills Escape Artist +9, Hide +13, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Search +4, Spot +5, Swim +14, Tumble +9

Skirmish (Ex) A scout deals an extra 1d6 points of damage on all attacks he makes during any round in which he moves at least 10 feet. This extra damage applies only to attacks taken during the scout's turn, and applies only to creatures that have a discernible anatomy. The scout must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot.

D18. Urchin Farm (EL 2 or 5)

A large tide pool takes up this room, the waters thick with seaweed and its bed clustered with a veritable carpet of red and black sea urchins.

The Lotus Dragons farm these sea urchins for their venom, although they're careful not to deplete their stock.

Creatures: Two ixitxachitl scouts swim through the waters of this pool once every minute; if they see intruders, they call for aid from their kin in area **D17**.

Ixitxachitl scouts (2): hp 11; see page 39.

D19. Rhagodessa Pen (EL 5)

The walls and floor of this cavern glisten with thick, transparent ooze. Mushrooms protrude from the slop on the floor here and there, and a viscous puddle of green goo shimmers to the south. A large patch of mushrooms grows on the far side of this slime, and what appears to be part of a halfling skeleton lies in the sludge between them.

Creature: Before Vanthus joined the guild, one of the primary sources of income for the Lotus Dragons was smuggling dangerous and exotic animals—they worked as agents for hunters and poachers in the surrounding jungle, purchasing eggs and young monsters and then selling them to smugglers bound for the north. Soller Vark was one such smuggler, and the rhagodessa the Lotus Dragons sold him was one such creature. Rowyn was so intrigued by the strange vermin that she decided to keep four of them as pets. She keeps three of the monsters here, where they are well fed on fish and the occasional vagrant or prisoner. Mindless, the rhagodessas can't tell the difference between Lotus Dragons and anyone else—a brave party could "recruit" these monsters by luring them into the guildhall proper, where they begin to hunt for food.

Rhagodessas (3): hp 22 each; see Appendix.

Treasure: The skeleton is the remains of a hapless thief who tried to infiltrate the Lotus Dragon guildhall a month ago and made the poor choice of investigating this part of the caverns rather than the passage leading south from area **D18**—the Lotus Dragons never even knew the poor halfling made it this far. The skeleton's leather armor and rapier are both rotted or rusted to ruin, but he still wears a gold ring worth 240 gp, a *ring of jumping*, and a *brooch of shielding* capable of absorbing up to 42 more points of damage from *magic missiles*.

D20. Mess Hall

A long banquet table fills this room, leaving barely any clearance to the east and west. A

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large cage filled with listless tropical birds stands to the northwest.

The Lotus Dragons take their meals in this room—since the table itself can only accommodate 11 people at once, the thieves tend to eat at different times. The cage contains a half-dozen birds that quickly begin singing if anyone approaches within five feet of their cage, possibly alerting the cook in area **D21**.

D21. Kitchen (EL 1)

A battered wooden table sits in this room, its surface covered with knives, pots, and other cooking implements. A fireplace to the south keeps this room relatively dry, if smoky. A bubbling cauldron simmers over the fire, the unseen contents filling the room with a bitter stink.

The fireplace chimney rises up through a twisting iron pipe that eventually feeds into an old fireplace in one of the abandoned houses surrounding Dead Dog Plaza, so that when the cook uses the fire to prepare food, the smoke appears to come from a building and doesn't give away the guildhall's location.

This room is also used by the Lotus Dragons' cook, a kobold named Churtle, to distill poison extracted from the urchins in area **D18**. The contents of the cauldron consist of 10 boiling doses of urchin venom.

Trap: If the guild is on alert, Churtle has rigged the boiling cauldron of poison with a length of iron bent back to her hiding spot just behind the door in room **D23**; when anyone opens the door from area **D20**, she triggers the trap, causing the cauldron to catapult out of the fireplace toward the open doorway—and anyone standing within.

Fireplace Catapult: CR 1; mechanical; manual trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 ranged touch (1d6 fire, boiling poison); poison (urchin venom, DC 11 Fortitude save resists, nausea for 1 minute/1 Str); Search DC —; Disable Device DC —.

D22. Pantry

This room is nearly clogged with crates, barrels, and sacks of grain.

There's enough supplies stored here to last the Lotus Dragons for a month.

Treasure: A DC 15 search of this room finds a metal coffer that contains 10 vials of urchin venom. The milky fluid is unlabeled, but identifiable with a DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check.

D23. Churtle's Quarters

A layer of sand and countless seashells covers the floor of this room. A small hammock hangs from hooks driven into the walls to the southeast, just above a heap of blankets and cushions.

Creature: A female kobold named **Churtle** (LE female kobold expert 4, Craft (poison making) +10, Profession (cook) +11), lives here, her obsession with seashells apparent all over the floor. Churtle serves the Lotus Dragons as a cook, and although the thieves pay her well, her true loyalty is to Rowyn, who spared her life two years ago. Churtle's followed her around ever since. Her cooking and poison-making skills are considerable, and she only rarely confuses the two.

Tactics: Churtle hides in the pile of blankets (Hide +7), hoping that no one finds her. She's close to ineffectual in combat, and if confronted yelps in terror and tries to tumble past the PCs to escape to the north.

If she gets away, she immediately flees the guild. If she takes any damage, she breaks down in tears, begging for her life and offering her 53 gp as a bribe to let her go.

Development: Churtle's initial attitude toward the PCs is indifferent, but if she can be made friendly she offers to be that PCs' personal cook and assistant—at least until an opportunity to escape back into the swamp presents itself. If particularly well treated, you might consider having Churtle stick around—she can be a persistent source of comic relief, and her skills make her a fairly competent scout or sentry.

D24. Lavatory

This remarkably clean lavatory features the latest technology in chamber pots.

D25. Training Hall (EL 5)

The floor of this large room is covered with thick padded mats. Throughout the room stand all manner of target dummies made of clothes and armor stuffed with straw, some of which wear bell-studded coats with numerous pockets, and others of which are draped with manacles and chains hung with cheap-looking padlocks. To the west, a wooden stage sits a foot off the floor. A padded throne flanked by potted plants sits on this stage.

The Lotus Dragons use this large room to hone their skills and spar. Rowyn sometimes observes their technique and style from the comfort of the throne, but usually it's either Kersh or Vanthus seated there. Currently, the throne is empty.

The door to the east is closed and locked (DC 25 Open Lock).

Creatures: As the entrance to the inner sanctum of the guild, the Lotus Dragons have chosen this room as their primary defense point. If the guild is on alert, six Lotus Dragon thieves wait here. They've taken six of the target dummies and stashed them in area **D26**, and have taken their place, disguising themselves so that at a glance, the room may seem to be empty.

Lotus Dragon Thieves (6): hp 8 each; see page 31.

Tactics: If they aren't noticed, the thieves wait for the PCs to scatter throughout the room before taking action and drawing their weapons in the surprise round. They work together, flanking foes and focusing initial attacks on lightly armored foes in an attempt to even the odds before facing armored enemies.

D26. Evaluation Room

A single chair sits in one corner of this room. Several target dummies lie heaped on a table to the southeast.

Rowyn, Vanthus, and Kersh use this room to meet with thieves whom they feel need evaluation, either for promotion in the ranks or "demotion" (which equates to being fed to Cruncher).

D27. Guardpost (EL 2)

Creature: This empty room is guarded by a rhagodessa. The vicious arachnid wears an iron collar attached to a chain—the far end of the chain is affixed to a winch in the small room to the north. When she's expecting visitors, Rowyn turns the winch in area **D28**, which retracts the chain and confines the rhagodessa to the room to the north. If the guild is on alert, the rhagodessa's chain is slack, allowing it to reach every corner of this room.

Rhagodessa: hp 22; see Appendix.

D28. War Room

A large hexagonal table made of oak takes up the majority of this room, surrounded by six chairs. The north wall bears a huge map of Sasserine, on which dozens of tiny flags have been placed. To the south, a five-foot-tall and ten-foot-wide slate bears a tangled mess of chalk scribblings. A winch handle protrudes from the northwest corner.

This room is where Rowyn meets with Vanthus, Kersh, and other contacts to plot Lotus Dragon activities in Sasserine. The map to the north is used to track allies, enemies, and organizations that pay protection money to the guild. Blue flags indicate allies, red indicate enemies, and gold indicate sources of income. Although the color system is unexplained, the PCs should be intrigued to see a gold flag protruding from the Vanderboren estate. A red flag protrudes from the Islaran estate and a blue one from the Kellani estate. A few of the city watch garrisons (including the Sunrise garrison) contain both blue and gold flags. Feel free to improvise the placement of other flags.

To the south, the slate is used to track other projects and take notes. The primary piece of information currently on the slate seems to track the comings and goings of ships in the harbor, as well as notations of which ones have been (or are scheduled to be) "holed." A note in the lower left corner, written in Aquan, reads, "Make sure to pay ixitxs. by month end!" In the upper right corner, the PCs may be amused or concerned to see their names listed inside a box, alongside a note in big letters that reads, "VANTHUS! FIX THIS NOW!"

D29. Guard Room (EL 2)

Creature: Several months ago, Rowyn purchased a *wand of animate dead* on the black market. The wand only had a few charges, but it was enough for her to create this room's guardian, a zombie created from a bugbear named Zhanther who once worked for her as a bodyguard—she executed and animated him when she learned that he was stealing from the guild.

Bugbear Zombie: hp 42; *Monster Manual* 267.

D30. Bath

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this chamber have been covered in white marble tile; every inch sparkles cleanly. In the middle of the room sits a five-foot-by-ten-foot pool of clear water. To the northwest stands an unlit iron brazier.

The water in the pool is fresh and clean—Rowyn uses this room to relax, often lighting the brazier to turn the place into a sauna.

D31. Rowyn's Lounge (EL 6)

The opulence of this chamber's decor is a bit jarring. The smooth plaster walls are painted violet. Delicately crafted silver lanterns flicker

softly on the wall, lighting the room. A shelf to the north holds several books, statuettes, stuffed animals, a crystal ball with a smoky red light at its core, and two coffers; one of darkwood and one of iron decorated with tiny jade bats. A five-foot-wide landscape of the city of Sasserine hangs on the eastern wall, yet all of the ships in the harbor fly flags depicting a serpentine dragon coiled around a lotus. A pair of overstuffed chairs sits beside a low table heaped with fruit and bottles of wine. To the south stands a lone wooden cupboard. The floor itself is adorned with a thick, deep purple carpet. An open door to the south leads to what appears to be a bedroom.

Rowyn uses this room to entertain guests, take her meals, or simply to relax. She commissioned the painting on the wall several months ago from a local artist with ties to the Crimson Fleet—a woman named Brissa Santos, who at the time was romantically involved with Vanthus. It was through this painting that Rowyn met Vanthus and the two of them became lovers.

Creature: Rowyn, guildmistress of the Lotus Dragons, waits here to confront the PCs. She hopes her thieves and guardians take care of them for her, of course, but if they make it this far, she has a proposal for them. The door to this room is unlocked, and when the PCs enter, they find her relaxing in one of the chairs. Standing to the side is a bright-eyed and hungry-looking monster, a dinosaur-like dragon with green scales and a bright yellow crest on its head.

Rowyn rises as the PCs enter, and regards them with an appraising eye. She addresses them as "Lavinia's flunkies," then boldly offers them a job. They're obviously resourceful folk with strong skills in a fight—would they be interested in working for her instead of Lavinia? Rowyn's offer is legitimate; even though she's a bit angry if the PCs have managed to take down her guild, she's got enough money to rebuild it. And with the PCs working for her, the new Lotus Dragons could be stronger than ever before. Of course, if the PCs refuse her offer or prepare to attack, she sighs with regret and nods to her "pet," giving him the order to attack by saying, "Gut Tugger! Do your thing!"

Rowyn and Gut Tugger

Rowyn herself is a beautiful human woman with long red hair tied back in a ponytail. Her eyes sparkle like chips of green jade, and she moves with an unsettling grace. On one shoulder she wears a tattoo of a lotus, while on the other is an intricate dragon tattoo, its tail coiling down around her arm.

Her "pet" is in fact a bitter, surly crested felldrake named Gut Tugger. While most crested felldrakes are good-aligned and serve as guardians for elven cities or armies, Gut Tugger always had a mean streak. When he killed his packmates over a treasure dispute, his elven keepers tried to put him down. He killed them as well, then fled the elven village only to be captured by animal smugglers. Gut Tugger played the role of a mindless creature, knowing that this was a free ticket to somewhere far from his elven oppressors—he ended up in Sasserine, purchased by Heldrath Kellani as a gift for her daughter. Rowyn and Gut Tugger formed a fast friendship, and he took to her lessons in thievery with shocking ease. Today, Gut Tugger lives an easy life as Rowyn's "pet." Rowyn often lets him wander the guild halls so he can spy on the Lotus Dragons from within. None of the thieves suspect Gut Tugger is intelligent, and more than one pair of loose lips or acts of insubordination have resulted in trips to Cruncher's pen as a result of Gut Tugger's reports to his mistress.

ROWYN KELLANI **CR 5**

Female human rogue 3/bard 2

NE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

AC* 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14
hp 25 (5 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; evasion
*3-point Combat Expertise

Spd 30 ft.
Melee* *+1 rapier* +3 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged mwk hand crossbow +6 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +3
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, sneak attack +2d6
Special Actions bardic music 2/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire courage +1)
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of gaseous form*, *wand of animate dead* (5 charges), *wand of charm person* (35 charges)
Spells Known (CL 2nd)
1st (1/day)—*cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*
0 (3/day)—*daze* (DC 12), *ghost sound* (DC 12), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*
*3-point Combat Expertise

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 15
SQ bardic knowledge +4, trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +12, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +14, Intimidate +4, Jump +12, Knowledge (local) +8, Perform (dance) +10, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +12, Swim +8, Tumble +12, Use Magic Device +8
Possessions combat gear, *+1 leather armor*, masterwork buckler, *+1 rapier*, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 bolts poisoned with black adder venom (Fort DC 11, 1d6/1d6 Con), gold earrings worth 300 gp, bejeweled necklace worth 200 gp, skeleton key (fits all locks in guildhall, including the treasury door)

GUT TUGGER **CR 3**
Male crested felldrake rogue 2
NE Small dragon
Monster Manual II 98
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common, Draconic, Sylvan

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 17
hp 37 (4 HD)
Immune sleep, paralysis
Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; evasion

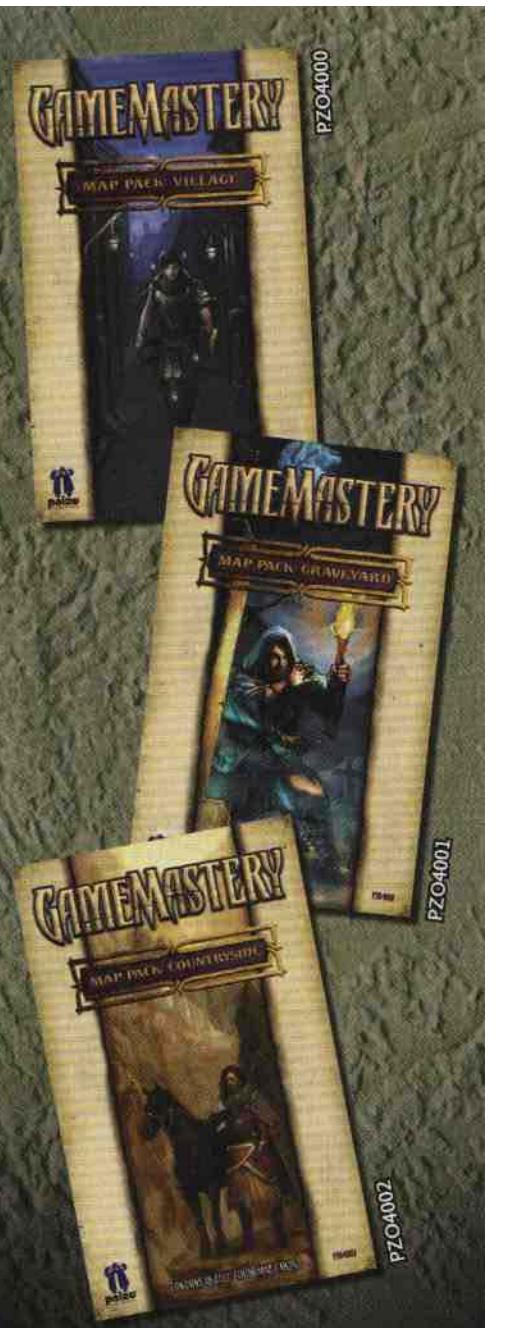
Spd 40 ft.
Melee bite +5 (1d8+1)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +0
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding
Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative
Skills Bluff +7, Diplomacy +2, Hide +11, Jump +10, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +7
Possessions *collar of armor +2* (as *bracers of armor +2*)

Tactics: Rowyn lets Gut Tugger engage the PCs first, taking the first round to use inspire courage. She then uses Tumble to flank Gut Tugger's opponent. The two focus their attacks on one enemy at a time. Rowyn uses Combat Expertise in all fights, and when she's not flanking makes use of Improved Feint to score sneak attacks. If any PCs are slain, Rowyn uses her *wand of animate dead* on the bodies to raise them as zombies—likewise, she'll do the same to Gut Tugger if he's killed (although she performs this act through tears). If she's reduced to less than 15 hit points, she retreats and drinks her *potion of gaseous form*, then flees into the nearest drainage pipe located at the wall's base. Once she reaches area **D9**, she escapes the guildhall through the closest trap door—she does not return to this complex, leaving the PCs to loot what they will.

Treasure: The bookshelf to the north holds several minor objects of value. The books themselves are novels, mostly adventure stories or erotica, none of particularly high value. Some of the statuettes are valuable though, including an alabaster statuette of a succubus worth 350 gp, an onyx statuette of a displacer beast worth 100 gp, and a silver statuette of a rearing unicorn worth 500 gp. The stuffed animals consist of small but dangerous creatures like stirges, cobras, Small monstrous spiders, and even what looks to be a giant shrew the size of a cat. None of these are worth much more than a few gold coins.

The two coffers on the shelves are jewelry boxes, each worth 150 gp. The



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Switching Sides

Of course, there's a chance that the PCs end "There Is No Honor" by accepting Rowyn Kellani's offer. While this Adventure Path assumes the PCs turn her down, it can certainly continue if they don't—the adventures to come simply take on a much different tone. As their first job, Rowyn may ask the PCs to perform any number of increasingly dangerous and sinister tasks to set things into motion for the Lotus Dragon takeover of the harbor. Eventually, when Vanthus doesn't return from his journey to rob the pirates in Kraken's Cove, she'll send them to investigate.

darkwood coffer contains seven silver and gold chain necklaces and bracelets worth a total of 300 gp. The iron box contains a dozen rings and earrings worth a total of 550 gp. The wooden cupboard contains several different articles of clothing sized for a human woman, including three courtier's outfits (worth 30 gp each), a noble's outfit worth 75 gp, and a flowing (and scandalous) robe of shimmering lavender silk worth 450 gp.

D32. Rowyn's Bedroom

The floor of this room is thickly carpeted, and the walls have been smoothed with plaster and painted a soothing light green. A delicate crystalline chandelier hangs from the center of the ceiling. To the south, a dressing table sits next to a padded stool, and a large canopied bed with silk sheets looms to the southeast. Between these two objects sits a heap of oversized cushions.

This room is Rowyn's private sanctum, a place to relax and sleep. Lately, Vanthus has been sharing her bed, although he's not present at this time (having headed east out of the city on another project). The pile of cushions serves as a bed for Gut Tugger.

The secret door to the north can be discovered with a DC 20 Search check.

Treasure: A search of the dressing table turns up a large collection of exotic and expensive perfumes—24 vials in all. Twenty of these are worth 10 gp apiece, but the last four are truly exotic imports from places with names like Mur, Alfheim, and Sigil. Each of these three vials is worth 200 gp. The final vial comes from a place named Shendilavri, and contains six doses that grant the wearer a +10 competence bonus on Diplomacy checks for 1 hour. One dose of this intoxicating perfume is worth 200 gp.

A DC 20 Search of the bed finds a small cache of letters hidden between the mattreses. Investigation reveals that these letters are from none other than Vanthus; they are exceptionally racy love letters written to Rowyn and dating back several weeks. It'll take an hour to read through them all, but there are a few pieces of information found in the letters (mostly in the more recent ones) of particular interest to the PCs, as excerpted in Handout #5.

D33. Guild Treasury (EL 4)

The door to this room is locked and trapped. A DC 30 Open Lock check unlocks the door, but also triggers the trap (as does using the correct key, if the key is turned counter-clockwise in the lock).

This plain stone room is empty, save for three large chests made of wood and iron.

Trap: Several traps ward the contents of this room. The first is built into the treasury door. The only safe way to open this door is to insert the proper key and turn the key clockwise to unlock the door; any other attempt to open the door triggers a poison dart trap in the northern wall; the darts fire at anyone standing in the 15-foot-long hall between this room and area **D32**.

The second trap consists of a bed of hundreds of needle-thin spikes hidden in the floor. This trap triggers as soon as anyone enters the room, but has an onset delay of 3 rounds. After this time passes, anyone in the room is suddenly struck by these spikes. The chest in the northeastern corner of the room is in fact a false chest; opening the chest disarms the trap, while closing it resets the trap (also resetting the 3 round delay).

Poison Dart Trap: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 ranged (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); multiple targets (1 dart per target in hall), poison (black adder venom; DC 11 Fort; 1d6 Con/1d6 Con); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

Footlancer Trap: CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; switch bypass; spikes shoot out of floor (1d6, damage as caltrops, *Player's Handbook* 126); never miss; onset delay (3 rounds); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

Treasure: As mentioned above, the northeast chest is little more than a disguised swifch to bypass the footlancer trap. The northwest chest is locked (Open Lock DC 30), but not trapped. Inside is a fantastic amount of stolen wealth These items represent the work of countless minor burglaries and thefts perpetrated upon Sasserine over the past several months. The total value of the stolen goods in this chest is 5,450 gp.

The southwest chest is locked (Open Lock DC 30). Within is a fantastic amount of gold and gemstones—all of which are neatly collected in silk bags bearing the Vanderboren family crest. The contents of this chest represent all that remains of the wealth that Vanthus stole from the Vanderboren vault, and amounts to 8,600 gp in all. An honorable party will, of course, return it all to Lavinia (who rewards them handsomely for such honesty).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

At the end of this adventure, the PCs should have destroyed the Lotus Dragon operation and saved Sasserine from losing control of their harbor. Although the city watch and the Dawn Council might not realize it at first, the painting from Rowyn's lounge and the documents and maps in the war room should be more than enough to prove the magnitude of the service the PCs provided to the city. If you're using the affiliations detailed in DRAGON #348, this accomplishment grants a +1 bonus to the

affiliation score of anyone belonging to the Dawn Council.

The Savage Tide Adventure Path assumes that Rowyn Kellani escapes the PCs, as she returns in the third adventure, "The Sea Wyvern's Wake." If the PCs capture her, you should have them learn of her escape from prison some time during "The Bullywug Gambit." If she's killed in this adventure, you'll need to make a few changes to "The Sea Wyvern's Wake," as detailed in that adventure. Whether she survives or not, her family soon finds out what role the PCs played in the ruin of the Lotus Dragons. While they had no direct hand in the guild's affairs, the Kellani family did know about Rowyn's involvement, and the dutiful daughter provided her estate with regular tithes from her guild. Angered at this loss of income and the humiliation, Heldrath Kellani takes action during the next adventure to punish the PCs for their actions in this adventure.

At some point several days after they defeat the Lotus Dragons, a representative of the Dawn Council invites the PCs to a banquet and dance at Castle Teraknian so that the members of the council can thank them in person for the services they provided to Sasserine. At the end of the banquet, Lord Worrin Lidu presents each PC with the Spire of Sasserine, a medal awarded to those who perform great services to the city. Anyone wearing this medal finds that it grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy and Gather Information checks made in Sasserine.

Lavinia Vanderboren certainly won't forget the PCs as well. News that her brother was responsible for her parents' death shocks her, but she recovers quickly, steeling her resolve to put the whole affair behind them. She gives each PC a 1,000 gp bonus for their services, and when she gets a chance asks them to continue investigating Vanthus' whereabouts. Thoughts of rehabilitation have left her mind now, though—all she wants is to see her brother face justice for his crimes. This plotline is the focus of he next adventure in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, "The Bullywug Gambit."

Excerpts from Vanthus's Letters to Rowyn Kellani
(Dated 2 days before the fire that slew the elder Vanderborens)

"...My parents have grown soft. I'm not worried in the slightest that they suspect anything, my delicate flower. The funds you've trusted me with have been more than enough to pay off the local guards, the harbor watch, and the ship's crew to say nothing about the new cargo. Hell... they even offered to help load the barrels! Of course, I didn't tell them what was inside—I'm sure they'd sing a different song if they knew just how much alchemist's fire we loaded into the hold of my father's new plaything. I'll be following the ship's progress for a few days to make sure the fire does the trick, so you'll not be seeing me for at least half a week. Keep your bed warm for me!"

(Dated 3 days after the fire)

"...It's unbelievable! Sure, she's the eldest sibling, but she knows nothing of life! She spent the last half of her childhood in Thenalar learning how to fold napkins and play the violin, for Hell's sake! It just goes to show you how insane my parents really were... leaving everything in her care like that! Whatever. She'll need the house to live off of, I suppose. Lavinia's not a bad lass, really... I kind of miss our time together, to tell the truth. Think she'd be interested in joining the Lotus? I doubt it. And anyway, a second Vanderboren tragedy might get too many people curious. No, for now, whatever's in the vault will have to do..."

(Dated two days ago)

"...I really wish you could have been there, my little dragon, to see their faces before I closed the door! Lavinia's never going to get anywhere hiring fools like them. I wonder if they've found Penkus yet? I hope they didn't die too quickly."

"In any case, on to the purpose of this letter. Brissa's in the other room, getting ready for a night out on the town, so I'll have to be quick. Remember that thing she hinted about to me? About the pirates who were supposedly using Kraken's Cove as a base for their smuggling operation? Turns out she wasn't spinning tales—I've heard that they'll be arriving within the week with a particularly rich cargo. I'll bring her with me on the pretext of joining up with them, get their guard down, and when they're not expecting it my men'll light the ships on fire! It'll be a simple task to pluck the treasure from the water once all those fools are dead. Should be more than enough to make up for what we lost when Lavinia inherited rather than me."

"I tell you... burning people to death on their own boats? It's the best way to make money yet. Wish I'd thought of it years ago!"

Handout #5

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTER

Rhagodessa

A spider-like creature the size of a pony skitters out of the pit. The creature's body is dark brown with yellow stripes, its furred legs long and spindly. The front pair of its ten legs rear up threateningly, their tips flattening into terrible discs studded with dozens of hooked suckers. The monster's head is horrifically oversized, dominated by immense mandibles that chatter and clack with obvious hunger.

RHAGODESSA **CR 2**

Always N Medium vermin

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 22 (4 HD)

Immune vermin traits

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee 2 pedipalps +7 (0 damage) and bite +5 (1d8+6)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +11

Atk Options Spring Attack, improved grab (pedipalp), powerful bite

Abilities Str 19, Dex 12, Con 13, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 6

Feats Multiattack[B], Spring Attack[B]

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, pair, or brood (3–8)

Treasure none

Advancement 5–6 HD (Medium), 7–12 HD (Large)

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a rhagodessa must hit with a pedipalp attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it can make a bite attack as a free action, gaining a +4 bonus on its attack roll with this attack. The tiny hooks and tenacious suckers the rhagodessa uses to clutch its prey tear flesh if a grappled creature escapes with an opposed grapple check, causing 1d4 points of damage to the escaping creature. A creature that escapes being grappled by making an Escape Artist check does not suffer this damage.

Powerful Bite (Ex) A rhagodessa's bite is always a secondary attack, yet the powerful muscles in its jaws allow it to apply 1.5 times its Strength modifier to damage rolls with its bite.

Bonus Feat Rhagodessas gain Multiattack and Spring Attack as bonus feats.

This primeval vermin lacks the venomous stinger or crushing claws of a scorpion, but makes up for it with its jaws—nearly a third of the creature's weight is accounted for in its powerful mandibles. These arachnids are nocturnal hunters that dwell in caverns, moving out into the surrounding countryside to seek food well after the sun has set.

Although they're all but mindless, rhagodessas are also creatures of habit. Once a rhagodessa finds a hunting ground that's fertile, it tends to remain close to its new lair. This trait makes the rhagodessa an excellent guardian; as long it's kept relatively well-fed, a rhagodessa settles into any small cavern or underground chamber and remains content to stay there, only rarely wandering into trouble in any nearby regions.

Scaling the Adventure

"There Is No Honor" is designed for a group of four 1st-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 2nd–3rd level characters. Simply adjust any NPC character levels up by 1 for every level by which your party's average exceeds 1. Advance all the rhagodessas encountered in the adventure by 2 Hit Dice. Add a second or even a third iron cobra to the vault. In the smuggler's tunnels, the PCs should encounter groups of ravenous zombie pirates in mobs of 3–5; feel free to add more creatures to the abandoned tunnels as well, such as larger monstrous crabs or even sharks to the sea caves. Advance Cruncher to 6 Hit Dice, and consider giving him the fiendish creature template. Replace the crocodile in the Crucible with a giant crocodile or a carrion crawler. Raise the save DC for urchin venom by 2.

James Jacobs is the Editor-in-Chief of DUNGEON. *He thanks David Cook and Tom Moldvay for their classic adventure (and the primary inspiration for the Savage Tide Adventure Path) "The Isle of Dread," David Noonan for giving Sasserine a name, and of course Chris Thomasson for coming up with the idea for the Adventure Paths in the first place.*

Turns out, it was a pretty good idea, Chris!

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting

Savage Tide
Sasserine

BY JAMES JACOBS
BY BEN WOOTEN
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

Sasserine began not as a city, but as a woman. Over 700 years ago, a cleric of Wee Jas named Sasserine woke one night after a particularly vivid dream of a hidden cove, protected from the sea by vast cliffs and from the land by steaming swamps and jungle. In this vision, she beheld a thriving city and a glittering spire of scarlet stone, and knew Wee Jas had visited her with a prophecy. Sasserine called together her followers, including her lover Teraknian, a soldier and worshiper of Kord, and set out to find this hidden cove. Diseases, accidents, and monsters took their toll, and near the end, despair gnawed at Sasserine's pilgrims. Finally, their numbers reduced to less than a quarter of their initial strength, these pilgrims emerged into a bounteous stretch of land with fertile soil and fields of exotic plants sheltered by twin shoreline cliffs. Sasserine recognized the landscape at once, but Wee Jas had not warned her of the black dragon that had taken the cove as his territory. Mere hours after the pilgrims had thankfully fed on the abundant plants and had only just begun to hope they had found their new home, the dragon Zelkarune struck. Enraged at this final trial, Sasserine stood her ground against the dragon and defeated it—but at a terrible cost. For in delivering the final strike, Sasserine had been forced to step between Zelkarune's claw and Teraknian; the blow meant for him instead laid her low, just as she called down a bolt of fire from the sky to slay the dragon.

In the days to follow, the survivors turned to Teraknian for leadership, who vowed to found a city in Sasserine's name. It was the year –124 CY, and over the seven centuries to follow, Sasserine would mature into one of the great hidden wonders of the south.

SASSERINE IN BRIEF

Sasserine is located at the westernmost edge of the Amedio Jungle, nestled in a sheltered harbor. Most travelers come to Sasserine via ship, as overland routes are fraught with peril. From the sea, Sas-

serine isn't much to look at; two ragged cliffs of stone jut from the coastline, their faces home to seahawks and gulls but little else. Then a vast rent in the cliff slides into view, its summit crowned by the shattered remnants of an immense stone bridge. Sailing between the slowly eroding stone pylons that once supported the bridge above, a visitor passes from open sea into a thriving harbor of commerce, whaling, and intrigue. Certainly the smell of the city is breathtaking—a tremendous riot of exotic spices, smoke, humanity, and sewage that assaults the senses. Perfumes and scented candles are popular commodities in Sasserine.

Sasserine is split into seven distinct districts, each with its own personality. These districts are separated by inner walls, by networks of canals or rivers, or simply by age. Friendly competition between the districts is common, especially during festivals, yet the citizens of Sasserine do not hesitate to come to each other's aid. Perched at the edge of civilization, Sasserine is (and has always been) often the target of assault from land and sea; the pirates of the Crimson Fleet, the navy of the Scarlet Brotherhood, the frog-like bullywugs of the surrounding marshland, and even gangs of ogres and giants from the nearby mountains keep the city on constant alert, yet to date the fiercely proud city has fallen to the enemy only once, and even then only through the act of the city's most notorious traitor.

Sasserine (Large City): Conventional; AL NG; Population 15,650; 40,000 gp limit; Assets 31,300,000 gp; Mixed (77% human, 6% half-elf, 5% halfling, 4% gnome, 4% dwarf, 2% elf, 1% half-orc, 1% other).

Sasserine's History

For 150 years after its foundation in –124 CY, Sasserine experienced phenomenal growth. In 30 CY, Sasserine had its first conflict with the notorious assassins and slavers of the Scarlet Brotherhood. Brotherhood wizards and clerics managed to destroy the stone bridge known as Teraknian's Arch and burned much of the waterfront before the defenders managed to repulse the attack. Over the next four centuries, Sasserine would be variously assaulted by the Scarlet Brotherhood, the Great Kingdom, and local tribes of giants and bullywugs once or twice a decade, so tempting were the vast plantations of coffee and spices the city protected. Yet with each assault, the soldiers of Sasserine grew more adept at defending their city. Teraknian's Arch was rebuilt and destroyed nearly a dozen

times. The final decision to abandon the bridge entirely and leave it in ruins marks the only remaining physical scar from years of warfare.

Over the years, a line of lord-mayors descended from Teraknian ruled Sasserine in conjunction with advice from the churches of Wee Jas and Kord. In the year of 480 CY, Orren Teraknian ruled the city. For the first time in centuries, the church of Wee Jas was stripped of its power when fabricated charges of devil-worship led to the arrest, imprisonment, and even execution of its faithful. Just as Orren's rule became unbearable, a great fleet of ships arrived—representatives of the Hold of the Sea Princes to the north. Promising an end to Orren's cruel rule, the invaders were aided in their assault on the city from within as the citizens rose up in rebellion. Orren Teraknian was overthrown and the Sea Princes claimed Sasserine as their own. Over the century to come, Sasserine's resources were savaged. The Sea Princes kept Sasserine a secret from the rest of the world, hoping to hide the valuable port from invaders by destroying any references they could find to it. Spies infiltrated cartographer guilds and libraries throughout the world, altering maps and sea charts with magic. Ship captains who knew the route to the city were bought off or murdered. Sasserine suffered in these 100 years, but the underlying spirit of her citizens did not die.

Their prayers were finally answered in 584 CY, when the Scarlet Brotherhood assassinated nearly all of the Sea Princes. The resulting turmoil threw Sasserine into chaos. Without the support of their homeland, the leaders of the city were overthrown in a fortnight.

In the decade since their emancipation, the people of Sasserine have rebuilt their city with astonishing alacrity, but they still work to restore their navy, to re-establish trade routes with lands to the north, and to heal the rift of hatred between the churches of Kord and Wee Jas. Burgeoned by events in their sister city of Cauldron (which recently survived a disaster of its own), the city of Sasserine seems to be perched on the edge of glory.

Sasserine's Citizens and Enemies

Sasserine is governed by a council of seven noble families known collectively as the Dawn Council. Decisions are put to a vote amongst the city's citizens, and their appointed representatives among the nobility take the results of these votes to guide their leadership in the Dawn Council.

Money once again flows into the city coffers as the trade routes are reestablished, bolstered by the trove of absconded funds recently liberated from the Sea Princes. Dress style in Sasserine ranges from rags to riches, but the one thing that applies across all classes is the fact that in this hot, humid city, less is more. Public nudity is generally frowned upon, but it's not uncommon to see outfits that leave little to the imagination (for better or for worse).

After a hundred years of oppression, the law in Sasserine has finally relinquished its stranglehold on the citizens. Murder, arson, treason, assault, theft, and other violent or destructive crimes remain illegal and are severely punished by the Sasserine Watch, but lesser crimes (drug trade, prostitution,

gambling, vagrancy, and similar offenses) remain unrestricted. Many come to Sasserine precisely because of the fact that their vices may be pursued here without fear of legal repercussions. Some public groups (in particular, the church of St. Cuthbert) are attempting to rally the Watch back to more conservative ways, but for now the income generated by visitors and the recent memories of repression serve to keep the majority of the city's populace open-minded and accepting.

Each of the seven districts of Sasserine is represented not only by an appointed noble, but by an allied church. Traditionally, the seven churches of Sasserine have been on good terms, but unfortunately the last 100 years have placed an undue strain upon them. In particular, the faithful of Wee Jas and Kord have suffered. The terrible rift of suspicion and hatred that formed between these churches during Orren Teraknian's rule exists to this day. The remaining four primary religions include Olidammara (in the guise of a fictitious patron saint of merchants named Worgul), Pelor, Fharlanghn, and St. Cuthbert. The final church is in fact comprised of the worship of three sea deities: Osperm, Procan, and Xerbo. Numerous smaller shrines can be found in Sasserine, each dedicated to different gods, but these shrines rarely have congregations of more than 50. There are few evil religions operating in the shadows of the city—the two most notable are the secret cult of Vecna that uses the Historian's Guild as a cover, and a fairly sizable temple of Nerull hidden below one of the plantation houses south of the city.

The Scarlet Brotherhood has traditionally been an enemy of the city, but times may be changing. A diplomatic monk named Anteki Alresian represents the Brotherhood in Sasserine. Anteki's methods are a bit unorthodox for the Brotherhood—he openly acknowledges his allegiances and asks the same of those who serve under him. Meanwhile, the Scarlet Brotherhood's plans for Sasserine remain hidden, possibly even from their amiable ambassador.

SASSERINE MAP KEY

Sasserine is divided into seven distinct districts, each of which has a distinct feel and theme. Important locations (temples, noble villas, guildhalls, and the like) are detailed on the following pages. What isn't detailed here are the numerous inns, shops, guildhalls, shrines, and taverns that can be found inside the city walls. While many of these locations are keyed on the map, their descriptions are not presented here. Instead, information concerning these locations is given in the Savage Tide Player's Guide, available at paizo.com.

Castle Teraknian

Castle Teraknian is not in any of the seven districts, and yet it belongs to all of them. Below the castle are the King's Crypts—burial chambers for the Teraknian Line. This area has been closed off as well; the only portion of the castle basement still in use is the Noble's Vault, a place for Sasserine's nobility to store valuables away from their personal estates.

A1: Whaler's Guildhall

The Whaler's Guild is overseen by **Captain Shadwik** (LE male human rogue 4/fighter 4), a gruff, grizzled man grown too old to ply the seas but still crafty enough to helm one of Sasserine's most prosperous guilds.

A2: Azure Cathedral

Those who worship at the Azure Cathedral offer their prayers to one of three deities as the need requires. Those seeking safety on long sea voyages pray to Osprem, the goddess of ships and sailors. People who fear the wrath of the sea offer prayers to Procan, the god of the sea. And those who seek riches from the sea pray to Xerbo, the god of sailing for profit. The Azure Cathedral is tended by a flock of twelve acolytes and led by a soft-spoken man named **Belrain Daskeral** (N male human cleric 7).

A3: Islaran Manor

The Islarans have handed down the post of Harbormaster from one patriarch to the next for generations. The current lord is **Keltar Islaran** (NG male human expert 5/aristocrat 3), a tired old man who expected to hand over the title of harbormaster to his eldest son Aaron in a few years. Unfortunately, both Aaron and Keltar's favorite daughter Alyssa vanished a few years ago, leaving him with only three daughters more interested in marrying into other families and a son who's deathly afraid of the water.

A4: Dredger's Guildhall

The Dredger's Guildhall is run with an almost horrifying glee by an obese dwarf named **Maklash Gristwhistle** (LN male dwarf expert 5/rogue 2). Maklash and his boys patrol the canals and waterways of Sasserine, clearing obstructions and gathering refuse and waste into large tanks in their barges for proper disposal in the great furnaces that belch putrid black smoke into the sky at all hours of the day.

Map Key

Each of the following locations is keyed to one of the seven districts. For ease of reference, the letter code in a location's number represents the district's patron deity:

A (Azure Cathedral): Azure District
K (Kord): Champion's District
C (St. Cuthbert): Cudgel District
F (Fharlanghn): Merchant's District
O (Olidammara): Shadowshore
P (Pelor): Sunrise District
W (Wee Jas): Noble District

A5: Kellani Manor
The Kellanis have quickly established a name for themselves as a greedy family willing to do nearly anything to get ahead in the nobility. Most believe that matroness **Heldrath Kellani** (LE female human rogue 6/aristocrat 2) bought her way into nobility with the vast wealth acquired during her days as an adventurer (some might say pirate)—and they're right. Rumor holds that Heldrath is ailing and will soon be naming her daughter **Rowyn Kellani** (NE female human rogue 3/bard 2) as the family matron.

A6: East Market
East market's vendors hawk seafood, whale oil, ambergris, scrimshaw art, and exotic animals.

K1: Lorchester Manor
The Lorchesters came to Sasserine many centuries ago, when a schism split their family over the rights of rule in the northern city of Redshore. Today, the family is ruled by the canny and somewhat scheming **Neldrak Lorchester** (LN male human aristocrat 7), whose primary obsession is plotting to gain control of Sasserine's lumber industry.

K2: Zelkarune's Hall
The headquarters of a mercenary company called Zelkarune's Horns, this large building serves as both a meeting hall, public museum, and adjunct to the nearby arena. Led by the charismatic and likable "reformed barbarian" **Zasker Grankus** (NG male human barbarian 6/fighter 2), Zelkarune's Horns has become one of the most successful organizations in Sasserine.

K3: Sasserine Arena
The most popular attractions held here are the gladitorial fights sponsored and operated by Zelkarune's Horns. These fights are generally not to the death when only people are involved, but are often used to settle debts. More often, members of Zelkarune's Horns hold public competitions among themselves to determine who among them is the greatest.

K4: House of Kord
The oldest structure in Champion's District is the temple of Kord. Made of black basalt, this cathedral's spires reach nearly 150 feet into the sky in places. The cathedral is presided over by a no-nonsense priest named **Tormagal Gred** (CG male human cleric 9/fighter 3).

K5: Kord's Market
Kord's Market is open during the morning and early afternoon, at which time weapons, armor, and metalwork of all kinds can be found for sale.

K6: Scarlet Embassy
The Scarlet Embassy was built only a few years ago over the site of a noble villa whose members were slaughtered during the final years of the Sea Prince rule. This building now serves as the living quarters for **Anteki Alresian** (LN male human monk 7) and his staff. Cynics hold that Anteki's merely lulling Sasserine into a false sense of security for a Brotherhood assault from the sea.

K7: Toregson Manor
The Toregsons are Sasserine's newest noble family, ascended to this honor when another family, the Pikes, were forced a year ago to sell their family home after they fell upon hard times associated with the abduction of one of their daughters. **Lord Urik Toregson** (NG male human aristocrat 3/expert 2) also owns the Smith's Guildhall in the Merchant District.

C1: Low Market
Low Market is the lesser of Cudgel District's markets—little goes on here save for the sale of food, firewood, and miscellaneous tools.

C2: Church of the Whirling Fury
A mystery to most of Cudgel's citizens, the exact nature of the ceremonies and rituals that take place in this innocuous-looking church are subject to wild speculation. Popular rumors hold that the members worship a vengeful storm god and that they sacrifice animals to prevent storms from harming the city. Only a strange symbol above the door depicting a vortex of wind and swords gives any hint as to what goes on within. A DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check is good enough to recognize this symbol for what it represents.

In truth, the Church of the Whirling Fury is a place of worship for those dedicated to the eladrin paragon Gwynharwyf. Her faithful consist of only a few dozen, and of these only six know her by name; the others simply worship her as the Whirling Fury—the embodiment of rage against evil. The cult is led by a mysterious woman known only as **Lady Silvermane** (CG female elf barbarian 6/champion of Gwynharwyf 2; this prestige class is detailed in the *Book of Exalted Deeds*).

C3: Temple of St. Cuthbert
One of the best-attended churches in the city, this temple recently received a staggering influx of support from Sasserine's sister city of Cauldron. After the recent death of its high-priest, the Sasserine Temple came under the care of **Father Ruphus Laro** (LN male human cleric 7), a kindly priest who grew up in Cauldron.

C4: Stonemason's Guildhall
The Sasserine Stonemasons are charged with the upkeep of the city's walls. Beyond this charge, they hire

themselves out to the rich, building stone mansions or castles as required in the surrounding region (or in Sasserine itself). The Stonemason's Guild is led by a gregarious dwarf named **Tenkar Gritbeard** (LG male dwarf expert 8).

C5: West Market

West Market is Cudgel District's busiest market. Bustling at all daylight hours, the market's primary specialty is wood and lumber, but anything from groceries to livestock to medicine can also be found for sale here.

C6: Taskerhill Manor

Cudgel District's oldest noble family are the Taskerhills, a name that today has become synonymous with fantastic wealth and lumber—the family has owned and operated Thunder River Lumber for centuries. Led by a proud and eloquent man named **Kalmadar Taskerhill** (NG male human aristocrat 10), the Taskerhills have only the best interest of Cudgel District at heart. Unfortunately, this interest has led to an unfortunate bit of elitism.

C7: House of Violets

This beautiful monastery perches on the southern rim of Crab Pond. Unknown to the public, and even to ambassador Anteki of the Scarlet Embassy, the House of Violets is in fact a front for the Scarlet Brotherhood. The monastery's abbot, **Gerialar Divalean** (LE male human monk 5/assassin 3) has been charged with keeping an eye on Anteki by their mysterious masters, and for now is content to merely perpetuate the monastery's façade.

F1: Harbor Market

Harbor Market remains busy at all hours of the day and night, although it's at its peak during lunch hours.

F2: Temple of Fharlanghn

The temple of Fharlanghn is little more than a shrine tended by a small staff of a half-dozen clerics. This isn't to say that the citizens of the Merchant District are godless, just that of all Sasserine's districts, these folk represent the widest range of faiths. **Lirali Woarali** (N female half-elf cleric 8) honestly wouldn't have it any other way.

F3: Merchant's Guildhall

Guildmaster **Dhalven Miomar** (LN male human expert 6) tries to remain a neutral party among the movers and shakers of Sasserine, so he can more efficiently and honestly tend to the needs of the city's merchants (many of whom bicker and squabble, being directly tied to competing concerns).

F4: Smith's Guildhall

This fortified stone building functions not only as a guildhall for Sasserine's smiths, but as a productive and well-staffed forge as well. The guildhall is efficiently run by **Velkandar Toregson** (NG male human expert 6/fighter 1), the eldest son of the Toregson family.

F5: Arabani Manor

Anwyn Arabani (CG female half-elf aristocrat 6/bard 3) claims to be of drow descent, although it seems unlikely given her relatively pale skin. What isn't in question is her obsession with the dark elves; she's decorated her entire manor with drow-themed works of art. Anwyn has yet to select a husband, despite the near-constant flow of suitors that visit her home; rumor holds that she may be involved with someone already, but the scandalous nature of their love has, to this point, prevented a public announcement.

F6: Seeker Lodge

Most visitors to Sasserine pass by this unassuming building without giving it a second glance, but to those who recognize the eight-pointed star symbol carved into the front door, the Seeker Lodge is perhaps the most reliable source of adventurous expeditions in the city. The Seeker Lodge is maintained by a soft-spoken man named **Feldus Selvant** (N male human rogue 4/wizard 5/arcane trickster 3). Feldus was recently involved in a major expedition to the Forbidden City, where he and several other Seekers contested with a group of adventurers from Cauldron over claims of a set of golden rings liberated from a yuan-ti temple.

F7: Alchemist's Guildhall

This large building is staffed by a small army of researchers and apprentices beholden to a fussy gnome named **Blisker Tittertop** (NE male gnome wizard 3/cleric 3/mystic theurge 8). Blisker has little interest in either Wee Jas or the Witchwardens, which has earned him the scorn of most of Sasserine's arcanists.

F8: Vanderboren Manor

Traditionally, the Vanderborens have been taken with high-risk ventures, and as a result many of their resources are taken up by sudden unexpected expenditures, leaving little to further their position in the city itself. Recently, young **Lavinia Vanderboren** (NG female human aristocrat 2) became the estate's sole heir after her parents perished in a terrible ship fire and her brother Vanthus went missing.

F9: Telvanta Academy

This prestigious dance school has a secret; its matron, a shrill but talented woman named **Alma Telvanta** (LE female human battle dancer 10; the battle dancer class is detailed in the *Dragon Compendium*), is in fact an agent of the Scarlet Brotherhood. Those she accepts as students are also those she deems can be molded in

secret into good citizens and members of the Brotherhood; their training in the academy is as much in espionage as it is in dance.

W1: Witchwarden Tower

Established nearly 600 years ago by the church of Wee Jas, the Witchwardens have since become a secular mage's guild. The current mistress of the guild is High Warden **Lux Seoni** (LN female human wizard 11).

W2: High Market

The High Market is where the truly exotic or expensive merchants come to hawk their wares to the city's elite.

W3: Meravanchi Manor

Whispers of the extremes to which the Meravanchis have gone in their notorious parties have always given the taverns of Sasserine something to talk about. Lord **Zebula Meravanchi** (CN male human aristocrat 8) is no different; recently, rumors that Zebula captured a nymph that he keeps in a secret suite of rooms in the basement of his manor have members of the old faith and the Knowlern family up in arms.

W4: Sasserine Opera House

Often featuring dancers trained in the Telvanta Academy and entertainers from as far away as Greyhawk City, events at the Sasserine Opera House rarely pass by without making a huge scene. The Opera House is run by **Nylaria Absalee** (NG female human aristocrat 4/bard 5), a large woman whose girth is matched by her flair for extravagant hairstyles and dresses.

W5: House of the Dragon

This large square building serves a dual purpose; it's both a library and a school. The school itself is dedicated to the education of anyone who can afford its prohibitive tuition, and its curriculum is certainly outstanding, as those who have graduated have become exceptional members of their chosen fields. Underground chambers house dormitories and the extensive library. Built over the entrance to Zelkarune's lair, the notorious black dragon's visage adorns the school's façade, as well as its banners and interior décor.

W6: Lidu Manor

Sasserine's oldest family, the Lidus were also the family to suffer the most under the Sea Prince rule. This period has taught the Lidu family humility, and it was primarily at their urging that Sasserine's new government was composed of the people rather than

of one ruling family. The current patriarch is **Worrin Lidu** (NG male human aristocrat 5/wizard 7), a kind-hearted noble who hopes to heal the rift between the churches of Kord and Wee Jas.

W7: Cartographer's Guildhall

The Cartographer's Guildhall is funded, in part, by the Azure Cathedral and the Seekers, yet they leave the administration of the guild largely in the hands of its more-than-competent mistress, **Kiva Willowtop** (NG female halfling expert 8).

W8: Temple of Wee Jas

The great domed hall of this temple houses a sixty-foot-tall statue of Wee Jas. Dozens of acolytes tend the temple and aid the aging **Mother Annah Teranaki** (LG female human cleric 13) in all matters. The temple has recently come under scrutiny, after one of Annah's own protégés, Embril Aloustinai, used the Cauldron Cathedral of Wee Jas as a cover for her own nefarious purposes.

W9: Ancestor Island

The dead of Sasserine who are not cremated are interred in above-ground domed vaults here on Ancestor Island, since the surrounding ground is generally too swampy to support proper graveyards. At the center of the island rises the Scarlet Spire, the gravestone that marks the only exception to this rule. Here is where Sasserine herself lies, the fifty-foot-tall crystalline spire above her tomb one of the city's most beloved landmarks.

O1: Shrine of St. Worgul

St. Worgul was said to be the ugliest dwarf to ever live in Sasserine. That she was still able to build a small empire of taverns and merchant companies and become one of the city's richest entrepreneurs speaks volumes for her ability to rise above her hideous countenance. The stories hold that before she died, she willed her estate and holdings to the district of Shadowshore that they might have a safe public place to gather, and that the keeper of her estate would represent the district's interests to the other six of the city.

Of course, the entire tale of St. Worgul is a clever fabrication by the church of Olidammara to generate a safe, public place for the faithful to gather and as a front for their true activities in Sasserine. The current priest of the Shrine of St. Worgul is a stooped and rather ugly-looking man named **Jalpe Jinn** (CN male half-orc rogue 3/cleric 8).

O2: Dracktus Manor

A classic example of leadership borne out of the combination of money and murder, this estate is currently run by an overbearing man named **Emil Dracktus** (NE male human aristocrat 3/rogue 4), after he "liberated" rule of the estate from its previous owners a few nights after the Sea Princes were driven from town. Emil Dracktus' real name is known only to him; he certainly bears no relation to the last five families who ruled this estate.

O3: Amedio Trading Concern

While Sasserine features many importers and exporters, none have become as successful as the Amedio Trading Concern. Detractors claim this is because the owners willfully take part in smuggling and the black market, but none have the resources (or bravery) to confront the towering presence that is the Trading Concern's lord and master. **Vico Bevenin** (CN male human ranger 5/expert 4) claims to have ogre blood in his veins, something his 6-foot-7-inch frame supports with ease. He owns no less than seven large trading vessels, each staffed by a crew of ex-pirates and thugs that are more than capable of holding their own, and owes much of his success to the immense rum distillery that takes up half of this building.

O4: Shipwright's Guildhall

Not everyone in Sasserine can afford to hire their own carpenters to build ships. For everyone else, the Shipwright's Guildhall is often the only choice. Despite its location, this guild is known to produce functional ships at affordable prices. Guildmaster **Gregar Skeen** (N male human expert 6/fighter 1) has managed to keep the business his own in the same way his fathers before him managed; by paying a lot of protection money to local thugs and by giving deep discounts to any citizen of Shadowshore who seeks to purchase a boat.

P1: Thunder River Lumber

Owned by the Taskerhill family, this lumberyard processes all of the exotic wood that comes through Sasserine. Trees logged from the Amedio Jungle are sent down the Thunder River, tended by foolhardy but brave "logriders" armed with long hooked poles until they arrive at the shallow bay surrounding this location. These logs are pulled from the waters, dried, cut, and then exported on barges to the north, where the lumber is loaded onto visiting trade vessels.

P2: Historian's Guild

This unassuming-looking building came into being many centuries ago, when a group of like-minded scholars realized that someone needed to document the city's history. Someone not tied to one of the noble families, someone capable of preserving records of all of the city's events in a safe place. That this cabal of scholars happens to secretly worship Vecna, and that their goal is to catalogue all of Sasserine's secrets for the purposes of honoring their god and making money via blackmail, is a truth known only to a few frightened souls. The current leader of this cult is a tall, thin man named **Errix Vorn** (NE male human cleric 7).

P3: Landowner's Hall

When the dozens of plantation owners need to gather, they do so at this large building. The manor features numerous guest rooms and a large meeting hall; when no guests or meetings are present, the hall is watched over by a staff of maids and servants led by a quiet man named **Basar Finn** (NG male human expert 3).

P4: Dawn Market

Dawn Market operates during daylight hours only, and is the primary source for food, firewood, and other necessities to the citizens of Sunrise.

P5: Knowlern Manor

Three hundred years ago, **Aniphastus Knowlern** (NG male elf aristocrat 3/wizard 7) and his family ran aground only a few miles west of Sasserine after their ship was attacked by pirates. Aniphastus took the event as an omen, and upon reaching the city of Sasserine they settled on its outskirts. In time, the city overtook their estate, but the Knowlerns made sure that at least a small portion of the land's original beauty remained untouched in the nearby Standing Stone Park.

P6: Dawnhouse

The Dawnhouse is a modest chapel dedicated to Pelor. A dozen priests tend the church, led by a dynamic and outgoing woman named **Kera Gosalar** (LG female human paladin 3/cleric 4). Kera finds much of the "anarchy" of the city to be distasteful, but rather than leading a crusade against the city's vices, she has chosen to provide an alternative option for the citizens. Her priests are often seen wandering the streets of the city, offering shelter and aid to those who look like they need a helping hand and turning the other cheek when confronted with sin.

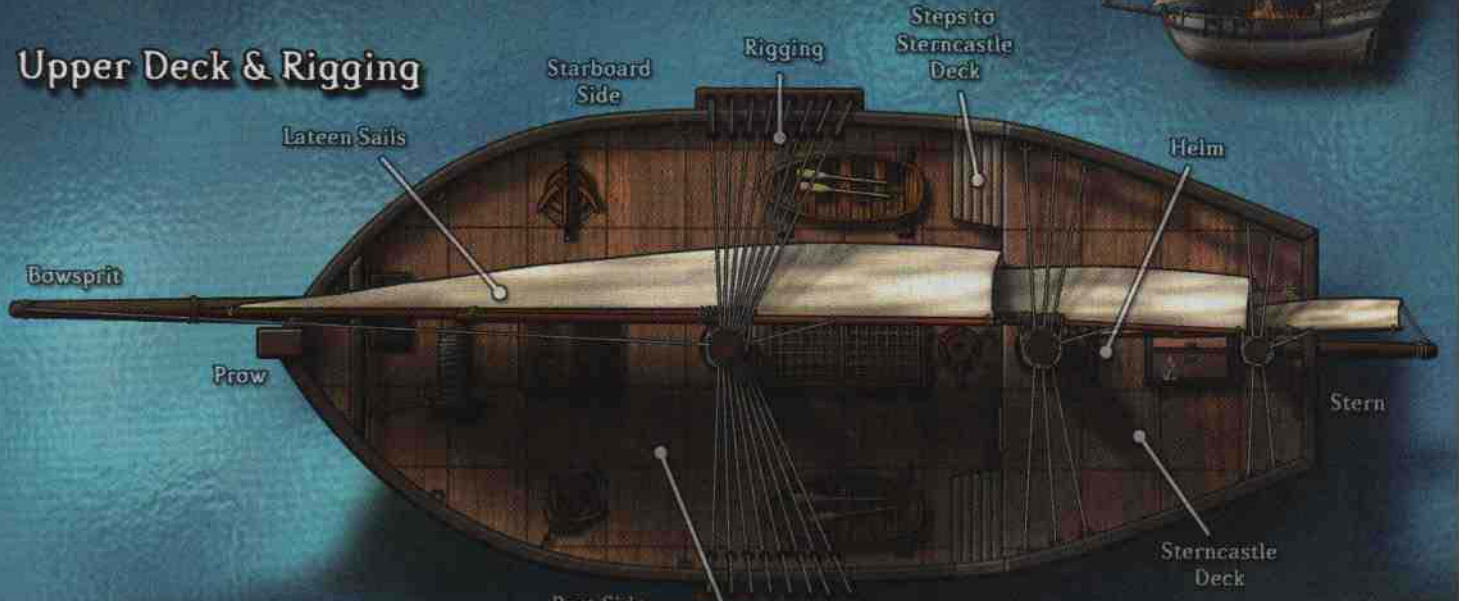
P7: Standing Stone Park

A bastion of nature within the city walls, this region features well-maintained paths for anyone who wishes a safe place to meditate and relax in the jungle's bosom. The park is maintained by the Knowlern family.

DARKMAIDEN'S DANCE
Merchant Caravel

Map of Mystery

Upper Deck & Rigging



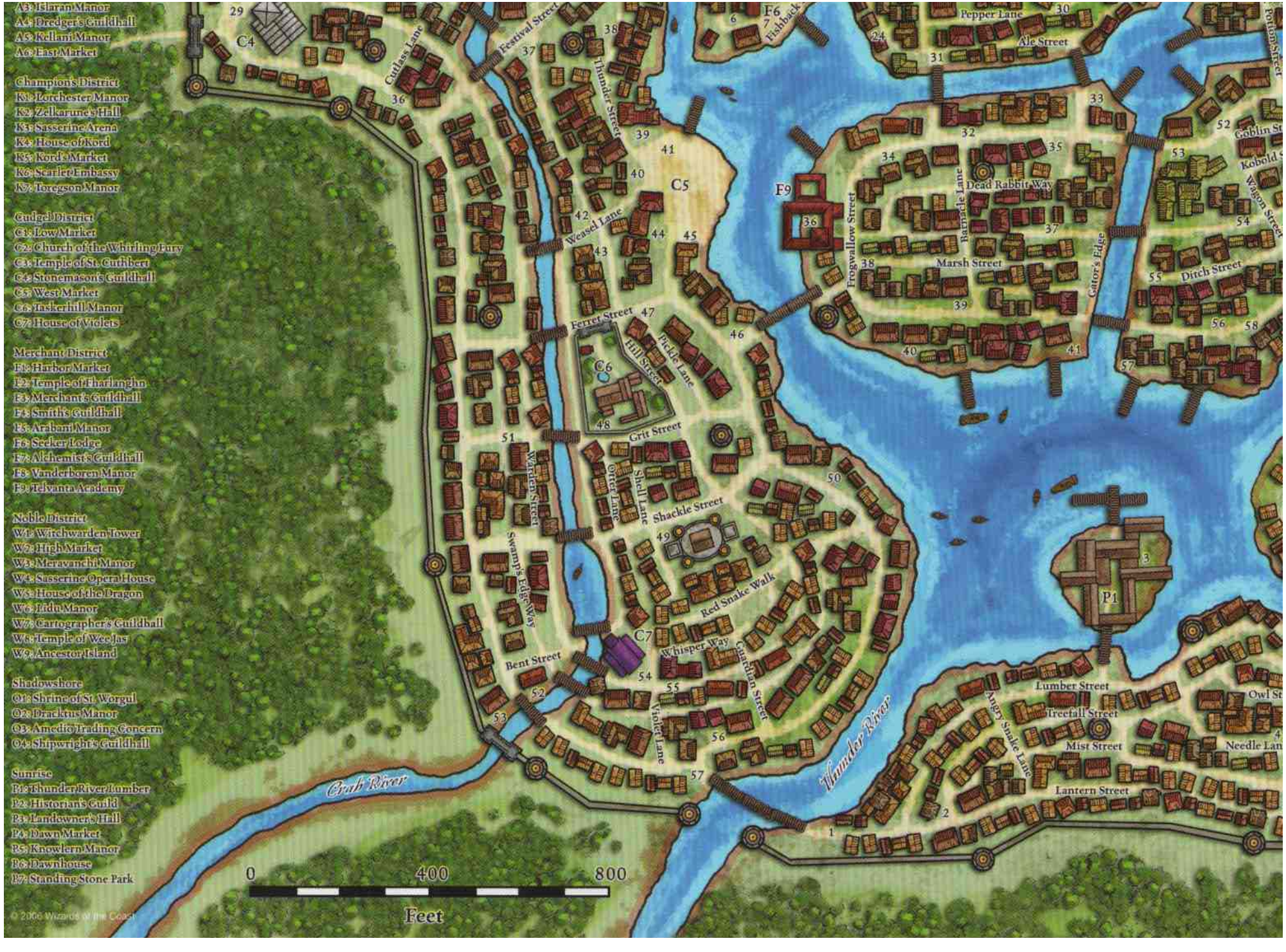
Main Deck

Lower Deck

1 square = 5 feet

WEST

Sasserine
N
nw
ne
W
E
sw
se
S
Terakuian's Arch
Watcher's Lane
Westlight Lane
Thunder Lane
Lantern Street
Kord's Walk
Glory Street
K1
K2
K3
K4
K5
K6
K7
Zelkarune's Way
Windy Lane
Shelter Road
West Brisk Street
Mansion Street
East Brisk Street
Avenue of Champions
Bloodcobble Way
Cliff Street
Rubble Street
Gull Street
Grifter's Lane
Worgul Street
O1
O2
O3
O4
Harbor Way
Lantern Street
C1
C2
C3
Fury Street
Crab Street
Ratcatch Way
Parrot Street
Main Street
Shard Street
Parrot Island
F1
F2
F3
F7
Gold Street
Silver Street
Copper Street
Bronze Street
Relic Street
Mead Street
Festival Street
Tale Street
Azure District
A1 - Whaler's Guildhall


A3: Islaran Manor
A4: Dredger's Guildhall
A5: Kellani Manor
A6: East Market
Champion's District
K1: Torchester Manor
K2: Zelkarune's Hall
K3: Sasserine Arena
K4: House of Kord
K5: Kord's Market
K6: Scarlet Embassy
K7: Toregson Manor
Cudgel District
C1: Low Market
C2: Church of the Whirling Fury
C3: Temple of St. Cuthbert
C4: Stonemason's Guildhall
C5: West Market
C6: Taskerhill Manor
C7: House of Violets
Merchant District
F1: Harbor Market
F2: Temple of Fharlanghn
F3: Merchant's Guildhall
F4: Smith's Guildhall
F5: Arabani Manor
F6: Seeker Lodge
F7: Alchemist's Guildhall
F8: Vanderboren Manor
F9: Telvanta Academy
Noble District
W1: Witchwarden Tower
W2: High Market
W3: Meravanchi Manor
W4: Sasserine Opera House
W5: House of the Dragon
W6: Jidu Manor
W7: Cartographer's Guildhall
W8: Temple of Wee Jas
W9: Ancestor Island
Shadowshore
O1: Shrine of St. Worgul
O2: Dracktus Manor
O3: Amedio Trading Concern
O4: Shipwright's Guildhall
Sunrise
P1: Thunder River Lumber
P2: Historian's Guild
P3: Landowner's Hall
P4: Dawn Market
P5: Knowlern Manor
P6: Dawnhouse
P7: Standing Stone Park
Festival Street
Cutlass Lane
Thunder Street
Weasel Lane
Ferrer Street
Hill Street
Pickle Lane
Grit Street
Shell Lane
Otter Lane
Warden Street
Shackle Street
Swamp's Edge Way
Red Snake Walk
Whisper Way
Guardian Street
Violet Lane
Bent Street
Fishback
Pepper Lane
Ale Street
Dead Rabbit Way
Barnacle Lane
Frogwallow Street
Marsh Street
Gator's Ridge
Ditch Street
Goblin St
Kobold St
Wagon Street
Lumber Street
Treefall Street
Mist Street
Angry Snake Lane
Lantern Street
Owl St
Needle Lane
Crab River
Thunder River
0
400
800
Feet
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North Street
Wand Street
Mephit Street
Imp Street
Arcane Street
West Wren Way
East Wren Way
Scarlet Street
Boneyard Way
School Street
Lidu Street
Opera Street
Witchwarden's Walk
Castle Terakinian
Magister's Street
Dweomer Lane
Sorcerer's Walk
Genie Street
Spire Street
Warlock's Run
Azure Street
Crow Street
Fisher's lane
Harpoon Street
Whale Street
Ocean Way
Ancestor Island
Fish Rock Road
Puppetmaker's Lane
Hook Street
Stirge Street
Main Street
Vine Street
Worm Street
Harbor Street
Lubber's Loop
W1
W2
W3
W4
W5
W6
W7
W8
W9
A1
A2
A3
F5
F8

Emerald River
Wall Street
Hullywug Lane
Tumbrall Street
Shadow Street
Spice Street
Chart Street
Brine Street
Toad Lane
Doxy Lane
Bar Lane
Emerald Street
East Lane
Sun Walk
Stonesail
Trench Street
Sunset Street
Barking Dog Lane
Willow Way
Ash Street
Gully Street
Tapir Street
Crown Street
Dusk Street
Monkey Street
Dead Dog Alley
Oyster Street
Pearl Street
Marble Street
Obsidian Street
Landowner's Lane
Pebble Street
Spice Street
Runt Street
Song Street
Bell Street
Salmon Street
Fish Street
Squid Street
Shark Street
Coral Street
Bay Street
Black Sand Street
Widow's Walk
Crown Street
Bastion Street
Star Street
Traveler's Street
Red Skink Lane
Blue Skink Lane
Dredger's Lane
Net Street
Bait Street
A4
A5
A6
P2
P3
P4
P5
P6
P7

Savage Tide

The Bullywug Gambit

When an attempt to arrange an early inheritance backfires, a man of lesser ambition than Vanthus Vanderboren would no doubt withdraw into his sister's manse to hide under her skirts and pray that the truth of his patricide remains hidden. Fortunately for Vanthus, lack of ambition has never been a problem. Now the Vanderborens' prodigal son slinks east along the coast to Blood Bay, lured by rumors of an incredible prize kept in a smuggler's hideout called Kraken's Cove. Yet what he is destined to find there is far more than a lucrative bit of banditry. What awaits him is the savage tide.

"The Bullywug Gambit" is the second chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #349 of *Dragon* magazine looks into the region surrounding Sasserine, and provides useful information if your PCs wish to explore this area more thoroughly than they do in the course of this adventure.

BY NICOLAS LOGUE
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH, LOW LEVEL (1ST–5TH), URBAN AND DUNGEON CRAWL

BY NICOLAS LOGUE

Switching Sides

It's possible that the PCs agreed to Rowyn's offer to join the Lotus Dragons at the end of "There Is No Honor." In this case, their reasons for traveling to Kraken's Cove change—Rowyn is concerned that Vanthus might not intend to return to Sasserine with her share of the haul, and hires the PCs to trail him in secret to Kraken's Cove and observe him—if he seems to be preparing treachery, the PCs are to intercede, capture him, and return him and his loot to the Lotus Dragons for punishment.

When she learns that Vanthus has apparently fled the region, Rowyn is momentarily distraught but recovers quickly. She asks the PCs to take advantage of the bullywug attack on Vanderboren Manor to sneak into the estate and learn what they can about where Vanthus may have fled to. While they're there, if they can steal some more of Lavinia's wealth for the Lotus Dragons... all the better.

Adventure Background

Brissa Santos was a vivacious woman, in youth a notorious pickpocket who, after several brushes with the law, turned her attention to art. Her paintings still grace many of the inns and taverns in Sasserine's Azure and Merchant Districts, yet the sedentary life of an artist left the woman wanting more. When she met Vanthus Vanderboren several months ago, she felt she'd found a man who could provide her just that. As a couple, they encouraged each other's self-destructive habits, and finally Brissa revealed to her lover her family's ties to the Crimson Fleet, an infamous consortium of pirates and smugglers. In an attempt to win Vanthus' favor, Brissa told him of nearby Kraken's Cove, and of how the Fleet used it as a staging area for smuggling operations. Even more enticing—scuttlebutt held that the latest cargo bound for this secret cove included an enormous black pearl destined for an undisclosed noble's collection in the city of Sasserine. Vanthus and Brissa planned their raid on Kraken's Cove to the finest detail, going so far as to hire a small army of desperate mercenaries from a local guild of scoundrels called the Black Shield Company to provide support for the assault.

Yet Brissa's love for her dark suitor had blinded her. To Vanthus, she was nothing more than another conquest he could use to get what he needs—she wasn't even his only lover. Vanthus was a member of the Lotus Dragons, a guild of thieves poised to seize control of Sasserine's underworld. By using Brissa and her contacts with the Crimson Fleet, Vanthus hoped to rob Kraken's Cove blind, present the loot to his lover Rowyn (the guildmistress of the Lotus Dragons), and pin the blame for the theft on Brissa, leaving her and her family to suffer the brunt of any retaliation from the pirates.

Yet what neither Brissa nor Vanthus realized was that the immense black pearl they sought to steal was something far more than a fantastic treasure—it was the first in a wave of sinister artifacts from the Abyss itself: a *shadow pearl*. When the robbery turned sour, the *shadow pearl* activated, releasing a devastating savage tide that transformed nearly everything it touched into ravenous monsters. By some mockery of fate, Vanthus resisted the effects of the savage tide and fled on a stolen ship, leaving Brissa to a horrid fate of insatiable fiendish hunger.

Adventure Synopsis

Still seeking Vanthus for their employer, Lavinia Vanderboren, and spurred on by discoveries made in the Lotus Dragon guildhall, the PCs seek out Kraken's Cove, nestled within the scarlet reaches of Blood Bay. Expecting to find a secret pirate hideout, the PCs instead discover the place in the grips of utter bedlam. Arriving shortly after Vanthus releases the savage tide, the PCs must contend with savage flesh-eating pirates. To make matters worse, this particular crew was transporting dangerous and exotic creatures in the holds of their ships, and now their deadly cargo, infected by the Abyssal energies of the tide, has escaped. Man and beast haunt the cove's twisting passageways, and the PCs must navigate the caverns of Kraken's Cove while enduring an onslaught from savage enemies.

Eventually they encounter Captain Harliss Javell, one of the few pirates to survive the savage tide intact. From her, the PCs learn that she sent her first mate and a band of froglike bullywug conscripts into Sasserine to extract revenge from Vanthus and his home, erroneously assuming the cowardly man fled there from Kraken's Cove. The party must race back to Vanderboren manor before their patron suffers at the slimy hands of bullywug mercenaries.

Yet in order to reach the manor, the PCs must first navigate a city in the throes of a wild celebration in honor of Kyuss' defeat one year past. Parades and revelry reign in the streets, and the PCs must wind their way through the wild throng to Lavinia's manor. In transit, they are targeted by a band of assassins hired by Kellani family coin to pay the party back for their transgressions against Rowyn and the Lotus Dragons in the previous adventure. After contending with stilt-walking monks, the PCs reach Vanderboren manor with little time to lose.

Inside, Drevoraz Kabran, Captain Javell's first mate, has captured Lavinia and her household. The PCs must stop the bullywug gambit, battling the frogmen to free their lovely patron before she pays for her brother's crimes with blood.

Adventure Hooks

If you are not playing this adventure as part of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, then there are several ways to motivate the PCs to get in on the action. Even if you are using "The Bullywug Gambit" as part of the path, you may want to consider the options below to further involve the PCs in this adventure.

Abducted by Pirates: A PC's friend or relation has been pressed into service with the Crimson Fleet. Research reveals that the press gang has relocated to Kraken's Cove. Whether they have succumbed to the savage tide is left to you.

Courting Lavinia: If a PC is noble born, or simply ambitious, he may be courting Lavinia's hand in marriage for any number of reasons (love, money, or an increase in social status). Upon hearing that her brother has gotten mixed up with the wrong crowd, the party could head to Kraken's Cove to sort him out and bring him back to Lavinia in an effort to earn her favor.

PART ONE: TO KRAKEN'S COVE

After recovering the money stolen from the Vanderboren Vault and defeating the Lotus Dragon thieves, the PCs still haven't succeeded in the primary mission assigned them by their patron, Lavinia Vanderboren. Her brother Vanthus is still at large, but with the discovery of the true extent of Vanthus's involvement in the death of her parents, Lavinia no longer hopes to find and redeem him. Instead, she wants him returned to Sasserine so he can answer for his crimes. According to documents discovered in the Lotus Dragon guildhall, Vanthus and a woman named Brissa recently left the city to travel to a location known as Kraken's Cove to mount a robbery of several pirate ships supposedly moored nearby.

Determining the approximate location of Kraken's Cove on the eastern shore of Blood Bay is possible with a DC 20 Gather Information check, a DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check, or a 50 gp visit to Highwall House in Sasserine's Noble District to speak to Sloren Highwall, the expert on local geography.

The Journey To Blood Bay

Although Vanthus has already left for Kraken's Cove, the actual point at which the pirates arrive and Vanthus, Brissa, and their hired mercenaries make their move is scheduled to occur a few hours before the PCs reach the area, no matter how long they take getting there. The PCs should have time to recover from their previous adventure, liquidate loot and shop for gear, and perhaps even go on one or two minor side quests before they set out for Kraken's Cove.

The cove itself lies on the eastern shore of Blood Bay, about 60 miles along a marshy coastline (or a mere 40 miles as the gull flies). The brisk salt-breeze of the ocean would make for a pleasant journey, if it weren't for the oppressive proximity of the trackless marshlands and the looming Amedio jungle beyond.

The safest and fastest method of reaching Kraken's Cove is by boat. If one of the PCs has ranks in Profession (sailor), a rowboat that seats four can be purchased in Sasserine for a mere 50 gp. For parties who lack this skill, the best option is to hire a fishing boat or similar vessel. Blood Bay is a notorious region, and most sailors or fisherfolk balk at visiting this location. With a DC 25 Diplomacy check, round-trip passage to Kraken's Cove from Sasserine can be had for 8 gp per passenger—otherwise, the best the PCs can hope for is 20 gp per passenger. If the PCs wish their transport to wait for them while they take care of business in Kraken's Cove, there's a further 10 gp/day charge. By rowboat, the journey takes 40 hours. If the PCs stop to rest, rowing for 8-hour stretches each day, it takes five days to reach Kraken's Cove. If they row non-stop in shifts, they can reach the cove in just under two days. By pinnace, cog, or fishing boat, the trip takes only 16 hours (non-stop—if the PCs leave on Day 1 at 6:00 in the morning, they can expect to reach Kraken's Cove at 10:00 in the evening).

If the PCs wish to travel to Kraken's Cove by land, they face a long, grueling journey through a trackless, monster- and bullywug-infested swamp. Hugging the coast is no solution; beaches are rare, and more often the transition from swamp to sea consists of miles of briny saltmarshes with little solid ground. A maze of hummocks and marsh provides a maddeningly slow method of travel on foot—assuming the PCs travel for only 8 hours a day at a speed of 30 feet, it'll take them five days to traverse the 60-mile journey to Kraken's Cove.

Feel free to liven up the journey with random encounters as you see fit. "Savage Tidings" in issue #349 of *Dragon* magazine provides some sample random encounters for the region, or you could build encounters with bullywugs, sharks, and other local terrors to menace the PCs.

PART TWO: KRAKEN'S COVE

Kraken's Cove serves smugglers well, for the entrance to this secluded rift in the coastal cliffs that line the eastern shore of Blood Bay is riddled with dangerous reefs and submerged threats. As a result, only sailors who know the region or possess charts of the waters dare approach the cliffs here—none of the ships the PCs have access to have either. If they're making their own way to Kraken's Cove, they'll need to make a series of a dozen DC 30 Profession (sailor) checks to wind their way through the maze of reefs to approach by sea.

Without charts, the safest option is to put aground a few miles north of Kraken's Cove at a secluded beach. From there, it's a fairly short hike up to the cliff tops and then south along a narrow path that eventually reaches the cove itself.

When the PCs arrive, things are not well in Kraken's Cove. A few short hours before they get there, Vanthus and his agents struck, setting fire to several of the pirate ships moored in the harbor and releasing many cages of exotic (and

Wormfall Festival

As the PCs prepare for their journey to Kraken's Cove, make sure to mention how the city of Sasserine is gearing up for a major festival. The one-year anniversary of the defeat of Kyuss draws near. Although the final events of the Age of Worms played out thousands of miles to the north, repercussions were felt in this region as the Wormgod nearly brought about the dawn of a new age. In the nearby Spire of Long Shadows, a small army of his undead minions erupted from the ruins there, along with several dangerous outsiders known as broodfiends. Three of these broodfiends made their way to Sasserine, but were destroyed by high-level heroes from the city of Cauldron before they could do much damage.

The event has since become yet another reason for Sasserine's Dawn Council to celebrate, the production of festivals being an excellent way to build up the city's morale and wealth as they continue to recover from 100 years of servitude to a foreign power. Criers loudly announce the coming festival on the city streets and canals, posters go up on tavern walls, and everywhere the citizens are abuzz with excitement. The Wormfall Festival is in full swing by the time the PCs return to the city in Part Three, but if you plant its seeds before they leave, the festival won't be a surprise to them.

dangerous) animals the pirates were in the process of transferring from ship holds to holding pens on land. During the chaos, Vanthus attempted to steal the *shadow pearl* from the hold of the *Slippery Eel*, but was caught by the ship's captain, Harliss Javell. No match for her, Vanthus tried to escape, and in so doing accidentally triggered the *shadow pearl*, unleashing its savage tide upon the Cove. The resulting wash of Abyssal energies transformed most of the pirates, thugs, and smuggled creatures into savage monsters. Only a few avoided this terrible fate, among them Vanthus (who quickly made good his escape aboard one of the two pirate ships to survive the fire), Captain Javell, and her first mate, a half-orc named Drevoraz Kabran. Furious at the permanent damage Vanthus had inflicted on her operation, Captain Javell commanded Drevoraz to make his way through the swamps to Sasserine, picking up a tribe of allied bullywugs who served the Crimson Fleet as caretakers of the region surrounding Kraken's Cove along the way. His mission: infiltrate Sasserine, make his way to Vanderboren manor where Captain Javell (erroneously) believes Vanthus fled, and raze the estate to the ground after murdering Vanthus and his family.

Captain Javell hoped to have dealt with the transformed monsters that were once her crew and cargo by the time Drevoraz returns, but these savage monsters quickly proved to be too much for her to handle on her own. By the time the PCs arrive, she's retreated to area **K14** of the caves, abandoning the cove itself to savagery.

Mad Monkeys (EL 3)

Even before the PCs reach Kraken's Cove, they'll realize something has gone horribly wrong. Plumes of smoke rise into the sky above the cove, visible from a mile away. Worse, as the PCs approach, swaths of dead wildlife, from parrot to gull to monkey to snake, lie dead on the ground, their bodies horribly distorted and deformed. What few wild animals remain alive are similarly deformed, and shockingly aggressive. The PCs should witness animals tearing each other apart numerous times on their approach, and at some point before they reach the cove, a clutch of four savage monkeys attacks them as well.

Creatures: The four savage monkeys flop and writhe down from the trees or across the ground with shocking speed. Their jaws are filled with tiny fangs, and their bodies are covered with open sores from which hooked bonespurs protrude. The savage monkeys fight to the death.

SAVAGE MONKEYS (4) **CR 1**
CE Tiny animal (chaotic)
Monster Manual 276, Appendix 2
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 6 (1 HD), ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1
Weakness afflicted

Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft.
Melee bite +4 (1d4–2 plus disease [DC 12])
Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +0; **Grp** –10

Abilities Str 7, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 5

SQ death throes

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +10, Climb +10, Hide +10, Listen +3, Spot +3

Into the Inferno

Once the PCs reach the cliffs overlooking Kraken's Cove, they are greeted with a tragic and horrific sight.

In the sheltered cove below, an inferno rages atop the water. Several ships, including a two-masted caravel, a sizeable frigate, a long barge, and what might have once been a schooner are all ablaze. Further out, a three-masted caravel seems to have escaped the fire—for now. A shiny slick on the surface of the water itself burns as well, creating a wall of wood and flame. The heat rises in searing sheets, and the roar of the flaming maelstrom mixed with the crashing surf masks any other sounds that might be issuing up from below. Through periodic gaps in the smoke, however, movement on the beach is visible—something still lives in the inferno below.

When Vanthus needed a distraction to sneak on board the *Slippery Eel* to steal the black pearl, he emptied several barrels of whale oil from one of the ships' cargoes into the harbor. The thick substance floated atop the water, and Vanthus lit it afire. The oil slick will continue to burn for an hour, after which only the ship moored furthest out survives—a caravel called the *Sea Wyvern*.

Descent to the beach below can be accomplished a number of ways. The cliffs that surround the cove are sheer but feature numerous handholds. They're forty feet high, and can be scaled with a DC 15 Climb check.

A more tempting route is via a rickety wooden walkway that descends from the eastern cliff down to the beach below. The slippery, narrow surface can be navigated with a DC 10 Balance check. Remember that a balancing character moves at half speed unless he takes a –5 penalty on his check. Although the fire has not yet reached it, the rickety wooden walkway has not been used by the pirates in some time and has rotted in the salt air. The walkway can support up to two creatures at a time. If a third creature boards it, the entire walkway creaks and moans ominously. If it still supports three creatures one round later, it collapses into the sea. The walkway collapses immediately if a fourth creature boards it. If the walkway collapses, all creatures on it must make a DC 13 Reflex save. Success indicates the creature clings to the cliff wall or a jutting piece of wood, and may attempt to clamber down the cliff. Failure indicates a fall into the water below, which isn't quite deep enough to cushion the landing. The base damage inflicted by the fall depends on how high up the character was when the walkway collapsed (no more than 40 feet, in any event) plus an additional 1d6 points of damage from the collapsing structure itself.

To make matters worse, while the PCs navigate the walkway, the heavy ropes mooring the burning *Slippery Eel* finally burn through and snap audibly. The *Eel* wrenches free and the tide carries it careening into the west wall of the cove, where it destroys the central 50 feet of walkway in a terrific crash. A DC 15 Spot or Listen check is enough to note the vessel's sudden motion, granting two rounds of action before it strikes. All PCs on the walkway when the Eel strikes it must make DC 15 Balance checks to avoid being knocked off; those in the middle section that is destroyed fall as described above (with a DC 13 Reflex save allowing them to grab a protrusion). Increase falling damage in this case by 1d6 fire as the PC crashes into the burning wreck below.

The water in the eastern section of the cove is 20 feet deep—deep enough that a person can dive into the water from the cliffs forty feet above, taking no damage if they make a DC 15 Swim or Tumble check. Failure indicates 2d3 points of nonlethal damage.

Kraken's Cove Cave Features

The smuggler's caves in Kraken's Cove are the brainchild of a retired pirate named Kigante Valeros. Kigante discovered the caves two decades ago and realized

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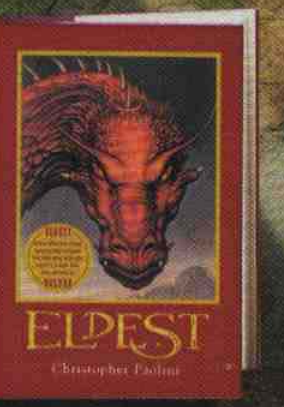

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The Sea Wyvern

The one surviving ship in the harbor is destined to play an important role in the Savage Tide Adventure Path. This is the *Sea Wyvern*. This three-masted caravel served as a pirate ship for the last twenty years. The *Sea Wyvern* is a fearsome vessel. Her sails are decorated with stylized figures of a wyvern; its tail raised over its back as though ready to strike its enemies. Even its figurehead carries the motif; a powerful wyvern, its wings unfurled, crouches at the prow. This ship has seen plenty of action; her hull is scarred in many places by scratches and dents, and a single huge claw mark rakes across the starboard, deliberately left as a scar of battle. The ship's wheel is designed to represent a dozen-headed wyvern.

The *Sea Wyvern* becomes central to the Savage Tide Adventure Path starting in the next adventure, "The *Sea Wyvern*'s Wake." The PCs first glimpse of the ship is an important moment of this adventure—be sure to give them a powerful description of the ship. The ship itself can be crewed by a group as small as 7 individuals as long as one of them has ranks in Profession (sailor), but even if the PCs leave the shp in Kraken's Cove for the remainder of the adventure, it's securely moored. They'll be able to head back to collect it when they need it at the start of the next adventure.

then that they'd make a great place for the Crimson Fleet to stage smuggling operations, transfer cargo and consolidate booty, or simply rest this far north of the fleet's home port of Scuttlecove. He and a small group of smugglers and guards were the keepers of the Kraken's Cove caves. They provided aid to visiting pirates and safeguarded the hideout when no one else was about. When Vanthus triggered the savage tide, many of Kigante's men succumbed to the madness. Although Kigante himself retained his humanity, he did not live for long after, and was murdered and eaten by his own men.

The cave walls are of smooth, wet stone and stalactites hang from the ceiling in places. Passageways average ten feet in height, and caverns are about twenty feet high. The pirates have long since removed the stalagmites that once clustered in many of the caves, and have spread sand through the entire area to even the floor and make movement through the caves less treacherous. The caves are lit by cheap hooded lanterns that hang from hooks in the walls every 30 feet; these lanterns have only a few hours of fuel left before they start burning out.

Remember that the PCs first arrive in this area only a short time after the savage tide wreaks this terrible toll. The freshly transformed savage pirates tore apart those unfortunate enough to resist the tide's magic, leaving body parts, swaths of blood stained sand, deep scratches in the walls, and other macabre hints of mayhem throughout the caves. Further, exploration of the caves is accompanied by a symphony of howls, shrieks, maniacal laughter, clanging of metal on metal, and other discordant sounds one might expect from a madhouse whose locks have failed. Much of this cacophony comes from area **K7**, as the savage slaves therein howl and shake the bars of their cages in an attempt to escape. As a result, Listen checks in the caves suffer a –4 penalty. At some point when the PCs have defeated enough of the savage creatures dwelling in the Cove (determined by you), this penalty goes away.

K1. Beach of Ruin (EL 4)

A fifty-foot-wide beach separates the burning waters of Kraken's Cove from the cliffs to the north. A ten-foot-wide cave opens at the base of the cliff to the northwest, while to the northeast several planks provide a crude bridge across a tide pool to a second, smaller cave entrance. The swaths of blood and ragged body parts strewn across the beach testify to a terrible and recent battle upon the sands here. Broken crates and bamboo cages litter the area, blood and bits of bone sprayed across bolts of silk and cracked barrels of ambergris seeping into the coarse, rocky sand. A number of mangled corpses, each stripped nearly clean of flesh and bones cracked open, lie strewn about the beach. The casualties are staggering, with a quick count putting the dead at nearly twenty.

This beachhead was a mooring ground for the Crimson Fleet, a place where the pirates could dock their ships between raids and store contraband, much of it living creatures. When Vanthus released the savage tide, the majority of the pirates both on the ships and here on the beach became ravening cannibals in a matter of seconds, falling upon those who resisted the tide in a frenzy. When the battle ended, some of the surviving savage pirates boarded the ships and locked themselves below decks, only to be consumed in the inferno. Others fled deeper into the caves, pursued by savage monsters liberated from their cages. Two remain here, lurking hungrily among the rubble.

Examination of the bodies in this area shows them to be devoured with a ferocity that belies reason—bones gnashed in a single crushing bite, entire lengths of flesh and muscle ripped free. It is also obvious that the battle broke out suddenly between friends and allies. Crossbow bolts riddle the few savage pirates slain, and the mingling of deformed corpses and those nearly completely devoured is demonstrative of the infighting that took place. Near area **K2**, two sea cats lie dead on the rocks, still chained fast to a heavy iron stake embedded in the ground.

Creatures: Two savage pirates hide in the ruined wreckage along the shore, waiting for untainted flesh to draw them out. If they note any PCs approaching the cave entrances, the gibbering menaces leap from hiding and charge.

Savage Pirates (2): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2.

Treasure: A DC 20 Search of the rubble (taking ten minutes per check, or three hours, 20 minutes on a take 20 check) uncovers three surviving items of value—a leather sack of stolen saffron worth 600 gp, a crate of fine dishware worth 200 gp, and a case of *potions of cure moderate wounds* stolen from a naval frigate (of which only three survive intact).

A character that explores the harbor underwater notes a section of seabed about forty feet from shore that appears strangely barren of life—the rocks and sand gleam, with not a trace of seaweed to be found. With a DC 20 Search check

of this region, a PC discovers what looks like a fist-sized black pearl that has shattered into five jagged chunks. This was the *shadow pearl* that triggered the savage tide. Now nonmagical, the shattered remains are still worth 250 gp.

K2. Tide Pool

A deep pool of rushing water separates a cave entrance from the beachhead. Two wide wooden planks serve as a crude bridge to cross the surging waters of the pool

The water is 20 feet deep below the boards. Crossing the slippery planks requires a DC 10 Balance check.

Anyone making a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check realizes that, given the way in which the water in the tide pool ebbs and flows, an underwater passageway likely exists somewhere below. Anyone in the water locates the entrance with a DC 15 Search check. Navigating the seaway to area **K11** is possible with a DC 15 Swim check.

K3. Mess Hall (EL 5)

This cavern must have served as a mess hall, yet now the large tables lie in ruins. To the north, dozens of barrels that once contained fresh water and food stores have been smashed to splinters. Bodies lie throughout the cave in various stages of dismemberment and consumption—it's hard to count the total dead due to the state of the corpses, but at least six people recently met a gory end in this cave.

This large cavern is the serving area where the Crimson Fleet pirates took their meals. The hall was the stomping ground of Kadmos Grimly, a fierce cook who spiced his food to match his temper—hot. Cooking for a band of cutthroat pirates is a dangerous job, and most of Grimly's predecessors were run through on account of their lack of culinary skill. Grimly's food was no better than that of those who came before him, but few wished to chance his ire or his deft mastery of the cleaver, which claimed more than a few fingers of dissatisfied feasters foolish enough to voice their opinions on the cuisine.

Creatures: Kadmos still reigns supreme in the mess hall, having succumbed to the fell power of the savage tide. He's spent the last hour in a gruesome repast of his friends—a former bosun lies strewn on the table. Grimly is in the kitchen area in the southwest corner of the room, hacking away with relish at a dead crewman with his cleaver, while two of his fellow cannibals wait impatiently at a table. As soon as they detect the PCs, they attack and fight to the death.

Savage Pirates (3): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2.

K4. Wyvernsting's Corridor (EL 4)

Creature: This long, high-ceilinged passageway has been chosen by a strange creature as an ambush point. This creature is Navesh Wyvernsting, a phanaton slave born into captivity on a pirate ship many years ago. The phanatons are a race of small arboreal creatures with large eyes and prehensile tails that resemble a cross between a monkey and a raccoon. Between their arms and legs are thin membranes the creatures use to glide through the air. Navesh's ancestors come from a tribe on the Isle of Dread, yet he has never known the companionship of others of his kind. Captain Harliss Javell purchased him from a Scarlet Brotherhood slaver and quickly realized the monkey-like creature would prove a capable crewman. In return for limited freedom, she released him from slavery and hired him as a bosun.

Once lauded for his cool head under fire, his quirky sense of humor, and his unquestioning loyalty to Javell, the savage tide has transformed Navesh into a long-limbed, deformed creature with writhing, boneless fingers. The savage phanaton lurks in this hallway, waiting for something exciting to happen in area **K3** before scurrying forth to join the fight. He's rather afraid of Ripclaw (the denizen of area **K5**), and won't join any fights that occur there, although he might come to investigate a few rounds after a fight in the cave ends.

Navesh's once-fine gray-brown fur is matted with blood and bits of gory tissue. Sizzling drool dribbles from his fanged, misshapen mouth. He slavers as

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he grunts and hoots before finally managing to snarl out in Common, "Come to me, meatbags. Just give me a mouthful of your tasty pink flesh!"

NAVESH WYVERNSTING **CR 4**
Male savage phanaton rogue 3
CE Small humanoid (chaotic)
DRAGON 339 62, Appendix 2
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +13, Spot +13
Languages Common, Elven, Goblin

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 22 (3 HD), ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2
Weakness afflicted

Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; gliding
Melee mwk kukri +5 (1d3+1/18–20) and bite –1 (1d6 plus disease [DC12])
Base Atk +2; **Grp** –1
Combat Gear *potion of bear's endurance, oil of keen edge*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 8
SQ forest awareness
Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (kukri)
Skills Balance +11, Climb +9, Diplomacy –5, Disguise –5, Escape Artist +7, Gather Information –5, Hide +13, Intimidate +3, Jump +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +13 (+17 in forests), Spot +13, Swim +7, Tumble +11
Possessions combat gear, masterwork kukri, *slippers of spider climbing*, gold nose ring and silver chain linked to silver hoop earring (whole set worth 100 gp), ruby ring worth 120 gp

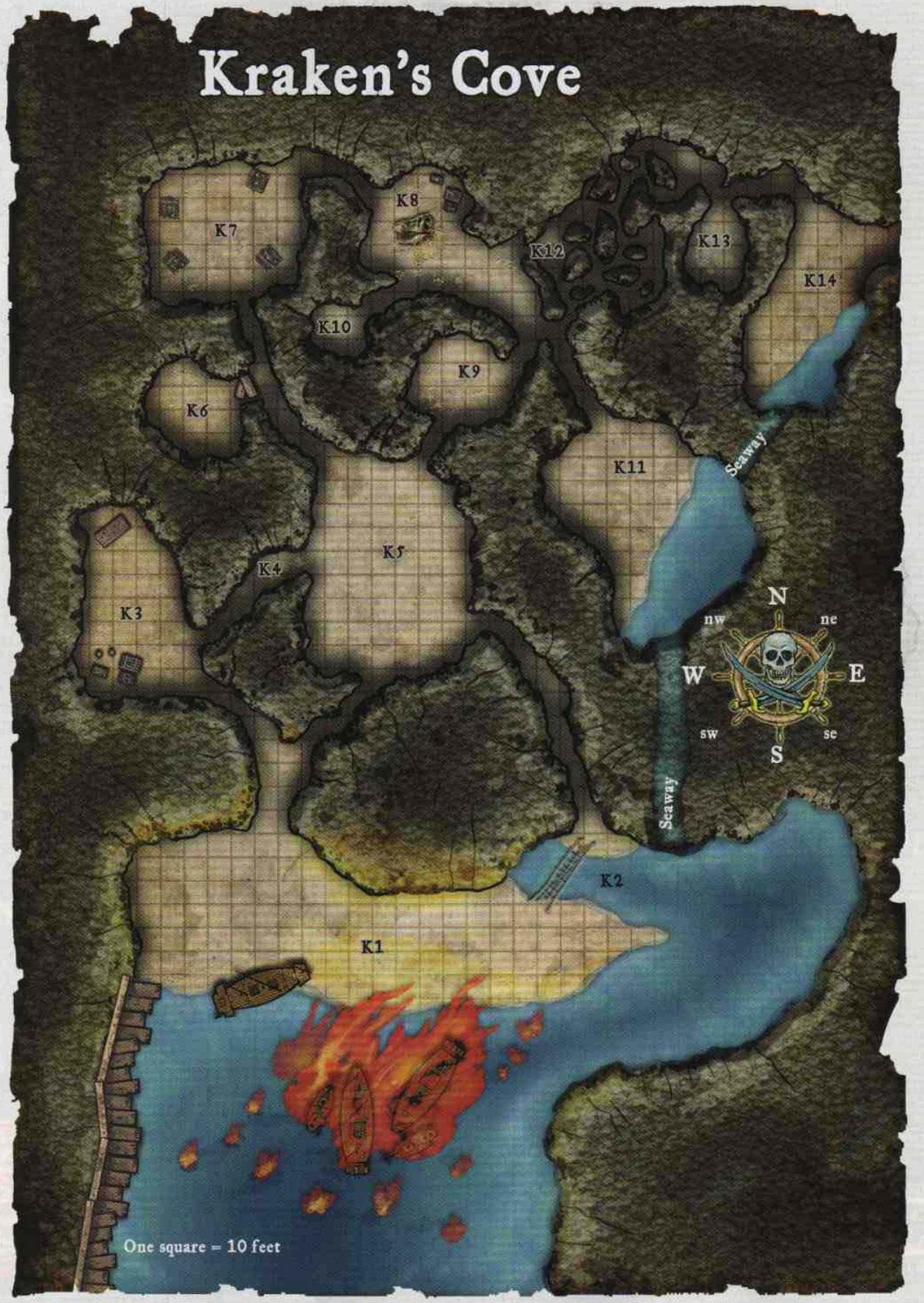
Forest Awareness (Ex) Navesh gains a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws in forest locations.
Gliding (Ex) Navesh's rudimentary wings allow him to negate damage from a fall of any height and allow 20 feet of forward travel for every 5 feet of descent, effectively giving him a fly speed of 20 feet while falling (average maneuverability). He cannot hover, even if his maneuverability rating increases. He can't glide while carrying a medium or heavy load, nor can he glide while unconscious or helpless.

Tactics: If Navesh hears the sounds of battle in area **K3**, he still possesses the sense of mind to down his potion and apply his *oil of keen edge* to his masterwork kukri. Of all the savage pirates, Navesh retains the most intelligence, and he knows that any group capable of slaying Kadmos is not to be trifled with lightly. He climbs up into the dark recesses of the ceiling and glides down to ambush the PCs when they arrive. Navesh fights until slain.

K5. Hall of Hanging Silks (EL 4)

Dozens of bolts of once-fine brocaded silk hang from lines of rope stretched lengthwise across the ceiling of this chamber, making it difficult to accurately judge the size of the sandy-floored cavern.

This large cavern is where the pirates store waterlogged booty from ships damaged and taking on water before being boarded. The silks hanging from the lines were damaged by a leak, and were hung up to dry only a few hours


Kraken's Cove
K1
K2
K3
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One square = 10 feet

before the savage tide tore through the region.

Creature: One of the *Slippery Eel's* most dangerous recent acquisitions from the Isle of Dread was a deinonychus. The dinosaur had been painstakingly transported here for sale, but escaped its cage after being transformed by the savage tide. The dinosaur was not-so-affectionately nicknamed Ripclaw after it disemboweled a careless pirate who got too close to the creature's cage. Ripclaw's back writhes with wriggling tentacles, several of which weep pus and leave a disgusting trail of yellowish smears on nearby silk sheets.

RIPCLAW **CR 4**
Savage deinonychus
CE Medium animal (chaotic)
Monster Manual 60, Appendix 2
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +13, Spot +13
AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17
hp 42 (4 HD); ferocity ; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2
Weakness afflicted
Spd 70 ft.
Melee talons +9 (1d8+6) and 2 foreclaws +7 (1d3+3) and bite +7 (2d4+3 plus disease [DC 18])
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +9
Atk Options pounce
Abilities Str 23, Dex 15, Con 23, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ death throes
Feats Improved Initiative, Multiattack
Skills Escape Artist +6, Hide +10, Jump +31, Listen +13, Spot +13, Survival +9

Tactics: The hanging silks provide cover for any creature standing behind them, as they serve to obscure vision and cast long shadows on the walls. As soon as Ripclaw detects the PCs, it begins stalking them, slipping quietly through the hanging sheets of silk until it picks out a single target with its scent. The dinosaur then pounces on that target, fighting to the death.

Treasure: The hanging silks are badly damaged; if they're harvested, 1d8 of them are salvageable and worth 50 gp each. A low table in the northeast corner of the room also holds a number of rare books laid out to dry on it. Though water damaged, this collection of tomes on topics ranging from lizardfolk cuisine to naturalist studies of the Amedio are worth 200 gp as a lot.

K6. Laboratory (EL 3)

A barricade of shelves and tables blocks entrance to this cavern. The barricade has hardness 5 and 30 hit points, and can be pushed aside with a DC 18 Strength check.

A fairly even layer of sand covers the floor of this musty-smelling cavern. Large pottery urns line the walls of the cave, and within each grows a riot of strange mushrooms, fluted toadstools, phosphorescent molds, greasy-looking fronds of pale lichens, and all matter of strange fungi. Several large glass terrariums, their walls beaded with condensation, stand along the west wall. One of these is shattered, the loamy soil within spilling out onto the sandy floor near a long but low table heaped with flasks, jars, bottles, and tools. Protruding from under the table are a pair of small boots, perhaps those of a gnome.

Coursing the seas of the world, exploring far-off frontiers, and pillaging their communities offered Leemo Varand the perfect opportunity to study a wide range of environments. A naturalist and scholar with a curiously overdeveloped interest in fungus, Leemo enlisted with the Crimson Fleet as a poisoner with the stipulation that he be allowed to gather all manner of bizarre samples from the farthest reaches of the world. Leemo ended up on the *Slippery Eel*, and Kigante Valeros set this cave aside for the awkward gnome to store a collection of plants and fungi odd, rare, and lethal.

Creatures: Ironically, Leemo met his fate at the frond of one his own dangerous samples. When the savage tide struck, the little gnome barricaded himself in this room. In so doing, he accidentally shattered a terrarium containing a violet fungus, which immediately lashed out at Leemo and quickly killed him. The violet fungus then retreated into the swath of fungi along the northwest wall. Anyone who investigates the table (or Leemo's boots) comes in reach of the fungi's tentacles, in which case it immediately attacks.

Violet Fungus: hp 15; *Monster Manual* 112.

Treasure: A strange creature that resembles a two-foot-long tadpole with a mass of four facial tentacles and a lamprey-like mouth is laid out on a wax dissection pad on the table. This hideous creature is a malformed and preserved larval mind flayer that Leemo recently acquired; some scholars might pay as much as 1,000 gp for such a find, although most merchants would pass on the foul-smelling monster.

A length of countertop on the northern wall of the room contains two small jars of maylss root paste, a vial of sassone leaf residue, a dose of id moss, and a striped toadstool (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 297 for details on these poisons). Leemo's body is rotted beyond recognition, but a search of his corpse ironically reveals the two *potions of lesser restoration* he always kept on hand in case of an accident.

K7. Slave Pens (EL 2 to 9)

As the PCs approach this chamber, the sound of shouts, wet cries of anguish, and the clang of metal on metal grows louder.

Dozens of five-foot-wide iron cages are built into the walls of this large cavern. Some are empty, while others contain the partially eaten remains of dead men and women. Yet most horrible are those cages that contain thrashing, wailing figures. Each of these seems more deformed than the last, twisting legs, writhing arms, vestigial heads, and jaws agape with too many teeth are all on display as the mad prisoners howl and slobber and throw themselves against the walls of their cages in a cacophonous attempt to break free.

Creatures: The Crimson Fleet pirates used these cages to house prisoners, sorting them into groups before shipping them off to Scarlet Brotherhood ports for sale as slaves. When the savage tide washed over the caves, those prisoners who didn't succumb to the tide were quickly murdered and eaten by those who did.

There are now 11 savage slaves locked in these cages. They thrash and writhe, but for all their noise they aren't quite strong enough to break free from their cages. Anyone who comes within five feet of a cage is in reach, though, and the savage occupant may be able to make a bite attack against such foes. Although each of these slaves are different humanoid races and classes, you can simply use the savage pirate statblock as necessary should any of these deformed souls become important in combat.

Savage Prisoners (11): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2 (use savage pirate).

K8. Trophy Cave

This sandy-floored cavern seems to be some sort of trophy hall. The centerpiece of the displays is an enormous reptilian skull, nearly six feet in length, mounted on a wooden display. Other trophies line the walls—nameplates from ships, battered sea chests, mounted heads of sea monsters, and weathered figureheads, each doubtless carrying a sordid history of theft and betrayal.

Kigante Valeros' interest in oddities was not limited to creatures. The retired captain kept a collection of other odd and obscure nautical treasures on display in this cave. Most of these trophies are relatively valueless, but there are a few exceptions.

The enormous skull is from a tyrannosaurus; other monstrous trophies include several shark jaws, a sahuagin's head, jars containing enormous fragments of tentacles, and a set of dragon turtle teeth. Among the nameplates of ships (all stolen or scavenged from other ships, pirate and merchant vessel alike) are names like *St. Asmod's Hope* or *Wavereaper*. One recent addition to this collection is a barnacle-encrusted mast of wood with letters badly eroded by a great deal of time spent below the waves. The only legible letters read "T...M...AUT." Nearby hangs a heavily rusted ship's bell bearing the name *Sea Ghost*.

Treasure: The only trophy of any real value is a leather-bound collection of nautical charts well over three hundred years old. These charts are remarkably accurate, even more so than most modern ones, and grant a +4 circumstance bonus on Profession (sailor) checks made to plot a course on the ocean.

Three locked sea chests (Open Lock DC 30) in the corner of the room contain a total of 120 gp, 448 sp, 683 cp, three garnets worth 20 gp each, an emerald brooch worth 50 gp, and 5 pearls worth 100 gp apiece.

K9. Kennel (EL 4)

The bodies of three strange creatures lie in a mangled heap in the center of this cave, their bodies torn apart and gnawed down to the bone. It's difficult to tell what manner of wolflike or hyenalike creatures they once were. Spiked collars lie empty beside the decapitated bodies, chains running from each to iron hooks in the walls.

Creatures: Kigante often kept exotic animals as guardians, picking and choosing new creatures from the exotic animals smuggled through the region. His most recent guardians were a pack of five krenshars, creatures he'd taken to calling "skull dogs." When the savage tide struck, three of the krenshars managed to resist the tide, and were quickly torn apart by the two that did not. The remaining savage krenshars wait here still. They wear spiked collars attached to long chains that allow them full reach of anywhere in this cave, but prohibit them from pursuing foes beyond the cavern. The savage krenshars have larger jaws than their untainted kin, and large patches of their mangy fur have fallen away to reveal leprous skin covered with writhing tendrils.

Savage Krenshars (2) **CR 2**

CE Medium magical beast (chaotic)
Monster Manual 163, Appendix 2
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +5

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp 15 (2 HD); ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1
Weakness afflicted
Spd 50 ft.
Melee bite +4 (1d8+2 plus disease [DC 13]) and 2 claws +2 (1d4+1)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4
Special Actions scare

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 13
SQ death throes
Feats Multiattack, Track
Skills Escape Artist +6, Hide +4, Jump +15, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Spot +5

K10. Storage

This small area is filled with piles of blankets, clothing, cases of crossbow bolts, and a collection of swords, pole arms, axes, and other weaponry.

These weapons could serve to replenish characters who have lost weapons or other pieces of equipment. There are 120 crossbow bolts, 3 short swords, 5 rapiers, 2 long swords, 2 scimitars, a glaive, 2 guisarmes, a halberd, 2 light crossbows, a heavy crossbow, 2 battle axes, 9 throwing axes, and a greataxe to be had here.

K11. Tributary Chamber (EL 4)

The sound of sloshing water fills this damp cavern. The eastern half of the cave consists of a large, frothy tide pool, its depths thick with seaweed and its surface roiling with the surge of the sea. Several narrow fissures in the ceiling seem to lead up and out through the cliff face to the south, allowing a brisk breeze to whip through the chamber.

The narrow fissures are impassable to creatures of larger than Tiny size, and even Tiny creatures must make a DC 30 Escape Artist check to navigate them. The tide pool itself is connected via submerged tunnels to the pools in area **K2** and **K14**.

Creature: Although Vanthus withstood the rapture of the savage tide, his accomplice Brissa was not so lucky. The tide transformed the once-beautiful young woman into a malformed monster, a slavering madwoman with a twisted jaw of shark's teeth, a hunched back, and wide splayed hands writhing with additional hook-tipped fingers. Vanthus escaped her

hunger by pushing her overboard before she recovered from the pain of her transformation, then fled the cove entirely. Brissa swam through the seaway and eventually ended up in this room, wracked with unholy hunger and twisted memories of love.

Brissa waits near the southern edge of the pool, hunkered over a large pile of raw fish and sea anemones she has nearly finished devouring. If she notices intruders in this cave, she leaps to her feet, shrieking out in a hoarse voice, "Where are you, my love? Is that you? I knew you wouldn't leave me! Sooooo hungry... please... feed me..."

BRISSA SANTOS **CR 4**
Female savage human rogue 2/fighter 1
CE Medium humanoid (chaotic)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Dodge
hp 27 (3 HD); ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; evasion
Weakness afflicted

Spd 40 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6+1/18–20) and bite –1 (1d8 plus disease [DC 14])
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13
SQ death throes, trapfinding
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse
Skills Bluff +6, Climb +6, Craft (painting) +2, Diplomacy +2, Disguise –3, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information –3, Hide +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +7, Spot +10, Swim +4
Possessions +1 *studded leather*, masterwork rapier, purple silk cloak with emerald clasp worth 20 gp, silver locket containing a tiny portrait of Vanthus (worth 10 gp)

K12. Savage Maze (EL 5)

This small labyrinth of tunnels leads to Kigante's personal chambers. The retired pirate chose the caverns beyond as his lair precisely because of this—the warren of tunnels would have made an excellent defense against enemies who were unfamiliar with their layout. Unfortunately, the enemies that finally got to Kigante did not have this disadvantage.

Creatures: Three of the savage pirates that killed and consumed Kigante still lurk in these caves. Although their knowledge of the maze's layout could have given them a significant tactical advantage, their madness prevents such coordinated assaults. Once one of them notices the PCs in the area, it shrieks and howls in delight as it shambles forth to attack. Its two mates arrive soon thereafter to join the battle.

Savage Pirates (3): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2.

K13. Kigante's Chamber

This cavern has been outfitted with the finest in stolen furniture. Thick rugs cover the floor, and fine silk tapestries and masterful seascape paintings hang from the walls, giving the place an almost regal feel. A four-poster bed takes up much of a large nook to the south, and nearby stands an oak desk with a matching armoire. Alas, much of this furniture is ruined, spattered and stained with gore and deeply scarred by swordplay. A skeletal body dressed in the ruins of a once-fine suit of studded leather lies in a red heap at the foot of the bed. Five more bodies lie about the room, horribly deformed men and women who seem to have perished on a rapier's point.

Kigante Valeros, an old salty dog of a half-elf and a Crimson Fleet veteran, called this dry warm patch of cave home. The cavern walls are lined with extraordinary paintings (more than a few of which were gifts from Brissa).

Kigante himself lies against the foot of his bed, his corpse half-devoured by savage pirates. Kigante did not die without a fight, as the bodies of five savage pirates in the room testify.

Treasure: Kigante's weapon of choice, a +1 *rapier* with a bronze hilt in the shape of a griffon, lies under his bed where it was kicked by a savage pirate eager to get to the dying man's flesh. A DC 15 Search check is enough to find the magic weapon (its discovery is automatic if a player specifically states he's checking under the bed).

A closer examination of Kigante reveals a bit more treasure—a *ring of swimming* (a gold band set with several aquamarine gemstones) still sits snug on a bony finger, and his darkwood buckler remains strapped to an arm. A DC 15 Search of his desk uncovers three silver bars worth 30 gp each in a lower drawer. A vial of vermillion ink worth 40 gp sits on top of the desk, one of the few objects in the room to escape damage during the battle that ended Kigante's life.

K14. Javell's Standoff (EL 4 or 13)

As the PCs approach this cavern, the sound of combat, the unmistakable slobbering cries of rage and hunger from several savage pirates, and a woman's voice shouting profane threats and curses become audible.

The floor of this cavern slopes downward to the southeast, finally ending in a large tide pool. The waters seem to be surging from a submerged passageway leading to the southwest. A hammock strung between two stalagmites sways gently to the south, next to an overturned table and a broken chair.

This chamber was used by Kigante as an escape route via the seaway, and as a quiet place to withdraw from the revels of piracy and contemplate life and his place in the great wheel of the world. Now, this tranquil getaway is the site of a heated battle between Harliss Javell and a horde of savage pirates.

Creatures: Harliss Javell has been backed into the southern corner of the cave, where she uses the overturned table as cover to fend off a half-dozen savage pirates. Over a dozen more lay dead on the ground, yet for all her skills in swordplay, Harliss is growing weary. She's been bitten several times by the savage pirates, and is suffering from savage fever already. When she spies the PCs, she cries out, "Oi! Get in the fight or stay outta me way, buckos. These things are lookin' to die, and I plan on obliging."

Harliss is a bold beauty with raven-black hair that flows like the deepest shade of midnight against her deeply tanned skin. She wears tight leather armor studded with fire opals and pearls and wields a curved rapier and dagger in a blinding display of swordplay. As she fights, she taunts her foes with phrases like "Ye picked the wrong lass to make a meal of today," or "Hungry? Have a taste o'me cold steel, ya stinking carcass!". As she recognizes one of the savage pirates, she might even say something like "Jebidiah? Is that you lad? You've looked better boy. Here, let me send you on your way." The savage pirates themselves don't notice the PCs until they are attacked, at which point three of them break off the fight against Harliss to attack them.

Captain Harliss Javell **CR 13**

Female human swashbuckler 3/rogue 3/scarlet corsair 7

CN Medium humanoid

Stormwrack 65

Init +4; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1

Languages Aquan, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 18

hp 76 (currently 51, 13 HD)

Fort +9, **Ref** +16, **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 40 ft.

Melee +2 *rapier* +18/+13/+8 (1d6+2/18–20) or +2 *rapier* +16/+11/+6 (1d6+2/18–20) and mwk dagger +15 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +17 (1d4/19–20)

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +12

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Flick of the Wrist, Improved Feint, corsair's feint, sneak attack +4d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14 (currently 8), Wis 8, Cha 12

SQ sailor's step, trapfinding, trap sense +1

Feats Combat Expertise, Flick of the Wrist, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +17, Bluff +14, Climb +6, Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +19, Jump +17, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (sailor) +13, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +12, Swim +14, Tumble +15, Use Rope +13

Possessions +3 *leather armor*, +2 *rapier*, 4 masterwork daggers, *ring of protection +2*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *rope of climbing*, *boots of striding and springing*, a pair of marilith-shaped earrings with each limb composed of a different precious metal worth 1,200 gp for the pair, a jade necklace with a shark's tooth at its center worth 600 gp

Corsair's Feint (Ex) Harliss may make a feint as a free action once every 1d4 rounds.

Flick of the Wrist (Ex) If Harliss draws a light weapon and makes a melee attack with it in the same round, she catches her opponent flat-footed (for the purpose of this attack only). She may use this feat only once per round and once per opponent during any single combat encounter. This feat is from *Complete Warrior*.

Grace (Ex) Harliss gains a +1 competence bonus on Reflex saves as long as she does not wear medium or heavy armor and is not carrying a medium or heavy load.

Insightful Strike (Ex) Harliss applies her Intelligence bonus to damage rolls with any light weapon, as well as any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse. Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to this additional damage. Harliss loses this ability if she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.

Sailor's Step (Ex) When aboard a ship and wearing nothing more than light armor, Harliss gains a +2 dodge bonus to her Armor Class.

Scourge of the Seas (Ex) When Harliss uses Intimidate to demoralize foes, the attempt affects all enemies within 30 feet who can see and hear her, and the effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to her Charisma modifier. This is a mind-affecting ability, and multiple uses of the ability don't stack.

Savage Pirates (8): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2.

Tactics: Although wounded and sick, Harliss Javell should have no problem dealing with the remaining savage pirates. Nonetheless, she fights using Combat Expertise to increase her Armor Class. Be sure to play up Javell's imposing presence and puissance at swordplay in this encounter and feel free to have her bail out a PC about to meet death at any moment with a hurled dagger. Javell is poetry in motion as she avoids the maws of the cannibals, dancing among them, her blades flashing impossibly fast. When the last cannibal pirate falls, Javell sheaths her blades and regards the PCs with a cold, appraising eye as she catches her breath

Harliss Javell

and tries to determine who they are and what they're about. If the PCs attempt to fight her, they most likely find themselves dead before they know what happened, so it is best to describe her battle with the savage pirates in a manner that makes the PCs think twice about crossing steel with her. If they insist on fighting, Javell fights with Combat Reflexes and uses Tumble to avoid being surrounded. She won't stop to finish off anyone she drops, and as soon as she realizes the way is clear, she may just abandon the PCs and attempt to escape on foot.

Speaking With Captain Javell

After the battle, Harliss calls out to the PCs. "What manner of driftwood do we have here? Speak up! Your names, lubbers! If only so's I can cut 'em inta' yer chests and save the undertaker some asking 'round."

Harliss appreciates characters who stand up to her gruff attitude with threats of their own, but in truth she is grateful to see non-deformed faces and hopes they may have some insight into what happened to her crew. Harliss turns her hard gaze on the PCs and demands to know their business in this "little piece o' hell." Take some time to roleplay this scene, and establish her character well, as Harliss is destined to make further appearances in the Savage Tide Adventure Path. In fact, the PCs' interactions with her here may greatly affect their later dealings with the Crimson Fleet.

Harliss grows frustrated when she realizes that the PCs know less about what happened at Kraken's Cove than she. This, combined with her clouded mind from the savage fever she's contracted, makes her a bit more talkative about Crimson Fleet matters than she probably should be. As soon as she hears Vanthus Vanderboren's name, she flies into a poetic litany of profanity that lasts several seconds and is as magnificent as it is scandalous to hear. When she recovers herself, she explains as she rights the toppled table and sits down upon it to rest. Feel free to break up the following soliloquy as you wish, allowing the PCs to interject questions here and there.

"All this ye see here," the flamboyant woman says as she waves her hand at the slaughtered deformities, "and what nightmares ye must have fought through t'get t'me; t'was all Vanthus Vanderboren's doing! That vomitous pig came t'me with his hussy 'n asked t'see our wares; made like he were a black marketeer lookin' fer some fur or scale t'move. Told him we had a ship coming in today what were full of exotica for him ta' shop, so he stayed on a few nights. Seemed a fine enough chap, but then not an hour ago, he dumped a hold full of whale oil into the cove and lit it up. I was on th'*Slippery Eel* at the time, and that's when I caught the two fo them on board, fixin t'rob me! Can ye imagine that? A pair of base curs tryin' t'rob Captain Harliss Javell? Anyway, I stuck the fool in the arm with me blade, he yelped, and then as he ducked aside he dropped what he were tryin' t'rob. Were a black pearl. One th'size o'a man's fist, mind you! Was going to make some fair coin off that bauble, but as it fell, the thing cracked like an egg. Some o'Vanthus's blood from my blade spattered the pearl, and it boiled and flashed with light. This foul, choking green gas started spewin' from it, burning through the wood like it were acid. I grabbed th'thing, ran up topside, then threw it inta' the water, but as it struck, the thing exploded!

"After that... things got a bit weird, mind ye. A green mist filled my vision, and I felt strange. Like someone else were in my head. Someone... someone hungry! And the rage! Rage like I never felt 'afore! And then, just like that, it were gone. Vanthus were on deck too by then, but he and I were the only humans left. That pearl, it did something to me crew. Ta' Vanthus' little girly too! Turned them bad, like something ye might find in a net and throw back on account the sun got no purpose lookin' upon it. These things!" She kicks one of the deformed pirates in distaste. "Whatever were in that damnable pearl turned over three score men into... into man-eating freaks!"

"Vanthus, he seen what his friend and the rest turned into. He dove into th'water t'get away. I did the same, only I swam for shore. Found me first mate Drevoraz there. He'd resisted the change too, as had some others here and there, yet they were nothin' but the banquet for those things. We fought our way into th'caves and managed to hole up here with Captain Kigante, the man who keeps these caves for us. Only, Kigante's freak food now; he got jumped by a mob of them not twenty minutes ago. Tore him apart like they was sharks!

"And one more thing. I think they got the sick in their maws. The places they done bit me still burn, and it's hard to think straight... But hey! You fought yer way in here! That means there ain't much left of them out there, yeah?"

If asked about the pearl, Captain Javell has little more to say. She admits she knew the pearl was magic, but that she'd been asked by her superiors to transport it to Kraken's Cove and wait there for someone to arrive to pick it up. She refuses to reveal much more about the identity of her superiors or who was supposed to collect the pearl, but a DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that she seems rather afraid of both mysterious individuals.

If the PCs ask her about Vanthus (or if they start pressing her too forcefully for more details about the pearl or her allies), she curses and flies into a tirade.

"I'll learn that cur what it is t'foul my business! I know who he is! Th'Vanderboren name's no secret to me. I know he's got family'n holdings in Sasserine! I sent me right hand Drevoraz t'deal with yer friend, I did. Drevoraz is on his merry way to Sasserine as we speak. He'll do for Vanthus' sister, his mum and pop, and any other family or friends the bastard has in that dunghill city. Cross the Crimson Fleet and we take everything in your life from ye. Best not forget that, boyo."

Harliss does not reveal the involvement of a tribe of allied bullywugs in this strike on Vanderboren Manor. If asked why she didn't go instead, she explains how she wasn't about to abandon Kigante to these men turned monsters and fought her way into the cove in hopes of helping him escape (only partially true—in fact, she was more interested in making sure certain papers on his desk did not fall into the wrong hands).

At this point, ask the PC with the highest Diplomacy bonus to make a Diplomacy

check; all other PCs can attempt to aid another by making DC 10 Diplomacy checks of their own, with each success granting a +2 bonus on the primary roller's check. If the PCs have healed Harliss' wounds or used *lesser restoration* to cure some or all of her Intelligence damage, the primary roller also gains a +8 bonus on his Diplomacy check. Make a note of Harliss' final attitude, as this determines how she interacts with the party later in the Savage Tide Adventure Path when their paths cross again.

DC 4 or less (Hostile): Harliss smiles, thanks the PCs for hearing out her rant, and then apologizes to them for what must be done; they are, after all, friends of Vanthus, and now it's time for them to pay for his sins against the Crimson Fleet. She attacks the PCs at once, intending to kill them all.

DC 5 (Unfriendly): Harliss eyes the PCs suspiciously, but decides that it's probable that they're after Vanthus as much as she. She bids the PCs to be on their way, warning them to stay away from Vanderboren Manor for a few days if they don't want to get hurt. If the PCs don't leave, she turns hostile and attacks.

DC 15 (Indifferent): Harliss remains indifferent to the PCs. She encourages them to leave Kraken's Cove, inferring that they'd best not be around when reinforcements arrive. This is a bluff; Harliss has decided to cut her losses, and not long after the PCs leave, she flees the region on foot to the east. She eventually reaches a Scarlet Brotherhood fort and is able to secure passage on a ship back to Scuttlecove.

DC 25 (Friendly): Harliss believes the PCs' story, and may even apologize for any trouble that her first mate might be bringing to the Vanderborens. She encourages the PCs to make haste back to Sasserine and Vanderboren Manor if they want to warn Lavinia about the coming assault, but doubts they'll get there in time. If asked, she'll write a brief note to Drevoraz, ordering him to hold off on the attack, but secretly she knows her half-orc first-mate won't believe the note even if the PCs can deliver it to him. Not long after the PCs leave, she flees to the east as detailed above.

DC 40 (Helpful): Harliss is impressed by the PCs, and gives them one of her marilith earrings as a token to show Drevoraz if they can reach him in time. This is a prearranged code between the two that signals to her first mate that the bearer of her note and the earring is to be trusted. She won't accompany the PCs to Sasserine, since she knows she'll be recognized by the city watch in no time and be thrown in jail, but she does honestly regret sending her man to strike against the Vanderborens if the PCs are this diplomatic. In any case, not long after the PCs leave, she sets out to the east as detailed above.

If the PCs kill Harliss or if she flees before she imparts any or all of the information above, you should take a few moments to prepare a lengthy note as a handout for the PCs to find somewhere on her person or in the nearby area. This note chronicles all

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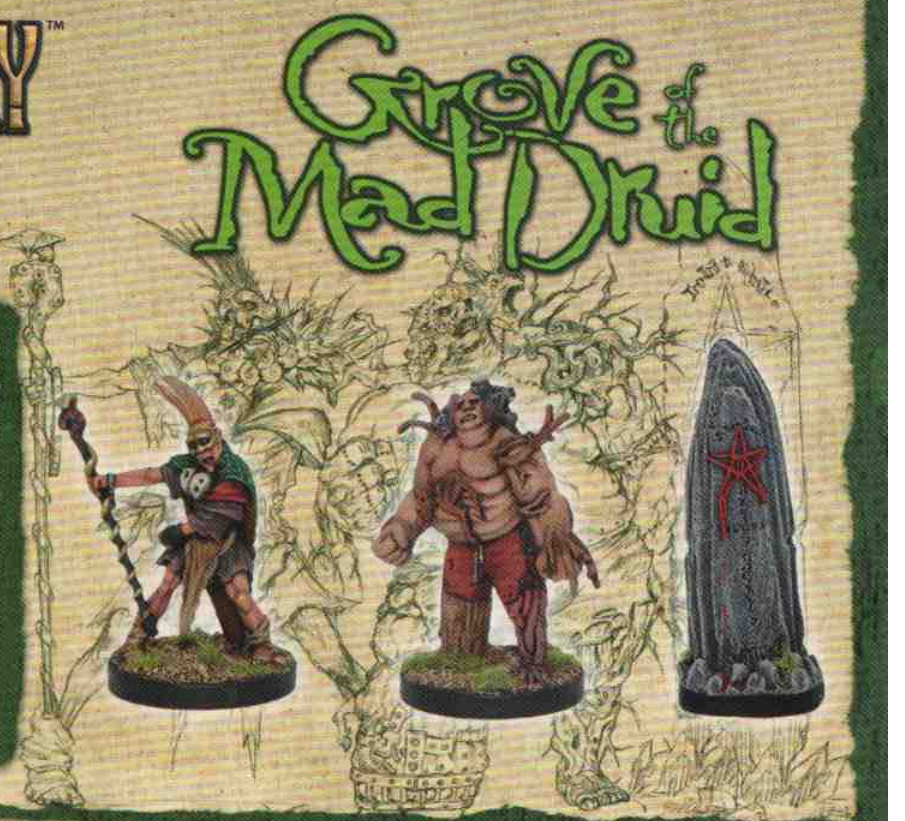
Grove of the Mad Druid



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of the information above, but is addressed to a Crimson Fleet Commander—a missive Harliss intended to send ahead of her return to Scuttlecove to let the Crimson Fleet know as soon as possible what happened in Kraken's Cove.

Note also that if the PCs manage to defeat Harliss, her gear represents a major haul for characters of this level. In this case, you should consider adjusting treasure found for the remainder of this adventure and perhaps the next as appropriate.

PART THREE: THE WORMFALL FESTIVAL

While the PCs frantically rush back to Lavinia after their harrowing encounter with the aftermath of the savage tide, wheels are in motion back in Sasserine. Bullywugs led by Drevoraz, Harliss' half-orc first mate, have descended on the Vanderboren estate, or rather ascended from the canals below, and are now engaged in a pitched battle with the manor's defenders.

The battle has gone largely unnoted by the city at large. The bullywugs have managed to prevent anyone from escaping so far, and as the city itself is deep in the chaotic celebration of the Wormfall Festival, no one has noticed the shouts and sounds of battle that periodically echo out of the manor. In order to reach Vanderboren Manor, the PCs must navigate a city thick with parades and festivity. To make matters worse, the Kellani family, their feathers still ruffled from the PCs' meddling in "There Is No Honor," have hired exotic killers to confront the PCs and extract vengeance for their role in the humiliation of Rowyn Kellani and the disruption of the Lotus Dragon Thieves' Guild.

Wormfall Parade

One year ago, a horrific brush with apocalypse in the far-off city of Alhaster sent deadly ripples across the entire face of the world. Even in Sasserine, the Wormgod's brief emergence into the world had an effect, as monstrous minions boiled out of the Spire of Long Shadows in preparation of the dawn of this new age. Only the intervention of a band of powerful heroes from the neighboring city of Cauldron saved Sasserine from a terrible fate. Now, one year later, Sasserine honors the heroes of that dark day with a wild parade and festival to remember the fallen and rejoice at the victory of good over evil.

Wormfall, as the holiday has been dubbed by city officials, is to be an annual event, a gigantic affair involving troupes of trained acrobats, marching bands, garish costumes in homage of the heroes of Alhaster and Cauldron (and corresponding effigies of their undead and wormy enemies), and floats constructed in the image of enormous green worms and shrouded skulls. Kites of green worms borne on sticks and strings dance in the air above the rooftops. Green lanterns burn above the streets, casting a sickly pale glow upon the cobblestones below, each with a removable shade and a layer of bright gold paper below to bathe the city in the warm sunlight of victory at the exact moment the worms fell and the heroes of Alhaster struck down their foul god.

When the PCs arrive in Sasserine they find the city in the throes of Wormfall and must navigate the teeming crowds of celebrating citizens in order to reach Lavinia's estate. Allow the PCs to trace their route through the city on a map of Sasserine (available in issue #139 or online at paizo.com in the *Savage Tide Player's Guide*), but no matter what route they take they find the going slow and frustrating. And of course, the crowd contains a few surprises for them along the way. You can use the following encounters at any point on the way back to Vanderboren Manor to spice up the journey.

The Belligerent Gnome (EL 5)

Creatures: A gnome by the name of Jilanth Turtoso, normally one of Sasserine's more docile citizens, becomes an unholy terror once he gets his third drink in him. Thankfully, Jilanth has a half-orc buddy named Kurgol with him. Kurgol does his best to keep Jilanth from starting fistfights with every person who crosses his path, but now and then the wily little gnome gets away from him. While the PCs are moving through the crowd, Jilanth targets them for a "bump" so he can accuse them of being "a bunch of rude, oversized louts." After slamming into one of the PCs on purpose, Jilanth huffs and puffs and rolls up his sleeves while Kurgol desperately tries to intervene.

If the PCs apologize for the "insult" by making a DC 20 Diplomacy check, they can hold off a fight long enough for Kurgol to arrive and talk some sense into the drunk gnome. Give the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus on the Diplomacy check if there is a gnome or half-orc in the party, and a +4 if they seem to be a little tipsy themselves or comment on the fun of the festival (Kurgol spent all yesterday volunteering his time setting up for the parade). If the PCs get verbally or physically aggressive with Jilanth, the little gnome immediately attacks. If the PCs inflict lethal damage on Jilanth, Kurgol flies into a rage and attacks them as well. This encounter should pose little physical threat to the PCs, but if handled poorly, the resulting chaos (and possible arrest and jail time if Jilanth or Kurgol is killed) could prevent the PCs from reaching Vanderboren Manor in time.

Jilanth Turtoso, gnome warrior 1: hp 8, *Monster Manual* page 132.

Kurgol, half-orc barbarian 5: hp 43, use the stats for the sample 5th-level barbarian on page 112 of *Dungeon Master's Guide*, except that he carries no weapons. Replace his Weapon Focus (greataxe) feat with Improved Unarmed Strike, giving him unarmed strike +9 melee (1d3+4).

Worm's Revenge (EL 3)

During the height of the celebration, a float-wagon heading downhill bearing a huge humanoid form shrouded in wriggling paper-mache worms and bearing two burning lanterns for eyes rolls out of control toward an open-air tavern filled with revelers. With a DC 15 Listen check, a PC hears the shouts of alarm and has three rounds to react. With a DC 15 Spot check, a PC sees the trundling cart rolling down the hill and has only two rounds to react. If both checks are failed, the PCs automatically notice the runaway float in time to take one round of actions. In any event, the PCs themselves are directly in the path of the run-

away cart. A character may try to halt the careening float's progress by grabbing it (automatic unless the attack to grab the float is a natural 1) and making a DC 25 Strength Check to stop it, by destroying one of its wheels (AC 15, Hardness 5, hp 15), or by creating an obstruction of at least 1,000 pounds (perhaps by toppling a haphazardly-stacked mound of barrels of ale with a DC 20 Strength check). Certain spells, like *web*, *shatter* (targeted at one of the wheels), *soften earth and stone* (cast on the dirt road in front of the float), or *warp wood* can halt the cart's progress as well. If the PCs warn the revelers in the tavern, 1d8 of the 20 can escape out of the float's path each round.

Assume that all of the PCs are in the float's path unless they specifically mentioned that they're spread out. A DC 12 Reflex save allows a PC to leap out of the way of the cart before it strikes them, otherwise it rolls right over them and inflicts 3d6 points of damage.

At the end of the three rounds, the wagon slams into the tavern with a tremendous explosion, sending furniture, dishware and patrons hurling in all directions. Worse, the Wormgod's eye lanterns shatter, spewing flaming oil in all directions and lighting the paper float on fire. Anyone still in the tavern at this time takes 3d6 points of damage—since each reveler has only 5 hit points, this disaster may well result in several deaths if the PCs aren't quick. Once the fire starts, it spreads quickly. The fire is contained by a bucket brigade before it spreads to neighboring buildings, but the tavern itself burns to the ground unless the PCs can organize a bucket brigade faster with a DC 20 Diplomacy check or use magic to aid in putting out the flames. If cast on the first round, a *gust of wind* extinguishes the fire, but after this, the wind only fans the flames. *Pyrotechnics* can transform the fire into an impressive display of fireworks or a choking cloud of smoke if cast within three rounds of the crash.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs stop the float before it crashes, award them as if they'd defeated an EL 3 creature in combat. If the cart crashes but the PCs save at least 15 of the revelers and save the tavern from burning down, give them an EL 1 award.

Kellani's Killers (EL 6)

Angered at the shame the PCs brought upon her daughter Rowyn, and furious at the loss of income generated by the Lotus Dragon Thieves' Guild, aging noblewoman Heldrath Kellani has hired a group of specialized murderers and killers to strike a blow of vengeance against the PCs. Led by a dangerous woman named Diamondback, this group of rogues poses as a band of street performers mounted on stilts and patrols the streets surrounding Vanderboren Manor, waiting for word of the PCs' approach.

Creatures: Diamondback is a deadly performer, late of the Talventa Academy before she decided there was more money in murder-for-hire. Diamondback, decked out in a form-fitting and sensual-if-macabre black bodysuit decorated with a white skeleton, is accompanied by an entourage of six acrobatic rogues who parade about the streets on ten-foot-high stilts. Diamondback precedes the stiltwalkers, dancing and performing an impressive array of acrobatic flips and leaps, while the stiltwalkers themselves wow audiences by juggling daggers and flasks of oil with burning rags stuffed into them. As they approach the PCs, allow them a DC 20 Sense Motive check to notice that the acrobatic troupe seems to be up to no good just before they mount their assault. Those who make the check may act in the surprise round.

DIAMONDBACK **CR 4**

Female human battle dancer 4
CN Medium humanoid
Dragon Compendium 26
Init +5; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 15; Dodge, Mobility
hp 25 (4 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +9, **Will** +0

Spd 40 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +9 (1d8+1)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5
Special Actions dance of reckless bravery
Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of eagle's splendor* (both already used)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 18
SQ AC bonus
Feats Dodge, Mobility, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +12, Escape Artist +10, Jump +14, Perform (dance) +11, Tumble +12
Possessions combat gear, *ring of protection* +1, black skeletal leotard, jade serpent earrings worth 500 gp as a pair

AC Bonus (Ex) Diamondback adds her Charisma bonus to her Armor Class; this bonus applies even against touch attacks or when she is flat-footed, but she looses the bonus if immobilized or helpless, when she wears armor, when she carries a shield, or when she carries a medium or heavy load.
Dance of Reckless Bravery (Su) Diamondback can inspire bravery in her allies by taking

How's the Weather Up There?

Although stilts are designed for performances, for an agile user they can grant unique advantages in combat. Stilts are generally ten feet tall, placing a character on stilts out of reach of melee attacks from most Medium creatures. With a DC 10 Balance check, a character can move at his normal speed while wearing stilts; failure by 5 or more indicates a fall for 1d6 damage. A character on stilts can move through crowds with ease, and generally gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls with melee weapons against Large or smaller creatures due to the advantage of higher ground (although the stiltwalker generally needs reach weapons to target Medium creatures).

A foe can attempt to sunder a stilt as if it were a weapon. A stilt has hardness 5 and 10 hit points, and each time it is struck, the stiltwalker must make a DC 12 Balance check to avoid a fall. If a stilt is destroyed, the stiltwalker automatically falls. While on stilts, you suffer a –4 penalty to resist bull rush, overrun, and trip attempts, but you may substitute your Balance check in place of the normal check to resist the attack if you wish.

a move action while within an opponent's threatened area. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. All of her allies within 30 feet gain a +4 bonus on saves against fear effects for a number of rounds equal to 5 + her Charisma modifier (currently 9 rounds).

STILTWALKERS (6) **CR 1**

Male and female human rogue 1
CN Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11
hp 8 (1 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged dagger +2 (1d4+1/19–20) or alchemist's fire +2 touch (1d6 fire)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear 2 flasks of alchemist's fire

Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ trapfinding
Feats Agile, Skill Focus (Balance)
Skills Balance +11, Bluff +3, Escape Artist +8, Jump +5, Listen +5, Perform (juggling) +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +5, Tumble +6
Possessions combat gear, padded armor, stilts, 4 daggers

Tactics: Diamondback and her killers are well acquainted with the PCs' appearances, and unless they go to great lengths to disguise themselves as they move toward Lavinia's mansion, the killers strike at some point before they reach it. Diamondback drinks her two potions before she approaches the group from behind and attacks the last character in line. At this attack, the stiltwalkers each throw a flask of alchemist's fire at the PCs, hoping the resulting explosions of fire damage them and cause a swath of chaos in the streets.

The attack works like a charm. For the following 2d4 rounds, panicked crowds fill the square. The stiltwalkers can move through the crowd with ease, but all other characters treat movement through the crowd as difficult terrain. Diamondback tries to stay within five feet of her chosen target at all times, tumbling away to find a different target if reinforcements arrive.

As soon as a rogue or Diamondback is brought below 4 hit points, he or she

attempts to flee into the crowd. If cornered, a badly wounded villain surrenders.

Development: It takes the city watch a few minutes to respond to the attack, likely giving the PCs plenty of time to become scarce. Even if they remain at the scene of the fight, the large number of witnesses are more than enough to convince the watch that the PCs were only defending themselves. With a DC 10 Diplomacy check, the guards let the PCs go after only a few minutes of questioning. A captured rogue or Diamondback readily gives up the identity of their employers if interrogated. Legal action against the Kellanis is unfortunately a bureaucratic nightmare beyond the scope of this adventure, but this assault combined with any evidence the PCs uncovered in the Lotus Dragon Guildhall in "There Is No Honor" goes a long way toward stripping the Kellanis of their noble status. In any event, after this failed attack, Heldrath washes her hands of the PCs, realizing they're too tough to tangle with. If her daughter Rowyn still lives, though, she has further plans for revenge that see fruition in the next adventure.

PART FOUR: FROGS IN THE HOUSE

When Captain Harliss Javell gave her first mate the orders to seek out the Vanderborens and extract punishment for Vanthus' treachery, she suggested to the half-orc he recruit several members of the Trub Glorp bullywug tribe as thugs. The Trub Glorp tribe dwells in the swamp south of Kraken's Cove, and have a long-standing alliance with the pirates of the Crimson Fleet. Drevoraz was able to secure the aid of the entire tribe (along with one of their pets) for the raid. Fortunately for the PCs, this significantly slowed Drevoraz's journey to Sasserine. Forced to make the last legs of the journey under stealth, the bullywugs arrived at Vanderboren Manor only a few hours before the PCs arrive, invading the mansion via a short creek that passes through the basement.

It wasn't long before the invaders clashed with the Jade Ravens, another adventuring party employed by Lavinia. Further, Lavinia herself, perhaps inspired by the PCs, has taken up her interest in fencing and has honed her skills as a swashbuckler. She and the Jade Ravens put up a terrific fight in the manor courtyard, but the bullywugs eventually defeated them, capturing most and sending one of the Ravens into desperate hiding before they settled in to wait for Vanthus' arrival.

The majority of the bullywugs encountered in Vanderboren Manor are Trub Glorp hunters, rangers possessing a burning hatred of all things human. A bullywug is a froglike humanoid with green, gray, or mottled yellow skin. They have long, flicking tongues and typically speak with thick, sloppy accents. They stand four to seven feet tall, weigh 100 to 300 pounds, and reek of the swamp. Bullywugs are fanatic creatures loyal to their tribe; they fight to the death. Note that these bullywugs have already taken some damage in the fight to wrestle the manor away from the Jade Ravens and Lavinia. When encountered, a Trub Glorp hunter has already taken 1d6 points of damage. Named bullywugs are at full hit points, as they held back from the initial fights or have already been healed by their shaman, Bua Gorg.

Trub Glorp Hunter **CR 1**

Male and female bullywug ranger 1
CE Medium humanoid (aquatic)
Monsters of Faerûn 25
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp 12 (–1d6, 1 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** –1

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; marsh move
Melee club +3 (1d6+2)
Ranged throwing axe +3 (1d6+2)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3
Atk Options favored enemy +2 (human)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 4
SQ amphibious, wild empathy –2
Feats Alertness, Track
Skills Hide +6 (+12 in marshes), Jump +6, Listen +1, Spot +1, Survival +3, Swim +14
Possessions leather armor, club, 3 throwing axes

Amphibious (Ex) Although bullywugs are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely out of water.
Marsh Move (Ex) A bullywug suffers no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.

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Vanderboren Manor

The bullywugs have posted no guards outside of Vanderboren Manor so as to not draw attention to the grounds during their invasion, making it relatively simple for the PCs to approach the manor. If they approach openly, there's a 20% chance that a bullywug notices them through one of the manor's windows and raises the alarm—any attempt at stealth negates this chance entirely.

You should provide the PCs with a map of Vanderboren Manor to help them plan the rescue mission—they've likely been to the mansion numerous times by now, and while they may not have visited every room in the building, they should be familiar with its layout. The manor itself is a well-made structure. Bullywugs lack darkvision or low-light vision, so if the assault occurs at night they've lit the manor's numerous wall-mounted lamps. Doors are made of wood and are unlocked unless otherwise indicated in the text.

The following room descriptions assume the bullywugs are not aware of the PCs. If the alarm is raised, refer to that room's Development section to note any changes to the room's condition.

Without concrete proof that bullywugs have invaded Sasserine, the city watch has little time or resources to devote to aiding the PCs in their task. With the Wormfall Festival in full swing, they've got their hands full keeping things in relative order as it is. PCs who waste time trying to organize an army of guards to assault the manor may well find that they're too late to save its occupants.

Note on Treasure: Although many of these rooms list objects as treasure, honorable parties won't loot their employer's home. If your party is working for Rowyn, she may ask the PCs to steal as much of this treasure as they can during their infiltration of the manor (see the "Switching Sides" sidebar at the start of this adventure). Note that many of the treasures in Vanderboren Manor are trophies from noteworthy and infamous adventure sites throughout the world—the Vanderborens have a proud family tradition as adventurers, and the decor of their manor reflects some of their more obscure finds.

V1. Atrium (EL 3)

This enormous great hall's marble stonework is smooth and white. Two oak stairwells with burnished brass railings ascend to an open first-floor landing. Tapestries depicting a beautiful and savage frontier of sprawling jungle landscapes and an eerie shoreline hang from the upper landing. A glass chandelier hangs from the atrium's ceiling.

Creatures: Three Trub Glorp hunters stand watch here, two on the ground floor between the stairwells and one patrolling the first floor landing. The two downstairs hunters stand directly under the chandelier; if the chandelier's rope is cut, its fall strikes the bullywugs for 2d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 12 half).

Trub Glorp Hunters (3): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Tactics: The bullywugs rush any discernable threat they notice, raising the alarm as they attack.

Development: If the alarm is raised, the bullywugs hide behind tapestries and prepare to ambush anyone who moves through the atrium.

V2. Statuary

This marble-floored room contains many fine sculptures of Vanderboren ancestors, long dead friends, and important personages. A partially-finished statue of Lavinia's parents, Verik and Larissa Vanderboren, stands in the center of the chamber. Their visages are incomplete from the nose down, so that their eyes stare outward toward the viewer, with no mouths to speak the secrets of their lives and deaths.

Treasure: On a marble pedestal near the south wall sits a gem-studded ceremonial silver dragon engraved with the stylized depiction of an obscure demigod of earth, weather, and hidden treasure known as the Earth Dragon. The statue is worth 1,100 gp. On another pedestal sits an odd golden likeness of half of a cow's head with a ruby eye worth 800 gp.

V3. Library

Row upon row of bookshelves filled to bursting with tomes on all manner of subjects line this room. A hearth sits against the north wall, embers glowing softly within. A reading table sits near the fireplace.

An old musty diary written in a strange archaic language (Suel) rests on the reading table, the initials "L. of G." burned into the cover. The diary's current page is marked with a strange card of flexible gray material with bumps and holes along its surface.

Treasure: The card of gray material is an unusual key that opens doors in an exotic and distant dungeon of metal hidden deep in the Barrier Peaks, and is useless to the PCs except as a curiosity worth 15 gp.

V4. Study

An impressive darkwood desk with a high-backed chair behind it sits in this spacious study.

This is where Lavinia's mother and father took important meetings with close friends, economic advisors, and members of the Seeker Lodge. The large office has gone unused for weeks.

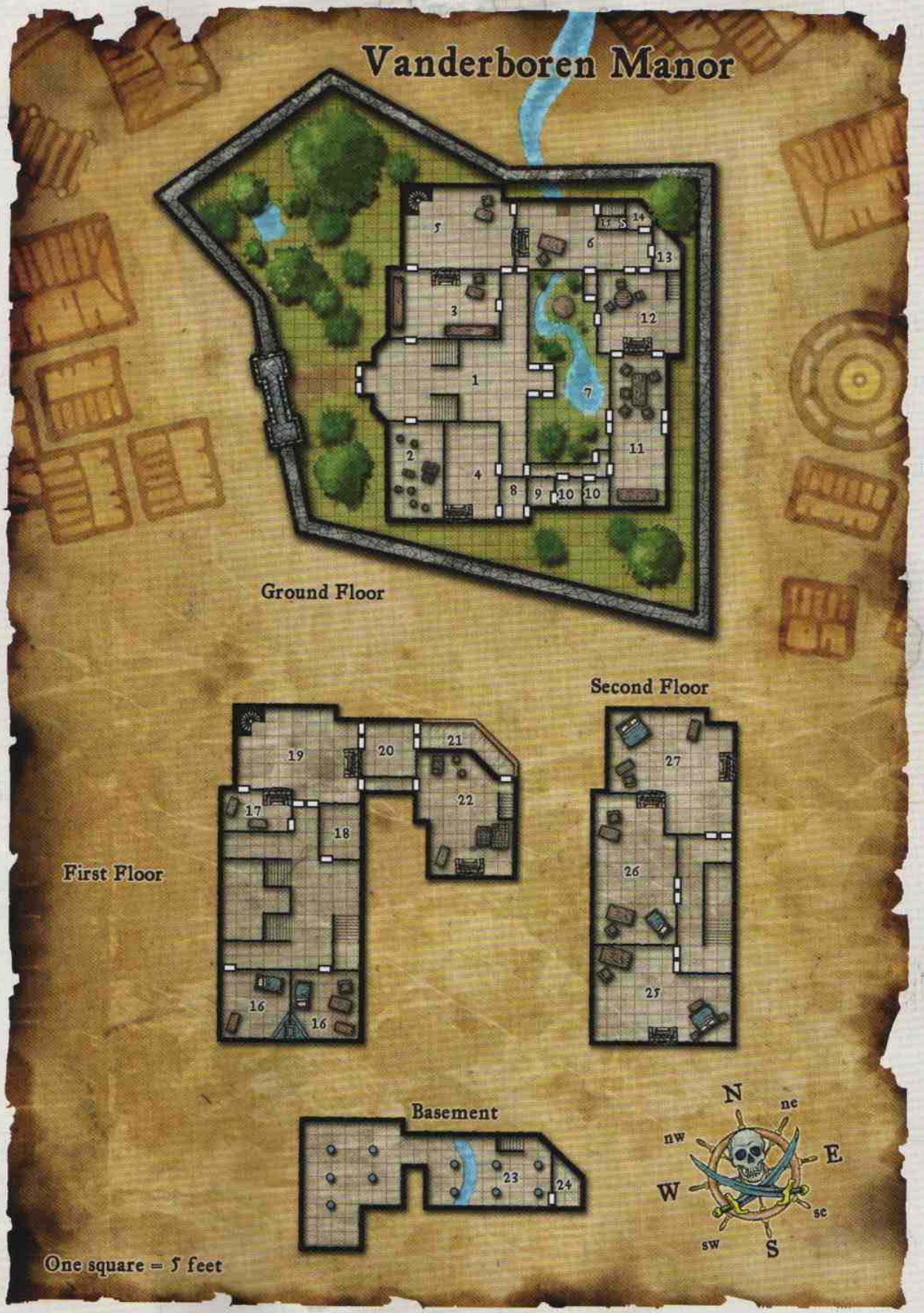
V5. Gallery

This dismal excuse for a gallery obviously once held dozens of works, but now most of the frames stand empty, save a few exotic landscapes and a portrait of Lavinia's parents.

The contents of this room suffered recently, as Lavinia was forced to sell most of the paintings herein to collectors and merchants to pay off the most critical of her inherited debts.

V6. Trophy Hall (EL 3)

This exhibit hall displays many hunting trophies, all well-preserved by taxidermy. Great


Vanderboren Manor
Ground Floor
Second Floor
First Floor
Basement
One square = 5 feet
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The Jade Ravens

The PCs aren't the only adventurers in Lavinia's employ. The Jade Ravens consist of a group of mercenaries and adventurers who have served the Vanderborens for many years. Traditionally, as members of this group became higher level, they went their own ways after recruiting new members to replace themselves. The current group consists of four 3rd-level NPCs. Having just returned from the nearby city of Cauldron with monetary aid from Vanderboren relations there, the Jade Ravens were present to aid in the initial defense of the manor against the bullywugs. Unfortunately, they were overwhelmed and are now scattered throughout the manor, either hostages or unconscious. As the PCs encounter them, they can rescue these NPCs and thus recruit additional aid in reclaiming the manor. How the PCs interact with the Jade Ravens here has repercussions throughout the rest of the Savage Tide Adventure Path. Will they be allies? Or will they become bitter rivals?

Tolin Kientai (LN male human ranger 3): The self-proclaimed leader of the group, Tolin is as vain and brash as he is handsome. He may take an interest in an attractive female PC, although his ego might make him difficult to get along with.

Zan Oldavin (N male half-elf rogue 3): A jaunty, flamboyant man who takes perhaps too keen an interest in his dagger collection, Zan's carefree and sometimes irresponsible attitude tends to get all four of the Jade Ravens into trouble with the authorities.

Kaskus Kiel (LN male dwarf druid 3): Kaskus has a deep and noisy love of mountains and caverns, and longs to return there some day after he's repaid a debt of loyalty to Lavinia, whose father rescued Kaskus from slavery to the Scarlet Brotherhood nearly a year ago.

Liamae Teslikaria (CN female human sorcerer 3): Liamae is a somewhat haughty woman, a rebel against her noble parents, who ran away from home to the exotic south to experience what life has to offer. She may become romantically involved with an attractive PC, but her capricious and sometimes self-destructive lifestyle might put long-term relationships under undue strain.

saber-toothed cats, a crouching deinonychus, a bloated toad the size of a pony, and a strange badger-like creature with golden fur and eight legs round out a menagerie of more mundane leopards, wolves, and bears. The carpet in this room is terribly stained with mud, especially around a door in the northeast corner of the room.

The door in the northeastern corner of the room leads down to the basement. The mud stains are from the bullywugs who invaded the manor from below; a DC 20 Survival check by a character with Track reveals many webbed footprints in the mud stains.

The secret door into area **V15** can be discovered with a DC 25 Search check.

Creatures: Three bullywug hunters have taken a liking to the stuffed dire toad, and have gathered around it while they guard this room. They attack anyone who enters the room.

Trub Glorp Hunters (3): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Development: The bullywugs hide behind the dire toad trophy if the alarm is raised. A strange "blourp!" sound emitted from behind the toad a split second before they leap out to attack is the only warning the PCs get if they fail to notice the hiding bullywugs before they attack.

V7. Courtyard

A plethora of exotic flowers and plants populate this lush courtyard. A small pond dotted with water lilies sits at the center of the courtyard, a gentle stream draining away to the north. Benches and a stone table with an intricate marble and iron dragonchess set built into its surface complete the idyllic scene, which is marred here and there by splashes of blood on the grass or walls. Three froglike bodies lie in a heap on the southern shore of the pond next to a dead badger.

Three dead bullywugs, one riddled with throwing knives, another smote with a blunt blow to the head, and a third badly riddled with deep holes caused by *magic missiles* lie about the pond. The Jade Ravens made their last stand here, and managed to kill three of the bullywugs before they were overwhelmed and scattered throughout the manor. The dead badger was Kaskus's animal companion (see area **V15**).

V8. Kennels (EL 3)

Four locked cage-stalls fill the northern portion of this room. The air reeks of unkempt dogs.

Creatures: Three mastiff hounds named Leshton, Ealia, and Kurz, diligently raised as hunting dogs by Lavinia's father, are kept here. Normally, the dogs had free run of the estate most of the time, but they were kenneled at the time the bullywugs struck and no one was able to release them. The dogs are agitated and whimper with fear—they can smell the bullywugs in the mansion, and if released, the faithful dogs want nothing more than to defend their masters' home from the intruding monsters.

They growl at any PCs who approach and bark loudly (the bullywugs have been ignoring the dogs' incessant barking since their arrival, so this does not draw any investigation by the frogmen). If calmed with a DC 15 wild empathy or Handle Animal check, the dogs obey the party, though they rush to attack any bullywugs they encounter.

Mastiffs (3): hp 16 each, *Monster Manual* 272 (riding dog).

V9. Storage

This large closet is filled with cleaning supplies, blankets, sheets, pillows, and other necessities of the household.

V10. Servant's Quarters

This simple room contains a few narrow beds and a single free-standing dresser.

These simple 10-foot-by-10-foot rooms are where the Vanderboren serving staff resides. Lavinia hasn't had a chance yet to rehire a full staff, so the only denizen of this room is her loyal major-domo, Kora Whistlegap, who unfortunately has not survived the bullywug invasion—her body can be found in area **V27**.

V11. Ballroom

This large chamber was used to entertain the Vanderboren's guests in bygone days. Now this area contains only a long dining table, an empty buffet table, and a few well-worn chairs.

Like the gallery, much of the finery that once decorated this ballroom has been sold to pay off several debts.

V12. Private Dining Hall (EL 6)

This spacious room is filled with comfortable upholstered chairs, bookshelves, and a few tables. A window overlooks the manor's central courtyard and the carpet is thick and soft. A large portrait hangs on one wall, a fine work depicting a handsome young man with a short beard and a sneer on his face.

Creatures: Huntress Lorb-Lorb Tub, a mottled brown and green bullywug wearing mismatched studded leather armor, relaxes here with three of her hunters. She is the mate of Chief Lorpth and a powerful personage in the Trub Glorp tribe. The huntress finds this whole affair ridiculous, and has refused to take an active part in the raid, instead becoming thoroughly distracted by a box of fine cigars in this room. She smokes them at her leisure and greets any PCs who enter with a slime-drooling smile and a puff before ordering her hunters to attack. She does not attack until at least one of her hunters falls or she is herself attacked, at which point she rages and fights to the death.

Huntress Lorb-Lorb Tub CR 5
Female bullywug barbarian 2/ranger 3
CE Medium humanoid (aquatic)
Monsters of Faerûn 25
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18; uncanny dodge
hp 57 (5 HD)
Fort +11, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; marsh move
Melee +1 *hand axe* +9 (1d6+3/×3) or
+1 *hand axe* +7 (1d6+3/×3) and
+1 *hand axe* +7 (1d6+2/×3)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7
Atk Options favored enemy +2 (human), rage 1/day
Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +3

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8
SQ amphibious, wild empathy +2
Feats Endurance, Track, Two Weapon Defense, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (handaxe)
Skills Climb +10, Hide +4 (+10 in swamps), Jump +10, Swim +10, Survival +2
Possessions combat gear, studded leather armor, 2 +1 *hand axes*

Amphibious (Ex) Although bullywugs are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely out of water.
Marsh Move (Ex) A bullywug suffers no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.
Rage (Ex) When she rages, Lorb-Lorb Tub's stats change as follows:
AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16
hp 67
Fort +13, **Will** +2
Melee +1 *hand axe* +11 (1d6+5/×3) or
+1 *hand axe* +9 (1d6+5/×3) and
+1 *hand axe* +9 (1d6+3/×3)
Grp +9
Abilities Str 19, Con 24
Skills Jump +12, Swim +12

Trub Glorp Hunters (3): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Tactics: The hunters and Lorb-Lorb Tub both attempt to flank opponents. Lorb-Lorb Tub is the smartest of the bullywugs in the mansion and fights in a manner demonstrative of both her canny hunter's instincts and intellect. Lorb-Lorb Tub is also not stupid enough to fight to the death and attempts to flee if reduced to less than 10 hit points. If cornered, she hurls down her weapons and begs for mercy.

Development: If the alarm is raised, Lorb-Lorb Tub ignores it and continues testing cigars. Her hunters grow more nervous, but dare not disobey the chieftain's mate.

If captured alive, Lorb-Lorb Tub offers to tell the PCs all she knows about her mate Chief Lorpth, Bua Gorg, and the half-orc stranger in exchange for her life. She can tell the PCs exact numbers and the locations of the other bullywugs, but won't aid in fighting them.

V13. Washroom

This room contains a matching large bathtub and washbasin.

Area V14. Privy

Beyond three fine porcelain lavatories that empty into a series of pipes that likely drain into the nearby canal, there is nothing of interest in this room.

V15. Hidden Armory

The walls of this stone-floored room are lined with weapon and armor racks, many of which are empty. Still remaining on the walls are a silvery bastard sword, a light crossbow, a glowing dagger, a suit of studded leather armor, a light steel shield, and a small wooden coffer. The wooden coffer lies on its side, the lid open and its contents (several potion vials and a pair of boots) strewn on the floor. Slumped on the ground nearby is what appears to be a recently slain dwarf.

This hidden armory is where the Vanderborens keep several of their spare weapons, stored here in case of an emergency. Unfortunately, neither the Jade Ravens nor Lavinia were able to reach this room in time for its contents to make a difference during the bullywug attack.

Creature: The dwarf druid Kaskus Kiel managed to hide in this room after the other Jade Ravens were captured. Unfortunately, the wounded druid didn't know about the *magic missile* trap that once warded the coffer of healing potions, and in his frenzied attempt to get to the contents he triggered the trap and was nearly slain. As fortune would have it, the dwarf stabilized naturally at –7 hit points. If the PCs can heal him, he frantically recounts the battle for the manor (including a tearful account of the death of his animal companion Brunthus at the hands of that damn half-orc). Kaskus readily agrees to join the PCs in their task of reclaiming the manor.

Kaskus Kiel **CR 3**
Male dwarf druid 3
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Dwarven, Druidic, Sylvan
AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17
hp 26 (currently –7, 3 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5
Spd 20 ft.
Melee scimitar +2 (1d6/18–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Combat Gear *potion of expeditious retreat*
Spells Prepared (CL 3rd, +2 melee touch, +3 ranged touch)
2nd—*bull's strength* (already cast), *cure moderate wounds* (already cast)
1st—*cure light wounds* (already cast), *longstrider*, *produce flame* (already cast)
0—*cure minor wounds* (2, both already cast), *guidance* (already cast), *light*
Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 6
SQ wild empathy +1
Feats Augment Summoning, Spell Focus (conjuration)
Skills Concentration +9, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +8, Spot +8, Survival +4 (+6 nature)
Possessions combat gear, *+1 hide armor*, *+1 heavy wooden shield*, scimitar, *goggles of minute seeing*, 35 gp

Treasure: The weapons and armor in this room are of masterwork quality. The glowing dagger is in fact a *+1 keen dagger*. Four of the potions that were once in the coffer are smashed, but four *potions of cure moderate wounds* survive intact. The boots are *boots of striding and springing*.

V16. Guest Rooms

This chamber is furnished with a bed, a low desk, and a free-standing dresser.

There is nothing of interest in these chambers.

V17. Laboratory

Alchemical and vivisection tools and all manner of glassware are scattered about on three or four tables in this windowless room. The fireplace is constructed with a brass grating fitted with slots to accommodate glass test tubes for heating.

This room is where biological samples gathered on the Vanderborens' many explorative journeys are kept, and where they created alchemical concoctions and potions. Lavinia's mother Larissa used this room often, but since her death the chamber hasn't been visited in over a month.

Treasure: A shelf on the north wall has the following samples in glass jars: a shrunken head of a simian humanoid (a tasloi) worth 20 gp, a bulbous green worm floating in alchemical preservative worth 50 gp, a strange one-eyed bat-like thing mounted on a board and whose body gives off an eerie soft glow worth 100 gp, and a piece of stretched leathery skin bearing a tattoo of an eye with an arrow crossed over it (this last is a patch of half-fiend skin that bears the notorious Carcerian Sign) worth 25 gp.

V18. Family Shrine

A large stone disk carved with the road and crescent moon of Fharlanghn is set into the wall above a modest altar heaped with offerings of dried fruit and other strange objects.

Although the Vanderborens have traditionally been a secular family, the worship of Fharlanghn remained a well-loved tradition in the family. Lavinia has not visited this shrine in weeks, and everything here is covered with a layer of dust.

Treasure: The offerings here include several sprigs of cinnamon worth 5 gp in all, a rare and preserved orchid worth 10 gp, an ruby brooch in the shape of a bat worth 300 gp, a small silver offering bowl with a crescent-shaped base made of bone worth 60 gp filled with fine dates from a far off desert (the dates are worth 20 gp in all), and a carved white oak *staff of passage* (1 charge remaining).

V19. Training Hall

This large open room is devoid of furniture, save a weapons rack containing several quality weapons, including three longswords, an axe, two daggers, four rapiers, a strange-looking crossbow, a ranseur, and a spiked chain. The floor is thickly carpeted to absorb the shock of a fall or takedown. The bodies of four froglike humanoids lie sprawled on the floor.

These four bullywugs were cut down in a valiant effort by Tolin Kientai and Kaskus Kiel before they were subdued and brought upstairs with the rest of the hostages. The weapons on the racks are all of masterwork quality; the strange-looking crossbow is, in fact, a *+1 repeating crossbow*.

V20. Laundry (EL 2)

This white paneled room is filled with basins and hampers. A large tub of water sits in the middle of the room, and numerous cords hung with clothespins lace the ceiling.

This is where the staff washes linens and clothing.

Creatures: Two bullywug hunters sift through the hampers here, searching for more fine silk robes. Bua Gorg, the bullywug cleric in area **V27** above, has taken a liking to these soft garments and plans on taking as many as possible back to his lair in the swamps. The bullywugs battle to the death to protect their master's "treasure."

Trub Glorp Hunters (2): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Development: If the alarm is raised, these two hunters move out onto the balcony (area **V21**) to watch for intruders.

V21. Balcony

This open-air balcony overlooks the corner of the Vanderboren Grounds, providing an excellent view of the city of Sasserine. Three reed chairs sit near the railing.

Development: The two bullywug hunters in are **V20** crouch here if the alarm is raised, watching the streets for any sign of reinforcements.

V22. Kitchen

Stoves, basins, and preparation counters fill up this cramped chamber. This kitchen is large enough to prepare a banquet.

Although the kitchen is sizable, it has been underused since the deaths of Lavinia's parents. The only evidence of recent occupation is a small wheel of Lavinia's favorite cheese (Hollowsky port) and a loaf of hardened bread. Even the wine rack is empty (Lavinia sold off some of the bottles and Vanthus drank the rest during his short stay in the manor immediately after their parents' death).

V23. Basement (EL 7)

Water from the central pool in the courtyard flows through this room, cascading through a grate in the south wall and then out through a second grate to the north. This second grate is nearly completely rusted through; only a few jagged shards of metal remain. Great swaths of mud stain the floor here.

This is where the bullywugs invaded Vanderboren Manor. Chief Lorpth used his pet rust monster to eat through the grate to allow access to the room from the creek. A Medium or smaller creature can still use this missing grate to enter and exit the Vanderboren Estate relatively unnoticed.

The muddy floor is difficult to walk through, and is treated as difficult terrain. Remember: bullywugs can move through mud like this with no penalty.

When the PCs first reach this area, the sounds of deep slobbery laughter, a woman's cries of distress, and a weird trilling chitter echo into the area from the chamber to the east.

Creatures: Chief Lorpth has taken the basement as his personal headquarters during the incursion. He has no interest in the finery of pinkskins, and enjoys the mud down here (he's homesick already). He's had three of his hunters bring in buckets of water and mud to transform the ground here into a soupy approximation of the swamp he misses so much.

While he waits for his kin and Drevoraz to finish with their business upstairs, and while his mate works her way through the cigars in area **V12**, Chief Lorpth has decided to have a little fun down here in the basement. He's pulled a large overstuffed chair from the ballroom above down here, setting it up in the southwest corner of the basement so he can watch as his pet rust monster Chunkus (the source of the strange chittering sound) torments a distraught human woman.

This is Liamae Teslikaria, one of the Jade Ravens. Having cast almost all of her prepared spells and loosing her dagger to Chunkus' hunger, Liamae has been biding her time for the opportunity to escape her bloated captor. Until then, Chief Lorpth has forced her to perform a demeaning game for his entertainment—she has been forced to wear nothing more than a tattered sheet into which the bullywugs have threaded nearly two dozen pieces of silverware. Chief Lorpth promised Liamae that if she can keep at least one piece of silverware away from Chunkus until he and his kin are set to leave, he'll let her go. If Chunkus gets all of the spoons and forks, he's promised to eat her. Liamae's down to only three spoons and a single fork, and by the time the PCs arrive she's desperate enough to try to escape, using her last spell to distract the Chief long enough to make a run for it. Covered with rust monster bites, she sees the arrival of the PCs as her chance and immediately casts her last *charm person* at Chief Lorpth.

Chief Lorpth **CR 5**
Male bullywug fighter 5
CE Medium humanoid (aquatic)
Monsters of Faerûn 25
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 18 touch 11, flat-footed 18
hp 57 (5 HD)
Fort +9, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; marsh move
Melee* +1 *greatclub* +7 (1d10+13)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +8
Atk Options Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack
Combat Gear *potion of shield of faith* +2, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *salve of slipperiness*

*3-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 11
SQ amphibious
Feats Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub), Weapon Specialization (greatclub)
Skills Hide –1 (+5 in swamps), Intimidate +8
Possessions combat gear, +1 *hide armor*, +1 *greatclub*, wooden crown fitted with seven moonstones (each worth 100 gp)

Amphibious (Ex) Although bullywugs are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely out of water.
Marsh Move (Ex) A bullywug suffers no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.

Liamae Teslikaria **CR 3**
Female human sorcerer 3
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Dwarven, Druidic, Sylvan

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10
hp 12 (currently 3, 3 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

Spd 30 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +0 (1d3)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +0
Spells Known (CL 3rd, +3 ranged touch)
1st (6/day, 1 remaining)—*charm person* (DC 14), *magic missile*, *shield*
0 (6/day, 3 remaining)—*acid splash*, *daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 15
SQ summon familiar (Rat named Scabies, currently deceased)
Feats Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Spell Focus (enchantment)
Skills Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Spellcraft +8

Chunkus, rust monster: hp 27; *Monster Manual* 216.

Trub Glorp Hunters (2): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Tactics: Chief Lorpth commands Chunkus to attack the most heavily armored foe (an unnecessary command, given Chunkus's ravenous appetite) and his three minions to gather around him to prevent the PCs from flanking him. Chief Lorpth has a vastly over-inflated opinion of his combat skills, and uses

Power Attack even if he's regularly not hitting a foe. The bullywugs fight to the death, but Chunkus waddles off into a corner to eat if given a sizable chunk of metal to gnaw on.

Treasure: Chief Lorpth has stacked Liamae's gear in a pile next to his impromptu throne. This consists of a *ring of protection +1*, a *potion of false life*, a *wand of mage armor* with 10 charges, a *wand of shocking grasp* with 30 charges, and 78 gp.

Development: Liamae gratefully thanks them if she survives, and can quickly fill the PCs in on what happened over the last few hours. She was cut off from the other Jade Ravens after the battle in the courtyard turned sour, and is quite worried about their well-being. She's also concerned about Lavinia, but not to the same extent.

V24. Reservoir

This chamber contains several twisting pipes and a large water container.

The mansion's water supply is stored here, and can be pumped up from the container into the kitchen above as needed.

V25. Lavinia's Room

Tall windows overlook the city of Sasserine to the west and south from this spacious bedroom, which features a large, four-poster bed made with frilly, lacy sheets and heaped with pillows. Several of the sheets and pillows lie scattered across the floor, and a bloody handprint with webbed fingers mars the wall near the door; additional bloodstains and muddy footprints stain the carpet in places. A dead frogman lies slumped against a desk in the northwest corner of the room.

This chamber has been Lavinia's since childhood, and is filled with her clothes and accoutrements. Though by all rights she should now be keeping her quarters in the master bedroom, Lavinia is not comfortable doing so and hasn't yet moved out of this room. The bullywugs, many of which were already wounded in their fight with the Jade Ravens, found Lavinia to be a tougher catch than they'd realized, and she managed to kill one of them before they subdued her.

V26. Vanthus' Room

This large bedroom is clean, well-ordered, and almost sterile in appearance; it's obvious that no one's used this chamber in weeks.

This is where Vanthus kept his quarters in the manor, although he hasn't slept here in well over a month. His bed is a luxuriant four-poster affair with silk drapes and satin sheets. A reading table and cabinet sit against one wall, a bar with various (now empty) bottles of wine and liquor and a collection of fine drinking vessels, one of which is a tankard with the words "Grog's" engraved on it.

Treasure: Inside the cabinet is a gold ring with a rounded blue stone worth 150 gp, a large ivory key worth 60 gp, and a collection of strange signet pins of various colors and crests (a mushroom on one, a whip on another, a pair of spiders on a third). The whole collection of pins is worth 100 gp in all.

V27. Master Bedroom (EL 8)

This room is dark and cloying; the shutters are closed, and the air smells of a rank combination of body odor and swamp mud. The desk, chairs, and most other furniture in this room have all been draped with white canvas dust covers, giving this room the eerie feeling of a tomb. Only the large four-poster bed in the northwest corner of the room has been uncovered, its dust covers lying in a heap at the side.

Creatures: Having secured the manor as best he can, Drevoraz Kabran claimed this room as a place to wait for Vanthus to return to the manor. After she was captured, Lavinia managed to convince Drevoraz that she'd heard from Vanthus, that he was en route to Sasserine and should be arriving home by the end of the day. Her plan to delay Drevoraz worked, as he now plans on executing Lavinia and the Jade Ravens in front of Vanthus before he murders the treacherous Vanderboren himself, assuming that he'll arrive in a few short hours. Drevoraz relaxes on the bed, passing the time alternately reading a racy novel he swiped from the library and tormenting the prisoners to fight off boredom before Vanthus's arrival. Also present in the room is the disgusting spiritual leader of the Trub Glorp bullywug tribe—a cleric named Bua Gorg. This bloated bullywug has soaked one of the dustsheets in water and now sits on an overstuffed chair in the northeast corner of the room, swaddled in the soaking sheet for comfort as he offers prayers to his demonic patron, Dagon.

Four hostages are tied to chairs, back to back, in the center of the room. The hostages include Lavinia, two of the Jade Ravens (Tolin Kientai and Zan Oldavin), and Kora Whistlegap, Lavinia's one remaining house servant. Of the four, only Lavinia is conscious, regarding her captors silently with eyes narrowed in fury. Tolin and Zan are both stable but unconscious at –4 hit points. Poor Kora is dead, her throat cut by Drevoraz in a brutal display of power intended to cow the other three prisoners into compliance.

Drevoraz is a muscular half-orc dressed in studded leather and decorated with numerous tattoos. Two years ago Drevoraz, then a lowly deckswabbing rogue onboard the *Sea Wyvern*, distinguished himself by taking a crossbow bolt to the right eye in a fight but plowed on through to the end, saving Captain Javell herself from an enemy's blade. Captain Javell immediately promoted him to first mate, and since then the half-orc has served the captain with unwavering loyalty.

Bua Gorg is the most grotesque bullywug of his tribe, with sickly yellowish skin and sagging throat pouch, disgustingly deflated after an enemy tribesman's spear punctured it. Now when the priest breathes heavily in delighted anticipation of bloodshed, his ruptured throat pouch sucks and dribbles noisily. Bua Gorg thoroughly enjoys the perks of his position, and has already made a mental list of finery

he would like dragged back to the swamp from the manor for his enjoyment. He worships the demon lord of the briny depths, Dagon, although much of his religious dogma is self-taught and based on his own sadistic pleasures.

DREVORAZ KABRAN **CR 6**
Male half-orc fighter 6
LN Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common, Orc

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Dodge
hp 43 (6 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *scimitar* +13/+8 (1d6+10/18–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +11

Abilities Str 20, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6
Feats Athletic, Dodge, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)
Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +2, Profession (sailor) +9, Swim +12
Possessions masterwork studded leather, +1 *scimitar*, *belt of ogre power* (as *gauntlets of ogre power*), 17 gp

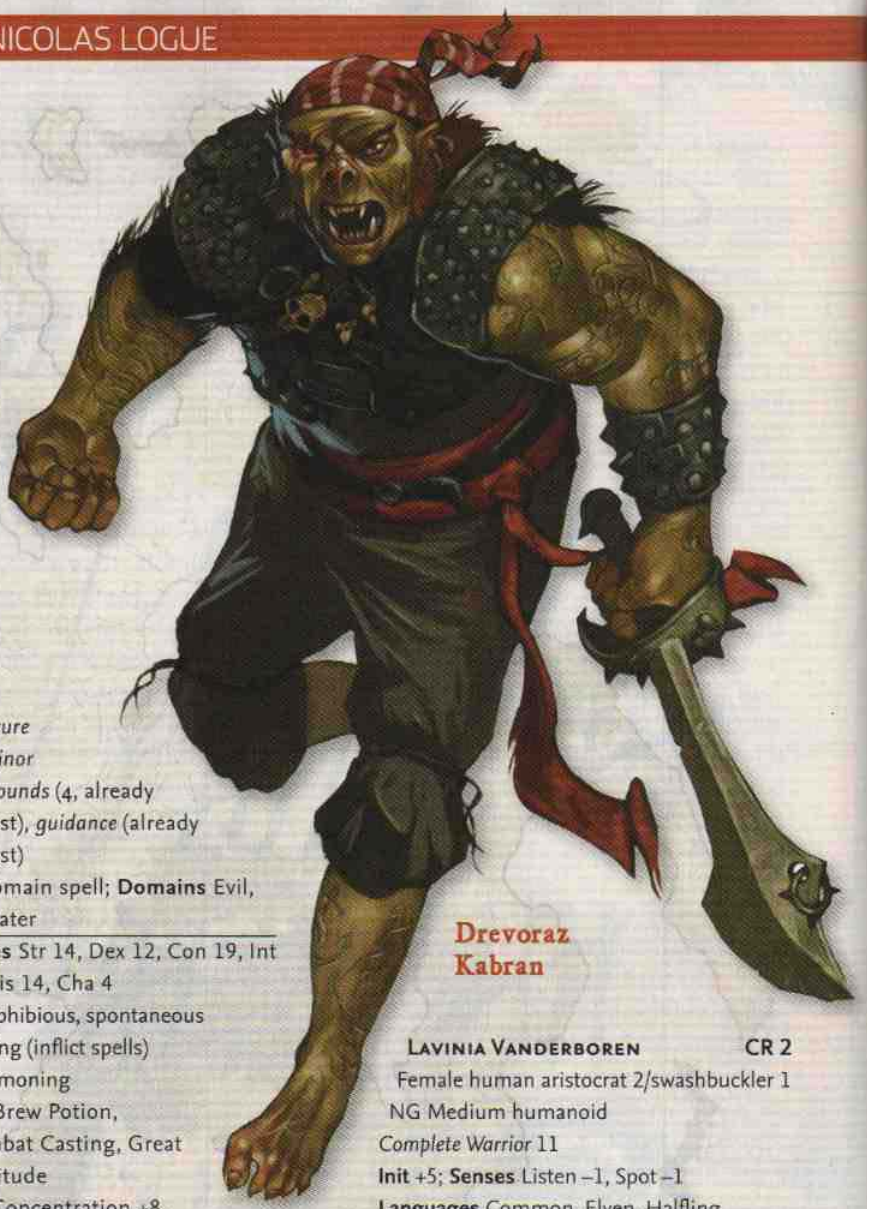
BUA GORG **CR 6**
Male bullywug cleric 6 (Dagon)
CN Medium humanoid (aquatic)
Monsters of Faerûn 25
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16
hp 54 (6 HD)
Fort +11, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; marsh move
Melee mwk spear +7 (1d8+3/×3)
Ranged mwk spear +6 (1d8+3/×3)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6
Combat Gear *wand of cure light wounds* (8 charges), *potion of sanctuary*
Spells Prepared (CL 6th)
3rd—*cure serious wounds* (already cast), *magic circle against good*[D] (already cast), *summon monster III*
2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2, 1 already cast), *fog cloud*[D] (already cast), *silence* (already cast), *summon monster II* (already cast)
1st—*command* (already cast), *cure light wounds* (2, already cast), *obscuring mist*[D], *summon monster I*
0—*cure minor wounds* (4, already cast), *guidance* (already cast)
D domain spell; **Domains** Evil, Water

Abilities Str 14, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 4
SQ amphibious, spontaneous casting (inflict spells) summoning
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude
Skills Concentration +8, Heal +7, Hide +1 (+7 in marshes)
Possessions combat gear, +1 *leather armor*, masterwork spear, *periapt of Wisdom +2*

Amphibious (Ex) Although bullywugs are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely out of water.
Marsh Move (Ex) A bullywug suffers no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.
Summoning (Su) Bullywug clerics are notorious for their powerful but unpredictable summoning abilities. When a bullywug cleric casts a *summon monster* spell, there is a 50% chance that one more monster than the spell would ordinarily summon appears. In such cases, there is then a 25% chance that the summoned monsters are not under the bullywug's control, and attack random targets.



LAVINIA VANDERBOREN **CR 2**
Female human aristocrat 2/swashbuckler 1
NG Medium humanoid
Complete Warrior 11
Init +5; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10
hp 20 (currently 18, 3 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +2 (1d3)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 15
Feats Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Weapon Finesse
Skills Appraise +7, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +7, Perform (stringed instrument) +7, Sense Motive +7, Tumble +4

TOLIN KIENTAI **CR 3**
Male human ranger 3
LN Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 0
hp 17 (–4 currently, 3 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d3+2)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 12
SQ wild empathy +6
Feats Endurance, Improved Initiative, Track, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (short sword)
Skills Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Listen +7, Ride +4, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+9 nature or underground)

ZAN OLDAVIN **CR 3**
Male half-elf rogue 3
N Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Elven, Orc

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10
hp 19 (–4 currently, 3 HD)
Immune sleep
Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +4 (1d3)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Atk Options Combat Expertise, sneak attack +2d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Expertise, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +10, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +3, Hide +8, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Search +8, Tumble +8, Use Magic Device +7

Tactics: If the alarm is raised, Bua Gorg moves to a position near Drevoraz and prepares an action to start casting *summon monster III* as soon as he sees intruders. Drevoraz stands near Lavinia, his scimitar at the ready to strike the woman at a moment's notice. When the PCs enter the room, Drevoraz demands the PCs lay down their arms or he'll hack off their pretty employer's head. Showing him a note from Harliss won't make a difference, but if they also show him one of her marilith earrings, Drevoraz wavers in his position. With this, or with a DC 40 Diplomacy check, his demands change. He asks the PCs for safe passage out of the city, at which point Bua Gorg croaks in rage, shrieking "We were promised blood for the lord of the depths! Dagon will not be denied!" The bullywug immediately attacks the closest PC, and Drevoraz takes advantage of the chaos to attempt an escape, fighting only as much as he needs to in order to clear a path to freedom.

If, on the other hand, the PCs fail to bargain with the half-orc (or if they simply attack) he tries to strike Lavinia down. Unknown to him, Lavinia has already managed to work free from her bonds and as soon as he starts to approach, she lunges free. Call for initiative checks. If Drevoraz goes before Lavinia, he moves up to her and makes a single attack against her. If Lavinia goes before him, she moves to seek safety with the PCs, and on his turn Drevoraz attacks the closest PC instead. Bua Gorg has used up most of his spells, and tries to spend as much time possible summoning monsters to aid the fight. If Drevoraz takes lots of damage, the bullywug moves in to use his *wand of cure light wounds* on the half-orc.

If the PCs free and heal either of the Jade Ravens, they quickly join the fight as well, grabbing their weapons from the pile near the bed if possible.

Drevoraz attempts to flee if brought below 15 hit points. If prevented from doing so, he fights to the death, too proud to give up to the enemy. Bua Gorg's motivations stem more from fanaticism than pride—he fights to the death as well.

Treasure: Drevoraz has stacked all of the gear he's taken from Lavinia, Tolin, and Zan in a heap next to the bed. Lavinia's gear consists of a *potion of cure light wounds*, a masterwork rapier, a *ring of protection +1*, a pair of gold earrings worth 200 gp for the pair, and a jade ring worth 80 gp. Tolin's gear consists of a *+1 chain shirt*, two masterwork shortswords, a composite longbow (+2 Strength), 40 arrows, a *cloak of resistance +1*, and 56 gp. Zan's gear consists of a suit of *+1 studded leather armor*, a masterwork buckler, a masterwork rapier, a masterwork shortbow with 40 arrows, *goggles of minute seeing*, and 14 gp.

Development: If the PCs have already rescued the other two Jade Ravens and have defeated the remaining bullywugs in the manor, proceed with "Concluding the Adventure," below. Otherwise, Lavinia, Tolin, and Zan beg them to help rescue Liamae and Kaskus; none of them know where the other two have been taken, but the basement is the first place they suggest checking.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

At the end of this adventure, the PCs are no closer to finding Vanthus, yet they have made an important discovery—although they may not yet realize it. The *shadow pearls* constitute the greatest threat Sasserine has ever faced, and the PCs' destiny is now inexorably tied to these dangerous black gems.

For now, however, the PCs have earned a break. Further impressed with their ability to act under pressure, Lavinia rewards the PCs not only with monetary wealth (using the monies she's gained from the various guilds and nobles who have finally paid back the debts owed her family, she can grant each PC a reward of 100 pp) but increases their monthly stipend from 100 gp to 200 gp. If you use the upkeep variant rules from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 130), you can instead assume that she keeps the PCs in an extravagant lifestyle as long as they remain in her employ.

Let the PCs enjoy their "time off." They can use this time to craft magic items, shop for new gear, explore Sasserine, or even go on adventures beyond the city walls in the surrounding regions. Several possible adventure hooks are presented in issue #349 of DRAGON magazine, which details the Sasserine region in that issue's "Savage Tidings." The PCs may even wish to follow up on parts of this adventure, although for now, their questions about Vanthus and the *shadow pearls* are destined to reveal only dead ends. Vanthus never returns to Sasserine, and as the days go on, Lavinia's need to see her brother face his crimes goes from a burning obsession to a quiet brooding anger.

BY NICOLAS LOGUE

Affiliation Awards

If your PCs belong to any of the affiliations detailed in *Dragon* magazine #348's "Savage Tidings," goals exist in "The Bullywug Gambit" that can increase their affiliation score. Each of the following criterions grants an affiliation score modifier of +1.

Church of the Whirling Fury: Kill all of the savage creatures in Kraken's Cove and provide a detailed report to Lady Silverhair.

The Dawn Council: Capture Drevoraz alive and turn him over to the city watch for interrogation regarding the Crimson Fleet.

The Scarlet Brotherhood: Deliver a live savage creature to a Brotherhood Representative for experimentation and investigation in the motherland.

The Seekers: Turn the nautical charts found in area **K8** over to the Seeker Lodge.

The Witchwardens: Recover the fragments of the *shadow pearl* from area **K1** and turn them over to the Witchwardens for study.

Zelkarune's Horns: Capture the rust monster Chunkus alive and turn him over to the Arena to become a featured monster.

In Kraken's Cove, the remaining savage creatures quickly die off as their violent natures send them into constant battles with the dangerous creatures of the region. By the end of the month, they are gone, and all that remains of their passing is an empty seacave littered with well-gnawed bones. Consultation with sages and libraries in Sasserine provides little insight at this time into the nature of what occurred at Kraken's Cove, and stories the PCs spread quickly become part of the region's rumor-haunted tradition.

By the time the itch for adventure strikes the PCs again, Lavinia is ready for them. She's finished reading through the strange notebooks recovered from the family vaults in the first adventure, and reports that they were, in fact, penned by her own mother during a trip to a place called the Isle of Dread. Further, it would seem that one of her parents' last accomplishments before their untimely deaths was to establish a colony on a relatively safe islet near the Isle of Dread. According to the notes, her parents planned on returning to this colony, called Farshore, with supplies and additional colonists, but their deaths put an end to that plan. With the PCs' aid, Lavinia hopes to travel to Farshore, resupply the colonists, and nurture the settlement into a living monument for her parents. The trip, she warns them, will be anything but short and safe, but the prospects for adventure and wealth should outweigh any fears the PCs may have. All she needs is another ship to aid in the voyage. Perhaps one of the pirate vessels that survived the fire in Kraken's Cove might fit the bill?

APPENDIX 1: THE SHADOW PEARL

The original *shadow pearl* was created over a thousand years ago by the Prince of Demons and then sent to the Material Plane for his followers to discover and use. The results of the first savage tide released by a *shadow pearl* devastated an entire nation and created the realm known to sailors today as the Isle of Dread.

Despite being minor artifacts themselves, the *shadow pearls* being produced by the hidden rulers of the Isle today are poor approximations of the first pearl. Yet these lesser *shadow pearls* are more than enough to serve Demogorgon's needs, and as more are created and seeded throughout the world, the awful culmination of the demon lord's plans draws near.

A *shadow pearl* is a lustrous black pearl approximately four inches in diameter. Anyone who studies the pearl's glossy surface for more than a minute sees what appears to be a swirling vortex of shadows within. As the viewer watches, faces form in the shadows until a twisted, feral reflection of the viewer rises to the pearl's surface, leering and hateful. While unnerving, this has no effect on the viewer.

A *shadow pearl* serves one function—to create a savage tide. This is a wave of rippling green energy that washes over the surrounding region, transforming creatures within to savage creatures (see Appendix 2). To trigger a pearl, it must be anointed with the blood of an intelligent creature—just a single drop will do. For one minute thereafter, the pearl sizzles and flashes with green light, reverting to normal after this time if no further action is taken. If the pearl is dropped or struck a solid blow during this minute, it cracks open and unleashes a choking cloud of green gas in a 20-foot-radius spread. Any creature that ends its movement for a round inside this cloud takes 1d6 points of acid damage. The smoke itself teems with swirling evil spirits and gnashing fangs. Once a *shadow pearl* is cracked, it smokes and sputters for one minute before exploding into a savage tide. Only by negating the *pearl's* growing magic with a successful *dispel magic* or *Mordenkainen's Disjunction* can the oncoming savage tide be halted. Placing the *pearl* in an antimagic zone until this minute passes also prevents the savage tide.

Once the *pearl* explodes, a savage tide flashes like a wave of boiling green water and fog out to a one-mile radius spread. All corporeal aberrations, animals, dragons, fey, giants, humanoids, magical beasts, and monstrous humanoids in this area must make a DC 15 Will save. Success indicates the creature is merely

nauseated for one round. Failure means that the savage tide has washed away their sanity and immediately transforms the victim into a savage creature (see Appendix 2).

A *shadow pearl* is a one-use item. Once it unleashes a savage tide, it is consumed.

Strong transmutation [chaotic, evil]; CL 20th; Weight 1 lb.

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTER

Savage Creature

It may have once been a man, but now its gray skin, strangely flopping arms and legs, and the vacant-eyed vestigial head hanging from its neck make the creature anything but. Yet perhaps worst of all is the creature's mouth, a cavernous wound in its twisted face filled with a twisting landscape of teeth, a mouth designed for one thing only—the tearing of flesh from the bone.

Savage creatures are a horrific transformation of living flesh into Abyssal nightmare. Created when the hateful energies of a savage tide corrupt and transform its victims, savage creatures are akin in many ways to fiendish creatures, yet they are tied more closely to the evil and chaos of the Abyss than any other plane.

Sample Savage Creature

This example uses a human rogue 1 as the base creature.

Savage Pirate **CR 2**
Male and female savage human rogue 1
CE Medium humanoid (chaotic)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +5, Spot +9
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp 10 (1 HD), ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1
Weakness afflicted

Spd 40 ft.
Melee scimitar +3 (1d6+3/18–20) and bite –2 (1d8+1 plus disease [DC 14])
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +4
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 17, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ death throes
Feats Athletic, Improved Initiative
Skills Balance +6, Bluff +3, Climb +9, Diplomacy –5, Disguise –5, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information –5, Intimidate +7, Jump +7, Listen +5, Profession (sailor) +5, Spot +9, Swim +9, Tumble +6
Possessions masterwork studded leather armor, scimitar

Creating a Savage Creature

"Savage Creature" is an acquired template that can be added to any intelligent corporeal aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, or monstrous humanoid.

Size and Type: The base creature's size and type remains unchanged, though it gains the chaotic subtype.

Armor Class: A savage creature's natural armor bonus increases by 2.

Speed: Increase the base creature's land speed by 10 feet.

Attacks: A savage creature gains a bite attack. If the base creature can use weapons, it retains this ability. When armed with weapons, the creature's bite attack becomes a secondary attack.

Damage: A Medium savage creature's bite attack inflicts 1d8 points of damage on a hit. Larger or smaller savage creatures do more or less damage, as outlined on Table 2–2 on page 28 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. A savage creature's bite attack is treated as a chaotic and magic weapon for the purposes of penetrating damage reduction.

Special Attacks: A savage creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains the following special attacks.

- *Death Throes (Su):* When a savage creature dies, it can immediately make a bite attack, snapping at any one creature in reach just before it succumbs. A savage creature can make this free bite attack only after an attack kills it outright. Once this bite attack is resolved, the savage creature's body melts into a puddle of acidic goo, leaving behind only its gear and its skeleton. Any living creature within a five foot radius of a melting savage creature takes 1d6 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 15 negates)—this acid damage affects only living flesh. A pool of acid remains on the ground, taking up a space equal to the creature's space while living—it deals 1d6 damage to any creature that moves through the area. The acid dries to a harmless green powder over the course of one minute.

Scaling the Adventure

"The Bullywug Gambit" is designed for a group of four 3rd-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 1st-2nd level or 4th–5th level characters. Simply adjust any NPC character levels up by 1 for every level by which your party's average exceeds 1; if this results in a 0-level NPC, simply give that NPC a level of warrior or expert. Specific changes to the adventure include:

1st–2nd-level characters: Encounters with savage creatures should be reduced significantly, at least until the PCs have a reliable magic weapon. Consider removing the DR 5/magic quality from savage creatures of CR 3 or lower. Replace Ripclaw with a savage crocodile or savage Medium viper, and replace Jajirlok with a savage lizardfolk. Replace the violet fungus in area **K6** with a Large monstrous spider. Consider having rescued members of the Jade Ravens be less wounded so they can provide more aid to the PCs.

4th–5th-level characters: Add an additional savage pirate to every encounter that features them. Advance Ripclaw by 2–4 Hit Dice, and give Jajirlok one or two levels of barbarian. Add a second violet fungus to area **K6**, and 2–3 more savage krenshars to area **K9**. Keep the bullywug hunters as 1st-level rangers, but add 2–4 to each encounter with them. Add a like number to area **V27**.

- *Disease (Su)*: A creature bitten by a savage creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 savage creature's racial HD + savage creature's Con modifier) or contract a supernatural disease called savage fever. The incubation time of savage fever is 1 minute, after which point the victim's flesh breaks out into a terrible black rash that causes short bony protrusions to extrude from the affected area; the victim also takes 1d6 points of Intelligence damage. Every day thereafter, the victim must save again or take another 1d6 points of Intelligence damage as the terrible rash spreads and his mind grows more and more bestial. Once a victim reaches an Intelligence score of 0, he collapses into a coma-like state and transforms into a savage creature. His Intelligence score now heals (up to its new maximum, adjusted by the savage creature template) at the normal rate; when he awakens, he immediately seeks out fresh prey.

Special Qualities: A savage creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

- *Afflicted (Ex)*: Once transformed into a savage creature, a *greater restoration* spell causes the victim to revert to normal, provided the caster succeeds on a caster level check (DC = 10 + 1/2 the savage creature's hit dice + the savage creature's Charisma modifier). A *miracle* or *wish* spell automatically restores a savage creature to normal. A savage creature that is killed and then brought back to life loses the effects of this template.
- Damage Reduction: 5/magic
- Darkvision 60 feet.
- Immune to disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, and pain-related effects.
- Resistance to acid 10.
- *Ferocity (Ex)*: A savage creature fights without penalty while disabled and dying.

Abilities: Change from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Con +4, Int –6 (minimum 1). A savage creature whose Intelligence is reduced below 3 can no longer understand any languages, nor can it cast spells or use spell-like abilities of any kind.

Skills: Savage creatures are hideously deformed. Many possess vestigial tentacles, sickening patches of bristles or tangled hair, rudimentary eyes, twisted arms and legs, and sometimes a second vestigial head. No two savage creatures have the same deformities, but each gains a +4 racial bonus on Escape Artist, Intimidate, Listen, and Spot checks, and a –4 penalty on Disguise, Diplomacy and Gather Information checks.

Alignment: Always chaotic evil.

Challenge Rating: As base creature +1

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature +3.

Nicolas Logue was a monk 5/thespian 6/freelance writer 7 upon the completion of this adventure, but assassins in the employ of Richard Pett and Greg Vaughan slew him shortly thereafter. Nicolas remains one step ahead of Pett and Vaughan, fortunately, and thanks to a clone *spell, is among the living once more (though he's down one level of freelance writer as a result and none too happy about it). Nicolas would like to dedicate this adventure to the Frumjoys, his oldest brother Dr. Christopher Logue, and Jimmy Buffett, who all taught Nick everything he knows about the pirate's life.*

THE PORTENT

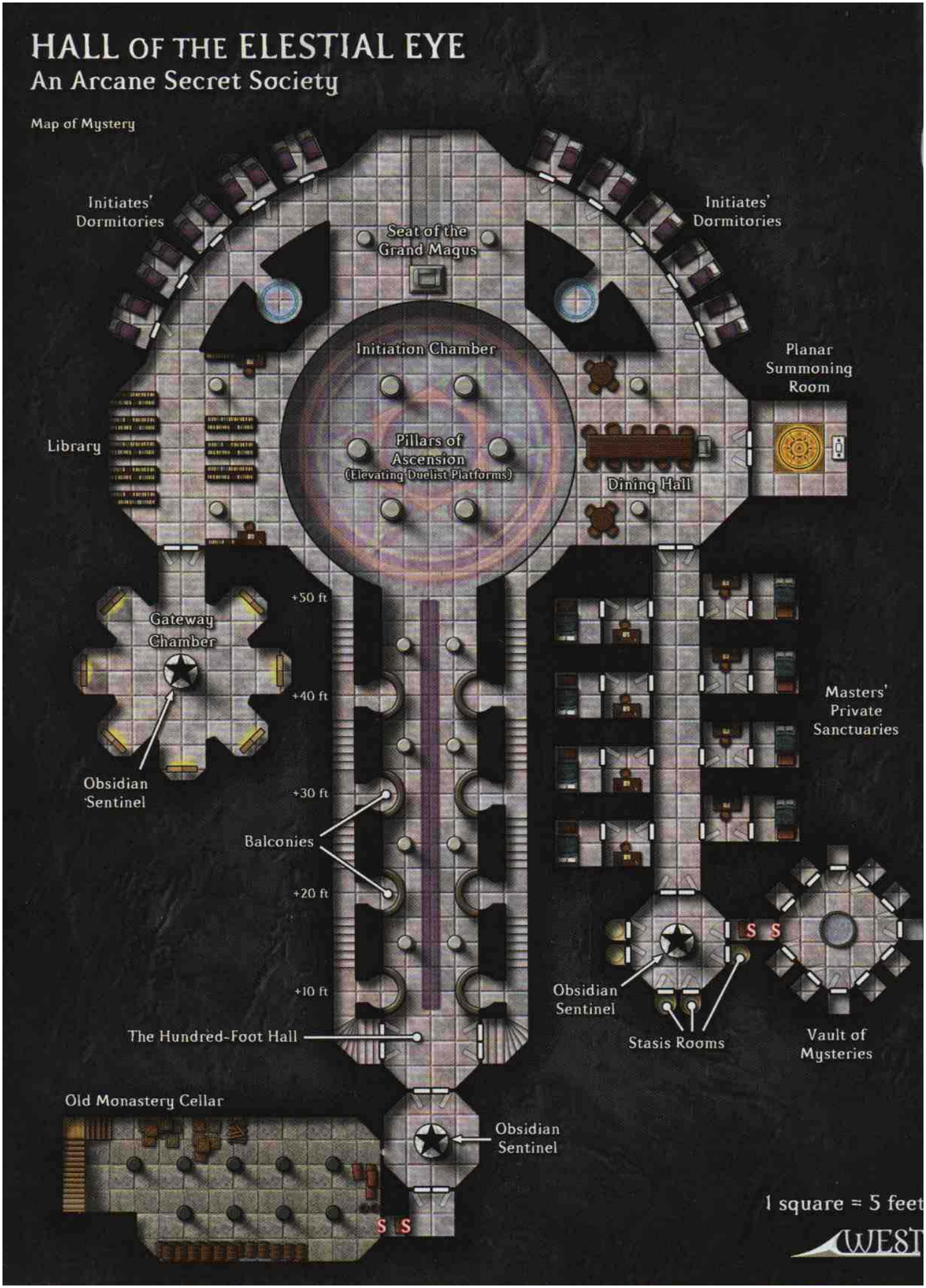
by Peter Bergting

WWW.THEPORTENT.COM

HALL OF THE ELESTIAL EYE

An Arcane Secret Society

Map of Mystery



Savage Tide

The Sea Wyvern's Wake

All ocean voyages are fraught with peril, yet a voyage to the infamous Isle of Dread might seem to some old salts to be a deliberate goading of the gods of the sea. Many of those who have attempted the voyage before and managed to return to civilization often choose not to speak of the trials they experienced on the dangerous route, yet those whose lips can be loosened by a draught of grog whisper amazing stories... tales of pirates, sea monsters, terrifying storms, and perhaps most harrowing of all, of a strange and sinister land without land, a floating graveyard of dead ships mired in a sargasso the size of an island. This place has many names, but its most well-known may be its most apt—Journey's End.

"The Sea Wyvern's Wake" is the third chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #350 of *Dragon* magazine features a regional guide to the seafaring environs the PCs can expect on the journey to the Isle of Dread.

BY RICHARD PETT
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | LOW LEVEL (1ST–5TH) | SEA VOYAGE

Switching Sides

If the PCs decided to go to work for Rowyn in "There Is No Honor," you'll need to change some aspects of "The Sea Wyvern's Wake." It's likely that by the time this adventure comes along, the PCs have helped Rowyn and the Lotus Dragons gain control over Sasserine's Harbor. After several weeks, Rowyn grows bored and sets her eyes on new targets. She approaches the PCs with a plan—during her time with Vanthus, she learned that his parents established a colony on a distant island. She's uncovered sea charts that lead to this colony, and plans on sailing south to see what can be done to plunder it—after all, the Vanderborens have proven to be an excellent source of plunder, and with the Sasserine harbor under Lotus Dragon control, she really sees no reason to stay in town all the time. Rowyn hires two ships, and places the PCs in charge of one. Her plan: to masquerade as a resupply convoy, sail down to Farshore, and usurp control of the colony. With a lock on the rare and exotic imports the Isle of Dread has to offer, the fortunes of all involved can certainly do nothing but swell.

If you run this version, the stowaway on the PCs' ship becomes someone else; it might be fun to make the stowaway Lavinia herself, driven to despair and madness by the ruin brought upon her by the Lotus Dragons and the PCs and now obsessed with getting revenge against them.

Adventure Background

Larissa Vanderboren had long held a longing for the unexplored regions of the world. While her husband Verik became an adventurer as a means to secure personal glory and a mountain of wealth, Larissa saw the adventuring lifestyle as a chance to explore the unexplored, to experience the unknown. When Verik Vanderboren hit upon the risky and unconventional idea of establishing a colony on the shores of the infamous Isle of Dread in 593 CY, Larissa saw only the opportunity for discovery. While Verik spent months building the colony fortress of Farshore and interacting with the locals to establish peaceful relations, Larissa was out exploring the Isle of Dread and writing her journal—a journal that has recently fallen into the hands of her daughter, Lavinia.

Adventure Synopsis

Lavinia recruits the PCs to aid her in a long journey south to visit and resupply the colony of Farshore on the Isle of Dread. The PCs are put in charge of a ship captured in the previous adventure, the *Sea Wyvern*. Their journey takes them from the city of Sasserine along the coast of the Amedio Jungle, and along the way they encounter several dangers and perils, including possible treachery from within. After a quick stop at the infamous ruins of Tamoachan to do a bit of exploring, they must run a blockade of Scarlet Brotherhood ships. Meanwhile, the PCs discover an old enemy, Rowyn Kellani, who has stowed away on board and is busy making trouble.

Eventually, they hit the open sea and arrive at the centerpiece of the adventure, an immense sargasso sea in which dozens of ancient ships lie lodged. The *Sea Wyvern* becomes enmeshed in the creepy seaweed as well. In order to free their ship and continue onward, the PCs must defeat the vine horrors of the sargasso and slay the heart of the seaweed, a plant monster known as the Mother of All.

Finally, the PCs reach the Isle of Dread during a tremendous storm. The *Sea Wyvern*, battered and sinking, crashes on the northern shore of the island.

Welcome to the Isle of Dread!

Adventure Hooks

If you aren't running "The Sea Wyvern's Wake" as part of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, you can use this adventure at any time the PCs need to travel from one point to another—you need simply change or adjust the nature of their starting and ending points as appropriate.

PART ONE: A MODEST PROPOSAL

After the harrowing events of "The Bullywug Gambit," the PCs should have a chance to relax. Give them time to craft magic items, research spells, explore Sasserine, and if they're not quite 5th-level yet, perhaps go on a few side quests into the region surrounding Sasserine (issue #349 of DRAGON magazine details many of the locations surrounding the city). When they're ready to start the adventure, they receive a message from their patron, **Lavinia Vanderboren** (NG female human aristocrat 2/swashbuckler 2), inviting them to a meeting at her manor house.

The current atmosphere of Vanderboren Manor gives the place a busy, vibrant feel. Not only has Lavinia retained several workers to repair the damage done to the manor during the bullywug attack in the previous adventure, but as her fortunes slowly recover, she's hired a new staff of servants to tend to the manor's needs. Having just finished a funeral service for her last major-domo Kora Whistlegap (who died during the previous adventure) and washed her hands of capturing her scoundrel brother Vanthus (who has fled to parts unknown), Lavinia is eager to turn to the future. And for Lavinia, that future encompasses a long sea voyage.

When the PCs arrive, they find Lavinia in the main dining room, pawing over a number of nautical maps, sea charts, and a large journal they may recognize as the one they recovered from the family vault in "There Is No Honor." When the PCs make their presence known, she smiles and invites them to sit at the table. Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs:

"Do you recall this journal we recovered from my family vault? It turns out that it was my mother's. My parents, may the gods rest their souls, were brave—foolish and rash some would say, but I have never been one to criticize an adventurous spirit. On the contrary—" she casts a wry smile at you all. "I admire it. In any event, it would seem that about four years ago, my mother and father undertook a risky endeavor. They sailed the *Blue Nixie*, along with a ship full of colonists, down south and across the Vohoun Ocean to a place they refer to as the Isle of Dread.

"You may have heard of this place—if you haven't, it seems apparent from reading my mother's journals that the place is aptly named. A jungle-covered hell infested with immense reptilian monsters, feral savages, and peril at every turn. Yet the southern peninsula remains relatively sheltered from the menaces on the isle mainland, and it was here, among the villages of several friendly locals, that my parents founded the colony of Farshore.

"The Isle of Dread represents an untapped trove of resources—exotic lumber, spices, animals, foods, and even minerals like silver and gold. Once Farshore was up and running, the influx of trade would have guaranteed my family a relatively uncontested flow of wealth. Yet before mother and father were able to return to Farshore with supplies and more colonists... my brother made his move and left me in the state you found me in a few short weeks ago.

Lavinia indicates her mother's journal. "Since we recovered this journal, I have not been idle. If Farshore fails, than my parents' last legacy fails. I intend to carry on their work, and have planned for a journey south to the Isle of Dread to resupply and join the colonists at Farshore for the rest of the year. I have the *Blue Nixie* readying in the harbor to take fresh supplies to the colony, but I find myself a vessel short." Lavinia's face breaks into a glowing grin as she continues, "You wouldn't know of anyone with stout hearts who might happen to be interested in helping me mount this expedition, do you? I fear the journey itself might grow dangerous at times, and there's no way of knowing what state or condition Farshore is currently in, but I suspect that danger is a vice you have."

Lavinia plans on taking her family ship, the *Blue Nixie*, to Farshore, and is already in the process of hiring a crew, outfitting it with supplies for the voyage, and recruiting additional colonists. Yet the amount of supplies she calculates Farshore needs greatly exceeds the amount she can haul with a single ship—she needs another sizable vessel to accompany the *Nixie* south. Fortunately, the PCs may well know of a perfect candidate—the *Sea Wyvren*. This former pirate ship was moored at Kraken's Cove in the previous adventure, and if the PCs haven't already claimed it as their own, a return trip to the Cove finds the ship still there, safe and sound. Technically abandoned, ownership of the *Sea Wyvern* now falls to whoever claims it first, and as fortune would have it, no one else knows about the abandoned ship.

If the PCs agree to Lavinia's request, she sees no reason to wait. She'd like to leave for Farshore as soon as possible. The *Blue Nixie* can be ready to go in a day—all that needs be done is for the PCs to make the *Sea Wyvern* ready as well.

Preparing for the Voyage

The PCs (and by extension, the players) may be ill-prepared to manage the logistics of a long sea journey. If they have little interest in preparing the *Sea Wyvern* for the trip, you should skip over this section of the adventure. Simply tell them that it takes a week to prepare for the voyage, introduce them to the crew and passengers, and start them on their way with Part Two.

Yet if the PCs want to take part in the preparation for the journey, let them take the initiative on planning for the voyage and outfitting the *Sea Wyvern*. Listed below is a checklist of the things that need to be addressed before the PCs take off. Any character who has at least 5 ranks in Profession (sailor) automatically knows these steps. If your PCs don't include someone with this level of nautical knowledge, a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check reveals it; otherwise they'll either need to consult a sailor NPC or run the risk of forgetting something critical.

The Voyage to Come: Using her mother's journal and extensive charts, Lavinia has already plotted her course out for the expedition. She intends to hug the coast of the Amedio Jungle until she reaches the far side of the peninsula, at which point she plans to sail more or less directly south from there to the Isle of Dread. *Dragon* magazine #350's installment of "Savage Tidings" presents what Lavinia knows of the journey in detail; if you're not using this article, feel free to drop hints to the PCs as to what they can expect along the way as you see fit. The voyage itself covers just over 3,000

The Sea Wyvern's Passengers

The key NPCs on the *Sea Wyvern* are listed below. Full stat blocks for them appear in sidebars throughout the following pages. You should round out the passengers on the ship with enough incidental NPCs (crew and colonists heading south to Farshore) to bring the crew up to a total of 23 members. The names and personalities of these additional NPCs are left to you to design, so you can customize them to your own campaign. NPCs marked with an asterisk play key roles in the next adventure—do your best to keep these NPCs alive.

Amella Venkalie*: If no PC has the skill to captain the *Sea Wyven*, Amella fills this role; otherwise, she can serve as a first mate, crew member, or advisor for the journey.

Father Feres (AKA Conrad Horst): A disguised criminal, Conrad has hired himself out as a mule for some sinister folk and uses the *Sea Wyvern* to escape persecution in Sasserine.

Avner Meravanchi*: A spoiled and despicable cur, Avner also represents the primary investor for the voyage south.

Skald: A mysterious figure fleeing assassins from the northern port of the Styes, Skald serves as a red herring. When things start turning sour, he's a prime suspect even though he's actually innocent.

Urol Forol*: A gnome naturalist who's studied the Isle of Dread extensively, Urol also wants to stop at the legendary ruined city of Tamoachan during the voyage.

Lirith Veldirose: Lirith gives the PCs a little extra firepower for the many onboard combats that await them on the journey to come. She can also serve as a member of the crew.

Rowyn Kellani: Rowyn is a stowaway who seeks to get vengeance on the PCs for their role in ruining her plans in "There Is No Honor." For much of the voyage, no one knows she's on board.

Tavey Nesk*: A young and excited lad, Tavey is the *Sea Wyvern*'s cabin boy and an idolizer of one of the PCs. The PCs should know he's there, but he doesn't play a major role in the Savage Tide until "Here There Be Monsters."

miles. Including stops to resupply here and there, and assuming fair weather and minimal mishaps along the way, Lavinia estimates that the entire journey should take not much more than three months.

Securing a Vessel: Lavinia needs a second ship to make the voyage; she can't carry all of the colonists and supplies on the *Blue Nixie* alone. She's looking for another caravel-class ship, but with her expenses tied up elsewhere, she can't afford the cost of hiring one (let alone purchasing one for 10,000 gp). The easiest solution to this dilemma is the *Sea Wyvern*, a perfectly-sized ship that escaped the inferno at Kraken's Cove in the previous adventure. Even if the PCs ignored her completely in "The Bullywug Gambit," the *Sea Wyvern* remains moored at the cove, safe and sound. Local salvage laws grant ownership of any found vessel in a case like this, so for the PCs, the *Sea Wyvern* is theirs for the taking. They may have to sail the *Blue Nixie* out to Kraken's Cove to collect it, but this should be a fairly minor task requiring only a few days' work.

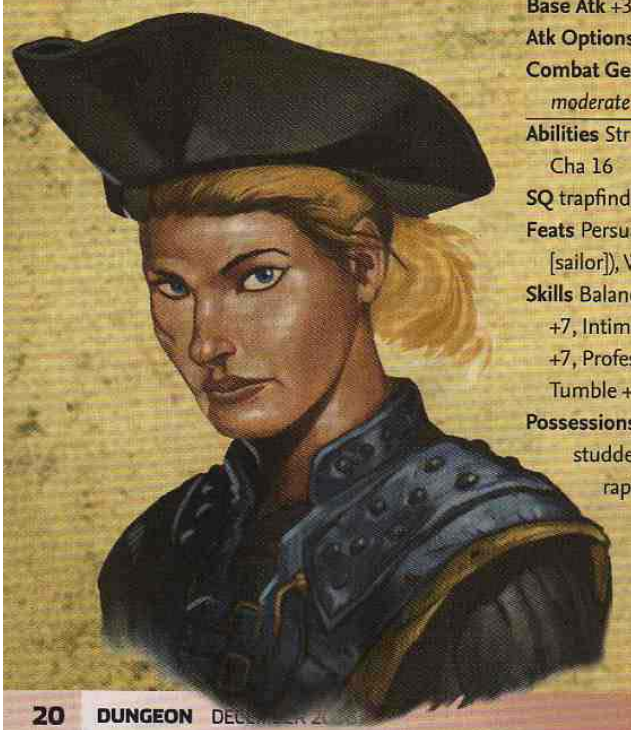
Securing a Crew: The *Sea Wyvern* requires a crew of at least seven to sail, and can comfortably accommodate up to 30 people on a long voyage (although there's bunk space for 22, an additional 8 can sleep on mats in the galley or the forward hold, if needed). This adventure assumes that a total of 23 passengers (including the PCs, named NPCs, colonists, and one vengeful stowaway, who doesn't use one of the bunks) set out on the voyage. Consult the "Sea Wyvern's Passengers" sidebar for a complete list of names.

In order to make the voyage to the Isle of Dread, the *Sea Wyvern* needs a crew capable of making Profession (sailor) checks (typically, these rolls are made by the ship captain) and Knowledge (geography) checks (normally made by the navigator). If none of the PCs can fill these roles, Amella Venkalie takes the role of captain for the voyage, and Urol Forol the role of navigator. Fortunately, Lavinia has already secured a crew and taken on passengers for the voyage, so unless the PCs insist on replacing crew members or adding new crew or passengers, this stage should consist of little more than a "meet and greet" of the NPCs involved.

Supplies and Cargo: The *Sea Wyvern's* hold, storage lockers, and other areas must carry at least 60 tons of supplies for Farshore, leaving an additional 60 tons of space for supplies. Ten tons of this space is consumed by repair supplies for the ship itself. A further 10 tons of food, water, and other miscellaneous supplies for the passengers and crew leaves 40 tons of space for the PCs to play with. If Avner Meravanchi has his way and is allowed to bring along his prize horse

The Ship's Captain

AMELLA VENKALIE **CR 4**
Female human rogue 4
CN Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common



AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16; uncanny dodge
hp 20 (4 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +6 (1d6–1/18–20)
Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2
Atk Options sneak attack +2d6
Combat Gear *elixir of swimming, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of remove disease*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Persuasive, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]), Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +11, Bluff +12, Craft (carpentry) +7, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (geography) +7, Profession (sailor) +11, Swim +6, Tumble +9, Use Rope +9
Possessions combat gear, masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork rapier, light crossbow with 20 bolts, *ring of protection +1*, silver ring decorated with tiny emeralds that look like multiple eyes worth 200 gp

A slight but powerful woman with fine blonde hair tied neatly back from her forehead, Amella dresses to fight and sail rather than to please the eye. A thin scar graces her right cheek. Amella is rather foul-mouthed, fond of uttering oaths only heard in the worst dockside taverns. Confident, haughty, and astute, she does not suffer fools gladly. She makes few attachments, having buried one husband—a dashing sea captain named Heldram Flashwell. They once ran a smuggling operation some distance from Sasserine, but were betrayed by a group of shifty gnomes led by a treacherous cur named Shortstone Badgewell—it was this cruel gnome who murdered her husband. This event has left Amella with a poor opinion of gnomes. She makes friends slowly, but once someone has earned her trust, she's quite loyal despite her carefree attitude. At your discretion, one of the PCs might bear a more-than-passing resmblance to her late husband, in which case her reaction to the PC could blossom into romance or degrade into a bitter rivalry, depending on how that PC treats her.

Thunderstrike, she and her food supplies consume another 10 tons of space. If they don't have any other particular requests, Lavinia suggests using any remaining space to load up on additional supplies for the colony.

Armaments: The *Sea Wyvern* is not currently outfitted with any siege weapons. If the PCs wish to add a ballista or catapult (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 99–100) to the caravel, they may do so. The *Sea Wyvern* can accommodate up to two ballistae or one light catapult.

PART TWO: LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVES

Once the PCs have met the crew and passengers, are comfortable with the Sea Wyvern's cargo and armament, and have said any goodbyes to friends they may be leaving behind in Sasserine, the journey may begin. The two ships set out from the harbor at dawn, and within the hour have left the familiar skyline of Sasserine behind. While the PCs may wish to return here later in the campaign via spells like *greater teleport*, the adventures themselves are not scheduled to return to Sasserine. As the city slips around the bend to the stern, the next stage of the campaign truly begins.

The map of the voyage on page 31 shows the route Lavinia has charted for the two ships. Letters indicate encounters along this route. Certain time-based events not keyed to specific points on the journey occur as well. Feel free to liven up the voyage along the way with other random encounters as you wish.

As the journey proceeds, don't dwell too much on daily routines. The voyage ahead will last, at the minimum, three months—the PCs will have plenty of down time to relax or even to craft magic items (although you might wish to limit item crafting if the PCs haven't brought along tools for the job).

Naval Combat

At times during this adventure, the PCs' ship may be attacked by enemies. *Stormwrack* has extensive rules for naval combat, but if you aren't using that book in your campaign, the following quick rules should suffice.

A ship effectively has three areas an enemy can target: the rigging, the hull, and the ship itself. A ship has a number of "sections" in its rigging and hull, each with its own hit points. A hit against a ship damages a randomly determined section of the ship. It's possible to target a specific section of a ship, but specific sections have a higher AC than the ship as a whole. Destroying a section of a ship's rigging reduces its speed by 10 feet. Destroying a section of a ship's hull reduces its speed by 10 feet and holes the ship. Each time a ship is holed, its captain must make a Profession (sailor) check to avoid sinking (DC 15 +4 for each hole after the first). On a successful check, the ship does not sink but the captain must make a new sinking check every hour thereafter until the holed section is repaired up to at least 1 hit point or the ship sinks.

A ship takes 1d100 minutes to sink once this check is failed, unless the ship has lost 25% or more of its hull sections, in which case it takes only 1d6 minutes to sink.

To repair a damaged section requires a Craft (carpentry) check and 1 minute of work. For every point by which this check exceeds DC 19, 1 hit point is restored. A section that has been destroyed can be repaired completely with a DC 20 Craft check and one day of work. Each day of repair work (successful or not) consumes one ton of repair supplies.

The Sea Wyvern

The *Sea Wyvern* is a caravel-class sailing ship. Full statistics for caravels appear on page 98 of *Stormwrack*, but the following information should be enough for you to run encounters involving the *Sea Wyvern*.

Seaworthiness: Any Profession (sailor) checks made to avoid foundering, sinking, and other hazards that large, well-built vessels avoid more easilly than smaller ones receive a +4 bonus.

Shiphandling: Any Profession (sailor) checks made to avoid collisions, sailing, or other situations that small, swift vessels avoid more easilly than large and clumsy ones receive a +2 bonus.

Speed: The *Sea Wyvern* has a speed of 30 feet in normal wind, allowing it to travel at a rate of 3 miles per hour. In moderate wind, her speed increases to 60 feet, while in strong winds it increases to 90 feet. The Sea Wyvern can change its speed up to 10 feet per round and turn up to 45° after moving at least 60 feet in one direction. This adventure assumes the entire journey, with the exception of two storms, is with normal winds.

Combat: The *Sea Wyvern's* overall Armor Class is –3. It has 24 hull sections (AC 3, hardness 5, hp 80) and 3 rigging sections (AC 1, hardness 0, hp 80). If six hull sections are destroyed, the ship sinks automatically. If the ship rams a target, it inflicts 4d6 points of damage per 10 feet of speed.

The Blue Nixie

Although there are two ships on the expedition, they stay in sight of one another for most of the adventure. As a result, when making Profession (sailor) or Knowledge (geography) checks to pilot or maneuver the ships, it's best to only make one check for both vessels. The PCs should be encouraged to remain on the *Sea Wyvern*, in any event, if only to keep things running smoothly for the adventure.

The *Blue Nixie's* crew and passengers include Lavinia Vanderboren, the Jade Ravens (a second group of adventurers that serve the Vanderboren family—the PCs interacted with these adventurers in the last adventure), and several other NPCs who have little role to play in this adventure or the next, but become key characters once the PCs reach Farshore.

The Weather

Lavinia has chosen the best time of the year to travel—the weather, for much of the journey, is quite pleasant. With the exception of the two storms the PCs encounter at the end of the voyage, they have little to fear from nature in this regard.

If you use *Stormwrack* in your campaign, feel free to use the charts in Chapter One of that book to determine weather, wind, and precipitation for the voyage.

The Voyage

When the expedition sets out, one of the navigators on the *Blue Nixie* or the *Sea Wyvern* must make a Knowledge (geography) check to plot a course. This normally determines if you arrive on target, but for the purposes of this adventure, you can assume that between the two ships, at least one navigator makes the DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check required to make the voyage.

Of greater import are the daily piloting checks to stay on the intended course. You should make this Knowledge (geography) check in secret. The *Blue Nixie's* navigator and Urol Forol on the *Sea Wyvern* both have Knowledge (geography) +12; if one of the PCs has a higher modifier, use that character's modifier instead.

As long as the Amedio coastline is in sight, it's a DC 8 Knowledge (geography) check to pilot the expedition. Missing one piloting check doesn't mean the expedition is lost, but it does increase the next day's check to DC 10. If a second consecutive check is failed, the third day's check rises to DC 13. If three checks in a row are failed, the expedition becomes lost. This is immediately obvious, as the coastline should not match that indicated on the sea charts. A DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check is enough to get back on course, but each check adds a day to the journey.

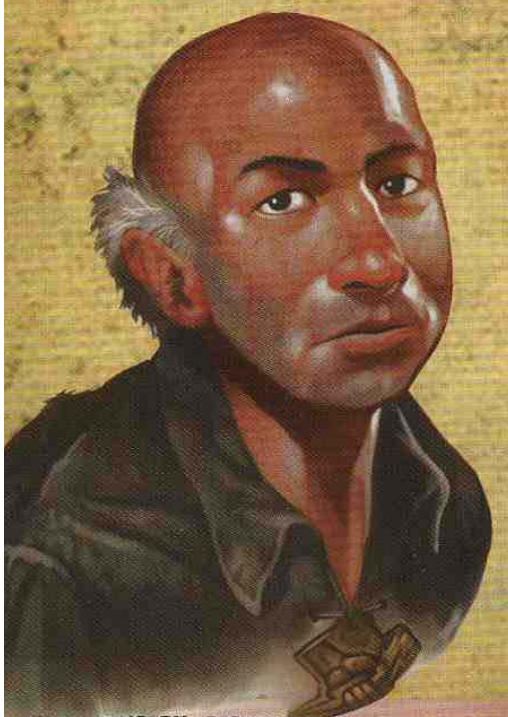
Once the expedition heads south into the open sea after encounter G, it's a DC 17 check to navigate (rising to DC 19 after a day's failed check, and then DC 22 after two consecutive failures). Make a DC 20 Survival check for each PC once per hour to see if any of them notice the expedition is lost (you should also make a Survival +14 check to represent the crew as a whole as well). Each hour, the DC drops by 1 point, until someone notices the expedition is lost. Once the expedition realizes they're lost, a DC 25 Knowledge (geography) check is enough to get back on course, but each check adds a day to the journey.

The Crew

The *Sea Wyvern's* crew must consist of at least seven people. One crew member must have ranks in Profession (sailor), and one must have ranks in Knowledge (geography). You should leave the selection of who's on the crew up to the PCs; of the named NPCs on the voyage, Amella Venkalie, Skald, Urol Forol, and Lirith Veldirose make excellent choices. Tavey Nesk is the ship's cabin boy, but he's not technically part of the ship's crew. Crewmembers sleep in the bunks at the ship's stern (each of the bunks shown on the map are two bunks high). The seventh crew member is the captain,

The Dishonest Priest

Conrad Horst, AKA Father Feres CR 2
Male human expert 3
CN Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common, Dwarven



AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10
hp 7 (3 HD)
Fort +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +2 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged dagger +2 (1d4/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (3), *potion of lesser restoration*, *wand of cure light wounds* (32 charges)
Imbued Spells (CL 7th)
1st—*cure light wounds* (2)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 11, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 13
Feats Persuasive, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Use Magic Device)
Skills Appraise +7, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (religion) +7, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +7, Use Magic Device +10 (+12 scrolls)
Possessions combat gear, dagger, wooden holy symbol of Hieroneous, small locked box (DC 25 Open Lock; contains two scrolls of contact other plane and a map of Limbo portal locations in the world)

Former scribe Conrad Horst is a consummate liar, and has taken Lavinia in by convincing her that he's a clergyman. In fact, Conrad is a desperate criminal recently forced to flee Cauldron when his scam of swindling old ladies out of valuable heirlooms came to light, and he spent several months hiding out in Sasserine.

Conrad has recently hired his services out as a mule to a sinister man whose name he doesn't know. In return for delivering a sealed box to a shrine of Hieroneous at Fort Blackwell, his benefactor arranged for Conrad a new identity as a priest. Disguised as Father Feres, Conrad hopes to travel to Farshore not only to escape persecution from his enemies, but to establish his scams in a new location unaware of his talents.

If there are PC worshipers of Hieroneous in your campaign, you might want to consider switching Conrad's cover identity so that he worships a deity not represented in the party. If you make this change, you should change the shrine of Hieroneous at Fort Blackwell (encounter A) as well.

who sleeps in the captain's cabin on the main deck at the stern, and is likely the only person on board who gets a room to himself. Tavey often chooses to sleep on deck, even in the crow's nest at times.

The Passengers

Anyone not a member of the crew is a passenger. The forward barracks on the ship's lower deck contain five relatively cramped bunks, three beds high. After the crew of 7, the remaining 15 passengers all sleep here. Some of them may choose, at times, to sleep elsewhere (on deck above on nice nights, or even slumped in a chair in the galley). The unnamed passengers are non-combatants, and whenever the ship is under attack, they quickly flee below decks for safety. If statistics for a passenger become relevant, assume they are all AC 10, have 5 hit points, and are unarmed.

The 23rd passenger is Rowyn Kellani, a stowaway. She remains hidden in the ship's hold for much of the adventure. Rowyn is quite adept at hiding her presence, both via skill and via magic. If the PCs insist on searching the hold on any day, it's a DC 30 Search check to find evidence that she's on board. For more information about Rowyn's plans, see event 4.

Provisions

If you're not interested in tracking provision consumption during this adventure, it's easy enough to ignore as long as the PCs don't take a major side trek or spend a lot of extra time at Tamoachan or other stops along the way.

If you want to add this level of realism to the adventure, assume that one person consumes a unit of provisions each day. With 23 people and a horse on board, that means that each day that passes, 24 units of food are consumed. The 10 tons of food Lavinia loads onto the *Sea Wyvern* at the start of the voyage consists of 2,000 units—enough for an 83-day voyage. This is just barely enough to reach the Isle of Dread; Lavinia intends on restocking food at friendly ports during the voyage, but it might be a good idea for the PCs to dedicate some of their remaining cargo space to extra provisions.

If food runs low, the PCs can put their crew and passengers on rations, in which case a person consumes only half a unit per day (reducing consumption to 12 units per day). Likewise, attrition and loss of crew or passengers reduces the draw on the ship's stores.

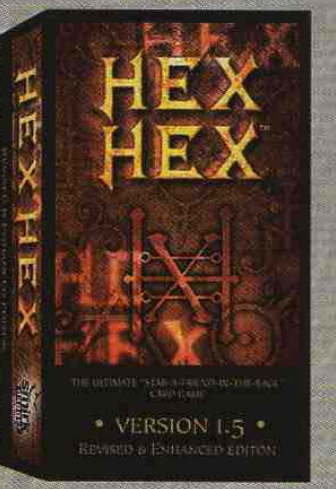
Event 1: This is an Outrage!

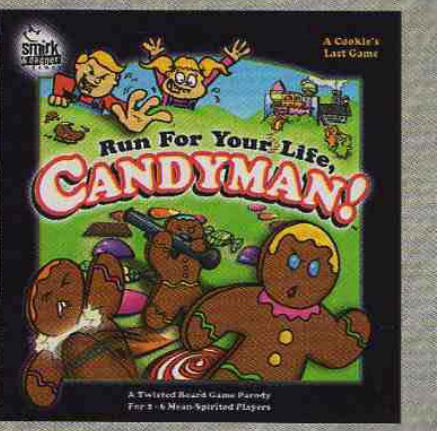
Avner Meravanchi wastes no time establishing himself as a troublemaker. He arrives a half hour late but doesn't apologize. With him are his two servants and his magnificent steed Thunderstrike. The horse is, if anything, as spoiled as Avner, and getting it secured in the jury-rigged pen that's been set up for it in the *Sea Wyvern's* hold takes another half hour. During this time, Avner discovers that he's expected to sleep with the other "commoners" in the forward barracks, and demands his own accommodations.

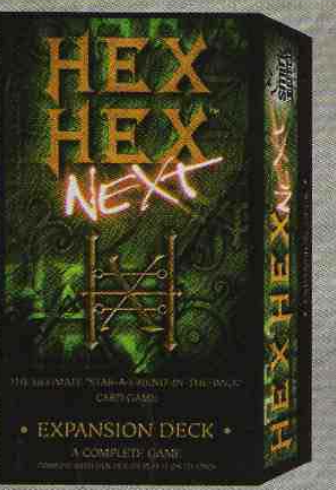
This scene is an excellent way to introduce the characters of the key NPCs as they react to Avner's temper tantrum. Amella has little patience for him, and unless the PCs intervene she makes it clear that Avner can sleep with the rest of the passengers or he can stay in Sasserine. Father Feres does his best to try to soothe Avner and play the part of a priest, but a few choice words from Avner about Feres' ear hair and baldness sends the priest into a private sulk for a few days. Skald avoids the confrontation by busying himself at the far end of the ship, while Urol takes up an almost obnoxious interest in Thunderstrike's pedigree. Lirith sees in Avner a chance to make friends with a noble, and might offer to share her bunk with him.

In the end, it's up to the PCs how to handle the situation. Any solution that results in Avner getting his own room makes the nobleman happy. With a DC 30 Diplomacy check, the PCs can convince him that it might be fun in a "slumming" sort of way to sleep in the forward barracks, in which case the nobleman reluctantly agrees. Any other solution leaves Avner bitter and cantankerous, and throughout the voyage he second-guesses the PCs and attempts to undermine or countermand his orders, becoming even more of a nuisance than he would be otherwise.

'Cause The Holidays are a lot more fun when you can stab a friend in the back!







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Event 2: Dinner with Lavinia (EL 3)

Once the voyage is underway, Lavinia sends a message via a rowboat piloted by one of her crew—she wants to invite the PCs, their crew, and Avner Meravanchi over to the *Blue Nixie* for dinner to celebrate the start of the expedition that evening.

As dusk falls, the two ships close and a line is thrown between the two, a pulley is attached, and a net seat is hoisted, allowing for safe crossing between the two ships. Lavinia looks very fine that evening, dressed in a silk shirt, jewelry, and dress. She leads her guests into the ship's galley; the *Blue Nixie* is a bit bigger than the *Sea Wyvern*, and even after only a couple days, the PCs should feel relieved to get a little bit more elbow room. A fine spread is laid out on the table, including grouse, peacock, and elven wine imported from Celene.

Consider the meal an opportunity for each character to interact with their crew, Lavinia, and the Jade Ravens. (If you aren't running this adventure as part of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, you should omit the Jade Ravens from the dinner.) In the pleasant surroundings of the cabin, allow PCs a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks made to make an impression. This moment could begin potential romances (or further them along, if any PCs have begun relationships with the Jade Ravens or Lavinia herself), and any connections the PCs make will help spice up the rest of this adventure, as events in the later stages of Savage Tide run better when the PCs have more to care for than just treasure. Be sure to note PC actions toward NPCs and feel free to vary future interactions accordingly. At the end of the evening a final drink is taken on deck after the evening sun has sunk but the air is still pleasantly warm outside. As the sun sets, it is finally time to return to the *Sea Wyvern*.

Creature: During the dinner, Rowyn Kellani has been busy. Using *disguise self* and *invisibility* to move undetected among the *Sea Wyvern's* crew, she positions her *pickled mephit* on the upper deck inside a coil of rope near the mast, where it remains hidden. She then cuts nearly all the way through the rope supporting the net chair and pulley between the ships. The first character to cross back to the *Sea Wyvern* via the net chair can make a DC 25 Spot Check to notice the cut rope. Otherwise, as he is halfway across, the rope suddenly snaps and drops the character into the water below. The fall deals no damage to the PC, but he must immediately begin making DC 15 Swim checks.

The round after this occurs, Rowyn casts *open/close* on the *pickled mephit* from her vantage point near the door down to the lower deck, opening it up and releasing its cranky occupant into

The Dashing Deviant

AVNER MERAVANCHI **CR 2**
Male human aristocrat 3
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common
AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10

hp 13 (3 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2
Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk longsword +3 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Atk Options Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack
Abilities Str 11, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack
Skills Bluff +5, Diplomacy +9, Forgery +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +6, Ride +7
Possessions masterwork longsword, steamer trunk filled with several suits of fine clothing (worth 400 gp in all), six bottles of fine wine worth 100 gp per bottle (hidden in steamer trunk), Meravanchi signet ring worth 250 gp, leather-bound journal chronicling his conquests among Sasserine's maidens and debutantes (approximately half of the contents are embellished and falsified), Thunderstrike (light horse), military saddle

Avner is a despicable cur—a slanderer, a deflowerer of maidens, and an utter cad who cares only about himself. Yet on the surface he is charming, helpful, and brave. This is all an act. When trouble appears, he disappears. When coins go missing, he is the culprit. When ladies are left in a lurch at the altar, he's off frolicking with their sisters.

Despite the slow recovery of her wealth, Lavinia couldn't quite finance her expedition to Farshore on her own. She spoke with the other noble families of Sasserine, but only one felt the profits for aiding her outweighed the dangers—the seminotorious Meravanchis. Of course, Avner's father, Zebula, had an additional reason to send Avner on this trip. By giving Avner the responsibility for representing Meravanchi interests in Farshore, he effectively removes the threat of him embarrassing the family in Sasserine. Avner has no concept that his father wanted to get rid of him, and carries with him a vastly inflated sense of self-import as a result. Traveling with Avner are two meek servants (Banaby Chisk and Quenge Asper, both 1st-level human experts) who defer to his every need but are otherwise unobtrusive.

the evening air. She then ducks back down to hide in the hold, leaving the mephit to do its thing.

Water Mephit: hp 19; *Monster Manual* 185.

Tactics: The water mephit released from the jar is particularly angry at having been imprisoned for so long, and immediately attacks the closest target, be it a PC or a passenger, with its breath weapon. It follows up with a *Melf's acid arrow* and then a *stinking cloud* before it engages the closest creature in melee. If the mephit is reduced below 5 hit points, it dives into the sea and waits for its fast healing to repair the damage before emerging to continue harassing the PCs. After being reduced to 5 hit points twice, the mephit gives up and flies away.

Event 3: Father Feres' Illness (EL 8)

Conrad Horst has a mission. In return for a fairly convincing disguise as Father Feres the priest (including an *imbue with spell ability* to give him the ability to cast a few spells along the way to help his disguise) and a method to escape the Sasserine law, he agreed to do a favor for a shady smuggler he contacted in Sasserine's Shadowshore district. The smuggler asked Conrad to deliver the package to a shrine of Hieroneous in Fort Blackwell, and Conrad agreed readily.

Unfortunately for Conrad, both the smuggler and the "shrine of Hieroneous" in Fort Blackwell are in fact members of a sinister cult known as the Wizards of the Hopping Prophet, a cabal of slaadi-worshiping bigots who wish to infest the Material Plane with chaos in the form of their beloved outsiders. The sealed box Conrad's been asked to deliver contains two scrolls of *contact other plane* and a map that purports to identify a half dozen portals to Limbo scattered throughout the world. The map's authenticity is left for you to determine.

Creature: When the PCs visit Fort Blackwell (see encounter A in Part Three), Conrad makes his delivery and agrees to the priests' invitation to stay the night, during which he is impregnated with a red slaad egg as thanks for helping the cult—the cultists care not what comes of Conrad's spawn, only that it emerges in the world to spread chaos.

Six days later, Father Feres falls desperately ill, taking a –10 penalty to all ability scores (minimum 1). His skin flushes, he can't keep down food or water, and he grows delirious, moaning and complaining that the world's grown too bright and soft around the edges. A *remove disease* spell cures him of the infestation, and a DC 15 Heal check locates the strange pulsing growth nestled in his belly. A DC 25 Heal check allows its removal and destruction (each attempt to remove the egg deals 1d4 points of damage to Conrad).

If the PCs don't learn of Father Feres' condition (or if they fail to remove the red slaad egg), one day after he falls ill his body rips apart in a terrific explosion as a fully-formed blue slaad tears free into the world.

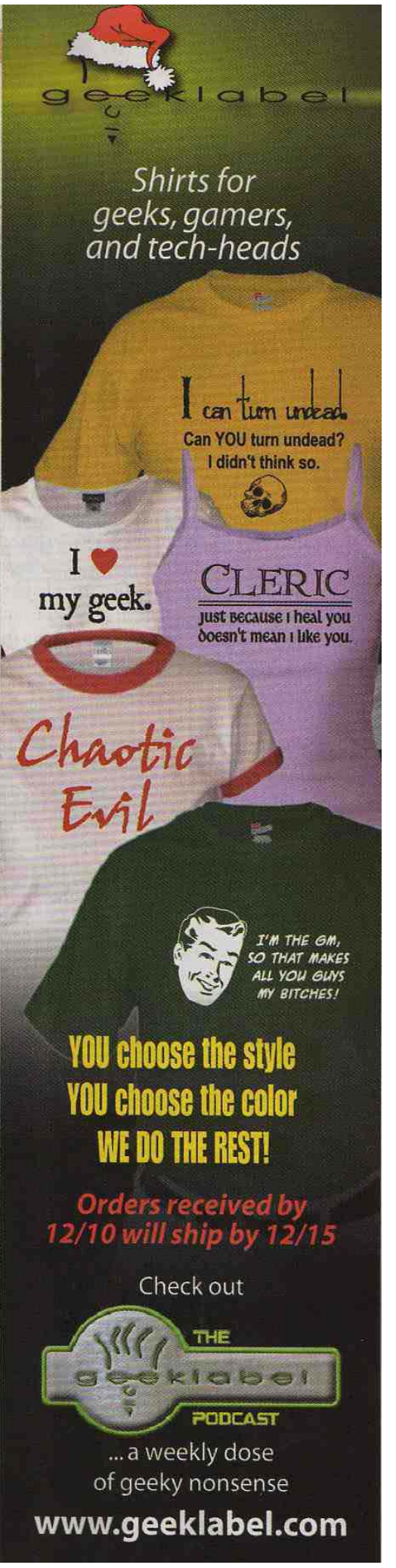
Blue Slaad: hp 68; *Monster Manual* 229.

Tactics: The blue slaad wastes little time trying to figure out where it's been born into if there are any creatures to eat—it's quite ravenous. The monster uses *telekinesis* to hurl characters overboard, or *chaos hammer* if it ever needs to hit a lot of foes at once. Otherwise, it simply tears into the nearest enemy with its claws and bite. It attempts to summon another blue slaad if reduced below 20 hit points, but otherwise fights to the death.

Note that a blue slaad is a dangerous foe for 5th-level characters, but if they allow Conrad's condition to go this far, you should pull no punches in the fight. The fact that the slaad doesn't discriminate between PCs and passengers should help the PCs a little, even if it costs a few of their passengers in the process.

Development: If the PCs save Father Feres, he may decide to come clean and admit his crimes, throwing himself on their feet for mercy. How the PCs deal with Conrad is up to them; he has no further role scheduled for the Savage Tide, so whatever his fate, it will not impact future adventures.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs save Father Feres and prevent the blue slaad from reaching maturity, grant



them an experience award as if they had defeated the CR 8 creature in combat.

Event 4: Rowyn's Vengeance (EL 8)

Rowyn Kellani was once the guildmistress of the largest thieves' guild in Sasserine—at least, until the PCs defeated her Lotus Dragons and forced her to abandon her wealth and flee for her life. Since then, she has seethed with a need for revenge. When she learned the PCs were preparing for a voyage, she knew she had to be on their ship. Fortunately for the bitter ex-guildmistress, her magic made stowing away a simple task.

If your PCs killed Rowyn in "There Is No Honor," you have a choice. You can omit this encounter entirely, replace Rowyn with another Kellani (perhaps she left behind a sister), or change Rowyn into an agent of the Crimson Fleet named Hannah Larn. Hannah has been sent by the fleet to spy on the voyage, but as it turns out, Hannah has a particular bone to pick with one of the NPCs on the ship. Perhaps she's one of Avner's jilted lovers, or was humiliated in a duel some time past with Amelia. In this case, her primary target becomes an NPC, and the PCs are simply in her way. In any event, the rest of this event assumes the stowaway is Rowyn Kellani.

Creature: Rowyn is patient. She makes, at most, only one attempt to hurt the PCs a week, since she doesn't want to expose her presence. She's been defeated by them once before—she has little desire to fight fair. Listed below are several possible methods Rowyn uses to murder the PCs.

Poisoning: Rowyn uses *disguise self* to appear as one of the passengers, then slips into the kitchen before a meal and laces one of the PCs' meals with a dose of arsenic (Fortitude DC 13, 1 Con/1d8 Con). She repeats the poisoning every day for 3 days, or until she thinks that the PCs might be on to her. An investigation into who might be poisoning the food should lead the PCs to the passenger Rowyn was impersonating. Whether or not the PCs believe the shocked passenger's claims of innocence is up to them.

Seduction 1: If one of the PCs is carrying on a romance with an NPC, Rowyn approaches that PC one night with *disguise self* to appear as the NPC and invites that PC to somewhere private for some fun. Once she has the PC alone, Rowyn begins to dance for the PC, using Disguise Spell to cast *suggestion* on the PC, suggesting that the PC strip down and join her in a midnight swim. She waits for the PC to undress and dive into the ocean, at which point she uses her scroll of *summon nature's ally III* to summon a large shark to attack the swimming PC before she sneaks back to the hold to hide.

The Sinister Passenger

SKALD **CR 3**

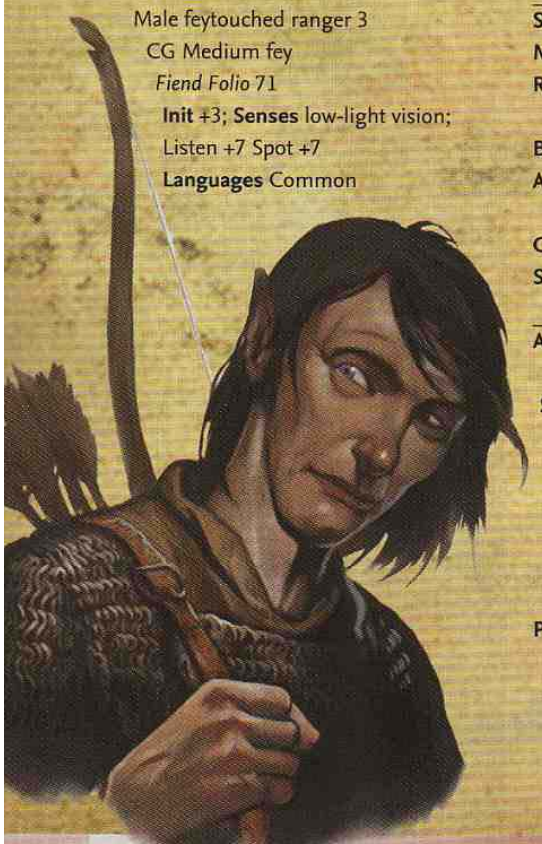
Male feytouched ranger 3

CG Medium fey

Fiend Folio 71

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +7 Spot +7

Languages Common



AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14

hp 20 (3 HD)

Immune mind-affecting

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.

Melee scimitar +4 (1d6+1 /18–20)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +7 (1d8+2/×3) or +1 *composite longbow* +5/+5 (1d8+2/×3)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, favored enemy +2 (reptilian humanoids)

Combat Gear vial of acid (2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

1/day—*charm person* (DC 11)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10

SQ wild empathy +3

Feats Iron Will, Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Track

Skills Hide +11, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+9 when avoiding hazards or to keep from getting lost), Swim +7

Possessions combat gear, chain shirt, scimitar, +1 *composite longbow* (+2 STR) with 20 arrows, two unused tickets to the Lachrymal Theater in the Styes to see "Feasting Corpulence of Devils"

Skald is a shifty-looking, hunch-shouldered character with pale skin, a nasal voice, and unsettling eyes. Yet despite appearances, Sklad is an honorable and courageous man. A former advisor to corrupt Councilman Rashlen in the foul waterfront far to the northeast known as the Styes, Skald fled after discovering just how evil his boss was. In the process of fleeing the Styes, Skald torched one of Rashlen's warehouses (which, at the time, was being used to store a large amount of opiates).

Since his flight, Skald's dodged Rashlen's agents nonstop, and as a result has taken to jumping at shadows. Skald's gift for navigation and his eagerness to join the expedition (he asked only for room and board for the voyage) are the primary reasons Lavinia invited him along.

Skald's unusual appearance and morose attitude soon become the focus of rumor. When things start going wrong on the voyage, it's Skald many of the passengers blame for the ill luck. Yet while he begins the adventure as unfriendly, PCs who befriend him over the course of the voyage should find in him a loyal friend indeed.

Seduction 2: As seduction 1 above, except that Rowyn uses Disguise Spell to cast *hold person* on the PC. If successful, she coup de graces the character with one of his own weapons, leaving the body on the deck for others to find. If she fails to kill the character with the first strike, she drops the weapon and flees, reasoning that it's almost as damaging to the PC to leave him thinking his lover tried to kill him.

Accidents: Rowyn might use *invisiblity* to position herself so that she can cut a key rope that drops a yardarm or other heavy beam down upon a PC on the deck. The PC takes 3d6 points of damage, but can avoid all of the damage with a DC 15 Reflex save.

Opportunistic Strike: During any other shipboard combat, Rowyn uses *disguise self* or *invisibility* to take up a position where she can sneak attack a PC during the battle, using the chaos to escape back into hiding after she makes a single strike.

Rowyn Kellani **CR 8**
Female human rogue 3/bard 5
NE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

AC* 20, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp 38 (8 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4; evasion
*3-point Combat Expertise

Spd 30 ft.
Melee* *+1 rapier* +5 (1d6+1/19–20)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, sneak attack +2d6
Special Actions bardic music 2/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1)
Combat Gear *pickled mephit*, scroll of *summon nature's ally III*
Spells Known (CL 5th)
2nd (2/day)—*invisibility*, *hold person* (DC 15), *suggestion* (DC 15)
1st (4/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *disguise self* (DC 14), *expeditious retreat*
0 (3/day)—*daze* (DC 13), *ghost sound* (DC 13), *mage hand*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*
*3-point Combat Expertise

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16
SQ bardic knowledge +7, trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Expertise, Disguise Spell (see page 55), Improved Feint, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +12, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +14, Hide +10, Intimidate +4, Jump +12, Knowledge (local) +8, Move Silently +15, Perform (dance) +13, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +12, Swim +8, Tumble +14, Use Magic Device +11
Possessions combat gear, *+1 leather armor*, *+1 buckler*, *+1 rapier*, *boots of elvenkind*, *pickled mephit*, 3 doses of arsenic

Tactics: Eventually, the PCs should realize they have someone on board who's trying to do them in. There's only a certain number of places Rowyn can hide on board, so once the PCs start searching, they should find her soon enough. When caught, Rowyn curses the PCs vehemently, blaming them for her ruin and promising them all painful deaths. If she has a chance before combat begins, she begins to dance so she can cast a disguised *suggestion* or *hold person* without being obvious. She uses Improved Feint to sneak attack foes during combat. If brought below 10 hit points, she tries to escape. She might try to murder a passenger and then use *disguise self* to pose as that passenger for a short time to give her a chance to strike at the PCs again, but in the end Rowyn knows she's cornered. She'd rather fight to the death than be captured.

Rowyn Kellani has no further role to play in the Savage Tide Adventure Path—her eventual fate is left to the PCs.

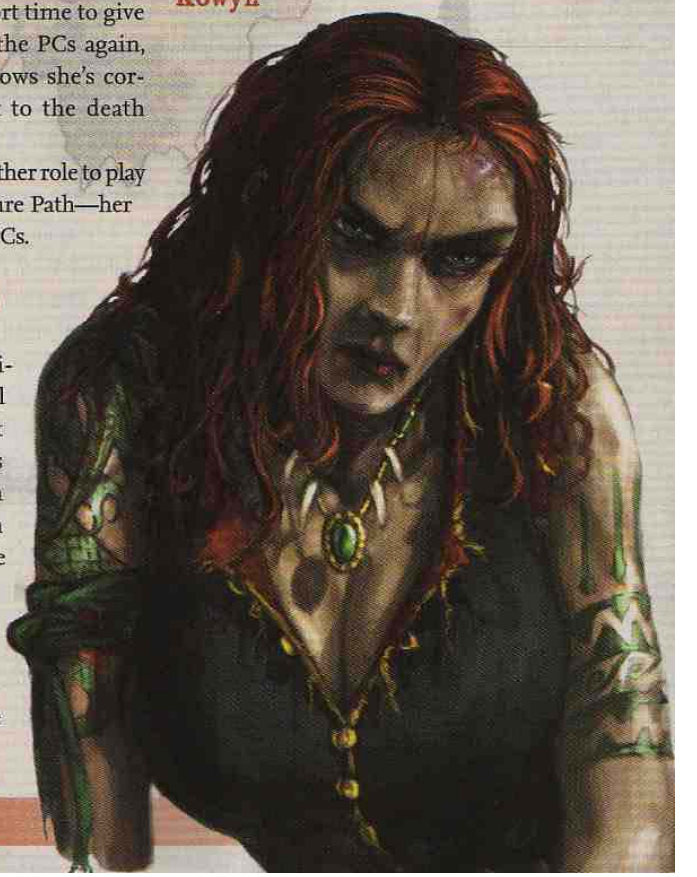
PART THREE: THE VOYAGE SOUTH

The map of the expedition's voyage lists several locations along the way at which preset encounters occur. If you wish to liven up the journey between these encounters, feel free to check for wandering monsters every day. Along the coast, there's a 28% chance per day of an encounter. Once the expedition heads out into the open sea, there's only an 8% chance per day of an encounter. If an encounter occurs, there's a 30% chance it's with another ship (50% chance of being friendly); otherwise use the encounter table on page 92 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* or the EL 5 encounter for Warm Marine encounters on page 216 of *Stormwrack* to determine what peril stumbles into the PCs.

Minor Encounters

In addition to the keyed encounters of the voyage, several minor encounters are presented here as well. These encounters are little more than descriptions of strange events with the exact details left to you to determine.

Coastal Fort: Forts are common sights along the Amedio coast up until encounter E, after which no more forts are to be found. The majority of these forts are held by the Scarlet Brotherhood (a sprawling organization of sinister monks and assassins), and are used as staging points for expeditions into the jungle interior. Lavinia avoids these forts, and often takes the expedition out further to sea as she passes them by to avoid any possible conflict. Two forts are not held


Rowyn

by the Scarlet Brotherhood—Fort Blackwell (detailed in encounter A) and Fort Greenrock (detailed in encounter E).

The Great Web: For several miles, the ships pass several enormous spider webs which cling to the boughs of the great jungle trees. Huge black shapes lie within the webs. PCs stopping in this area or sailing beneath these trees (which stretch forty feet over the ocean) encounter dozens of hungry monstrous spiders of all sizes.

The Sacred Forest: These ten miles of jungle coastline are home to vast Kapok trees. A DC 20 Spot check allows a character to notice the hundreds of tribal ornaments in the trees, as well as numerous desiccated corpses of lizardfolk hanging from the boughs. These trees are filled with strange fetishes, masks, and totems, and a DC 25 Search check (made over the course of an hour) nets 3d6 gp of loot. Characters stepping too far into the jungle here risk the wrath of whatever strange tribe erected the fetishes, be they savage humanoids, lizardfolk, or worse...

Ruins: Now and then, the PCs may spot glimpses of ancient civilization—the vine-clad remnants of strange humanoid statues of great size, the crumbling forms of immense ziggurat temples, or the teetering stone ruins of villages. While any of these ruins could promise treasure or adventure, Lavinia would rather ignore them for now. She's promised Urol Forol a stop at the mightiest of these ruins, and doesn't want to waste additional time along the way.

The Vast Burning: The expedition passes a huge blackened valley along the jungle shore. Closer inspection reveals that this was a vast sacrificial pit into which hundreds of what look like humanoid apes were thrown. The sacrifice took place a decade or more ago, but birds and plants do not touch the place. The pit has nothing to do with this adventure, but you could develop it further if you wish.

Wyvern Sighting: A flock of six wyverns swoop down to fly alongside the *Sea Wyvern* for ten minutes, cavorting in the skies above and occasionally swooping down to skip their talons or wing tips across the ocean surface. A few might come close to the ship or curiously look over her wyvern-shaped figurehead, but as long as the PCs don't attack, the wyverns eventually wing off to the port side and are gone.

Sea Monster: Have the PCs make Spot checks. Whoever rolls the highest notices something strange in the water several hundred feet out—a sinuous shape, perhaps, or possibly a brief flash of an immense black mass. If this occurs at night the shape might glow in the dark. Perhaps the PC sees, for the briefest of moments, an immense

The Curious Scholar

UROL FOROL **CR 3**

Male gnome druid 1/expert 3

NG Small humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +12, Spot +10

Languages Common, Draconic, Druidic, Gnome, Sylvan

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 26 (4 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8 (+10 vs. illusion)

Spd 20 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +1 (1d4–2)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** –4

Combat Gear *wand of shillelagh* (32 charges),

Spells Prepared (CL 1st)

1st—*calm animals* (DC 14), *obscuring mist*

0—*mending, purify food and drink, resistance*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st)

1/day—*dancing lights, ghost sound* (DC 10), *prestidigitation, speak with animals*

Abilities Str 6, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 10

SQ animal companion (crow named Miss Crazzle), wild empathy +1

Feats Skill Focus (Knowledge [geography]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature])

Skills Concentration +6, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (nature) +16, Listen +12, Spot +10, Survival +12

Possessions combat gear, +1 *leather armor*, quarterstaff, *cloak of resistance* +1, two doses of *stone salve*, collection of snakes and spiders, sleeping cap for Miss Crazzle

Urol is a bent old gnome who constantly squints when he looks. He carries the odor of the land about with him, an odor that most find not too pleasant. He is talkative and chipper except when the subject of the natural world comes up, whereupon he flies into a frenzy of excited stuttering bliss, expounding upon obscure and often strangely fascinating (to him, at least) bits of lore.

Urol has actually been to the Isle of Dread before, although his stay, in his words, was, "Unfortunately short—due to events beyond my control, I might add! We've certainly nothing to fear this time around!" He demanded to be part of Lavinia's expedition when he learned about it, and indeed his knowledge of the Isle could greatly help the colonists of Farshore. Urol has a strange fascination with poisonous creatures, and his nerve-wracking collection of spiders and snakes is often the subject of whispered talk on the *Sea Wyvern*.

Urol frequently evokes Amella's anger during the voyage, despite his best efforts to win her friendship. As the weeks go by, it may fall to the PCs to keep him out of her hair.

eye the size of a tower shield staring back at him before the shape sinks back into the deep. This sighting of some unknown sea monster shouldn't lead to combat, but it should serve to keep the PCs on edge for a few days to come.

A: Fort Blackwell

Distance from Sasserine: 475 miles
Time from Sasserine: 13 days

This small settlement of approximately 2,000 is located near the northernmost tip of the peninsula known to sailors as "The Hook." One of the few coastal Amedio forts not controlled by the Scarlet Brotherhood (its distance from the Amedio interior makes it not worth the effort for the Brotherhood to control), Fort Blackwell remains an independently governed walled town perched on the edge of civilization.

Fort Blackwell is a cozy town with a tiny harbor protected by an immense sea gate hung between two squat towers. Before any ship is allowed within the harbor, a troop of Blackwell guards must be allowed to search the ship and interview its captain. Fortunately, years of relative peace and being ignored by both the Scarlet Brotherhood and the Crimson Fleet (who maintain larger ports of call in various forts elsewhere along the coast—forts wisely avoided by the expedition) have made them rather lackadaisical in their searches, and barring anything outwardly suspicious performed by the PCs, the guards allow their expedition entrance into the harbor after a mere 15-minute inspection.

Although Lavinia intends to stay only one night in Fort Blackwell, she defers to the PCs if they wish to stay longer. She points out to the PCs that it'll probably be seven weeks before they reach Fort Greenrock, the next friendly location where they'll be able to resupply, so she encourages them to get all their shopping done here if they can.

Fort Blackwell features numerous small and cozy inns and taverns, all of which serve a delicious local malt blend of whiskey called The Green Man (10 gp per bottle). Food and supplies can be readily purchased from one of four large provisioners who keep warehouses on the waterfront. Several small shrines, including ones dedicated to Hieroneous, Kord, Pelor, St. Cuthbert, and the gods of the sea (Procan, Osprem, and Xerbo), can be found here as well.

Yet there are hidden dangers in Fort Blackwell. The Scarlet Brotherhood has several spies in town to keep an eye on things. A hidden sea cave just north of town once used by smugglers has become the lair of a family of sinister fey known as redcaps (*Monster Manual III* 138) led by a foul-mouthed father named Kabou-termannekin who sometimes sneaks into the fort to cause problems. And the shrine of Hieroneous is in fact a cover for a cult of slaadi worshipers who call themselves the Wizards of the Hopping Prophet. These cultists have a terrible fate in store for poor Conrad Horst, who stays the night at the shrine while the PCs are in port here (see Event 3).

Any of these perils could rear their head during the PCs' stay if you wish to expand the adventure—otherwise, the stay here should be short.

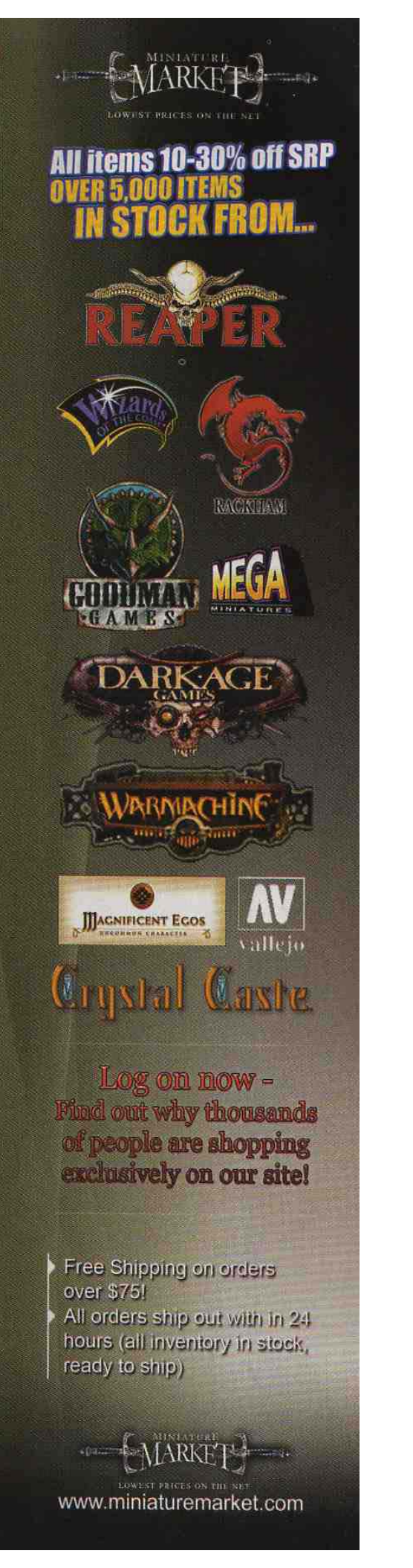
Fort Blackwell (Small Town): AL NG; 800 gp limit; Assets 4,480 gp; Population 1,123; Conventional; Isolated (human 90%, half-elf 7%, others 3%).

Authority Figure: **Governess Juliana Terwall** (NG female human aristocrat 4/ranger 2).

B: Hungry Flotsam (EL 6)

Distance from Sasserine: 785 miles
Distance from Fort Blackwell: 310 miles
Time from Fort Blackwell: 9 days

As the PCs near the mouth of the Havekihu River, the expedition has its first real encounter with poor weather. The ships anchor near the river and take half a day to refill water stores on board from the river's waters (as they do upon reaching the next three rivers along their route). Near the evening, less than a half hour after the expedition gets under way again, a thick fog springs up. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check confirms that fog banks like this often occur along the coast in this region, but the thickness is nevertheless oppressive. Passengers head below deck, and the crew grows silent as all ears strain to the starboard side, marking the distant



sound of breakers on the shore as the only trustworthy method of ensuring the expedition doesn't draw too close to the shallows while still staying parallel to the coast. The fog grows thicker, and soon even the *Blue Nixie*, only a few hundred feet ahead, is lost to vision.

At this point, Lavinia orders the ships to anchor for the night until the fog burns off in the morning. The voice of one of her crew calling out from the fog to the *Sea Wyvern* announcing the short stoppage is curiously muted by the fog, but nonetheless easily understood. The PCs should anchor the *Sea Wyvern* as well, and prepare themselves for a long night.

Creatures: Of course, the fog is far from uninhabited. At some point in the night, the entire ship lurches as if striking a reef. In fact, the ship has been attacked by a dangerous aquatic predator called a flotsam ooze. This ooze has been drifting on ocean currents for several weeks, an enormous glob of transparent protoplasm that exudes a powerful adhesive that causes driftwood, animal carcasses, ship fragments, rocks, and other objects to cling to its surface. To the untrained eye, such an ooze floating on the sea looks like nothing more than a clot of flotsam adrift in the current.

The ooze itself is fifteen feet in diameter, and the lurching sensation was caused not by the *Sea Wyvern* hitting bottom, but by the ooze attaching itself to the hull as it prepares to slither up to search for prey.

Enormous Flotsam Ooze **CR 6**

N Huge ooze (aquatic)
Fiend Folio 17
Init +0; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Listen –5, Spot –5

AC 14, touch 6, flat-footed 14; transparent
hp 115 (7 HD)
Immune ooze traits
Fort +13, **Ref** +0, **Will** –3

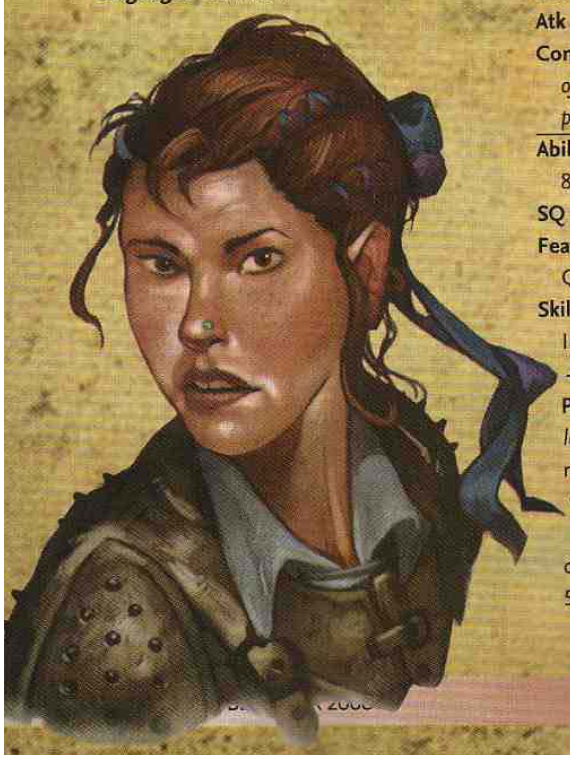
Spd 10 ft., swim 30 ft.
Melee slam +13 (2d6+15)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +23
Atk Options adhesive

Abilities Str 30, Dex 6, Con 32, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1
SQ amphibious
Skills Hide –2, Swim +18

Adhesive (Ex) A flotsam ooze exudes a sticky slime that holds fast any creature or item touching it. It automatically grapples any creature it hits with its slam attack, and a grappled opponent cannot escape as long as the ooze lives unless the adhesive is weakened by soap or lye (in which case the ooze makes a standard grapple check to maintain a hold). A flotsam ooze can make one additional slam attack each

The Tomboy Warrior

Lirith Veldirose CR 3
Female human rogue 1/fighter 2
CN Medium humanoid
Complete Warrior 12
Init +6; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common



AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14
hp 20 (3 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** –1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk falchion +6 (2d4+3/18–20)
Ranged mwk composite longbow +5 (1d8+2/×3)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of jump, potion of expeditious retreat*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ trapfinding
Feats Acrobatic, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (falchion)
Skills Balance +9, Climb +6, Bluff +5, Intimidate +7, Jump +12, Sense Motive +3, Swim +7, Tumble +11, Use Rope +6
Possessions combat gear, *+1 studded leather armor*, masterwork falchion, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, sapphire nose ring worth 450 gp, silver bracelet worth 150 gp, coral ring that looks like an octopus worth 500 gp

A red-haired tomboy who wears flamboyant scarves and silks, Lirith has been a sailor for the past year. Lirith intends to work hard while she can, then retire early to some fabulous island. Above all, Lirith loves to show off, particularly in combat. She loves to Tumble, Balance, and fight using Bluff and Intimidate checks to ensure everyone notices her.

Lirith's greatest secret is the fact that she was actually born Lirith Annamander, the daughter of a minor noble from the city of Verbobonc, far to the north. Her need for attention stems from a childhood spent in the shadow of several talented older siblings. At the age of 15, she ran away from home and eventually ended up in Sasserine, taking a new name to hide her past. Yet sometimes she misses the comforts of noble life, and as a result she puts material needs above emotional needs—her eyes are drawn to precious things. Anyone who openly displays wealth and is particularly good-looking is likely to be in for romantic intrigue.

round against any creature stuck to it. A weapon that strikes a flotsam ooze sticks fast unless the wielder makes a DC 12 Reflex save. A DC 16 Strength check allows a character to remove an item stuck to the ooze. These two checks are static, and do not change if the ooze's ability scores or total Hit Dice change.

Transparent (Ex) A flotsam ooze is transparent in water, and receives concealment while swimming (50% miss chance).

Tactics: The flotsam ooze is aquatic, and as such it does not leave the water once it's attached itself to the *Sea Wyvern's* hull. Its weight causes the ship to list slightly to the port. Attached to the hull just left of the stairs leading up to the bow, anyone who leans over the rail on the port side can see what appears to be a huge pile of flotsam clinging to the hull. The ooze can attack any target that comes within ten feet of the bottom of the stairs along the port side of the ship. Any creature it grabs is pulled overboard if it fails an opposed Strength check—in any event, the ooze can make a free slam attack against such a foe each round.

Treasure: The flotsam ooze floats once it's slain, the driftwood and debris that once coated it slowly sinking or drifting away. If a DC 20 Search is made of the ooze within one minute of its death, a character finds that among the debris are no less than six bodies of hapless sailors. It's unclear if they were merchants or pirates, as their bodies are little more than bone by now, but one of the bodies still wears a *ring of mind shielding* and another wears *gauntlets of ogre power*. After a minute, these treasures sink to the bottom 40 feet below, where a DC 30 Search can find them.

C: Tamoachan

Distance from Sasserine: 1,285 miles
Distance from Havekihu River: 500 miles
Time from Havekihu River: 14 days

Lavinia promised Urol Forol a chance to explore the ruins of the infamous Tamoachan ruins, and asks the PCs to accompany him on this short side expedition. Continue with Part Four.

D: Brotherhood Blockade (EL 6)

Distance from Sasserine: 1,435 miles
Distance from Tamoachan: 500 miles
Time from Tamoachan: 4 days

As the expedition approaches the tip of the Tamoachan peninsula, Lavinia draws the *Blue Nixie* up alongside the *Sea Wyvern* to speak to the PCs. She informs them that the next several miles will be among the most dangerous of their journey, as they must now thread the neeedle and sail through a Scarlet Brotherhood blockade. For many years, the Brotherhood has maintained a strong presence on South Olman Isle, particularly the city of Narisban. Although their navy has grown lax in their once-stict patrols of the region, Brotherhood ships are still common in the sound between the peninsula and South Olman Isle. Lavinia suggests that, in order to minimize the chances of their expedition being spotted, the *Blue Nixie* and the *Sea Wyvern* should sail through the sound seperately, about a half hour apart, to meet up again on the southern side. She defers to the PCs' opinion in the matter, though—if they think it'd be best to stick together, she agrees.

Creature: Unfortunately, the Brotherhood spots the PCs no matter what as they sail hurriedly around the horn. If the *Sea Wyvern* has allowed the *Blue Nixie* to go ahead of her, the *Blue Nixie* makes it through but the *Sea Wyvern* is spotted by a Brotherhood caravel. If the two ships sailed together, a pair of Brotherhood ships spot them, in which case each ship becomes locked in its own battle.

These ships are privateers charged by the Scarlet Brotherhood to capture any ships they spot sailing these waters, claim the cargo as spoils, and claim the crew as slaves (or worse) to be brought to Narisban. The ship that accosts the *Sea Wyvern* is a ragged caravel named *Purity's Prow*, captained by an equally ragged man named Lars "No-Neck" Helvur. Captain Helvur hails the *Sea Wyvern* as he sails toward the ship, informing the crew that he means to board her for "inspection." *Purity's Prow* flies the Scarlet Brotherhood flag, but even if no one on board the *Sea Wyvern* makes a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check (which calls up tales of how Brotherhood ships are little better than pirates in these waters), the evil and sinister look of Helvur's crew of nine thugs and cutthroats should leave little doubt that the *Sea Wyvern* is about to come under attack.

Lars "No-Neck" Helvur CR 4
Male human rogue 2/fighter 2
CE Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15
hp 30 (4 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk scimitar +8 (1d6+4/18–20)
Ranged heavy crossbow +4 (1d10/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +6
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear *elixir of fire breath* (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 13
SQ trapfinding
Feats Athletic, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (scimitar)
Skills Balance +8, Bluff +6, Climb +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +10, Knowledge (geography) +0, Profession (sailor) +5, Swim +8, Tumble +8
Possessions combat gear, *+1 studded leather armor*, masterwork scimitar, buckler, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, gold ring worth 120 gp

Pirate (9) CR 1/2
Male and female human warrior 1
CE Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13
hp 8 (1 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +2 **Will** –1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee rapier +2 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged light crossbow +1 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Athletic, Toughness
Skills Climb +3, Profession (sailor) +3, Swim +5
Possessions leather armor, buckler, rapier, light crossbow with 10 bolts, earring worth 15 gp

Purity's Prow
Caravel class sailing ship
Seaworthiness +0; **Shiphandling** –1
Speed 30 ft. in normal wind

AC –3, hull 3, rigging 1
Hull 24 sections; Hardness 5; hp 80 (currently 40)
Rigging 2 sections; Hardness 0; hp 80 (currently 40)
Ram 4d6 per 10 feet of speed
Armament 2 ballistas (10 bolts each)

Tactics: Although they look tough, the crew of *Purity's Prow* is actually fairly desperate. They've been at sea for months, unable to return to port for repairs or supplies until they've made their quota of slaves and booty. With no slaves and slim treasure, a premature return to Narisban is an invitation for execution.

If the PCs attack the pirates before they have a chance to board, refer to page 21 for quick rules for naval combat (or use those provided in *Stormwrack*). If the PCs let the pirates approach, they pull up alongside the *Sea Wyvern*, toss several ropes with grappling hooks over to secure the ships together, and lower planks to aid in the boarding process. It's a DC 10 Balance check to cross on a plank, or a DC 15 Jump check to leap from one deck to the other.

Once on board the *Sea Wyvern*, Captain Helvur demands the PCs drop their weapons and hold still while he has his crew tie everyone up. If no one resists, the passengers and crew are loaded onto *Purity's Prow* and shipped to Narisban for a fate beyond the scope of this adventure.

Helver and his thugs do their best in combat, fighting together to reduce opponents' opportunity for flanking. As soon as Helver is slain, or as soon as six pirates are dropped, the remaining pirates panic and attempt to flee back to *Purity's Prow*, cutting the ropes that lock the ships together as they go and then attempting to flee.

Treasure: A search of *Purity's Prow's* hold reveals the cause of Captain Helver's desperate attack on the *Sea Wyvern*—they've managed to gather only 1,150 gp in booty (consisting of coins, a few bags of flawed gems, and several pieces of jewelry, all kept in one large trunk). The ship has only about a

week's worth of food, most of it spoiled or infested with weevils.

Development: If the *Blue Nixie* and the *Sea Wyvern* attempted the crossing together, the *Blue Nixie* is accosted by a second ship (the *Nightshark*). There's no need to play out this second combat—simply assume that whatever fate the PCs meet in their altercation with *Purity's Prow* is mirrored by the *Blue Nixie*.

E: Ruins of Fort Greenrock

Distance from Sasserine: 1,765 miles
Distance from the Brotherhood Blockade: 330 miles
Time from the Brotherhood Blockade: 9 days

Although Lavinia had hoped to be able to resupply food stores at Fort Greenrock, it becomes obvious as soon as the expedition rounds the last coastal bend before this remote colony of monks and druids that something terrible has happened. The wooden pallisade surrounding the fort has been torn apart, and the fort itself has burned to the ground. It appears that whatever grim fate visited the place occurred several months ago, for no sign of life or activity can be seen from shore.

If the PCs investigate, they find further evidence of a great battle. Dried blood stains the timbers of collapsed buildings here and there, broken weapons lie in the sand, and hundreds of black-feathered arrows decorate the sides of the ruins that face the jungle. A DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check reveals the workmanship on these arrows as having come from lizardfolk.

No stores remain in Fort Greenrock, nor are there any survivors. The savage tribe of lizardfolk who brought ruin to this once-idyllic waystation have long since returned to the depths of the Amedio. Lavinia urges the PCs to press on, saying that they'll have one final opportunity to restock supplies at the village of Renkrue on the Axuxal Isles in about ten days.

E: River Menace (EL 6)

Distance from Sasserine: 1,925 miles
Distance from Fort Greenrock: 160 miles
Time from Fort Greenrock: 4 days

As with Havekihu River and Xatalati River before, the expedition stops here at the mouth of Atikula River to refresh the supplies of fresh water. Unlike the previous two rivers, the point where the Atikula reaches the sea is marked by a magnificent 900-foot-wide waterfall that cascades two hundred feet over a cliff into the ocean below. With no beach nearby to speak of, it's easy enough for a ship to sail in fairly close and then send out a rowboat with barrels to fill. There's only room in the narrow harbor for one ship at a time, and Lavinia graciously offers to let the *Sea Wyvern* go first, unaware of the peril that waits within.

As with the previous stops like this, refilling the stores takes about half a day. While the stores are being refilled, some of the passengers may be tempted to take advantage of the secluded and calm cove's waters to enjoy a swim.

Creature: The deep pool below the waterfall is far from uninhabited, as anyone who decides to take a swim quickly learns. Even if no one tempts fate in this manner, the aquatic seven-headed hydra that lives below swims up to investigate the strange shapes floating on the water above not long after it's the *Sea Wyvern's* turn to refill the water barrels. The hydra happens to choose the largest concentration of PCs for its attack, surging up from the depths below and exploding with a tremendous spray of water as it strikes. This hydra is identical to the seven-headed hydra detailed in the *Monster Manual*, save that it has the aquatic subtype. The hydra fights to the death to protect its territory.

Aquatic Seven-Headed Hydra: hp 77; *Monster Manual* 156.

Treasure: Anyone who dives down to investigate the harbor bed below finds a grim scene—dozens of sunken ships of all sizes rot in the mud and seaweed here, previous victims of the hydra. A DC 20 Search of the wrecks reveals that most of the cargo has long since rotted away as well, but an hour's worth of exploration is enough to turn up 102 gp in a partially collapsed chest, a suit of +1 *chainmail* on a long-dead elf in one of the sunken ships' staterooms, and draped over a drooping yardarm, a bright green *cloak of the manta ray*.

G: Renkrue

Distance from Sasserine: 2,140 miles
Distance from Fort Greenrock: 215 miles
Time from Fort Greenrock: 6 days

The Isles of Axuxal lie off the southern coastline of the Amedio Jungle, and are settled by several peaceful Olman Tribes. The village of Renkrue, the easternmost settlement on the isles, is also the most advanced, consisting of a collection of straw huts and even a few wooden structures built years ago by an ambitious priest of St. Cuthbert who had visions of converting the islanders to his religion. He died not long after seeing to the construction of the village's two buildings; these buildings now serve as the chieftain's hut and a communal hall respectively.

The residents of Renkrue are friendly and chatty, although only a few of them speak Common. Up to ten tons of food can be purchased here, using trade stock from the *Blue Nixie* Lavinia brought for just this purpose. In addition, the PCs can purchase potions, scrolls, wands, and other magic items that aren't made of worked metal here, up to the village's gold piece limit.

Lavinia suggests the expedition takes a day of shore leave on Renkrue. There's little danger here, and it might give the PCs a good chance to roleplay further with the NPCs they've been sailing with for the past several weeks in an environment different than the cramped quarters of a ship. Sample reactions for the key NPCs on the expedition are listed below.

Amella Venkalie: Amella would prefer to remain on board the *Sea Wyvern*, but if she's developing a relationship with a PC she could be convinced to take some time away from the ship.

Conrad Horst: If he lives this long, Conrad may decide to retire here, his recent brush with death having given him a new outlook on life. Unless persuaded otherwise, he gives his goodbyes to the PCs when they resume their journey.

Avner Meravanchi: Initially charmed by the quaint village, Avner quickly becomes obsessed with one of the village daughters. His attempts to "purchase"

her from her parents insults the islanders to such an extent that they refuse to continue trade with the expedition unless the PCs can smooth things over with a DC 25 Diplomacy check, at which point Avener loses interest in the village and its residents and spends the rest of shore leave onboard the *Sea Wyvern* in a foul mood.

Skald: Intrigued by the island, Skald spends his time exploring the relatively safe interior during his stay. PCs who suspect him of being a villain may be suspicious of his desire to spend shore leave alone.

Urol Forol: Urol couldn't care less about the village of Renkrue, but he quickly becomes obsessed with the wide variety of life to be found in the extensive tide pools that line the nearby shores. He spends hours exploring these pools, scribbling in his notes and squealing with delight at each new discovery.

Lirith Veldirose: Lirith enjoys her time with the people of Renkrue, and that evening gets quite drunk during an impromptu drinking contest with one of the locals (or perhaps with a PC). If she gets drunk enough, she may challenge a PC to a mock duel (during which she gains a +2 bonus to her Constitution but a –2 penalty to her Dexterity due to her inebriation).

Rowyn Kellani: If she still lives, Rowyn attempts an assassination of a PC during the shore leave.

Tavey Nesk: As cabin boy, Tavey is expected to stay on board and watch the ship. If the PCs let him come with them and leave the ship unguarded, nothing bad happens to the ship.

The *Blue Nixie*: Although both ships take shore leave at the same time, the passengers and crew of the *Blue Nixie* generally keep to themselves and do not mix much with those of the *Sea Wyvern*. The notable exceptions are Lavinia Vanderboren and the Jade Ravens. If any PCs have already established relationships with any of these NPCs, this encounter is a great time to continue such rivalries or romances.

Renkrue (Village): AL CG; 200 gp limit; Assets 7,800 gp; Population 780; Conventional; Isolated (human 100%)

Authority Figure: **Chief Ixawhani, He Who Sleeps With Sound** (ranger 4).

H: The Pearl Current

Distance from Sasserine: 2,290 miles
Distance from Renkrue: 150 miles
Time from Renkrue: 4 days

This section of ocean contains a hidden peril—the Pearl Current. This swift-flowing oceanic current sweeps up from the southern Vohoun Ocean to the northeast toward the Densac Gulf, and can carry unprepared ships hundreds of miles off course with ease. Lavinia's charts indicate the presence of the Pearl Current, but determining when and where it starts and ends is a trickier prospect, as the current's exact shape and width vary.

Once the PCs reach this area, the daily piloting checks to remain on course become more difficult, rising to DC 21. This check rises to DC 23 after one day's failed check, and to DC 27 after two days of failed checks. Characters who aren't careful can be caught up in the current for days or even weeks as they fight to cross through the current. After a total of three successful checks (not necessarily consecutive), the expedition sails clear of the current, at which point the base piloting check drops back to DC 17.

I: Ruja

Distance from Sasserine: 2,505 miles
Distance from Renkrue: 215 miles
Time from Renkrue: 6 days

After nearly two weeks on the open sea, land once again looms on the horizon. For a moment, the PCs may think they've reached the Isle of Dread ahead of schedule, but in truth they've only spotted the island of Ruja, an uninhabited island surrounded by perilous 1,000-foot-high cliffs and crowned with a tangle of thick jungle. Rumors have long held that Ruja is the lair of some form of terrible monster, yet the difficulty of even reaching the jungle peaks above have ensured that the isle's interior has remained unexplored.

The expedition is not scheduled to stop at Ruja—instead, its southwestern cliffs serve as a last landmark on the way to the Isle of Dread. Beyond these cliffs, only 500 miles of open sea lie between the PCs and their goal.

If the PCs wish to explore Ruja, this is an excellent place to expand the adventure. As long as the *Sea Wyvern* (and thus, by extension, the *Blue Nixie*) has enough food stores to make the last two weeks of the voyage, Lavinia has no qualms about stopping for a few days here to let the PCs scratch their itch for exploration. Unfortunately, the interior of Ruja is hardly worth the peril; the jungle peaks are the lairs of relatively unintelligent monsters like rocs, terror birds, monstrous vermin, and oozes. The most intelligent denizens of the Ruja heights are several tribes of bickering Large ettercaps. There is little in the way of treasure waiting to be discovered here.

J: The First Storm

Distance from Sasserine: 2,665 miles
Distance from Ruja: 160 miles
Time from Ruja: 4 days

Up until this point, the expedition has been lucky—they've had clear weather without a storm in sight. That luck ends as they reach this stretch of the Vohoun Ocean. Late at night, the wind whips into a frenzy, and by dawn, the ships are caught in a full-fledged storm. The *Sea Wyvern's* captain must make a DC 20 Profession (sailor) check to maintain control of the ship; failure indicates that the ship is driven off course by the storm. The storm itself has severe winds, but the *Sea Wyvern* is large enough that it weathers the storm well. The next morning, the skies remain cloudy but the wind dies down once again. If the ship was driven off course, the PCs must spend a day getting back on course (after making a DC 19 Knowledge [geography] check to navigate the route).

Unfortunately, the storm has had another effect. The *Blue Nixie* is nowhere to be seen. Lavinia's standing orders in this case to continue on to Farshore and reunite there if the ships get separated should encourage the PCs onward, even though they have no idea if the *Blue Nixie* made it through the storm intact. In fact, the other ship did, but was driven further south and damaged. Lavinia's new course takes her around the west side of the Isle,

and if the PCs contact her somehow (such as via a *sending* spell) she lets them know she and her crew are okay, and that they should continue on their way to Farshore.

K: Journey's End

Distance from Sasserine: 2,815 miles
Distance from the First Storm: 150 miles
Time from the First Storm: 4 days

Cut off from the *Blue Nixie*, the *Sea Wyvern* continues south. At this point in her journey, she encounters one of the most notorious perils of the Vohoun Ocean—Journey's End. Continue with Part Five.

L: The Second Storm (EL 6)

Distance from Sasserine: 3,000 miles
Distance from Journey's End: 185 miles
Time from Journey's End: 5 days

Only five days after the *Sea Wyvern* escapes the clutches of the living sargasso, she encounters her greatest threat yet.

As the sun dawns, the day is overcast and grim. Have the PCs make Spot checks—whoever gets the highest result notices something off the starboard bow: land. The ragged, jungle-choked peaks of the Isle of Dread loom on the horizon. The sight of land brings a cheer from the crew and passengers, and consultation with the sea charts confirms it—the *Sea Wyvern* has nearly reached her goal. All that remains is to sail down the eastern coast to Farshore.

Alas, by the time morning becomes noon, it should be obvious that fate has something else in store for the ship. The rain begins shortly thereafter, and by 2:00 a second storm is in full force. This one is much more powerful than the first—not quite a hurricane, but close. The *Sea Wyvern's* captain must make a DC 30 Profession (sailor) check to stay on course. In addition, the captain must make a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check every hour to avoid rolling or washing (50% chance of either on a failed check).

A roll is when the ship rocks violently to the side as it slides down the face of a large swell, only to rock back to the other direction upon reaching the next swell. Anyone on deck who isn't lashed to something solid must make a DC 12 Balance check or a DC 15 Strength check to avoid falling and sliding toward the edge of a ship. A sliding character can save himself from falling overboard with a DC 12 Reflex check.

A wash is when the ship plows into an oncoming swell, causing a powerful rush of surf to wash over the deck. This occurs 1d6 times before the ship rights itself, and with each wash, any character on deck further toward the bow than the central mast must make a DC 12 Balance check or DC 15 Strength check to avoid being washed overboard; these characters do not get a "last chance" Reflex save to avoid this fate.

Once overboard, it's a DC 20 Swim check to stay afloat. A character washed

overboard starts 1d3×10 feet away from the ship, and drifts a further 1d3×10 feet away each round. Swimming back to the *Sea Wyvern* may be impossible.

At sunset, after the *Sea Wyvern's* captain has made four checks to avoid rolling or washing, a tremendous lurch strikes the ship and the sound of splintering wood fills the air. The ship comes to a sudden stop, and everyone on board must make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid falling prone. The ship has run aground on Masher Reef, about 25 miles northeast of the Isle of Dread. Waves crash against the ship, which now lists perilously to port, but as long as the ship remains grounded, the captain need not make Profession (sailor) checks to avoid a roll or wash.

Creature: Unfortunately, the creatures for which Masher Reef got its name do not take kindly to intruders upon their territory. Only a few rounds after the ship strikes the reef, a huge eel-like fish called a masher explodes from the water. The creature strikes at anyone on deck, attempting to make a quick meal of the intruders.

Masher: hp 68; see Appendix.

Tactics: The masher continues to fight until brought below 20 hit points, at which point it flees back underwater. Characters who move about on the listing deck must spend 2 squares of movement per square if they head "uphill" toward starboard, and anyone running or charging "downhill" toward port must make a DC 12 Balance check to avoid falling. A character who falls ends up in the five-foot-deep water atop Masher Reef.

The ship's captain can make a DC 20 Profession (sailor) check once every minute to attempt to dislodge the *Sea Wyvern* from Masher Reef. Every minute, there's a cumulative 10% chance another masher erupts from the waters to attack.

Development: Once the captain gets the ship off the reef, he must make another 1d6 DC 15 Profession (sailor) checks to avoid rolls or washes. After this, the storm abates somewhat, but the damage is done. Striking the reef has holed the ship in several places, and only by putting the entire crew to work at bailing can she stay afloat. As the night grows darker, the *Sea Wyvern* is in poor shape indeed—continue with Encounter M.

M: Shipwrecked on the Isle of Dread

Distance from Sasserine: 3,025 miles
Distance from the Second Storm: 25 miles
Time from the Second Storm: 1 day

After surviving the second storm, the *Sea Wyvern* is in bad shape. At this point, continue with Concluding the Adventure.

PART FOUR: TAMOACHAN

The jungle claimed this city centuries ago, and now her mysterious stone buildings, towering ziggurats, and rubble-strewn streets have fallen to the creeping vines and towering trees. Built in a bygone age by the Olmans, Tamoachan today is one of the greatest lures for adventurers in the Amedio Jungle—its proximity to shore making it the most tempting target of these ancient ruins. Much of the city has been picked over by thieves and looters, adventurers and scholars, whether they were trying to learn the reason for the city's death or merely seeking its many lost treasures.

Lavinia has promised the gnome explorer Urol Forol the chance to explore these infamous ruins, and has agreed to give him a day to do so. No other crew members set foot on shore at this time, for the ruins of Tamoachan are dangerous. Yet Lavinia is loath to let Urol go it alone—if the PCs don't jump at the chance to explore Tamoachan themselves, she asks them to accompany the gnome, if only to keep him from getting into too much trouble.

Urol's desire to explore Tamoachan arose only a week before the expedition left, when he came into the possession of a tattered map. He purchased the map from a one-legged sailor who claimed to have been given the map by a dying elf fished from the sea. This nameless elf claimed to have been part of an expedition into the ruins, and to have found a previously unexplored section of the city. Unfortunately, his party was attacked by a strange eight-legged lizard with glowing eyes that turned those who saw it to stone—only he escaped back to his ship. Alas, on the voyage back to Sasserine to recruit a new party to explore the ruin, his ship sank in a storm. The elf died soon after and the sailor, having no wish to explore a dangerous ruin, sold the map to Urol for a pretty penny.

Urol shows the map to the PCs if they ask; the section of ruins marked are only an hour's brisk walk into the jungle, the entrance hidden in the lee of a partially collapsed ziggurat. Urol tells the PCs he believes that the strange reptile the elf's party fought was a basilisk, a creature whose gaze petrifies its prey. If this causes the PCs to balk, Urol assures them that they'll be able to kill it easily, and even if one or two of them are turned to stone, he's come prepared with plenty of doses of *stone salve* to undo this fate. Urol doesn't tell the PCs he only has two doses of the stuff, though—certainly, these brave heroes can defeat a silly basilisk before more than two of them are petrified!

What Urol doesn't know is that the map's story, as told him by the one-legged sailor, is a complete fabrication—the only bit of truth to the tale was that this area of the ruins has indeed laid unexplored for many years. The one-legged sailor was in fact a disguised agent of Malcanthet, Demon Queen of Succubi. Ever watchful, she knows that her sometime ally and lover Demogorgon is up to something, yet also knows better than to directly confront the powerful demon lord about it. Consultation with strange oracles deep in the Abyss have led her to the PCs, who for reasons she still doesn't understand are fated to become embroiled in these matters soon enough. Malcanthet wants them on her side as a result—and if possible, without them knowing it.

Tamoachan Ruin Features

The one-hour trek through the jungle to Urol's ruins should go fairly easily, as most of the more dangerous denizens of Tamoachan like in underground chambers. The ruins that the PCs seek generally have ten-foot-high ceilings, and are constructed of blocks of unmortared stone covered with a flaking layer of stucco decorated with ancient images of men and animals.

1. Tchechiwhani's Nest (EL 5)

The jungle parts to reveal the ruins of a large chamber, once held within the root of the ziggurat above but now open to the elements. Images of pouncing and stalking cats grace what is left of the vine-strangled walls. Dozens of mouldering stuffed jungle-cats lie scattered around the edge of the exposed chamber, along with several strangely unweathered statues of men dressed in armor. Of the five passageways that once led further into the ziggurat's depths, only two remain uncollapsed.

Creature: The statues are adventurers, petrified by the gaze of the basilisk that lives here. Called tchechiwhani by the ancients, basilisks were often kept as pets by decadent rulers who fitted the dangerous creatures with helmets to block their petrifying gaze—helmets that could be removed at range with a hooked pole when said rulers wished to make statues of their vanquished and captured enemies.

This basilisk does not wear such a helmet. It spends much of its time sleeping in a nest of rubble in the northernmost collapsed passageway, but if it hears anyone in area 1, it quickly slithers out to investigate. It avoids pursuing creatures into the chambers, as it dislikes the confined spaces within (and is unsettled by the sound of area 2's denizen when it sis roused).

Basilisk: hp 45; *Monster Manual* 24.

Treasure: A DC 25 Search of the rubble-choked passageways uncovers a somewhat damaged marble statuette of a reclining humanoid figure with head turned and legs drawn up worth 78 gp and a small silver pyramid worth 3 gp.

2. Xochiquetzal's Chamber (EL 5)

A huge statue of a lumbering man outfitted in decayed skins and cracked skulls, his gaping and tusked mouth wide enough to swallow a halfling whole stands to the north. A battered but once intricately carved well sits to the south. The whole area is littered with skulls and shards of rusted metal.

The well in this room once contained a wondrous substance called liquid light, but a recent earthquake cracked the depths of the well shaft and opened it into a network of narrow fissures deep below the ground. A gibbering mouther named Xochiquetzal slithered up through these fissures, and has dwelt in the ruins for many years. It avoids the basilisk by slithering through these fissures to hunt in the surrounding ruins when hunger strikes.

Xochiquetzal, Gibbering Mouther: hp 42; *Monster Manual* 126.

Treasure: Xochiquetzal leaves the remains of its meals in its well, and is slowly filling the depths with bones. A half-hour search of the well unearths thousands of bones, along with some treasure: six turquoise gems worth 50 gp each, a +1 *dagger*, what appears to be an ivory wand but is in fact a folded fan of ivory slats worth 180 gp, a platinum bracelet worth 230 gp, and 124 gp.

Malcanthet's Plan

In years past, a lesser varrangoin outcast named Sutolore stole a powerful artifact from an enclave on the Abyss—the *tooth of Ahazu* (one of the *teeth of Dahlver-Nar*, an artifact detailed in the *Tome of Magic*). Sutolore sold the item in the Abyssal market of Broken Reach to an agent of Malcanthet in exchange for a sinecure in her domain. When Malcanthet identifies the PCs as possible agents in her efforts to undermine Demogorgon, she realizes that if they recover the *tooth of Ahazu*, their chances of success once they reach the Abyss will greatly improve, yet if they fail, she doesn't want Demogorgon or his agents to be able to trace any link back to her. She just needs to get the *tooth of Ahazu* into the PCs' hands in a subtle way.

Malcanthet sends Sutolore to the Material Plane to hide the *tooth of Ahazu* under the Fangs of Zotzilaha on the Isle of Dread in a hidden chamber unlikely to be visited by others for ages to come. Entry to this hidden chamber is controlled by a small golden idol of the bat god Camazotz; Sutolore steals the idol from the chamber then flies north to Tamoachan, placing the idol in the ruins detailed here among other treasures sacred to Camazotz. While Sutolore was placing the idol, another of Malcanthet's agents (this one magically disguised as a one-legged sailor) sold a map to the ruin to Urol, knowing that he would be involved with the PCs' coming expedition.

If all goes according to Malcanthet's plan, the PCs should stop off at Tamoachan, recover the bat idol from the ruins, travel on to the Isle of Dread, later find the cave where the *tooth of Ahazu* has been hidden, and then use the bat idol to recover the *tooth*. To the PCs (and hopefully anything observing them from afar), the discovery of the *tooth* should be a logical reward for their explorations. Which is how the Queen of Succubi prefers it.

3. Mictlan's Portal

A ten-foot-wide, fifty-foot-long landing overlooks a larger chamber to the north, accessible by a short flight of downward sloping stairs. The entrance to the larger room is framed by dozens of skeletons carved into the fifty-foot-wide arch, their bones intertwined with hundreds of carved snakes. Unnerving ripples of black smoke slither and dance among the carvings.

A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that this archway marks the entrance to the ancient Olman land of the dead, marking the chambers beyond as an ancient crypt, or perhaps a place where the priests prepared the dead for their journey into the afterlife. The ripples of black smoke are the remnants of an ancient and mostly malfunctioning necromantic trap. Any character that steps throguh the arch must make a DC 15 Will save or be shaken for one round—this effect is harmless enough in the long run, but it prevents the jittery basilisk from pursuing foes into this chamber.

4. Ancient Tamoachan (EL 6)

The floor of this large chamber once contained a breathtaking carving of an ancient city, yet time has taken its toll on the map-like carving, reducing it to a tangled mess that, ironically, almost seems to reflect ruined Tamoachan above. The walls are decorated with brightly colored frescoes depicting a royal court in ceremonial garb and a king arrayed with his magnificent armies. Pathways wind through the ruins, affording a twisting route through the rubble. In the center of the room is a wide plaza, in the middle of which rests a low stone table.

This chamber once served the priests of Tamoachan as a place to prepare the dead for burial in area **10**. By preparing the dead in the center of this model of the city, they hoped to help ease the deceased into the afterlife by surrounding him with familiar vistas.

Trap: The ancients also protected this chamber with a devious trap. Three rounds after intruders enter this chamber, a *wall of fire* appears along the southern wall. The wall advances north at a speed of 15 feet, extinguishing when it hits the north wall. Three rounds later, if any living creature remains in the room, a new wall appears and sweeps north. The password to deactivate the trap, "Uetzcayotl," has unfortunately been lost to time. The fifteen-foot-wide collapse along the eastern wall represents the only safe zone in the room once the trap activates.

***Wall of Fire* Trap**: CR 6; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; onset delay 3 rounds; spell effect (*wall of fire*, 9th-level wizard, 65-ft. length, 2d4 fire damage to creatures within 10 feet of north face, 1d4 to creatures within 20 feet of north face, 2d6+9 fire damage to any creature that passes through the wall); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

Development: Tlanextli, the will-o'-wisp that has claimed these ruins as its home, is likely to hear any loud noises from this chamber and comes to investigate, seeking to kill any lone characters it finds. If it finds more than one PC alive, it remains invisible and follows them, hoping they break through the iron wall in area **6**.

5. The New Tunnel

This tunnel appears to be a natural vent through the stone, rather than a constructed entrance.

The chambers between area **4** and **6** have collapsed; this tunnel opened up during the earthquake that struck the area a few years ago and damaged the well in area **2**, only recently restoring access to the chambers beyond.

6. Antechamber (EL 6)

The walls of this room are covered with eroded glyphs and hieroglyphic images depicting what appear to be batlike creatures feasting on humanoids. The eastern wall beyond a low archway in the room consists of a strangely out of place sheet of iron.

A DC 25 Spellcraft check identifies the metal wall as the result of a *wall of iron* spell. It completely seals off entrance to the room beyond, and is wedged into

groves that run around the alcove's perimeter. The wall can be battered down with enough force, something Urol urges the PCs to do since it's obvious the ruins continue on the other side of the wall.

Iron Wall: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60 hp per 5-ft. section; Break DC 29.

Creature: A will-o'-wisp named Tlanextli dwells in this chamber, cut off from the rest of its lair by the *wall of iron* that Sutolore triggered when the two fought several weeks ago. Tlanextli views the chambers beyond as its empire, and the thought of another creature dwelling therein when it can't reach these chambers has all but driven the aberration mad with frustration. It views the arrival of the PCs with an optimistic curiosity, and holds back its natural instinct to feed from their emotions or to attack in favor of remaining invisible, following quietly, and hoping they find a way through to the room beyond.

Tlanextli, Will-o'-Wisp: hp 40; *Monster Manual* 255.

7. Tloquatcha's Crypt (EL 5)

This chamber bears a strange resemblance to the previous one, in that the floor consists of a stone scale model of an ancient city. Yet whereas the previous model was terribly damaged, this chamber seems relatively well preserved. The layout and style of the city is quite different, with four wide canals converging upon a large lake in the center, from which rises a great stone pyramid. Mighty temples rise from the low angular buildings, while the stone walls depict lifelife depictions of leering bats, lizards, and snakes.

When the varrangoin Sutolore intruded upon this chamber some time ago, he clashed with Tlanextli the will-o'-wisp in this chamber. After wounding Tlanextli and forcing it to flee, Sutolore pressed deeper in here to place the bat idol he stole from the Isle of Dread. Unfortunately, he triggered a trap in area 8 that caused a *wall of iron* to seal him into these chambers.

The city depicted here shows a section of ancient Tamoachan that served as a necropolis for the city's dead. A DC 30 Knowledge (history) check reveals as much.

Trap: The central pyramid is actually a sarcophagus. A DC 20 Search check reveals that the top level of the pyramid can be pushed aside, revealing a hollow within occupied by a mummified Olman priest, bound in a fetal position by lengths of brittle leather cords. The priest is quite dead, but the golden ceremonial necklace around its neck looks valuable. Unfortunately, the air in the sarcophagus is thick with ancient disease. When opened, a cloud of dust blooms from within, filling a 20-foot-radius spread. All creatures in this area must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or contract mummy rot (*Monster Manual* 190).

Mummy Rot Trap: CR 5; mechanical device; touch tigger; no reset; multiple targets (all creatures in a 20-foot spread);

mummy rot (DC 16 Fortitude resists); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

Treasure: A ceremonial golden necklace carved to resemble a string of bat and lizard heads still hangs from the dead priest's neck. This is in fact a *strand of prayer beads* with a *bead of blessing* and a *bead of healing*.

Development: The pristine condition of this chamber is fascinating to Urol, and he demands to be left here for as long as possible so he can make sketches of the room's carvings and sculptures. When finally forced to leave, the little gnome is uncharacteristically morose. Once reminded of the mysteries that await him on the Isle of Dread, though, he cheers right back up.

8. The Great Calendar Stone

A huge circular disk of stone dominates the floor of this chamber, its face carved with dozens of concentric rings of hieroglyphs and shapes. A filthy nest of bones and rubble sits atop it.

This disc is an ancient Olman calendar stone, used once to track the movement of celestial bodies.

Creature: The outcast varrangoin Sutolore was once a member of a large tribe that roosted in the ruined fortress of Overlook on the seventy-third layer of the Abyss, known as the Wells of Darkness. After crossing the tribe's ruling coven, Sutelore fled with a relic known as the *tooth of Ahazu*. Sutolore sold the relic in the town of Broken Reach on the first layer of the Abyss to a succubus in Malcanthet's service. Unfortunately for Sutolore, Malcanthet's plots left him little time to explore the hedonistic paradise of her Abyssal realm of Shendilavri before he was sent to the Material Plane on an important mission for the Queen of Succubi.

After reaching the ruins, Sutolore found them to be occupied by a territorial will-o'-wisp. A battle ensued, and although it resulted in a draw, Sutolore found himself trapped in the ruins by a *wall of iron*—a magical trap designed by the ancient Olmans to imprison would-be graverobers in the tomb.

Since being captured, Sutolore has survived on the rancid water at the bottom of the shaft in area **10** and has eaten nearly all of the foul-tasting hooded tarantulas that dwelt along the walls of that shaft. Exceptionally hungry and frustated at his predicament, the varrangoin is in ripe condition to attack anything that crosses his path.

SUTOLORE **CR 6**

Male lesser varrangoin
CE Medium magical beast (extraplanar)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Abyssal, Varrangoin

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16
hp 32 (5 HD) **DR** 10/cold iron
Resists acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 12
Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1
Weakness light blindness

Spd 20 ft. fly 40 ft. (average)
Melee bite +7 (1d6+2) and
2 claws +5 (1d4+1) and
tail sting +5 (1d4+1 plus poison)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7
Atk Options Flyby Attack, poison (DC 13, 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex)
Special Actions breath weapon (30 ft. cone of fire; 3d6; Ref DC 13 half; at will)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 8
SQ death throes
Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Multiattack
Skills Hide +11, Listen +2, Move Silently +11, Spot +2

Death Throes (Ex) When killed, Sutolore explodes in a 20-foot radius burst of energy. This explosion deals 3d6 fire damage (Ref DC 13 half).
Light Blindness (Ex) Exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a *daylight* spell) blinds Sutolore for 1 round. After that, he takes a –1 penalty on attacks, saves, and skill checks while operating in bright light.

Tactics: As soon as Sutolore hears anything moving about in area **7**, he leaves his shabby nest on the calendar stone to investigate. Upon finding the PCs, he shrieks and attacks with his breath weapon while flying circles in the large room. He resorts to melee combat only if his foes seem resistant to fire or if he's confronted in a smaller area. If reduced to less than 10 hit points, Sutolore abandons the fight and attempts to escape.

If the PCs haven't slain Tlanextli when Sutolore attacks, the will-o'-wisp joins the fight, perhaps allying itself with the PCs against their foe. Such an allegiance lasts only as long as Sutolore remains in Tlanextli's lair—as soon as he's slain or driven off, Tlanextli turns its wrath on the PCs.

9. Guardians of the Well of Death

Twin statues of men dressed in strange, ancient armor and wearing towering headdresses made of coiled snakes and bat wings stand at either side of an arched doorway here. Beyond the archway beckons a circular room, its walls adorned with dozens of niches in which rest the desiccated bodies of long-dead men and women.

These statues once triggered the *wall of iron* trap built to wall in grave-robbers; Sutolore ironically triggered it when he added the golden bat statuette to one of the crypts in area **10**. The trap was intended to trigger only once, and no longer poses a threat.

10. The Well of Death

A yawning shaft descends into gloom here. The walls of the shaft are fitted with hundreds of niches, upon which lie the dusty bones of heroes, priests, kings, queens, and warriors of a bygone age. Resting upon the topmost niche, cradled in the arms of a skeleton, is a glittering golden statuette of a bat.

The shaft here is 100 feet deep, although the bottom 20 feet consists of stagnant water that has drained in here from above. None of the bodies here are buried with anything of value, with one exception.

Treasure: The golden bat idol clutched by the topmost body is a fantastic work of art, with rubies for eyes and tiny slivers of pearl for fangs and claws. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check identifies it as a representation

of Camazotz, an ancient god of bats and the night. Its presence here is not unusual, since much of the iconigraphy on the walls indicates that the builders of this crypt worshiped him, but if this Knowledge (religion) check exceeds the DC by 10, the character notices that the craftsmanship of the idol is leaner, more angular than that of the images of Camazotz from the surrounding walls—almost as if whoever created the idol were from a different region entirely. The idol radiates faint transmutation magic, and an *identify* or similar spell reveals that the idol is in fact some sort of key. In any event, the idol itself is worth 2,500 gp, so it's unlikely the PCs will leave it behind. If they do, Malcanthet may be forced to intervene, sending another agent to retrieve the idol and surreptitiously return it to the possessions of one of the PCs.

In any event, once the PCs have explored the ruins and convinced Urol it's time to go, continue with Part Two above.

PART FIVE: SARGASSO

Sailors call it Journey's End, and speak of it in hushed tones—a floating graveyard that scours the ocean, constantly seeking new ships to add to its collection. This is the sargasso of the Mother of All, and it represents the greatest danger the PCs are destined to face on their voyage to the Isle of Dread.

The *Sea Wyvern* encounters the strange sargasso bed after the first storm separates her from the *Blue Nixie*. None on board notice the sargasso's advent; it comes upon the ship at night, under the cover of an overcast sky. The next morning, the crew wakens to an unsettling sight.

As the gray dawn breaks, burning fitfully through the morning fog to light the sea, something seems strange about the waters below. They seem almost solid, as if the sea had formed some strange sort of skin. The air seems dead as well, and the sails hang limp, heavy with moisture from the receding fog.

Finally, the mist begins to clear, and what is unveiled is not the gently rolling vista of the sea but a wet green field of weed. The swath of dirty green stretches flatly in all directions. To the stern, it extends for perhaps a half mile, beyond which lie the open waters of the mocking sea. In all other directions, the weed extends to the horizon. Trapped within its vice are dozens of other long-dead ships, their hulls protruding from the sargasso at odd angles, masts askew, sails hanging in tatters. One such ship lies mired only six hundred feet to the port, and it seems to be in better shape than the others. Perhaps most unnerving, however, is neither the sight nor smell of so much sun-baked seaweed. It is the unnatural silence, for the thick choking green has robbed the *Sea Wyvern* even of the strangely comforting sound of water lapping against her hull. It is not a healthy silence. It is the silence of a graveyard.

The Sargasso

Characters may make a Knowledge (nature), Profession (sailor), or bardic knowledge check to determine what they may have heard about their most recent plight.

DC 15: The swath of seaweed is a sargasso, a treacherous patch of vegetation often driven by storms only to collect in regions of the ocean that even the wind and currents seem to fear. A patch a mile across would be unusual, yet this swath stretches to the horizon.

DC 20: Sailors call it Journey's End, and speak of it in hushed tones—rumors of a living island that appears from the mists after storms. This living land is said to have a black soul that fuels the hunger of children rumored to live within its green embrace.

vel, a ship hauntingly similar to the *Sea Wyvern*, has been torn apart by the vegetation's rampant growth. A plate near the stern gives the vessel's name—*Rage*.

This caravel lies two hundred yards away from the *Sea Wyvern*, her hull crushed and her decks listing perilously to port. As the PCs approach the *Rage*, be sure to emphasize the quality of the sargasso—the dampness, the disorientation of walking on unsure ground, and the strange currents in the puddles that swirl around the heroes' feet, almost as if the fronds of the weed itself were stirring.

The timbers of the *Rage's* deck are rotting, and squelch nastily underfoot as the PCs board the wreck. Ship beams have been ruptured by the vines, which cling to every surface. As the PCs explore the *Rage*, they note signs of combat—a swath of dried blood, a broken rapier's blade lodged in a mast, or signs of frantic fortification.

1. Upper Deck

The upper deck is wreathed in slippery seaweed and swaths of what appear to be thick green mucus. Although almost everything has been smashed, the remains of three dozen burnt torches and an upturned cauldron that seems to have recently been filled with oil are still visible. Anyone who scrapes away the mucus or vines and makes a DC 15 Search check discovers that in many spots, the wood appears to have been partially burnt.

2. Crew Room

The doors from the deck above have been barred with timbers, but to no avail, as they lay smashed herein along with a broken ballista. Although once the ship had lower decks, they have been completely filled with weed and hold nothing of interest to the PCs.

DC 25: Journey's End is one of the sea's more terrible blights, and is said to be able to crush ships in its grip. Its children are awful creatures formed of the weed itself, and are said to rise by night to slake their hunger upon any their green mother has caught in her grasp.

General Features

This is one case where the half-whispered rumors are true—the *Sea Wyvern* has fallen prey to a sinister and dangerous menace known as the Mother of All, a hateful aquatic plant. The Mother of All has grown enormous over the decades, and measures well over ten miles in diameter now. Fortunately for the PCs, her fronds are mostly inert except at her core, where she remains horribly, hungrily alive.

In most places the sargasso surface consists of a heavy mat of seaweed. The mat is ten feet thick, and dense enough to walk on (although characters must spend two squares of movement to enter a square of heavy sargasso mat, and the DC of Tumble checks increases by 5).

Near the sargasso's heart, the green fronds rise up into large forests of stinking, rotting kelp, forming mounds of the stuff from which brown and green arms almost like branches or even trees protrude.

The Mother of All dwells at the sargasso's center, in the hull of her first victim, a ship called the *Thunderer*. She can vaguely sense the presence of life moving about on her fronds, and the first night after the PCs become mired in the weed, she sends the first of her children to greet them.

In any event, the *Sea Wyvern* is doomed to rot in this green embrace. Attempts to burn or cut away the weed might allow the ship to make a few dozen feet of headway each day, but the stuff grows back with unnatural speed. Eventually, the PCs should be driven to seek out clues to their predicament in nearby wrecks, such as the wreck of the *Rage*, which lies only a few hundred feet away.

The Wreck of the Rage

The wreck is strangled with weeds and vines, almost as if immense green claws hold the ship in their grasp. In many places the cara-

3. Captain's Cabin (EL 6)

Beyond the crew room lies the captain's cabin. A large hole is in the floor, through which the green of the sargasso can be seen. PCs that enter this room can make DC 15 Spot checks to notice that a tattered journal lies on the edge of a table across the room. Unfortunately, the ship's deck has sunk, and the journal now lies precariously perched at the table's edge.

As soon as anyone enters the room on foot, the floorboards twist and buckle, sending the journal into the sargasso 5 feet below. The journal's pages can last for up to three rounds in the soggy water of the pit before the words contained within become illegible. It's a simple matter to leap into the hole to retrieve the book, but unfortunately, the pit is far from uninhabited.

Creature: Three aquatic assassin vines, living in symbiosis with the strands of the sargasso, grow in the weed nearby. Any creature that comes within reach (such as anyone leaping into the hole to nab a fallen journal) is immediately attacked.

These assassin vines are identical to the ones in the *Monster Manual*, save that they have a swim speed of 5 feet and can survive in air or water with ease.

Assassin Vines (3): hp 30 each; *Monster Manual* 20.

Treasure: The journal chronicles the tale of a monk named Anhelm and his journey along the southern coast of the Amedio to visit the natives of the Isles of Axuxal. The document tells of a fierce storm that drove the *Rage* far out to sea, but it is the entries on the last few pages that are of the greatest interest to the PCs—see Handout 1.

The First Night (EL 7 or 8)

Even if the PCs head out into the sargasso at once, they are unlikely to discover the wreck of the *Thunderer* before night falls. As the sun sets, allow the PCs to make DC 15 Spot checks. With a success, they notice shapes stirring in the distant green, and as the last light of day fades and the mist rises once again, they may just see the shape of horror rising from the weeds.

Handout 1

This foul green land is stained with blight. We tried to cut away the weed, but to no avail, and soon had to abandon the tools we had used, their edges dulled to misery.

At noon I ordered Carus and Twaid out onto the weed to explore. How large can such a place be? The crew grow restless.

It is dusk. Efforts to destroy the weed have failed. I have explored what I could, but this is all mists and weed. When will Carus and Twaid return? Despite the calm, the night is not still, and I feel eyes watching me.

The night brought noises but no attack, but I fear for my brothers, I heard cries in the night—was it them? I feel something is alive here, but what can it be? Captain Grough claimed the land had a black heart—maybe Carus and Twaid will have some useful information when they return.

Afternoon. I have decided to find my brothers, and have taken Ranis and Pale with me. They are good brothers, and will aid me as best they can. We shall find the land's black heart.

We headed east, making good headway as only brothers can. By night we had covered many miles but saw nothing but more of the green.

It is night, and I can hear life. Something moves at the edge of sight. Why do they not show themselves? I can hear them whisper one word, over and over, "Outsiders..."

It is afternoon. We have come to a terrible place, a forest of weed grown in mockery of real life, a mire of skeletal ships. How many souls have been lost here? Our supplies grow wan, we must return by the morn to the Rage.

It is dawn, and we have returned to the Rage too late. The crew are gone and the green holds her ever fast. Where have they gone?

I can hear them in the day now. They are outside. They are watching. They want me to join them, but I shall not.

Ranis and Pale are dead. They came through the mist, yet they were not the same. I knew them by the tatters of clothes draped over the green that took their flesh. What wore their bodies has been vanquished, but I know now that these were but the children of what dwells at this land's heart. I must seek the mother at this heart, for to destroy the mother is to destroy the brood. If only I had...

With night comes the fog (reducing visibility to 30 feet and providing concealment [20% miss chance] to all creatures within) and the children of the sargasso—vine horrors. These plant monsters are vaguely humanoid, fatted on the bodies of the sargasso's victims and hungry to add more to the hive. The vaguely humanoid plant monsters share a rudimentary hive mind—not enough to communicate with each other, but enough for them to receive impulses from the Mother of All that dwells at this land's core. She senses new life on the *Sea Wyvern* (or at the PCs' camp, if night catches them elsewhere on the sargasso), and sends the vine horrors to collect.

The vine horrors are relentless foes, and the sargasso hides hundreds, if not thousands, of the creatures. During the first night, you should run as many vine horror attacks as you think the PCs can bear; if the fights begin to feel repetitive, feel free to let dawn come and send the monsters back to their

watery homes below the sargasso surface. It's best to focus on the battles that involve the PCs. Feel free to have some of the unnamed colonists go missing, but the named NPCs shouldn't be idly killed off.

Vine horrors generally attack in groups of 3–4. The goal isn't to overwhelm the PCs, simply to impress upon them the relentless nature of their foes. As they attack, they whisper and call to the PCs, speaking only one word over and over: "Outsiders...".

VINE HORROR **CR 4**

NE Medium plant (aquatic)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16

hp 42 (5 HD)

Immune plant traits

Fort +8, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +7 (1d6+4)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +7

Atk Options Blind Fight

Special Actions *animate vines*

Abilities Str 18, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 10

SQ malleability

Feats Alertness, Blind Fight

Skills Hide +0 (+15 in swamps), Listen +3, Spot +2, Swim +16

***Animate Vines* (Sp)** A vine horror can use this ability at will to animate any single strand of sargasso within 90 feet. An animated vine fights as an assassin vine (*Monster Manual* 20). If the vine horror is incapacitated or moves out of range, the vine returns to normal.

Malleability (Ex) Because of its unusual body structure, a vine horror can compress its body enough to squeeze through a 1-inch-wide crack. Cracks and similar openings that are 1 inch or more in width do not slow the vine horror at all.

The Second, Third, and Subsequent Nights

The war of attrition builds. Unless the PCs intervene or help with ideas of defenses on board, colonists and crew go missing as the days pass. Before long, things should grow desperate, and if the PCs don't seek out the source of the horror on their own, perhaps Urol, Amella, Skald, or even Avner suggests they do their thing and play the part of heroes. Until the PCs destroy the Mother of All, they have little to look forward to but night after night of relentless assaults by her children.

Other Shipwrecks

The *Rage* and the *Sea Wyvern* are far from the only wrecks mired in the weed. Other wrecks litter the sargasso, yet these are little more than sad empty shells covered in the foul mucus and vines of the land. If you wish, some of these wrecks could hide vine horrors or aquatic assassin vines.

Some of the ships are over fifty years old, as anyone with a DC 15 Knowledge (history) or Profession (sailor) check can tell. Valuable objects may be found within them at your discretion.

The Wreck of the Thunderer

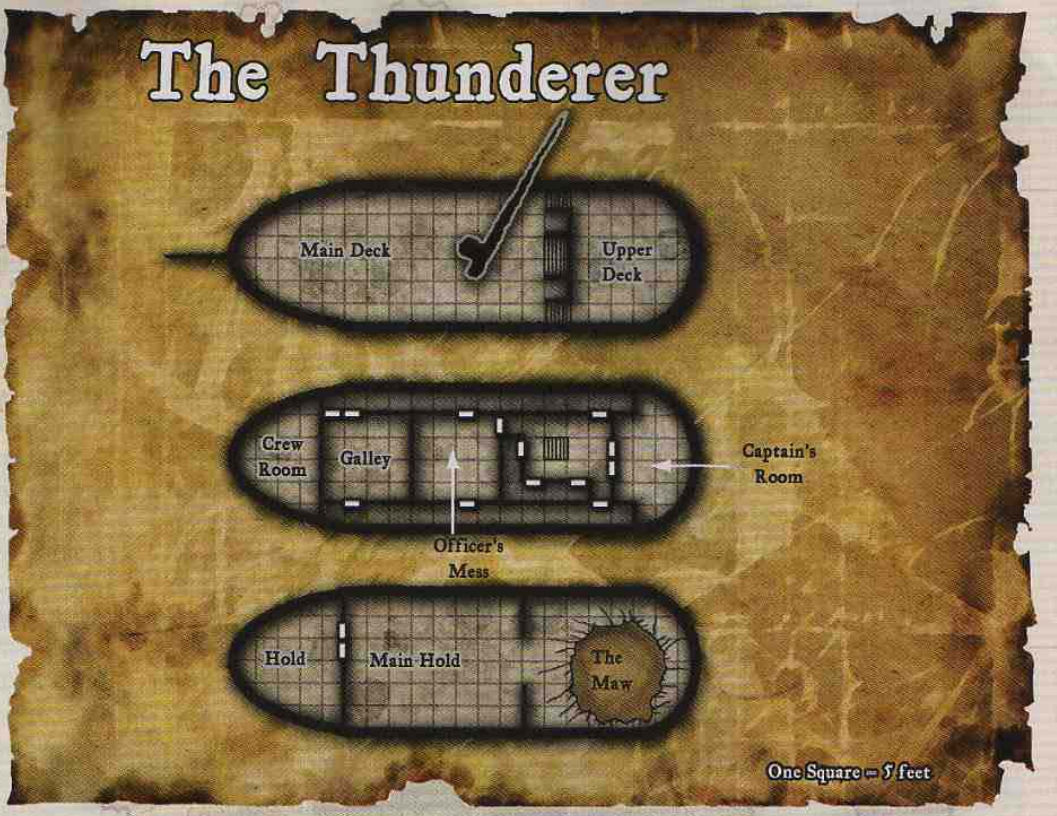
Eventually, through luck or careful planning, the PCs should come upon the forest of kelp at the sargasso's heart. The fact that only here does the landscape change should pique their interest, and as they approach more closely, they discover something lodged at the heart of this land—the wreck of a caravel called the *Thunderer*.

This place is the home of the Mother. Her fronds extend outward for miles, comprising the sargasso itself, yet here in the hold of this ship she is horribly, malignantly alive. As the PCs approach the ship, they hear a strange whispering voice in their minds—not words so much as a mental beacon. Anyone who looks back across the sargasso sees the entire place coming alive. The Mother has sensed their approach, and if the PCs cannot destroy her soon, her thousand young converge at the core to tear the PCs apart.

The time the PCs have to explore the *Thunderer* is dynamic; the slow march of the vine horrors converging upon them is meant primarily to instill a sense of dread, and is not a promise of a mass battle (unless the PCs decide to retreat from the *Thunderer* to rest, perhaps).

Exploring the Wreck (EL 7)

Unlike the other wrecks, the original skeletons of the crew remain aboard, soggy bones mingled with broken chests, weapons, and rigging. The wreck itself is nearly sunken into the weed. It's a mere five-foot climb (DC 10 Climb check) to clamber onto the main deck. The lower decks are accessable from above, but are located below the level of the weed surface. Along the walls, fronds and feelers of seaweed protrude and twitch.



Within the *Thunderer* wait six more vine horrors, and in order to reach the Mother of All the PCs need to confront and defeat them. Feel free to have the PCs encounter them in two groups of three, and try to time them organically at stressful points during the exploration. In all rooms below decks, fronds of weed protruding from between boards give the vine horrors plenty of targets to animate to aid in their attacks on the PCs.

Treasure: The *Thunderer's* hold still contains much of her valuable cargo, and a quick search of the rotten chests kept herein uncovers quite a lot of booty, including 1,200 gp, 462 pp, four fine scrimshaw carvings (each depicting one of the seasons and worth 250 gp if cleaned) a quartet of golden goblets worth 100 gp each, a silver church candelabrum worth 350 gp, an enormous steel barnacle-covered shield depicting sharks devouring men (a *+1 animated tower shield*), and a watertight bone scroll tube containing an arcane scroll of *hold monster*, *waves of fatigue*, and *permanency*.

The Birthing Maw (EL 8)

When characters finally reach the lowest level of the ship, in the aft hold labeled "The Maw," they come to the lair of the Mother of All:

> A huge section of the hull has rotted away here, leaving a stinking pit with walls of writhing green and brown vegetation. These walls writhe with horrible half-formed life, semi-human shapes twisting and spasming from thick tumescent stalks like anthropomorphic fruits ready for harvest. The pit drops away into a noisome, unseen depth, certainly far deeper than sea level, into an unknown hell below.

The Maw itself is 100 feet deep and lined with young vine horrors—walls of screaming seedlings and writhing adolecents waiting to mature, a process that takes several weeks. At the shaft's deepest point is a swill of water and decay, and it is here that the Mother of All dwells.

The shaft is 25 feet in diameter, and the air within is stifling hot and foul. Any creature that enters the pit must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d6 rounds. The unformed and growing

Scaling the Adventure

"The Sea Wyvern's Wake" is designed for a group of four 5th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 3rd–4th level characters. Simply adjust any NPC character levels by 1 for every level by which your party's average deviates from 5.

Reduce the flotsam ooze to a Large creature with 6 Hit Dice. *Purity's Prow* should have a further 10 to 20 points of damage to her hull and rigging. Replace the seven-headed hydra in aea E with a five- or six-headed hydra. Mashers encountered should be much more skittish, and retreat back into hiding in their reef as soon as they take a total of 20 points of damage.

In Tamoachan, replace the basilisk with a grick or a carrion crawler. Replace the gibbering mouther with a gray ooze. The *wall of fire* trap in area 4 should not move. Remove Tlanextli from the adventure, and make Sutolore a 6 Hit Die half-red dragon dire bat. Remove one or two of the assassin vines from the wreck of the *Rage*, and have the PCs encounter vine horrors in groups of one or two at most. The Mother of All should be replaced by a half-fiend vine horror.

vine horrors in the walls twitch and writhe to the touch, but are incapable of attacking. It's possible to clamber down the shaft with a DC 20 Climb check.

Creature: The Mother of All dwells at the bottom of this shaft, yet she is capable of sinking into the surrounding sargasso and reappearing at any point in the mire by using *transport via plants*. If the PCs attempt to attack her from above, she simply appears at the top of the shaft, extruding forth from the rim of the Maw to strike at her enemies.

Mother of All: hp 105; see Appendix.

Development: When reduced to zero hit points, the Mother collapses in on herself and dies—a writhing mass of rotting vegetation that howls and shrieks until finally it lies still. A moment later, the sargasso itself wakens, as the countless of vine horrors that still live within feel the death of their Mother. Without her to hold their forms, they rapidly fall apart into sludge. A few rounds after that, the sargasso shudders and shakes as it begins to unravel from the center. The first to collapse is the maw itself, which collapses over a period of two minutes, filling with seawater at a rate of 5 feet per round. The land quickly follows, and within an hour the whole place has lost its cohesion.

With the exception of the *Sea Wyvern*, the remaining ships mired in the sargasso sink as the mass drifts apart. The dissolution churns the waters of the sea somewhat, and it's a DC 15 Swim check to stay afloat. Luckily, the *Thunderer* collapses into ruin as the sargasso melts away, leaving in its wake plenty of driftwood for the PCs to cling to (negating the need for Swim checks to keep from sinking). In 1d4 hours, the *Sea Wyvern*, captained by Amella in the PCs' absence, appears on the horizon to reclaim her floundering owners. By the time the PCs are safely back on board, all trace of Journey's End has gone.

The expedition is now free to continue on to the last leg of their journey, as detailed in Part Three above.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After escaping the perils of Masher Reef in encounter L, the crippled *Sea Wyvern* limps along the waves. It should be obvious to the PCs their vessel will not reach Farshore—that they will be lucky to reach any shore. The closest stretch of land beckons only 25 miles away, where a narrow strip of beach along a thick wall of jungle might afford somewhere safe to land.

The storm continues through the night. Although the winds abate enough that there's no need for Profession (sailor) checks to avoid rolls or washes, it's strong enough that the tattered ship seems in danger of sinking at any second. Caught by the storm and the tide, the badly listing *Sea Wyvern* is driven toward the northern shore of the Isle of Dread. The primeval vista looms larger before the PCs through the driving rain, periodically lit by flashes of lightning. Suddenly, the ship lurches again, throwing everyone to the deck. The *Sea Wyvern* tilts crazily to the side, lurches one last time, and rolls. The cold dark sea rushes up to meet the PCs, and in a cacaphonous roar of wave and ruin, all goes dark...

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTERS

Masher

This wormlike fish measures nearly thirty feet from tip to tail. Its face is a terrible circular maw of grinding teeth, with two beady eyes peering out from the crown of its head. Large spines rise from its sinuous back, shuddering and rattling with menace.

MASHER **CR 6**

Always N Huge animal (aquatic)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural)

hp 68 (8 HD)

Fort +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

Spd 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee bite +12 (3d6+12)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +22

Atk Options poison spines

Abilities Str 27, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Hide +4 (+12 in coral reefs)

Environment warm oceans (coral reefs)

Organization solitary, pair, or school (3–8)

Treasure none

Advancement 9–16 HD (Huge), 17–32 HD (Gargantuan)

Poison Spines (Ex) When angered, a masher extends several of poisonous spines from its back. The fish is adept at reflexively aiming these spines at any creature it can sense. It can use its spines to make attacks of opportunity on any creature that attacks it with any melee weapon, provided the masher threatens the attacking foe. Attacks made with these spines are at +12, with a hit inflicting 1d6+8 points of damage. A creature struck by a masher's spine must make a DC 18 Fortitude save to resist taking 1d6 points of Constitution damage. One minute later, the creature must save again to resist taking a further 2d6 points of Constitution damage.

Skills A masher's coloration grants it a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks made while within five feet of a coral reef.

These wormlike fish move slowly along coral reefs, crushing and eating coral

growth by mashing it with their powerful jaws. They are exceptionally territorial, and if threatened are prone to attacking in "self-defense" with a ferocity generally associated only with the most cantankerous of predators.

Masher steaks are particularly delicious, and are considered an exotic delicacy in many ports. Preparation of masher for consumption is a delicate process, as their poison glands run throughout their body. With a DC 22 Profession (cook) check, the food is safe to eat. Consumption of an improperly prepared masher steak results in poisoning as if the feaster had been stuck by one of the fish's spines.

Mother of All

This dislocated sack of foul smelling vegetation is wreathed in screaming humanoid forms that struggle to free themselves from the foul flesh. A vast distended belly bathed in foul green mucus hangs from the vaguely humanoid form. Infantile cries echo from the hideous passengers that slowly pull themselves from their mother. Twenty feet tall, this grotesque hybrid of woman and plant is a nightmare of mucoid arms and clustered eyes. It is a deviant thing of rot, a pyramidical bulk that rises to a head of eyes and barbed, thorny teeth.

Mother of All **CR 8**

Always N (any) Huge plant (aquatic)

Init –2; **Senses** all-around vision, low-light vision.; Listen +13, Spot +17

Aura babbling young

Languages Aquan, Common; limited telepathy

AC 16, touch 6, flat-footed 16 (–2 Dex, –2 size, +10 natural)

hp 105 (10 HD); DR 5/cold iron

Resist cold 10

Immune electricity, plant traits

Fort +15, **Ref** +1, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; transport via sargasso

Melee bite +15 (2d6+10) and 2 claws +13 (1d6+5)

Space 15 ft. **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +7; Grp +25

Attack Options carried progeny

Abilities Str 30, Dex 7, Con 22, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10

SQ amphibious, sargasso, spawn

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Multiattack

Skills Listen +13, Spot +17, Swim +18

Environment ocean

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 11–18 HD (Huge), 19–30 HD (Gargantuan)

All-Around Vision (Ex) The Mother of All can see in all directions at once, thanks to the immature vine horrors linked to her. It gets a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks, and cannot be flanked.

Carried Progeny (Ex) The immature vine horrors that cover the Mother of All constantly lash out at any creature that gets too close. Any creature adjacent to the Mother of All at the start of the Mother's turn is subject to a slam attack from the carried progeny (+13 melee, 1d6+5 damage).

Babbling Yong (Su) A Mother of All is constantly in the process of spawning dozens of vine horrors. The immature vine horrors produce a cacophony of wailing that interferes with spellcasting. Any creature within 60 feet of a Mother of All that attempts to cast a spell must first succeed on a DC 15 (+1/spell level) Concentration check or lose the spell.

Limited Telepathy (Su) The Mother of All can communicate telepathically with any vine horror within a 10 mile radius.

Affiliation awards

If your PCs belong to any of the affiliations detailed in Dragon #348's "Savage Tidings," goals exist in "The Sea Wyvern's Wake" that can increase their affiliation score. Each of the following criterions grants an affiliation score modifier of +1.

Church of the Whirling Fury: Kill Sutolore and report his death to the Church.

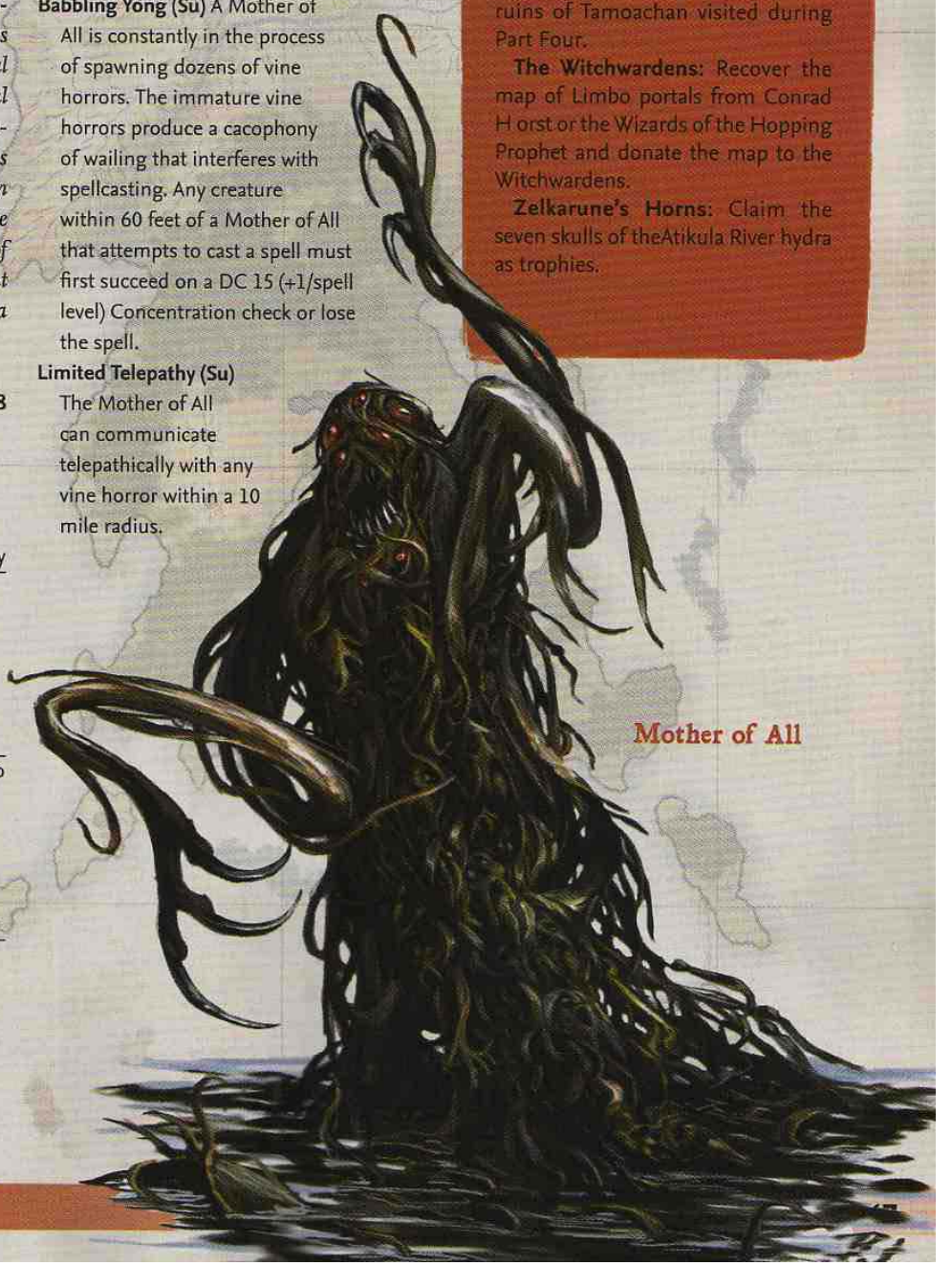
The Dawn Council: Report the destruction of Fort Greenrock, one of the few friendly ports of call along the Amedio Coast, to the Dawn Council.

The Scarlet Brotherhood: Negotiate a non-violent resolution to the Brotherhood Blockade.

The Seekers: Provide a map and documents detailing the unexplored ruins of Tamoachan visited during Part Four.

The Witchwardens: Recover the map of Limbo portals from Conrad H orst or the Wizards of the Hopping Prophet and donate the map to the Witchwardens.

Zelkarune's Horns: Claim the seven skulls of theAtikula River hydra as trophies.



Mother of All

Sargasso (Ex) A Mother of All creates a vast stretch of seaweed in the ocean that constantly grows at the rate of 1 square mile a year. The Mother of All cannot leave its sargasso field, although if the seaweed is somehow destroyed, it can create a new one.

Spawn (Ex) A Mother of All produces a new vine horror every three days. It automatically commands any vine horrors within a 10-mile radius. As a free action, it can issue a cry of distress that causes all the vine horrors on the sargasso to return to her at once to defend her.

Transport via Sargasso (Su) Once every minute, a Mother of All can *transport via plants* as a free action. It may only transport via the sargasso she creates, and may appear anywhere within the sargasso.

Pickled Mephit

First appearing in the alchemical opium dens of the Styes, a *pickled mephit* appears as a sizable glass jar of briny liquid, in which floats a vaguely humanoid shape. If the wax-sealed lid is lifted (a move aciton) or the fragile jar is dropped upon an unyielding surface to shatter (a free action), the mephit stored within the jar wakens from its magically-induced preservation to angrily attack the closest target. A *pickled mephit* jar can be thrown as a grenade-like weapon—the mephit generally attacks whoever it strikes. The user of the item has no control over the released mephit, and is advised to be well away from the jar when it is opened.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster IV*; Price 1,400 gp.

Numerous variations of the Mother of All exist, from Sargasso Mothers (which create lands of living seaweed) to Jungle Mothers (great bloated trees), to Moor Mothers (living twisted moorlands). All have one thing in common—they spawn vine horrors of a similar appearance to the land they breed. The Mother quickly grows to subsume the land itself with her roots and branches, a growing mass of vegetation that has a unique and insidious quality of overwhelming all other forms of land in its path. This verdant cancer spreads slowly, at a leisurely rate of about a mile a year. A Mother of All can spawn a hundred vine horrors a year with ease. Her colony forms a crude hive mind and the mother can communicate with them at great distances.

The effects of the advancing vegetation depend upon the terrain, but generally anything inanimate in its path is slowly overwhelmed and absorbed into the whole.

Richard writes, "And there I was, thinking the second time would be easier... Where's that ladder? Which tree to hide in now—ah! The big horrible one Vaughan and Logue are climbing...

"Big thanks to Eric Boyd and that scoundrel Steve Greer for the long discussion on breathing life into a classic D&D cover. May I humbly suggest that before you run the sargasso you treat yourself to a viewing of one of my favorite films, Aliens, *and learn from the classic "against the odds" monster movie."*

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting

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Savage

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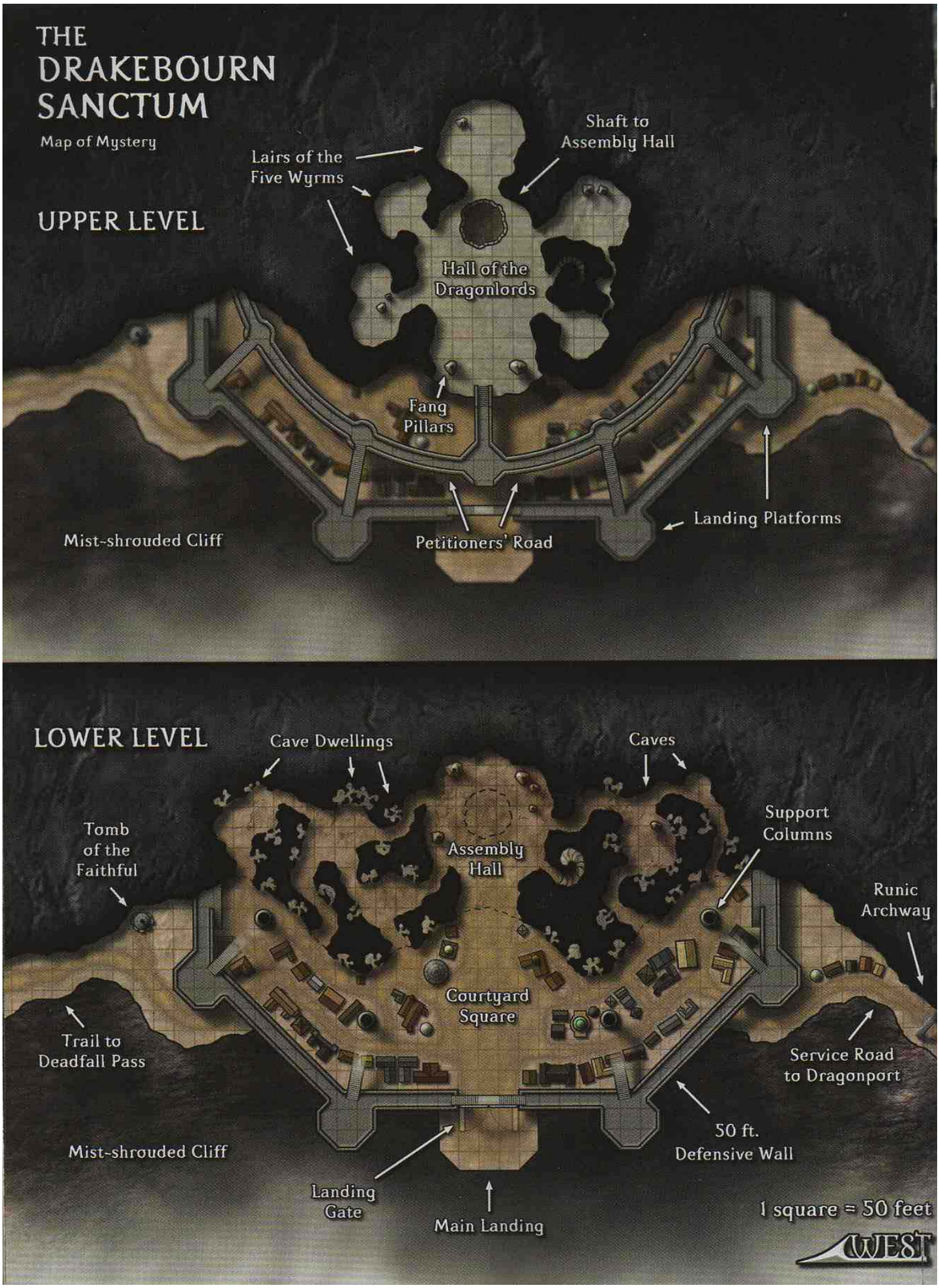
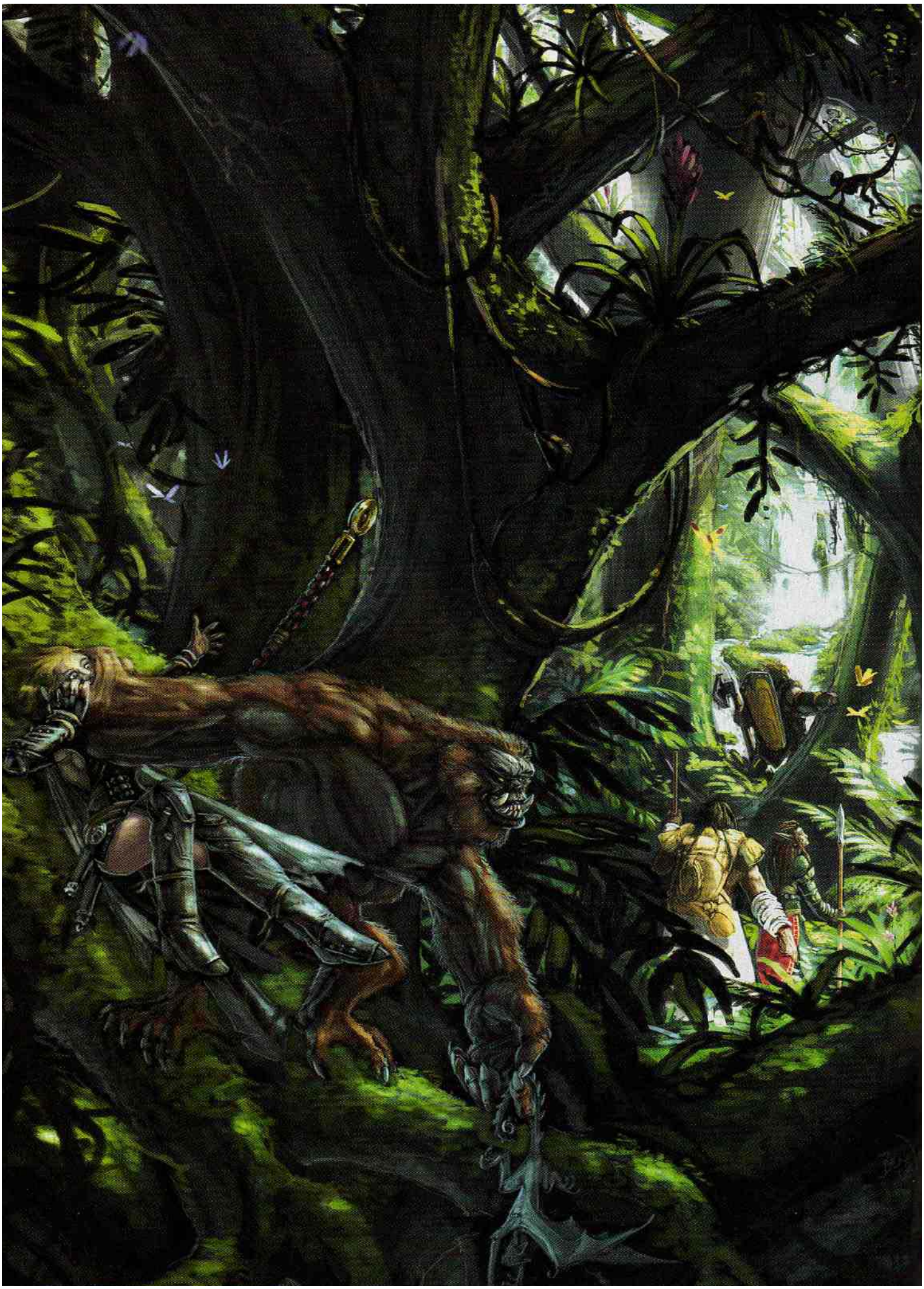

THE
DRAKEBOURN
SANCTUM
Map of Mystery
UPPER LEVEL
Lairs of the
Five Wyrms
Shaft to
Assembly Hall
Hall of the
Dragonlords
Fang
Pillars
Landing Platforms
Mist-shrouded Cliff
Petitioners' Road
LOWER LEVEL
Cave Dwellings
Caves
Tomb
of the
Faithful
Assembly
Hall
Support
Columns
Runic
Archway
Courtyard
Square
Trail to
Deadfall Pass
Service Road
to Dragonport
50 ft.
Defensive Wall
Mist-shrouded Cliff
Landing
Gate
Main Landing
1 square = 50 feet
WEST



Savage Tide

Here There Be Monsters

A long, perilous ocean journey behind them, the crew of the *Sea Wyvern* finds itself shipwrecked on the Isle of Dread. Their destination lies well over 150 miles to the south, miles heavy with the threat of the island's terrible inhabitants. Yet the unknown enemies are far more sinister, for more than just dinosaurs hunt the vast jungles. Before long, a cunning fiend picks up their trail, and its duplicitous master demands their sacrifice.

"Here There Be Monsters" is the fourth chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in DUNGEON. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out DRAGON's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #351 of DRAGON explores the Isle of Dread in detail, providing a complete ecology of the island as the writings of Larissa Vanderboren. This article can be used as a player handout to represent the journals the group recovered from the Vanderboren family vault in the first adventure in this campaign.

The PCs should be 7th level when they begin "Here There Be Monsters." They should gain enough experience to advance to 8th level by the time they reach the shrine of Demogorgon in Part Four, and to 9th by the end of the adventure.

BY JASON BULMAHN
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | MID LEVEL (7TH–8TH) | WILDERNESS & DUNGEON CRAWL

Switching Sides

If the PCs agreed to Rowyn's offer to join the Lotus Dragons at the end of "There Is No Honor," this adventure needs little adjustment. They're still wrecked, and still need to work their way south to Farshore before they can reunite with their nefarious ally and set into motion their plans to capture Farshore's resources for the Lotus Dragons. The perils they face along the way remain unchanged.

Adventure Background

Three months ago the *Sea Wyvern* began its long journey across the Vohoun Ocean to reach the Isle of Dread. Funded by Lavinia Vanderboren, the expedition was to bring supplies, provisions, and colonists to the small settlement of Farshore, a colony established several years ago by the Vanderboren family. The journey was long and dangerous, but until the first storm, things were on schedule. In the storm's wake, the *Sea Wyvern* and Lavinia's ship the *Blue Nixie* were separated. The *Sea Wyvern* became mired in a supernatural sargasso, and after she escaped fell prey to an even more terrible storm. On the verge of sinking, the ship ran aground only a few hundred feet from the isle's northeastern shore. As the storm reached a crescendo, the PCs and their allies were thrown from the decks into the surging waters of a storm-wracked sea...

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs awake on the northern shore of the Isle of Dread, shaken from their ordeal but relatively intact. The *Sea Wyvern* lies holed, impaled on a reef a few hundred feet from shore, thus leaving only one option—a dangerous overland journey to Farshore. As the PCs take stock of the situation, a hungry tyrannosaurus wanders out of the jungle looking for a quick meal. After dealing with the beast, their expert Urol Forol plots a route to safety for them. Before the party leaves the shore, they must gather up all the survivors and as many provisions as they can find.

The journey to Farshore takes the castaways through a jungle inhabited by large predatory birds and hungry dinosaurs. After encountering an outcast aranea, the PCs come to an ancient underground ruin manned by monstrous scavengers and the restless dead. As they leave, they can't shake the suspicion that they are being watched.

On the other side of the mountains, the trail winds along a stretch of shoreline cliffs. A primitive band of gargoyles strikes at the PCs numerous times before they can leave the cliffs for the island interior. This transition is hampered by a number of mishaps, and eventually the group heads into the island interior.

The PCs then find themselves in a fog-shrouded jungle with no apparent way out. That night, the fiend who has been silently stalking them (a simian demon known as a bar-lgura) finally strikes, abducting Urol in the process. Recovering the expert leads the PCs to an ancient shrine to Demogorgon, forcing them to deal with the fiend and his minions.

Adventure Hooks

If you are not playing this adventure as part of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, there are several ways to motivate the PCs to get in on the action. The simplest is to use this adventure as part of any ocean-going expedition that ends in a shipwreck. Even if you are using "Here There Be Monsters" as part of the path, you may want to consider one of the options below to further involve the PCs with this adventure's plot.

Colonists: The PCs have struck out for the colony of Farshore to seek a new life, or perhaps to escape an old one. The *Sea Wyvern* offered an inexpensive way to reach the settlement, but the shipwreck has now forced them to take action.

Explorers: Rumor has it that the Isle of Dread is loaded with treasure, from ancient forgotten cities to valuable skins and spices. Beyond the monetary gains, the island is also said to be full of mysteries and ancient lore. If not for the other innocents, the PCs might just take to exploring the island from the crash site, but the other crew and passengers must be escorted to safety first.

PART ONE: TERROR BIRD JUNGLE

This adventure begins as the PCs wake on the northern shore of the Isle of Dread. It is early morning, and the storm has subsided. The air is cloyingly hot and humid, and damp sand clings to every available surface. The characters regain their senses on a lonely beach, desolate save for a scattering of wreckage and a few other survivors. Each of the PCs has whatever gear they were carrying at the time of the crash—all other gear is still on the ship, which is caught on the rocks 200 feet from shore.

Although all of the player characters automatically survive the shipwreck, the same fantastic luck does not hold for the *Sea Wyvern's* crew and passengers. Many of them were low-level commoners or experts, and the surging waters of the stormy sea have claimed most of them. Of the 23 brave souls who set out from Sasserine three months before, only a few survive.

"Here There Be Monsters" assumes that only four NPCs survive the shipwreck, although if any of the other NPCs on the boat have become important to the PCs or the plot, they should survive as well. Of course, the more survivors you have, the more difficult the adventure becomes to run; strive to keep only essential NPCs alive if you can. For additional survivors, you should use the notes on how these four react to the trials to come as guides and inspiration.

Stats for these four NPCs can be found in Appendix 1.

Amella Venkalie: Amella captained the *Sea Wyvern* if no PC stepped up to the task in "The Sea Wyvern's Wake," otherwise she acted as the first mate or crewman. After the shipwreck, she becomes depressed and miserable. She looks to the PCs for guidance and does what she can to help.

Avner Meravanchi: Avner is a spoiled and haughty nobleman who invested heavily in this voyage. After the shipwreck, he is furious with the PCs, blaming them and Amella for causing the wreck. He ignores the other NPCs and makes unreasonable demands for himself and his horse Thunderstrike, who managed to

swim ashore. Avner's poor servants were not so lucky—Banaby Chisk and Quenge Asper both perished in the storm, much to Avner's chagrin.

Tavey Nesk: A young and impressionable member of the *Sea Wyvern's* crew, Tavey idolizes one of the PCs. Tavey is terrified after the crash and looks to the PCs for protection.

Urol Forol: A gnome naturalist and self-proclaimed expert on the Isle of Dread, Urol is shaken up by the shipwreck, but thrilled to finally be on the island. He and Miss Crazzle (his crow animal companion) spend as much time as possible looking at the flora and fauna, collecting samples, and offering helpful tips to the characters.

About The Isle of Dread

Over 1,300 years ago, a fleet of Olman princes from across the eastern sea came upon a bounteous land and claimed it as their own. They cleared vast stretches of jungle on the island to plant crops, and built a fortified city that dwarfed all other settlements in the region atop a massive central plateau. Known as Thanaclan, this city became the heart of one of the wealthiest kingdoms of the far-flung Olman empire. Yet after 300 years of rule, the city-state of Thanaclan fell prey to the first savage tide. The tide washed over the entire island, bringing ruin and madness and death, and what remained would become known as the Isle of Dread.

The isle itself is a large landmass surrounded by treacherous reefs and smaller islands. Most of the island's coastline consists of rugged cliffs, but here and there isolated beaches allow safe landing. Most of the human population of the isle, descendants of the original rulers of Thanaclan, dwell on a southern peninsula, sheltered from the monsters and dinosaurs that rule the mainland by a great wall.

Weather on the Isle of Dread is at best uncomfortably warm and humid. Along the coast, temperatures have been known to dip as low as 64° F, while atop the central plateau or in the depths of the jungles it often rises above 90° F. The bulk of the Isle is covered with lush, tropical jungles, yet here and there reminders of the ancient Olmans can be found in the form of collapsed statues, ruined temples, and mysterious standing stones. Few examples of the isle's original fauna survive today (mostly limited to wild boars, rock baboons, and terror birds), for the isle is now overrun with terrible, legendary creatures. Chief and largest among these are the dinosaurs, or "thunder lizards" as the Olman natives call them. Yet there are other monsters dwelling in the hidden reaches of the isle, monsters that couple their fearsome countenances with equally fearsome intellects.

In "Here There Be Monsters," the PCs move along the eastern coast of the Isle of Dread, venturing into its interior for only a short time. In the next adventure in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, the PCs have a chance to explore the Isle more completely. Wandering monster tables, details on the isle's secrets, and numerous encounters are presented there—if you wish to expand the events in "Here There Be Monsters," the next adventure is an excellent resource. You can also use the backdrop on the Isle of Dread that appeared in issue #114 of DUNGEON (also available as a PDF download at paizo.com). Finally, don't forget to check out issue #351 of DRAGON, which not only has a detailed ecology of the Isle of Dread presented in the format of journal fragments that can serve as player handouts and a new installment of "Savage Tidings," but also features a four-panel poster map of the Isle of Dread you can give to the PCs to help them plot their course to the colony of Farshore.

Hungry Welcome (EL 8)

Give the PCs a few moments to get their bearings, figure out who's still alive after the wreck, and consider their options. Before they can set any plans in motion, a tremendous roar tears through the heavy morning air.

Creature: A hungry tyrannosaurus has come to the beach in search of an easy meal. The dinosaur emerges from the jungle 60 feet from the PCs, and immediately bellows a roar as it notices them.

Tyrannosaurus: hp 180; *Monster Manual* 61.

Tactics: The tyrannosaurus charges the nearest PC, attacking with its formidable bite. After establishing a hold, it attempts to swallow a grappled character. The dinosaur flees once it is dropped to below 40 hit points, so long as it has at least one creature in its stomach—otherwise it fights to the death.

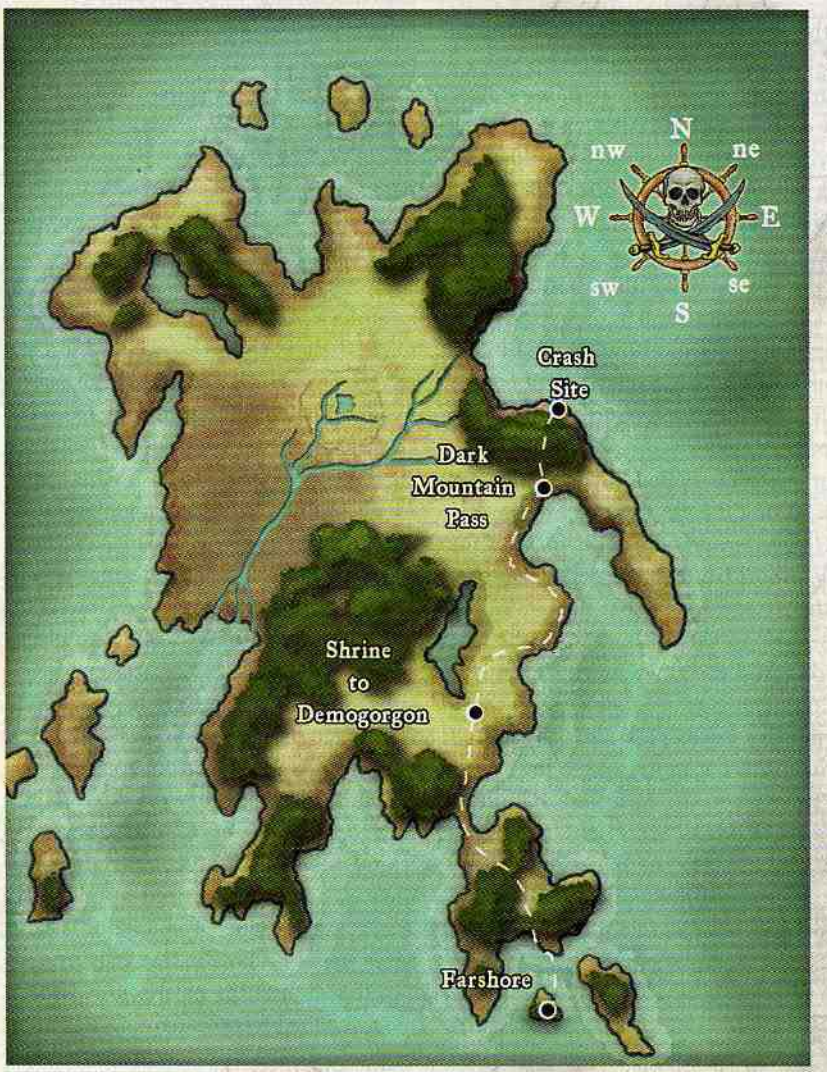
Developments: After the fight with the tyrannosaurus is over, the surviving NPCs make their way down the beach to contact the characters. Heading up the pack is Avner, who is absolutely furious about the shipwreck and demands to know what the characters plan to do to ensure his safety. Amella follows behind him looking miserable, while Tavey looks to his hero, hoping for inspiration and offering to help him clean up. Urol, however, strays a bit far behind the others, picking up pieces of seaweed, shells, and any other natural specimens he can get his hands on. He mutters to himself, and takes notes furiously in a large, waterproof book.

From this point forward, these NPCs turn to the characters for direction. Aside from Urol, they are all completely out of their element and in need of guidance. While Amella and Tavey take this with some measure of calm, Avner is brutish and demanding the entire time. Urol is too fascinated by the surroundings to be frightened, and this absentmindedness could cause trouble later.

Preparing for the Journey

The *Sea Wyvern* is very heavily damaged and beyond repair at this time. Once the PCs reach Farshore, they can arrange a return to salvage more of the ship's cargo and repair the ship, returning her to a seaworthy state. For now, however, anyone with at least 5 ranks in Profession (sailor) can tell that there's nothing that can be done for the ship. This leaves the PCs with only one option—they must travel across the Isle of Dread on foot to reach Farshore. But before they can set off, they have a number of preparations to consider.

Where are we? The *Sea Wyvern* was on its way to Farshore when the crash occurred, stranding her crew on the northeastern shore of the Isle of Dread, as a DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check



can determine. Without detailed maps of the isle, the party's only reliable source of information is Urol, whose knowledge and advice are vital to everyone's survival. Urol can quickly sketch out a map of the island (for a large, PC–friendly map, see *Dragon* #351) and points to their current location on the northeastern side of the island.

How do we get to Farshore? Once the characters know their location, they must plot an overland route to Farshore. Urol is giddy at this prospect and offers to plan a route that, while scenic, remains "quick and safe." After an hour, he presents his plan to take the group down through the small mountains to the south and along the bay toward the village of Tanaroa, the first of a number of native settlements that surround the colony. The journey to Tanaroa alone is approximately 130 miles. Urol estimates this journey will take approximately 10 days, taking into account the condition of the path and moving at his speed of 20. Avner prefers to ride his horse for this journey, but sullenly relents if it is made clear that the horse is needed to carry supplies.

What supplies do we need? The biggest concern for this journey ahead is food. A Medium creature requires a total of 10 pounds of rations for the ten-day journey. Small characters need only 3 pounds. Tavey, being young, needs only 5 pounds for the entire journey. Taking these factors into account, the NPCs need a total of 28 pounds of rations for the journey. Thunderstrike requries a total of 100 pounds of feed, but can carry up to 300 pounds and only be carrying a medium load. Urol assures the characters that he can find sufficient food to cut these weights in half throughout the journey, but Avner refuses to eat anything found in the wilds of the island. If you wish to add a bit of doubt to Urol's claims, he derides Avner's squeamishness about "eating local," and plucks a bright green soft-shelled crab from a nearby tidepool, saying, "See? There's delicious food all over this island!" As Urol pops the crab into his mouth, his eyes bulge and he immediately spits the thing out and is sick to his stomach for an hour.

Gathering up food and other gear from the shipwreck is not a simple task. Most of the cargo has sunk into the bay, but some has floated ashore. Scavenging on the beach requires a DC 10 Search check and takes 30 minutes per check. With a successful check the character finds 5 pounds of edible food, 10 pounds of feed, or one valuable tool (see the next section). For every 5 points by which the searcher beats the DC, another item or crate of food is recovered. Up to 30 pounds of food and 50 pounds of feed can be found in this manner. The ship's hold contains another 20 pounds of edible food and 30 pounds of feed. The *Sea Wyvern* is 200 feet off shore, and reaching her requires several DC 15 Swim checks. The NPCs are more than happy to help search the beach and can aid the PCs' Search checks there, but they never stray very far due to the threat of predators. The PCs can gather more food from the nearby jungle with a DC 10 Survival check, but the predators that hunt the jungle during the day make this risky.

Water is not much of a concern for the journey due to the frequent rains and abundance of streams across the island. In spite of this, Avner demands that they bring along some wine if any of his valuable bottles from the hold are found.

Scavenging the Sea Wyvern

The *Sea Wyvern* was carrying a host of supplies for the colony of Farshore. The following list of items can be found on the beach or in the hold of the *Sea Wyvern*. The DM should feel free to add items to this list, such as items belonging to the PCs. Much of the equipment listed here belonged to other crew members or was in the hold as cargo. Roll randomly or choose an item for each successful Search check.

Searching the *Sea Wyvern*

d%	Item Found
1–3	Heavy wooden shield
4–6	Suit of studded leather armor
7–8	Masterwork heavy crossbow
9–11	Quarterstaff
12–13	Masterwork trident
14–15	Cold iron dagger
16–17	Quiver with 20 arrows
18–19	Case with 10 crossbow bolts
20–23	100 feet of hemp rope
24–25	Case of 4 pints of lamp oil
26–27	Battered lantern
28–30	Fishing net
31–32	Tent
33–36	Two waterskins
37–38	Signal whistle
39–42	Saddle
43–45	Pair of saddlebags
46–47	Explorer's outfit
48–49	Noble's outfit.
50–75	50 pounds of food (5 pounds per check)
76–90	80 pounds of feed (10 pounds per check)
91–92	Small cask of ale
93–94	Case containing 4 bottles of fine wine
95–96	Small wooden case containing 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*
97–98	Scroll of *remove disease* in a watertight scroll tube
99–100	Scroll of *shrink item* in a watertight scroll tube

The First Night (EL 7)

When the PCs awake on the island, it is late morning. By the time they recover from their fight with the tyrannosaurus, form a plan, and gather supplies, it should be approaching dusk. Urol suggests beginning their journey the next morning so that they can reach the southern mountains to the south by nightfall rather than risk navigating the jungle at night. None of the NPCs wish to sleep in the jungle at night. Unfortunately, the beach is not incredibly large (the rest of the nearby coast is rocky), and the carcass of a dead dinosaur makes it a dangerous place to sleep. Unless the PCs find a way to rid themselves of the corpse, a trio of large flightless birds comes looking for a meal. If the PCs decide to move inland and sleep in the jungle, these three creatures instead stumble upon their camp.

Creatures: A trio of terror birds is drawn to the beach, attracted by the scent of dead tyrannosaurus. Terror birds stand nearly ten feet tall, and while flightless, their beaks and talons remain quite formidable. These predators approach the beach stealthily, and upon noticing other creatures, move to attack. While not very intelligent, terror birds do have a level of cunning that allows them to hunt as a group.

Terror Birds (3) **CR 4**
N Large animal
Fiend Folio 175
Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14
hp 45 (7 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

Spd 50 ft.
Melee bite +8 (1d8+4) and 2 claws +6 (1d4+2)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +13
Atk Options improved grab (bite)

Abilities Str 19, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 10
Feats Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Skill Focus (Hide)
Skills Hide +8, Move Silently +7

Improved Grab (Ex) A terror bird can only grab a creature at least two sizes smaller than itself, but can move at half speed while maintaining the hold without making a grapple check.

Tactics: The terror birds attempt to attack with surprise, using their Hide skill to move up undetected. Once within 100 feet, they charge, with two of the terror birds moving up against one target while the third charges the nearest Small creature and attempts to grapple him. If successful, the terror bird then tries to move away with the grappled creature the next round. The other two terror birds remain to fight for two rounds, giving their companion a chance to escape with their meal. Note that these terror birds are fiercer than others of their kind, and can attack with their powerful legs in addition to their bite.

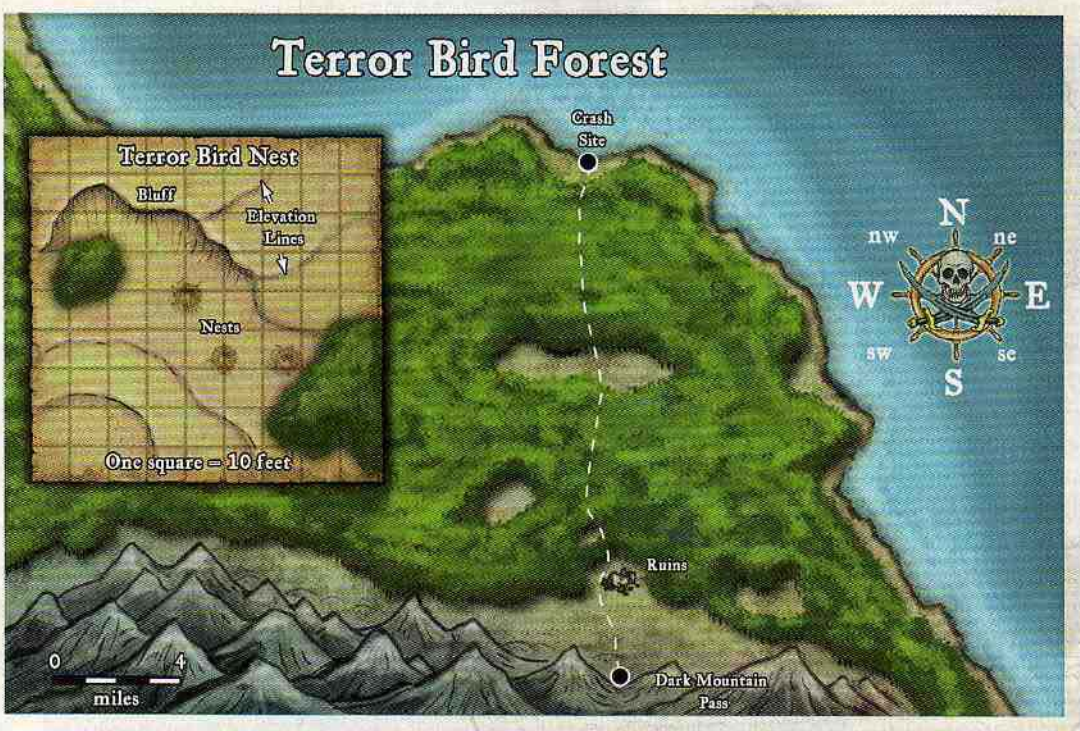
Journey to the Mountains

The journey from the beach to the southern mountains is a 13-mile trek through a stretch of jungle inhabited primarily by terror birds and dinosaurs. Fortunately, large game trails crisscross the expanse, making travel a bit easier (3/4 normal speed). The jungle consists of tall trees, flush with brightly colored birds and thick hanging vines. The canopy keeps the region shaded with occasional shafts of light. Terror birds hunt the floor of the jungle with some frequency. Every hour that the PCs travel, there is a 25% chance that they encounter a group of 1d4+1 terror birds. The PCs can avoid these predators with a DC 20 Survival skill check. Success at these checks each hour reduces the chance of encountering a pack of terror birds to 10%.

Hunting Birds (EL 6)

Roughly halfway through the light jungle, the PCs come upon a vast depression in the jungle that stretches nearly 6 miles across and 1 mile wide. A meteor struck the jungle here decades ago and the jungle has never reclaimed the broken ground. Today, the clearing is made up of rough ground, spattered with clumps of tall grasses and the occasional furrow. The crater is home to a herd of enormous dinosaurs known as diplodocuses, towering behemoths with elephantine bodies, long necks, and even longer tails. A dozen of the dinosaurs dwell in the crater, and although they often come to the crater's rim to feast on the plants that grow there, their size makes it a simple matter to avoid them.

Creatures: What won't be easy to avoid is a young diplodocus who has wandered too far from the herd and been attacked by a flock of six terror birds. The sudden onrush of dinosaur and bird gives the PCs 1d4 rounds to prepare before the beleaguered diplodocus crashes out of the undergrowth 50 feet from the PCs. The sight of the dinosaur being hounded and snapped at by "those horrid birds" fills Urol with rage, and he calls out for the



PCs to help the poor beast. The PCs can easily let this fleeing dinosaur pass them, taking its pursuers with it, but doing so may harm their relationship with Urol. The characters can instead move to help out the dinosaur by attacking the terror birds or at least slowing them down.

YOUNG DIPLODOCUS **CR 8**
N Huge animal
DRAGON #318 64
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +12, Spot +13
AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14
hp 164 (16 HD)
Fort +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6
Spd 20 ft.; Run
Melee tail slap +18 (2d6+12)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +28
Special Actions tail sweep, trample 1d6+12
Abilities Str 27, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
Feats Alertness, Run, Toughness (4)
Skills Listen +12, Spot +13

Tail Sweep (Ex) As a standard action, a young diplodocus can sweep a half circle with a radius of 20 feet extending from an intersection on the edge of the dinosaur's space. Any creatures smaller than the young diplodocus in the swept area takes 1d6+12 points of damage (Reflex DC 26 half). The save DC is Strength-based.

Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 26. The save DC is Strength-based.

Terror Birds (6): hp 45 each; see page 33.

Tactics: The terror birds move and attack the diplodocus each round until attacked by one of the PCs. The diplodocus moves its speed and takes a swing each round, provoking attacks of opportunity each time it moves. The terror birds avoid getting in front of the dinosaur so as to avoid its trample attack. Any PC that ends his move in front of the wounded dinosaur is subject to this attack. Once the terror birds have been drawn away, the diplodocus moves at its full speed to the east to return to his herd, leaving the PCs to deal with the angry birds.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs experience points for a CR 8 creature if the diplodocus escapes.

The Aranea's Nest (EL 6)

Toward the end of their first day of travel, the jungle begins to thin. Eventually, it opens up to reveal an area littered with ancient stone ruins. The mountains directly to the south are not particularly tall, and Urol points out that their best chance to find a pass lies in that direction.

The ruins themselves are Olman, dating from the time of their great empire on the isle long ago. Over the centuries, this small outpost has fallen into disrepair and decay, the jungle slowly overwhelming its crumbling walls. These ruins are infested with spiders, although those of the monstrous variety seem to avoid the PCs and skitter off into dark holes when they draw near. Spider webs caress the ruins, hanging between old walls and carpeting the floor. In a clearing in the center of the ruins resides a throne made of webs and bone. If the characters approach, they can make out the form of an old woman sitting on the throne, looking in their direction and beckoning them forward. The woman is Lithira, an outcast from the aranea colony located to the west.

Lithira is fascinated by the appearance of the PCs and has no intention of attacking them. In her humanoid form she wears a worn gown of black silk with cobwebs hanging from her bent form. As the characters approach, she calls out to them first in the ancient language of the Olman, and then in Sylvan. If she's unable to establish communication with the PCs, she grows suspicious and may attack them if they don't quickly leave. Fortunately, Urol speaks Sylvan and can function as a translator for the PCs if he's still alive.

Once communication is established, Lithira demands to know, "Who are you that has wandered into my web? You are not from this place. I have not seen your like in an age. I am Lithira, queen of these ruins. What brings you to my domain?"

Lithira is more curious than concerned about the appearance of outsiders here. Although aware of the native tribes and the colony of Farshore to the south, she knows little about them. After allowing the PCs to explain themselves, she goes on to ask them about the world beyond the island and what it is like. If the characters tell her a rousing tale of

their homeland, she listens with rapt attention and thanks them when they are done. She then tells the characters the following.

"I thank you for your tale. The world beyond sounds truly wondrous and I would very much like to visit it one day. As for your journey, there is little I can do to aid you. You should know that the way south is dangerous. There are unnatural things that lurk in the dark places, now more so than in the past. I know that four eyes have gazed upon you and their servant seeks you out. You would do well to avoid him.

"If you plan to head south, take the dark mountain pass that travels under the peaks. It was made by the ancient ones, but beware—hungry birds nest near its opening not far from here, and they are fierce near their young. May you wander the web to find your way home."

Lithira has little more information to offer the characters. She does not know the meaning of her premonitions, but she trusts them to be true. If asked about the "path under the mountain," she says it leads to the bay on the other side, but that she has not been that way in ages. She also explains that it is much easier than traveling around or over the mountains. She says nothing of the unnatural things that lurk in the dark places, except that they are numerous now and their power is growing.

When the characters are done, Lithira transforms into an old hairy spider and crawls away, allowing them to leave in peace. None of the NPCs wish to remain in this place any longer than they must, and urge the characters to lead them out immediately.

Should the PCs attack Lithira or her minions, they find themselves beset upon all sides by a hoard of spider swarms, four Small and three Medium monstrous spiders, and a pair of Large monstrous spiders. Lithira remains away from the fight if possible, lending aid with her spells.

Lithira, female aranea: hp 22; *Monster Manual* 15.

Spider Swarm: hp 9; *Monster Manual* 239.

Small Monstrous Spiders (4): hp 4 each; *Monster Manual* 288.

Medium Monstrous Spiders (3): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 288.

Large Monstrous Spiders (2): hp 22 each; *Monster Manual* 289.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to establish a rapport with Lithira and receive her advice, grant them experience as if they had defeated a CR 7 creature in combat.

The Mother's Nest (EL 9)

The terror birds that scour the jungle for food nest in the southern foothills. One such nesting ground lies just 100 feet north of the entrance to the tunnel that leads under the mountains. If the players avoided the aranea ruins and do not know about the existence of the tunnel, they can discover the entrance to this underground pass though the mountains after 2d6 hours of

searching—feel free to have them encounter additional flocks of 1d4 terror birds every few hours. When they finally find the entrance to Dark Mountain Pass, they also find the mother's nest.

Creatures: The terror bird nesting ground has three occupied nests, one of which is watched over by a fifteen-foot-tall female. A fourth terror bird wanders the area, watching out for predators. If the PCs sneak up to the area, only this lookout bird has any chance of spotting them, as the others are busy tending to their nests.

NEST MOTHER
CR 7
Advanced elite terror bird
N Large animal
Fiend Folio 175
Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 110 (13 HD)
Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +5

Spd 50 ft.
Melee bite +15 (2d6+7) and 2 claws +13 (1d6+3)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +20
Atk Options improved grab (bite)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 12
Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claws), Multiattack, Skill Focus (Hide)
Skills Hide +11, Move Silently +10

Improved Grab (Ex) A terror bird can only grab a creature at least two sizes smaller than itself, but can move at half speed while maintaining the hold without making a grapple check.

Terror Birds (3): hp 45 each; see page 33.

Tactics: These terror birds are extremely territorial and move to attack any perceived threat, including anyone spotted trying to enter the tunnel to the south of their nests. The terror birds swarm the nearest enemy and fight until slain. They do not coordinate their attacks effectively and split up if multiple foes appear. Should any of their eggs be damaged, they immediately turn their attention to the offender.

Lithira

Treasure: The terror birds keep little of value, but each of their nests has a cluster of three 1-foot-tall eggs. These eggs are worth 500 gp each to the right buyer, but they must be kept safe and warm for the rest of the journey. Urol dislikes killing the terror birds, but realizes the necessity. Once he finds the eggs, he desperately wants to take one with him. In addition, the nest of the largest terror bird contains the half-eaten corpse of an aranea. The carcass still wears a *cloak of Charisma* +2 that, while terribly soiled, functions perfectly well.

PART TWO: DARK MOUNTAIN PASS

During the Olman rule of the Isle of Dread, the city of Thanaclan was merely the largest of many architectural achievements. The Olmans built countless other structures throughout their isle—temples, fortresses, statues, and even several smaller towns. One such structure that survives to this day is a lengthy tunnel that runs under a ragged mountain of black stone and perilous cliffs. Known as Dark Mountain to the current natives of the isle, the tunnel that runs through its roots provides the most direct route of access between the northern jungle and the southern cliffs.

Dark Mountain Pass is 6 miles long and relatively straight. Portions of it are worked, whereas others are more natural. Assuming the party left the beach on the morning of their second day on the Isle of Dread, they should arrive at the pass entrance right around dusk and might wish to camp somewhere inside. Fortunately, no monsters dwell in the tunnel itself, and the terror birds do not venture inside unless chasing prey. Assuming the PCs move at a speed of 20 (Urol's walk speed), the tunnel only takes three hours to traverse. As they make their way, have the two characters in the back of the party make DC 20 Spot checks. Success indicates that they have the feeling that they are being watched, but no enemy appears yet. Halfway through the journey, the PCs hear the sounds of tumbling rocks behind them, but once again, no source is apparent.

The southern end of the pass consists of a small complex built by the Olman centuries ago to serve as an outpost. Unless otherwise noted, all of the chambers in this complex have 15-foot-high ceilings and are unlit. The walls and doors are all made of stone, decorated with bands of geometric designs and carvings of animals, all covered in mildew. The air is very dank and carries with it the smell of decay.

1. Reception Hall

The tunnel finally opens up into a large chamber shrouded in darkness. A small,

stagnant fountain lies directly opposite the entrance, while a stone throne sits on a dais at the far end of the room. A humanoid ribcage is pinned to the throne, held there by an ancient spear, while all around it lie the remainder of the poor soul's bones.

This large chamber was once used to allow guests to refresh themselves after the long walk through the tunnel. The ribcage pinned to the throne is that of the watcher who was stationed in this chamber when madness swept the island. He was killed by one of his fellows here in the complex. The bones crumble to dust if they are moved.

The fountain is 8 feet deep, but it is only half full of stagnant water. Anyone who drinks this tainted water must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or suffer 1d2 points of Constitution damage. A red stone rod can be seen at the bottom of the pool with a DC 20 Search check. This rod weighs 8 pounds and is one of the keys necessary to open the great doors in area 5.

Treasure: The spear protruding from the ribcage is actually a +1 *longspear*. In addition, a simple necklace made of triangular gold plates worth 500 gp lies on the throne's seat.

2. Centipede Chasm (EL 8)

The stairs end at a broad platform overlooking a wide chasm. Two primitive stone statues flank the balcony, their impassive countenances caked with mildew. The chasm itself drops away into a black gulf of swirling water. Two bridges span the chasm, exiting the room through separate double doors on the far side.

The statues are harmless, made during the time of the Olmans. During the fall of their empire, insane tribesman hacked at the statues with greataxes. Although the mold and mildew covers up much of this superficial damage, it can still be seen with even casual observation.

The water below is only twenty feet deep, and supports a wide variety of fish that serve as the primary source of food for the two menaces that live herein. Numerous small submerged tunnels connect the water to the bay to the south, although they are impassable to anything of Tiny size or larger.

Creatures: This large chamber is the home of two Gargantuan centipedes who dwell up near the ceiling on an obscured niche, some 50 feet above the level of the platform. Once the characters have entered the chamber and begin to cross the bridges, the centipedes climb down to attack, one on each side.

Gargantuan Monstrous Centipedes (2): hp 66; *Monster Manual* 286.

Tactics: The centipedes crawl down the walls and attempt to bite the first creature they can reach. If they immobilize a character with their poison, a centipede grabs that foe and climbs back up the wall to enjoy its meal. The centipedes retreat to their lair at the top of the chamber if dropped to less than 10 hit points.

3. Mictlantecuhtli's Walk (EL 8)

The doors leading into this area from area 2 are stuck, requiring a DC 28 Strength check to open. Due to their size, up to three characters can assist on this check.

Deep niches are set into the walls of this ten-foot-wide corridor, each holding fragments of human skeletons caked in mold and fungus. Rusted metal collars and iron necklaces rest in each niche as well, and a few still retain fragments of crumbling burial shrouds. On spaces where no niches have been carved, intricate murals of a skeletal humanoid or hound, each wreathed in a long, coiling snake, decorate the walls.

The Olmans used this winding corridor as catacombs to inter their dead. Each spot marked on the map with niches actually represents six separate alcoves, carved one on top of another, for a total of about 200 bodies. Each skeleton is similarly attired, and with few exceptions, none hold anything of value. Disturbing any of the bodies or tampering with the wall that leads into area 4 causes the catacombs' three guardians to rise up and attack.

NPCs in Dark Mountain Pass

Throughout this part of the adventure, the NPCs have the following attitudes and tasks in mind.

Amella Venkalie: Amella is not happy with the prospect of traveling underground, as she considers it unsafe. If anything goes wrong, she's is the first to say, "I told you so." If she's developed a romantic interest in a PC, she never strays far from that character's side.

Avner Meravanchi: Avner is scared of the jungle after all of the terror birds, and is happy to travel a nice birdless tunnel. Throughout the long walk, he speaks only about the luck they might have in finding fresh food and more wine somewhere along the way.

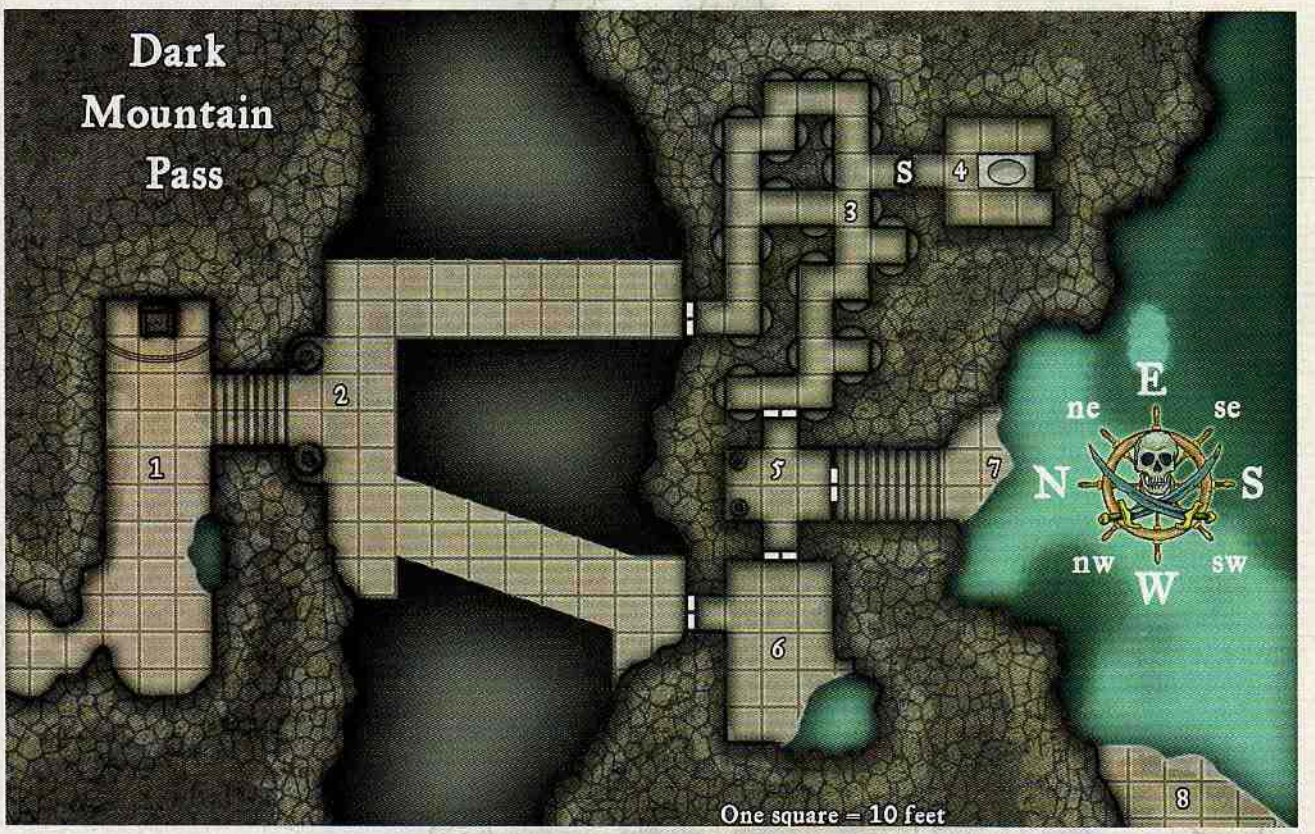
Tavey Nesk: Tavey, who had such excitement about becoming an adventurer like his PC hero, is uncomfortable and uneasy throughout the time spent in the tunnels. He tries desperately to cover up his fear so as to not be embarrassed in front of his idol.

Thunderstrike: Thunderstrike is nervous and easily spooked throughout this journey. Unless he can be calmed (DC 15 wild empathy check or DC 20 Handle Animal check), his constant clatter and neighing makes it very difficult to move silently through the complex.

Urol Forol: If the characters saved the diplodocus, Urol is on great terms with them despite what they might think of him. He continues to constantly evaluate and talk about the surroundings, taking numerous rubbings and doing sketches whenever possible. If the characters did not save the diplodocus, Urol is quiet and angry at them until he eventually demands an apology for the poor beast.

The secret door to area 4 can be discovered with a DC 22 Search check. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the skeletal dog and human as different representations of the Olman god of death and undeath, Mictlantecuhtli.

Creatures: The Olman placed three mummies in with the corpses to serve as their guardians. Once, these



mummies looked indistinguishable from the other bodies, but over time only these three undead have survived the decay of ages. These mummies are desiccated and preserved, but rather than being wrapped in strips of linen they wear tattered burial shrouds that hang from their bony frames like dusty cobwebs.

Mummies (3): hp 55 each; *Monster Manual* 190.

Tactics: Place the mummies at three random points throughout the catacombs. When anyone desecrates the dead or opens the secret door leading to area 4, they rise to attack together. The mummies all move toward the defilers and attack any living creature that comes within reach.

Treasure: Each one of the mummies wears a golden necklace around its rotting neck underneath its burial shroud. Each of these ancient necklaces are worth 500 gp each.

4. Teonahwanhi's Repose (EL 6)

This chamber is a small crypt dominated by a large stone sarcophagus. Both the walls of the room and the sarcophagus itself are covered in decorative patterns and carvings of animals. The top of the sarcophagus depicts a man dressed in robes, wearing a feathered headdress, and clutching a blue rod in one hand and a ceremonial dagger in the other.

The Olman shaman interred here was a man named Teonahwanhi. He blessed the creation of Dark Mountain Pass and volunteered to be buried alive within it order to appease the often fickle and capricious nature of their deities in hopes of ensuring the complex's safety and longevity. While Teonahwanhi himself is not an undead guardian, his resting place is far from undefended.

Trap: The lid of the coffin is trapped—any attempt to open it causes dozens of spears to shoot out of the floor throughout the room.

Floor Spear Trap: CR 6; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +15 melee (1d8+3 plus poison, spear); poison (greenblood oil, DC 13 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con, 1d2 Con), multiple targets (1d6 spears per target in the room); Search DC 26, Disable Device DC 20.

Treasure: Inside the sarcophagus rests Teonahwanhi's skeletal corpse. The long-dead shaman holds a blue stone rod in one hand and a masterwork silver dagger in the other. This rod weighs 8 pounds and is one of the keys necessary to open the great doors in area 5. Around his neck is a golden medallion inset with a shining pink *pearl of power* (3rd level).

5. Great Water Doors

Two gigantic iron doors stand closed to the south in this small chamber, decorated with symbols of water and sealife in tarnished copper. Opposite them are a pair of pedestals, each with a peculiar notch cut into the side. One of these pedestals is made from a dusky red granite, while the other is crafted of light blue marble.

Long ago, high tide brought the level of the bay nearly up to the doors of this place. As a defense, the Olman built these large water doors, designed to automatically close at high tide. The mechanism broke down many hundreds of years ago, locking the doors closed. In case of just such an emergency, the Olman installed

the two pillars, one blue and one red. Each has a corresponding rod hidden nearby that, when inserted simultaneously, could be used to rotate the pillars clockwise to manually open the doors. These rods are located in the fountain in area 1 and the sarcophagus in area 4.

Water Doors: 4-foot-thick iron and stone; Hardness 10; hp 1,440; Break DC 50.

6. Stagnant Pool (EL 7)

The doors leading into this area from the west are stuck, requiring a DC 28 Strength check to open. Due to their size, up to three characters can assist on this check.

One corner of this chamber has completely crumbled away to reveal a stagnant pool of water, its surface calm, dark, and mysterious.

This room was once a dining hall, but over time a leak from the stone above caused the subsidence in the southwest corner. Now, little is left aside from crumbling stones and shards of a rotted table. The room's sole inhabitant, a black pudding, has devoured most of the other furnishings and now hides in the pool.

Creature: The pudding waits until it senses motion within 10 feet of the fountain to attack, reaching out to strike with an acidic pseudopod. The black pudding is mindless and attacks the PCs until it is destroyed.

Black Pudding: hp 115; *Monster Manual* 201.

7. The Bay (EL 7)

The doors open with a screech of protest, flooding the chamber with fresh salt air from the world outside. Beyond the doors is a broad set of seaweed-choked stairs that leads down to a small beach.

Once through the doors, the characters emerge into the sunlit world again. During low tide, the area indicated as shallow water lies just above sea-level, leaving deep tide pools to the left and right.

Creatures: A trio of Large monstrous crabs dwell in the water here. The crabs are always hungry and attack the PCs the moment they enter the water.

Large Monstrous Crabs (3) **CR 4**

N Large vermin (aquatic)

Stormwrack 142

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +0, Spot +4

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18

hp 36 (6 HD)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Spd 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +8 (1d8+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +17

Atk Options constrict 2d8+5, improved grab (claw)

Abilities Str 21, Dex 11, Con 12, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 2

SQ amphibious

Feats Toughness

Skills Hide +0, Move Silently +4

Tactics: The water of the bay has two depths. The shallow areas are only 5 feet deep, meaning that half of each crab sticks out of the water when they are in these areas during high tide (giving them cover from those out of the water). The deep areas are 15 feet deep, giving the crabs total cover when they are in these areas. Medium or smaller creatures must swim to move through the deep areas. They can move through the shallow areas without making swim checks, but each square of movement costs 2 squares. Small (and smaller) creatures must swim in shallow water.

Development: If the crabs are killed and cooked, 30 pounds of food can be recovered from each.

8. Cliffside Path

The land here rises up away from the water, eventually forming a winding cliffside path roughly 80 feet above. Although the ramp is relatively steep, Thunderstrike and the rest of the party can easily traverse it.

PART THREE: CLIFFS OF DREAD

Leaving Dark Mountain Pass behind, the party must now navigate the eastern shore of the Isle of Dread, moving along a winding path that at times takes them nearly 100 feet above the waters below, and at others it descends back to sea level to traverse stretches of rocky beach. Originally carved from the cliff over 1,000 years ago by the Olmans, time and erosion have taken their toll on this once-majestic seaside byway. In places, it has eroded to less than ten feet in width, although it's never narrow enough that the party and a nervous horse can't navigate it in relative safety.

Several times in the recent past, adventurous and industrious Olmans from the southern villages attempted to establish new homes along this stretch of land. The mountains provide an excellent natural barrier from the savage monsters that dwell on the mainland, and the fishing in this bay is particularly fine. As the PCs travel south, they encounter many traces of these recent settlements—empty outrigger canoes beached on the rocks, sections of walkway that have been repaired or reinforced with wooden supports where erosion has washed away the stone, and now and then even small collections of beachside huts. Investigations of these sites reveals that they are all uninhabited. The canoes rot in the tides and are completely unseaworthy, repairs to the cliffside paths are dubious and look unsafe, and the huts themselves have often partially collapsed or become nesting grounds for loud and angry gulls.

Alas, while this stretch of land is indeed sheltered from the monsters and dinosaurs that dwell on the mainland, it is far from safe. Not long after the Olmans attempted to settle this stretch of land, the lights of their fires attracted unwanted attention. The gargoyle tribes of the peninsula across the bay soon came to investigate, and found those who dwelt here to be an excellent source of food. At first, the gargoyle attacks were isolated, and the warriors of the tribes were able to drive them off. As the months wore on, however, the gargoyles grew more aggressive, until finally a full-scale invasion from the sky struck the Olmans in the dead of night. When the sun rose, the beach was deserted once again.

Yet the gargoyles have learned that prey often travels this coast, and not

NPCs on the Cliffs

Throughout this part of the adventure, the NPCs have the following attitudes and tasks in mind.

Amella Venkalie: Thrilled to be out of the caves and at least near the water again, Amella has high spirits toward everyone except Urol, who has really begun to annoy her with his incessant chatter. At some point along the journey, she explodes and flies into a litany of curses and profanity directed at Urol, who has himself finally had enough of Amella's mean-spirited comments. If the PCs don't intervene, the two could come to blows.

Avner Meravanchi: Once mishaps start to occur and the gargoyles attack, Avner's complaints reach a new height. He demands that the characters take care of these problems, and may try to convince the other NPCs to hole up with him in a small cave while the PCs go on to get help. He eats more than his share of rations whenever possible, figuring that he has earned it.

Tavey Nesk: Tavey returns to his fun-loving self once out of the caves. He uses the cliffs as an opportunity to impress his hero with acts of acrobatics and displays of climbing and jumping skills. Tavey runs a 20% chance each day of taking a 50-foot fall (DC 12 Reflex negates). A PC can convince him to cease his dangerous behavior with a DC 20 Diplomacy or successful Intimidate check (Tavey's hero gains a +5 bonus on these checks).

Thunderstrike: Thunderstrike is nervous and easily spooked throughout this entire journey. There's a 20% chance each day that the skittish horse missteps along the cliff face and must make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid taking a 50-foot fall onto the rocks below. A DC 15 wild empathy or a DC 20 Handle Animal check negates this chance by calming the horse's nerves.

Urol Forol: Urol remembers hearing about the gargoyles and their aerie across the bay after the first attack. He knows little about them, but has heard rumors that they are a good-sized tribe. Urol is truly puzzled and worried about the mishaps that continue to befall the party. He is at a loss as to their cause.

long after the PCs arrive, they attract unwanted attention from the skies.

The Route South

Urol estimates that it should take the group roughly 6 days to traverse the beaches and cliffs south. He views the presence of the ancient roadway as a surprise bonus, and points out that anything that's stood the test of centuries is likely to be safe enough to trust for travel. If the PCs wish to avoid taking the ancient cliffside road, their travel time south triples as they are often forced to navigate deep tide pools and narrow beaches. As with elsewhere on the island, the frequent rains make gathering fresh water an easy task, but gathering food along the cliffs is more difficult. With the exception of the plentiful fish in the bay, the only animal life along these cliffs are flocks of wily and bitter-tasting sea gulls. If the PCs have fishing equipment, Survival checks made along this route to get along in the wild can be made at no penalty. Otherwise, these checks suffer a –5 penalty to each roll.

Mishaps and Malevolence

Unbeknownst to the party at this time, they have attracted the attention of more than just gargoyles. Those PCs who noted the feeling of being followed in Dark Mountain Pass were the first to feel this sinister presence, but here on the cliffs it becomes truly malevolent. And the further south they travel, the worse things become.

The source of this evil is a wretched and hateful simian demon named Olangru, an outcast bar-lgura tanar'ri. Once a scout for the sinister forces that hold the Isle of Dread's central plateau in their grip, Olangru's failure would have resulted in his execution had he not managed to flee with a few of his mates south into the trackless jungles. Olangru eventually discovered a hidden shrine to Demogorgon on the banks of Bloodwater Lake, and hopes that by bringing enough sacrifices to this shrine he can restore his favor with the Prince of Demons.

Olangru recieved a vision the night the PCs crashed on the Isle of Dread, a vision he believes was granted him by Demogorgon. (Of course, the actual source of the vision was Malcanthet, the Queen of Succubi, who has decided to use Olangru as another pawn to draw the PCs further into her plot against Demogorgon—she hopes that by forcing a confrontation between the PCs and Olangru she can plant the seeds of hatred for the Prince of Demons in their souls.) Olangru traveled north to intercept the PCs, but only caught their trail once they went into Dark Mountain Pass. He has been following them at a safe distance ever since, content to let them head toward his temple, where he hopes to sacrifice them to Demogorgon.

Now that the PCs have reached the cliffs, the fiend plans to take a more active roll in guiding the party, satisfying his cruel need to cause pain and fear in mortals. Until that time, use the following mishaps and odd occurrences to instill a sense of dread in the players. Each one of these minor events occurs only once, and even then no more than two should occur on any given day.

Always Watching: One night, give each PC on watch a DC 15 Spot or Listen check to sense a presence out in the dark, just beyond their range of observation. Twice during the night, the entire camp falls into magical *darkness* that lasts for one hour. The bar-lgura pulls off this trick by teleporting above their camp and dropping a small pebble with *darkness* cast on it.

Carcasses Outside Camp: The PCs wake in the morning to find a dozen bird carcasses arranged just outside the light range of their camp. Each bird is tied, wings outstretched and head to the ground, on an X-shaped frame. Although the birds appear to have been dead for days, they were certainly not there the day before. Olangru placed these carcasses using *telekinesis*.

Missing Supplies: A pack of food goes missing, reducing the group's food supply by 1 day. No one knows where the food went, but everyone is quick to blame Avner Meravanchi. The bar-lgura used *telekenesis* to remove the pack at night while the party was distracted.

Skull Slide: A small rockslide falls onto the group, dealing 1d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 12 negates). Mixed in among the rocks are a number of

human skulls. This rockslide is caused by the bar-lgura high above (the skulls are from his personal collection—he's confident he can collect replacements soon enough).

Suicidal Native: The group spies a native up ahead standing on the cliff's edge, but as they approach, he stabs himself in the chest with a dagger and flings himself into the bay. By the time the characters reach that spot, no trace of the native can be found. Olangru created this illusory native using *major image*.

A. Gargoyle Ambush (EL 8)

This location is approximately 24 miles from the Dark Mountain Pass exit. The party will need to make camp at least once before reaching this spot, unless they have some way of moving incredibly quickly. In any event, the gargoyles catch their scent at this point along their journey.

Creatures: Four gargoyles roost in this area, hiding on small ledges above the path (two on each). These sadistic monsters are scouts from the colony that roosts on the other side of the bay, and have been charged with patrolling these cliffs for new prey. They view this area as theirs and attack any intruders on sight. Unlike most gargoyles, these creatures do not have a gothic look, but instead have a more feral countenance and often have geometric patterns similar to Olman hieroglyphic writing etched into their form.

Gargoyles (4): hp 37 each; *Monster Manual* 113.

Tactics: The gargoyles swoop down from above to engage the party. Once in melee, they make full attacks whenever able and attempt to bull rush Small targets off the cliff face if the opportunity presents itself. Anyone who falls off the cliff either lands on a ledge 20 feet below, taking 2d6 points of falling damage, or in the water 80 feet below, taking 2d3 points of nonlethal damage and 4d6 points of lethal damage. The water below is very deep and choppy, requiring DC 15 Swim checks to stay afloat.

If three of the gargoyles are defeated, the fourth attempts to flee to report the attack to its kin across the bay.

B. Unsafe Lift (EL 6)

Up ahead, the path comes to an abrupt end, looking out over the bay. Nearly sixty feet above, it continues along its southern route. A bamboo platform hangs near the upper path's edge, suspended by several vines draped over a log driven into the cliff face above. The other ends of the vines hang down the cliff face and are attached to a second log at waist height on the lower ledge. Down below, a dozen or so abandoned huts line a wide but rocky beach.

The Olmans who recently attempted to settle along this stretch of coastline built this crude lift to allow them quick access to the ledges above. The system is as ingenious as it is primitive, using crude pulleys to allow several characters (or a beast of burden) to pull on the vines to raise or lower the lift between the two ledges and the beach below.

The beach below ends just to the south of the lift at a stretch of cliffs that plunge directly into the sea for nearly two miles—the easiest route onward is to continue along the ledge. In order to do so, though, the PCs and their allies must first reach the upper ledge. Spells like *fly* and *levitate* offer the easiest options, but for groups without them, the cliff can be climbed with a series of DC 20 Climb checks. The upper level is 60 feet above, making it a total of 140 feet above the water of the bay. Anyone falling into the water ignores 20 feet, takes 2d3 points of nonlethal damage for the next 20 feet, and takes 1d6 points of lethal damage for every additional 10 feet above that.

Of course, the PCs can also use the lift. Great care must be taken when releasing the lift, as its weight causes it to descend very rapidly. Moving the empty lift at a safe speed of 10 feet requires a DC 10 Strength check. Moving the lift once it's loaded increases this DC by 2 for every Small creature, by 5 for every Medium creature, and by 10 for every Large creature; the lift itself has a space of 10 feet. Several people can assist in these checks. Failing this check by less than 5 results in no progress, while failing it by 5 or more causes the lift to careen down to smash onto the tide pools below. Anyone on the lift when it falls takes 1d6 points of damage for every 10 feet fallen.

Trap: Olangru has cleverly sabotaged the lift by cutting partway through some

Perils of Homemade Boats

It's possible that the PCs might try to rig together a raft or repair canoes found along these cliffs. Unfortunately, this route is not only time consuming, but in the end is quite a bit more dangerous than the land-based route south. Urol, Avner, and even Amella advise against such a plan if the PCs bring it up.

Most of the canoes and ruined huts have rotted to the point of uselessness, but a dedicated group could scavenge enough supplies to build a five-foot-section of raft. The lift from area **B** is a special case; it could be used to build a ten-foot-section. Building a crude raft requires a DC 5 Craft (boatbuilding) check, while repairing or building a canoe requires a DC 10 Craft (boatbuilding) check. A crude raft's effective gp cost for purposes of determining how long it takes to craft is 50 gp—it'll take a few days and a lot of help to build a working raft. During this time, feel free to have monsters attack the PCs (such as groups of 1d4+1 monstrous crabs or gargoyles) 2–3 times a day.

Once the PCs set out to sea, the peril only increases. The waters around the Isle of Dread are rife with monsters that might ignore larger vessels, but are intrigued by the presence of smaller ones. Creatures like elasmosauruses, Large sharks, giant octopi, or enormous sea snakes (use the stats for huge vipers but give them the aquatic subtype) should hound the PCs often on their voyage.

Of course, if the PCs seem determined to reach Farshore via raft, you should let them succeed (providing they survive the monster attacks). In this case, they bypass Part Four of this adventure entirely... for now. You can certainly have them run afoul of the bar-lgura Olangru at any point during the next adventure if they don't encounter the demon during this one.

of the vines that support it. The moment more than one Medium creature steps onto the lift one of the vines snaps, causing the lift to tilt wildly to one side. Any creature on the lift at this time must make a DC 20 Reflex save to avoid being pitched off the lift. One round later, the remaining vines snap and the entire thing falls into the shallow tide pools below. A *make whole* spell can repair the damaged vines before they break.

Sabotaged Lift: CR 6; mechanical; touch trigger; no reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; variable fall; multiple targets (everyone on the lift); Search DC 30, Disable Device DC 15.

C. Quotoctoa's Wrath (EL 9)

This area is about 10 miles beyond the sabotaged lift (area **B**). After learning of the loss of some of its members in the previous ambush (either from the report of a gargoyle that escaped, or by the simple fact that the patrol from area A never returned to report), a gargoyle chieftain named Quotoctoa assembles a warband of his best warriors to seek out and slay the intruders. The group discovers the PCs at this location and attacks them without pause.

Creatures: Led by Quotoctoa, a fierce gargoyle barbarian, this host of angry gargoyles is bent upon the destruction of the characters. The gargoyles do not bother setting up an ambush, so there is no chance of surprise.

QUOTOCTOA **CR 7**

Male gargoyle barbarian 3
CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 113
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common, Terran

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 20; uncanny dodge
hp 72 (7 HD); **DR** 10/magic and 5/adamantine
Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

Spd 50 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
Melee 2 claws +9 (1d4+6) and bite +7 (1d6+4) and gore +7 (1d6+4)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +11
Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, rage 1/day
*2-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 19, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 4
SQ fast movement, freeze, illiteracy, trap sense +1
Feats Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack
Skills Hide +9 (+17 near stone), Intimidate +0, Listen +5, Spot +5
Possessions *bracers of armor +2, gargoyle crown*, 10 gold rings (each worth 50 gp)

Rage (Ex) When raging, Quotoctoa's statistics change as follows:
hp 86
AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 18
Fort +11, **Will** +8
Melee 2 claws +11 (1d4+8) and bite +9 (1d6+5) and gore +9 (1d6+5)
Grp +13
Abilities Str 23, Con 24

Gargoyles (3): hp 37 each; *Monster Manual* 113.

Tactics: The gargoyles use their superior mobility to swarm the party, landing in and among the PCs to set up flanking opportunities. Meanwhile, Quotoctoa lands near the most powerful-looking character, goes into a rage, and attacks using Power Attack and his smite ability granted from his *gargoyle crown* at the first chance. Given the opportunity, Quotoctoa uses Improved Bull Rush to push foes off the cliff, causing them to take 6d6 falling damage and 2d3 nonlethal damage as they plummet into the water 100 feet below.

D. The Trail Turns Inward

After the fight with the gargoyle tribe, the path continues onward for 18 miles before reaching a narrow mountain pass that leads to the interior of the island. Urol looks at this path, and marks it on his map, but urges the group to continue onward toward the coast to reach Tanaroa. Avner, meanwhile, suggests that the group take the path to avoid any further attacks from gargoyles. If the party heads inland, continue on with Part Four. If the party instead decides to continue on the cliffs, they find that their route comes to an end soon thereafter. Whether the elements have eroded the ledge away completely or the ancients simply never completed its construction is unclear, but the only way onward is to backtrack to the pass and head into the isle's interior.

PART FOUR: FOGMIRE

The mountain pass is a 10-mile journey through twisting canyons of rock. There are plenty of places to stop and rest along this path, and both food and water are more plentiful than they were along the cliffs. When the mountain pass finally comes to an end, the PCs find themselves on the edge of a great and dark fog-shrouded jungle. A lake glitters far off in the distance, barely visible through the gloom.

The path the PCs are on leads right into the mysterious jungle. Leaves drip with condensation, and the canopy above sings with strange bird calls. An inordinate number of small serpents make their home on the jungle floor, but they avoid the PCs whenever possible. While the undergrowth is relatively light, the ground is wet and muddy, verging on swampland in places. The PCs can easily turn south to continue their journey straight to Tanaroa, following game trails that wander through the woods. Or so they think. For as they continue to wander, things grow strange indeed.

The PCs have entered a mysterious region of the Isle of Dread called Fogmire, a place where Demogorgon's fell influence is strong. The boundaries between the Material Plane and the wretched jungles of Gaping Maw's islands on the Abyss are thin here, and the taint of that foul realm bleeds through to influence the plants and animals. Although there is plenty of food in Fogmire, many of the animals and plants in the swampy jungle are deformed, off-color, or bloated with twitching growths. While they taste horrible, they are edible. The water has an off taste about it as well, but it, too, is safe to consume. The trees are twisted and deformed in some places, while others sport large tumors that leak pale green ooze. The fog that shrouds this jungle is ever-present and limits visibility to 60 feet, making navigation difficult. It's a DC 25 Survival check to avoid becoming lost in Fogmire. Yet for all the ominous signs and portents, nothing attacks the PCs during their initial intrusion into Fogmire. It's almost as if the beasts of the island avoid this lonely stretch of land entirely.

Gargoyle Crown

The wizards of ancient Thanaclan crafted several dozen of these crowns as rewards for those gargoyle minions who served them well. Over the centuries, most of the gargoyle crowns have been destroyed or lost, but a few remain here and there, often in the possession of the descendants of those original favored gargoyle minions.

Crafted from pieces of carefully carved granite, a *gargoyle crown* features three sharp points in the front with a series of small points ringing the rest of the wearer's head. The crown has two primary powers. Once per day as a free action, the crown can be activated to give the wearer DR 5/adamantine for 10 minutes, giving his skin the appearance of stone. The crown also grants its wearer a special smite attack usable once per day against creatures touching natural stone or earth. The wearer gains a +4 bonus on attack and damage rolls when using this special strike. The wearer must declare he is using this ability before making the attack. This item takes up the hat body slot when worn.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *stoneskin, true strike*; Price 14,000 gp; Weight 4 lb.

The Fogmire Ruins

After the PCs have spent several hours in Fogmire, perhaps as they begin scouting for a safe place to camp, they come upon some old ruins in a relatively dry clearing in the jungle. Made up of crumbling, moss-covered walls, these ruins appear ancient but do not feature the Olmans' architectural style. Built out of simple stone blocks, the walls bear no designs or patterns. Small piles of rubble dot the ruins, and an empty fire pit sits in the center.

Off in the northwest corner of the ruins stands a crude wooden frame in the shape of an "X." Bound upside-down to this frame is the corpse of an Olman man, his legs high in the air. Even from

Sleeping in Fogmire

The Abyssal influence of Fogmire manipulates the dreaming mind—any character that sleeps in Fogmire must make a DC 14 Will save or take 2 points of Wisdom damage as terrible visions of a demon-haunted jungle and ocean plague them. These are visions of Demogorgon's Abyssal realm of Gaping Maw. A creature reduced to 0 Wisdom by this effect falls into a permanent nightmare coma, and without aid from allies, will eventually die of thirst if the bar-lguras of Fogmire don't get to him first.

Creatures that do not sleep (such as elves) cannot be affected by this effect.

afar, it's easy to tell that the gaping wound in the center of his chest killed the man. When the party approaches to within 10 feet of the corpse, it suddenly begins to speak in broken Common.

"Welcome to my home, travelers. You come a long way only to stay here forever. At least you live. That is good for now. My home is your home, now and forever."

The corpse is a simple human zombie (*Monster Manual* 266) given the power to speak through foul magic. He cannot remove himself from the cross and does not attack even if he is cut down or assaulted. The corpse has little information and always speaks in dour tones, predicting the characters' oncoming doom. If asked, he identifies himself as Golnura, but he does not know where he is from or how long he has been here. He does know that the master of Fogmire killed him, but he refuses to describe him.

This talking zombie was placed here by Olangru as a tool to taunt intruders into his realm. The undead creature always asks about what it is like to be alive, often commenting that soon the PCs will know what it is like to be dead. The zombie is easily destroyed and does not attempt to defend himself.

If the PCs leave the old ruins and attempt to find their way back out, they find the path winds quite a bit as they leave the place. The baleful influence of Gaping Maw warps reality in Fogmire, and those who stumble into this dreadful section of jungle find it very difficult to escape. Any attempt to wander away from the old ruins results in the PCs finding themselves arriving at the old ruins from the opposite side 1d4 hours later, as if they'd traveled in a circle. Fogmire is, in a sense, a dimensional "ant-lion trap," and as long as the focus of this trap exists (the Lemorian golem in the shrine of Demogorgon), physical travel won't allow escape from Fogmire. Even flight fails; the fog seems to go on forever, and even if a character tries to fly straight up, he finds that at some point along his flight he's arched back toward the ground, directed by powerful forces beyond his control. Spells like *teleport* and *plane shift* could allow escape, but for now these spells are likely beyond the PCs' reach.

The Chosen of Olangru (EL 7)

Olangru and his mates are the rulers of Fogmire, and they know its hidden paths by their black hearts. Soon after the PCs arrive in the cursed jungle, the bar-lguras follow them at a safe distance and wait for an opportune chance to strike. Although their primary objective it to cause a bit of terror, they also plan to abduct one of the group to take back to their temple to be sacrificed to Demogorgon. The best point for this event to occur is when the PCs bed down for the night, but if they're about to discover the location of the shrine of Demogorgon, the demons strike just before they do so.

When the time is right, Olangru and his two mates become invisible and teleport into the party's midst from his vantage point sixty feet away. Give any characters on watch a Listen check opposed by the bar-lguras' Move Silently checks to notice their arrival. Those that fail are surprised (sleeping characters are automatically surprised).

Creatures: This initial combat should be fairly short—Olangru and his mates wish only to abduct one of the intruders. If he still lives, Urol is the primary target—otherwise you should select one of the other NPCs as the victim. Note that despite the challenge of this encounter, the EL is reduced due to the circumstances noted below under Tactics.

Bar-lguras are hulking demons that look at first like powerfully muscled orangutans, yet the cruelty that burns in their rheumy red eyes signals a hateful intelligance. They have enormous, tusk-like fangs, six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot.

OLANGRU **CR 9**

Bar-lgura scout 4

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Fiendish Codex I 29, *Complete Adventurer* 10

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 27; Dodge, Mobility, skirmish (+1 AC), uncanny dodge

hp 95 (10 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 20

Fort +13, **Ref** +16, **Will** +8

Spd 50 ft., climb 20 ft.; Run

Melee* 2 claws +15 (1d6+10) and bite +10 (1d6+6)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +17

Atk Options Power Attack, Spring Attack, pounce, skirmish (+1d6)

Special Actions abduction, *summon tanar'ri*

Combat Gear *ring of the ram* (25 charges)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

At will—*darkness*, *cause fear* (DC 14), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (DC 20), *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 18)

2/day—*disguise self* (DC 14), *invisibility*, *major image* (DC 16)

*2-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 26, Dex 22, Con 20, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16

SQ battle fortitude (+1), fast movement, trackless step, trapfinding

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Power Attack, Run, Spring Attack

Skills Balance +21, Climb +29, Hide +23, Intimidate +16, Jump +33, Listen +14, Move Silently +19, Spot +14, Tumble +21

Possessions combat gear, *bracers of armor +2*, *boots of levitation*, *cloak of resistance +1*

Abduction (Su) A bar-lgura can use *greater teleport* to transport other creatures. It can bring up to one Large or two Medium or smaller creatures with it each time it teleports. It can teleport unwilling targets as well, although an unwilling victim can attempt a DC 20 Will save to resist being transported. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Battle Fortitude (Ex) At 2nd level, a scout gains a +1 competence bonus on Fortitude saves and initiative checks. A scout looses this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

Pounce (Ex) If a bar-lgura charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

Skirmish (Ex) A 3rd-level scout deals an extra 1d6 points of damage on all attacks and a +1 competence bonus to Armor Class during any round in which he moves at least 10 feet. The extra damage applies only to attacks taken during the scout's turn, and only against living creatures that have a discernible anatomy. Undead, constructs, oozes, plants, incorporeal creatures, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are not vulnerable to this additional damage. The scout must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a

NPCs in Fogmire

Throughout this part of the adventure, the NPCs have the following attitudes and tasks in mind.

Amella Venkalie: Amella quickly becomes depressed again once the group leaves sight of the sea, and loudly blames Urol for their troubles when they become lost in the jungle. When Urol is abducted, Amella's attitude toward the gnome changes. Horrified by the simian demons, she can't stomach the thought of leaving anyone, even "that ridiculous gnome," behind for them to torment, eat, or worse. She encourages the PCs to find him and rescue him, and if she's in an ongoing relationship with one of the PCs, may even demand to accompany them into the Shrine of Demogorgon once it's discovered.

Avner Meravanchi: Avner is thrilled to be away from the gargoyles, but quickly becomes quite disgusted with (and frightened of) Fogmire. He does not care that Urol has been taken and demands the PCs find some way to get them out of this situation; "Maybe the time those weird apes take with the gnome'll give us a chance to escape!"

Thunderstrike: If Thunderstrike is still alive at this time, the prize horse attempts to bolt into the jungle whenever he gets a chance; a DC 15 wild empathy or DC 20 Handle Animal check, made daily, prevents this; otherwise Olangru finds the horse soon enough and tears it apart.

Tavey Nesk: Tavey is terrified of Fogmire, and takes to constantly asking the hero what he can do to help and when they will get to leave. Tavey offers to help the group find Urol until they come to the entrance to the shrine, when his nerve fails.

Urol Forol: Urol becomes quite weary of Fogmire upon entering it. After a few hours, he continues to look at the plants and animals, commenting on how "none of this is right..." When Urol is abducted, he does so screaming and calling out for the characters to save him.

vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. Scouts can apply this extra damage to ranged attacks made while skirmishing, but only if the target is within 30 feet. A scout looses this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor and when carrying a medium or heavy load.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a bar-lgura can attempt to summon another bar-lgura with a 35% chance of success. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell (CL 10th).

Skills A bar-lgura gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks and a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks.

OLANGRU'S MATES (2) **CR 5**

Female bar-lguras

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Fiendish Codex I 29

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +11

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19; Dodge, Mobility

hp 51 (6 HD); DR 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 16

Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; Run

Melee 2 claws +12 (1d6+6) and bite +7 (1d6+3)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +12

Atk Options pounce

Special Actions abduction, *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

At will—*darkness*, *cause fear* (DC 12), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (DC 18), *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 16)

2/day—*disguise self* (DC 12), *invisibility*, *major image* (DC 14)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 19, Con 19, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Run

Skills Balance +15, Climb +23, Hide +17, Intimidate +10, Jump +27, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Spot +11, Tumble +15

Possessions *bracers of armor +1*

Abduction (Su) A bar-lgura can use *greater teleport* to transport other creatures. It can bring up to one Large or two Medium or smaller creatures with it each time it teleports. It can teleport unwilling targets as well, although an unwilling victim can attempt a DC 18 Will save to resist being transported. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Pounce (Ex) If a bar-lgura charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a bar-lgura can attempt to summon another bar-lgura with a 35% chance of success. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell (CL 6th).

Skills A bar-lgura gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks and a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks.

Tactics: Olangru appears at the north entrance to the old ruins, near the corpse of Golnura. During the surprise round, he charges the nearest PC and attacks using his pounce and skirmish abilities. On the first round of combat, two of his three bar-lgura mates appear, one coming from the southeast path and another coming from the west. The one closest

to Urol moves right up to him, using Tumble if needed, and teleports him away using its abduction ability. That bar-lgura does not return to the fight.

Olangru frequently draws attacks of opportunity during the battle, charging from one opponent to the next while making use of his pounce and skirmish abilities. Once Urol is abducted, he and his remaining mate teleport away.

Developments: After Olangru and his mates teleport away, the characters have a chance to take stock of the situation. Urol is gone, leaving behind his animal companion, Miss Crazzle. The crow hastily looks about for the missing gnome and then proceeds to annoy the PCs with squawks and pecks, as if to say, "Where did my friend go?" The remaining NPCs panic over the situation and fall into a state of despair, seeing no way out of the situation and assuming that one of them will be taken next.

The Shrine to Demogorgon

There is no indication where the bar-lgura went with Urol and no trail to track—the method of abduction leaves behind no clues. Fortunately for Urol, Olangru has no plans to immediately sacrifice him—the bar-lugra intends to wait for the proper moment to make the sacrifice, when the fluctuating barriers between the Material Plane and Gaping Maw are at their thinnest.

The party has few options at this point. They cannot escape from the jungle and a terrible demon is stalking them and abducting their members. If they do nothing, Olangru's attacks continue, abducting one NPC every few nights until he finally begins taking PCs. It's possible that Olangru might be slain in one of these fights, in which case the abduction attempts cease but the sinister curse of Fogmire persists.

Fortunately for the PCs, the fact that the Lemorian golem (see Appendix Two) functions as a focus for Fogmire's curse also makes it fairly easy to locate. *Detect evil* and *detect chaos* both reveal faint auras infusing the plants, animals, and even the ground and the air in Fogmire. A DC 15 Search check reveals what appear to be writhing "currents" in these auras, currents that all flow in the same direction. By tracking these currents, the PCs will soon enough come to the entrance to the Shrine to Demogorgon, at which point the background levels of chaos and evil rise to moderate and overwhelm the currents. It should be obvious that this is the epicenter of the Abyssal influence in Fogmire.

Other divination spells can guide the PCs. A *divination* might reveal that "the rivers of evil and tides of chaos point the way," while *locate creature* or *locate object* used on Urol or any of his belongings might work as well if the spells are cast in the vicinity of the old ruins. The entrance to the shrine to Demogorgon is just under 500 feet into the jungle to the north of the old ruins, so as long as these spells are cast at caster level 8th or higher, the shrine itself (and by extension, Urol and his gear) are in range.

Even parties that lack divination spellcasting capabilities receive hints once they sleep. Characters who succumb to the Wisdom-draining influence of the region while they sleep experience strange dreams, and upon wakening such characters are momentarily filled with the urge to seek out the Shrine to Demogorgon to offer themselves as a sacrifice. This urge passes quickly enough, but the direction in which the urge tugged nevertheless points the way to the Shrine.

The entrance to the shrine is carved into the side of a low hill at Fogmire's heart. Atop this low hill rises a 40-foot-tall twisted spire of black rock, and at the hill's base gape twin carvings of baboon heads, their open maws granting access to two caverns leading under the hill.

The temple itself is carved out of solid rock. Unless otherwise noted, ceilings are 10 feet tall and the rooms within are dark. Doors are made from 8-inch-thick iron, rusted with age. Unworked caves are natural, but the floor has been cleared of debris. The chamber walls are smooth save for a band of leering demonic monkey faces carved into them at waist height. The entire place smells strongly of wet fur and sulphur, and the air is heavy and damp.

The remaining NPCs refuse to stay at the old ruins by themselves, but they do not wish to enter the evil temple either. When the PCs arrive there, they offer to hide out in the jungle nearby and await their return. Only Amella offers to accompany the PCs, and even then only if she's romantically involved with one of them and can't bear to let her lover out of her sight.

1. Two Entrances

The oppressive, fog-thick jungle thins here before a low hill. Above, a large spire of black rock looms, while at the hill's base, the image of two gigantic fanged baboon heads carved into the rock leers out at the jungle. Their gaping maws reveal two caves that lead into darkness.

A DC 30 Knowledge (religion or the planes) check reveals that the twin faces are a reference to Demogorgon, the Prince of Demons. Both entrances lead into the shrine, but only the eastern passageway is safe.

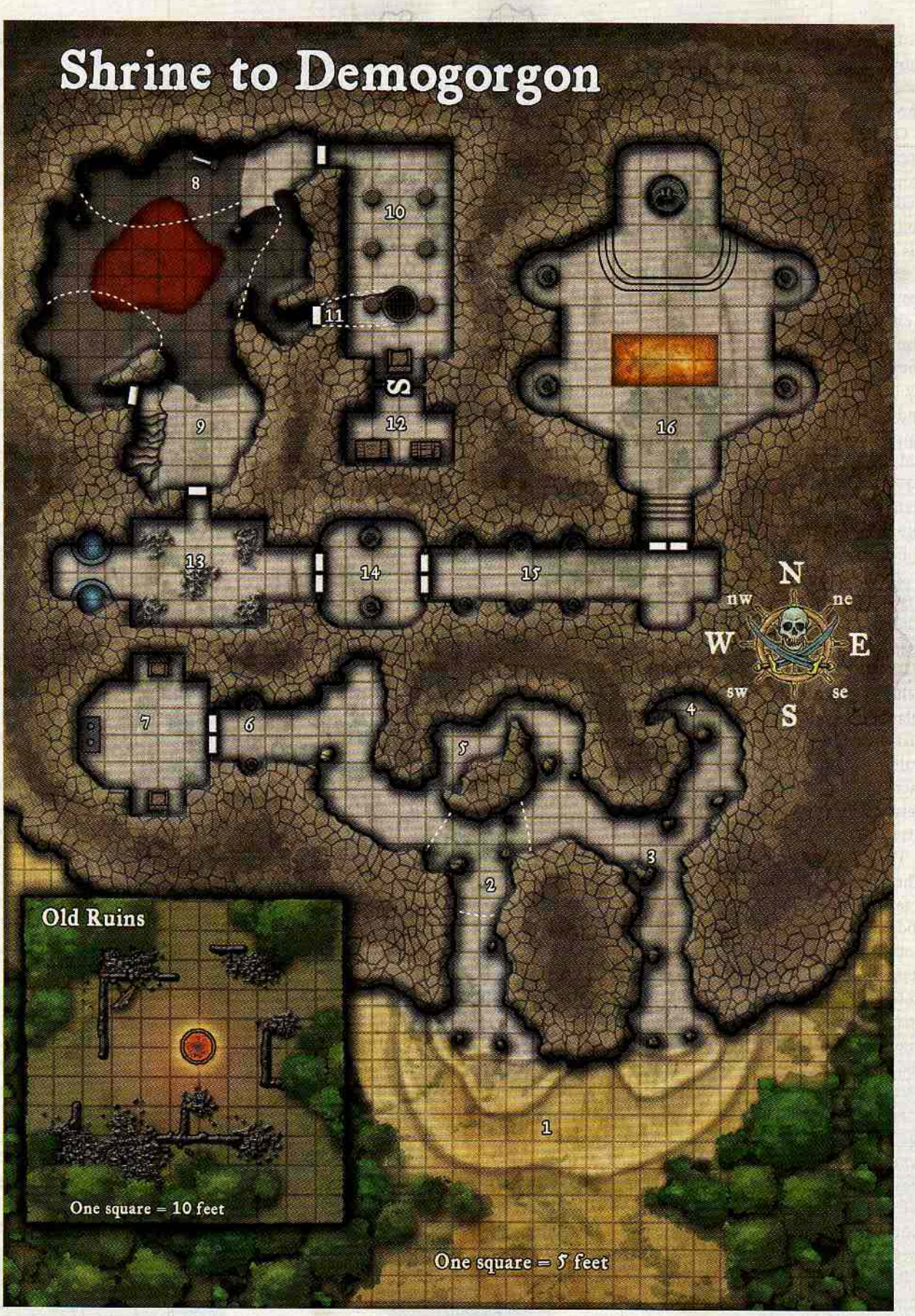
2. Rockfall Trap (EL 8)

Trap: This junction of the corridor is rigged to collapse the moment anyone steps inside the area indicated on the map, bringing tons of rock and debris down into that area.

Anyone standing in the indicated area on the map when the trap is set off is in the cave-in's bury zone. These characters take 8d6 points of damage (DC 15 Reflex half) and are buried. Characters within 10 feet of the bury zone are in the slide zone and take 3d6 points of damage (DC 15 Reflex negates). Characters that fail their save in the slide zone are also buried.

Buried characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If a buried character falls unconscious, he must make a DC 15 Constitution check each minute or take 1d6 points of lethal damage.

Characters who are not buried can dig out their friends. Characters can move 5 times their heavy load limit per minute and double that amount with an appropriate tool. Characters in the slide zone are buried by 1,000 pounds or rock, while those in the bury zone are underneath 2,000 pounds of rock.


Shrine to Demogorgon
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Old Ruins
One square = 10 feet
One square = 5 feet

Those inside the bury zone cannot be reached unless an adjacent square is free of debris. Characters in the slide zone can break free with a DC 20 Strength check, while those inside the bury zone who are adjacent to an open square or the slide zone can break free with a DC 25 Strength check.

Unless the PCs spend the time needed to dig out a tunnel, this intersection remains completely blocked by the fallen rock.

Rockfall Trap: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; cave-in (see above), multiple targets (all creatures in the indicated area and those within 10 feet); Search DC 20, Disable Device DC 20.

3. Bloody Handprint

Up ahead, the passageway forks to both the right and the left, with both leading off into darkness. A faint dripping sound can be heard in the distance.

This is where Olangru and his mates appeared after abducting Urol. A DC 20 Spot check allows a character to notice a gnome-sized bloody handprint on the floor near the east wall.

4. Dead End

Attached to the wall of this dead-end by a pair of rusted manacles is the skeletal corpse of a human, his bones yellow with age.

This prisoner, an Olman hunter who was captured when he wandered too close to Fogmire, was placed here long ago by Olangru and subsequently forgotten and left to starve. Next to the corpse, scrawled on the wall with a piece of loose rock, is a rambling message written in Olman. It reads, "No way out. The jungle is pain and suffering. Maybe it will end soon and the spirit of the hawk will take me aloft from this accursed place. I beg him to take me away before I am dragged to the altar of the two-faced one. There is no way out." There are other words scrawled beneath this message, but they are mostly unintelligible aside from a few words such as "cannibals," "hungry," and "out."

5. Urol's Gear

Piled up in one corner of this small passageway are the crumbled and torn remains of Urols's tunic, boots, and any other gear he was wearing at the time he was abducted.

6. Doors of Sacrifice

The natural caverns give way to worked stone and a short hallway ending in a pair of tarnished bronze doors. The doors are engraved with scenes of all maner of demonic reptiles and simians tormenting human slaves, and the handles are made from the barbed tongues of fiends. A pair of stone statues flank the door in niches carved into the walls. These statues each depict leering monkey demons, their tongues dripping an oily red liquid that evaporates before it hits the floor below.

The statues set into the walls are just that—ordinary statues enchanted with a faint illusion magic that causes their tongues to drip blood. Beneath each statue is a tiny inscription written in Abyssal that can be found with a DC 15 Search skill check. The left statue's inscription reads, "give of your left," while the right's reads, "give of your right."

Anyone investigating the door can, with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check, identify that scene as one from the Abyss. The doors themselves are locked by a specialized version of *hold portal*. They can be opened if a living creature grasps both handles and turns simultaneously, while giving the appropriate blood sacrifice (a total of 2d4 points of damage).

Doors of Sacrifice: 3 in. thick bronze; Hardness 10; hp 90; Break DC 30.

7. Shrine of Duplicity (EL 7)

This chamber is stained with blood. Two stone thrones sit on either side, set into alcoves. On the far side of the chamber is a blood-caked altar of greasy green stone, topped by a pair of black tallow candles. Iron-framed mirrors stand on either side of the altar, their reflections warped and indistinct.

This chamber hides the portal to reach the shrine's inner sanctum. To activate the portal, the PCs must first light both of the candles on the altar and then activate both of the mirrors. The order in which the candles are lit is very important.

If the north candle is lit first, warm blood pools on the throne on the south side of the room. If the character that lit this candle then sits in the south throne, he sees a dark glimmer in the mirror to the north of the altar. If that PC then touches the mirror to the north of the altar, a bestial image of himself appears within. This also sets off the Trap if the character fails a DC 19 Will save.

If the south candle is lit first, warm blood pools on the throne on the north side of the room. If the character that lit the candle then sits in the north throne, he sees a dark glimmer in the mirror to the south of the altar. If that PC then touches the mirror to the south of the altar, he sees a bestial image of himself appear. This also sets off the Trap if the character fails a DC 19 Will save.

If both candles are lit before their corresponding mirrors are touched, the candles explode into a 5-foot-radius burst of flame that deals 4d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 15 halves) to anyone caught within, then self-extinguish, resetting the trap.

If both mirrors are touched appropriately, triggering the trap twice, the mirrors change into swirling vortexes of darkness for 10 minutes. Anyone touching these vortexes (up to one character per turn per mirror) is teleported to area **8**. After 10 minutes the mirrors revert to normal, the blood around the thrones disappears, and both candles go out.

The mirrors, candles, and thrones are all minor artifacts. If damaged or removed from the Shrine, they melt away into brine only to reappear in their proper locations here.

Those who fail their saves when they touch one of the mirrors are transformed. They take on a savage appearance, hair going wild, eyes becoming bloodshot, and voices becoming thick and guttural. For 11 rounds, the feral PC attacks his one-time allies to the best of his abilities

(as determined by the DM). During this time, the PC's normal self appears in the mirror, crying for release. The PC controls this image and can give advice to the rest of the group, but can take no other actions. The feral PC is magically controlled for the duration of his rage as if by *dominate monster* (but without granting additional saves when forced to act against his nature)—*dispel magic* or a similar effect can end the assault early (the domination effect functions at caster level 11th). *Protection from evil* or *protection from chaos* also prevents the effect from taking place. Once the attack has ended, the affected character returns to normal and the savage image returns to the mirror.

Disarming the trap allows the mirror to be activated without risk of the character turning on the rest of the party. If the roll to disarm the trap is failed by 5 or more, the character making the attempt is subject to the trap, but the mirror does not yet count as being activated for the purposes of opening the portal.

Mirror Trap: CR 7; magical; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (transformation into savagery—see above; DC 19 Will negates); Search DC 30, Disable Device DC 30.

8. Olangru's Harem (EL 8)

The mirror portals in area 7 deposit anyone who sucessfully triggers them to a space adjacent to the single mirror located on the north side of this cavern.

This huge chamber is bathed in a strange red light that comes from above. Thorny vines grow across the walls and toward the ceiling some forty feet up. A natural stone bridge crosses through the upper reaches of this room, directly above a large pool of crimson liquid. To the north stands a large mirror, its warped surface framed in iron. The warm scent of wet fur is overpowering here, and a furtive shuffling echoes down from above.

The ceiling in this chamber is 40 feet high and the second level is 20 feet above the floor of the room. The door in the eastern wall that leads to area **11** is made of iron and locked (DC 25 Open Lock). The pool of blood in the center of the room is only a few feet deep at its center, making the center of the pool difficult terrain. The blood itself is real, perpetuated by the unholy influence that pervades this shrine.

Anyone touching the mirror turns its reflection into a pool of inky blackness. Touching the surface of the mirror at this point teleports that character back to area 7. This means of travel does not function while the candles in area 7 are lit (they automatically extinguish after 10 minutes if unattended).

Creatures: This chamber is the den of Olangru's three bar-lgura mates. The trio of foul demons is currently on the upper floor of the room and is not immediately aware of the PCs. Give the demons Listen checks every round that the PCs attempt to do anything that makes sound, either against an opposed Move Silently check, or against a static DC (see page 78 of the *Player's Handbook*). If the PCs manage to remain quiet long enough to move up to the higher level, they might get a chance to surprise the fiends. Otherwise, the demons attack immediately upon detecting the intruders.

Bar-Lguras (3): hp 51 each; see page 48.

Tactics: The bar-lguras begin combat by teleporting to the lower level of the room, surveying the area and moving into a position where they can charge the next round. If possible, they charge and make full use of their pounce ability. The bar-lguras attempt to abduct a weaker opponent to the upper level where they can fight alone. Alternatively, truly bothersome PCs are teleported to area **11**, the pit beneath area **10**, and left there. If given the chance, the bar-lgura use their spell-like abilities to confuse and hinder the PCs, such as creating a wall at the top of the stairs leading to area **9** with *major image*, using *invisibility* to set up an easy charge or flank, and tripping or disarming opponents with *telekinesis*.

Note that the PCs can only enter this chamber two at a time, meaning that if the first pair alerts the bar-lguras to their presence, the rest might find a combat in progress when they arrive.

9. Upper Level

A set of crooked natural stairs leads to the upper level of this large chamber. There are two iron doors leading out of this area, one to the south and one to the north. Both are unlocked. Once up here, the light source in this room is clearly visible. A large blood-red piece of quartz is lodged in the ceiling and filters in natural light from outside. Small mounds of gnawed bones litter the floor along with tufts of rust-red fur.

10. Throne Room (EL 8)

Six columns run down the length of this room, flanking a pit covered by a rusted iron grate. On the far side of the room is a stone throne, and the room itself is chokingly foul-smelling.

This area is used by Olangru as a throne room, where he plans out his future conquests and contemplates the coming glory of Demogorgon. The rusted iron grate in the center of the room is solid (treat as a portcullis) and although it can be safely walked upon, anyone attempting Tumble or Balance skill checks in that area takes a –2 penalty on the check.

The throne on the opposite side of the room is made of simple stone and is carved with the likeness of grinning monkey demons. A DC 15 Search check of the throne reveals scuff marks on the floor in front of it, indicating that the throne has been pushed forward in the past away from the wall (which contains the secret door to area **12**). Locating this secret door takes a DC 25 Search check.

Creatures: Olangru's court dwells in this chamber, a mob of wretched, horned, and feral fiendish baboons. The baboons spend much of their time loitering in the southern half of the room, noisily waiting for Olangru to bring them food. The moment the PCs enter this chamber, the baboons begin howling and shrieking in rage before surging forward as a mob to attack.

Mob of Fiendish Baboons **CR 8**
CE Gargantuan magical beast (extraplanar, mob of Medium magical beasts)

Monster Manual 107, 268; *Dungeon Master's Guide II* 59

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +4, Spot +4

AC 9, touch 8, flat-footed 7

hp 165 (30 HD)

Resist cold 5, fire 5; **SR** 6

Fort +18, **Ref** +19, **Will** +9

Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee mob (5d6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +22; **Grp** +36

Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, expert grappler, trample (2d6+3)

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 4

SQ mob anatomy

Feats Alertness, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun

Skills Climb +10, Listen +4, Spot +4

Expert Grappler (Ex) The mob of fiendish baboons can maintain a grapple without penalty and still make attacks against other targets. A mob of fiendish baboons is never flat-footed while grappling.

Mob Anatomy (Ex) A mob of fiendish baboons has no clear front or back and no discernible anatomy, so it is not subject to critical hits or sneak attacks. It cannot be flanked, tripped, grappled, or bull rushed. A mob of fiendish baboons is made up of relatively small numbers of individual creatures, so spells or effects that target specific numbers of creatures can have an effect on a mob. Each specific creature that is slain, disabled, or otherwise incapacitated by spells or effects that target specific creatures bestows two negative levels on the mob. A mob that gains negative levels equal to its Hit Dice breaks up as if reduced to 0 hit points. Negative levels gained in this manner are not the result of negative energy (and thus cannot be blocked by *death ward* or removed by *restoration*), but never result in permanent level loss. A mob takes half again as much damage (+50%) for spells or effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and evocation spells.

Mob Attack (Ex) A mob of fiendish baboons must move into an opponent's space to attack, which provokes attacks of opportunity. It can occupy the same space as a creature since it tramples and moves around its victim. It can move through spaces large enough for its component creatures. A mob inflicts 5d6 points of bludgeoning damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move, with no attack roll needed. Mob attacks ignore concealment and cover, but damage reduction does apply.

Trample (Ex) A mob that simply moves over a creature and doesn't end its movement with that creature in one of its occupied squares can trample the creature for 2d6+3 points of damage. The victim can either make an attack of opportunity against the baboons or make a DC 27 Reflex save to take half damage.

Tactics: The mob of fiendish baboons moves toward the PCs at full speed, attempting to grapple the closest one while the rest take damage from the mob. The mob tramples lone targets to reach a group to accomplish this. Each round, the mob continues to grapple one target and deal mob damage to the rest. This continues until the mob is dispersed, at which time the few remaining fiendish baboons quickly scurry out of the chamber or hide amongst their dead fellows.

11. The Pit

The door to this tiny chamber from area **8** is locked, requiring a DC 25 Open Lock check to open. Inside, the pit is a mess of bones, scraps of flesh, dried blood, tattered rags, and other things best left unmentioned, for it is in here that Olangru feeds his baboon subjects, imprisoning the still-living food in this chamber and then opening the grate to area **10**.

12. Two Chests (EL 5)

This small chamber features a pair of rusted iron chests sitting against the far wall. The odor of damp fur hangs heavily in this cramped room.

These two chests once again present the PCs with a choice between the right and the left. The interiors of both chests are lined with lead. Both chests are identical in appearance, bearing engravings that depict horrid flames consuming the just and the righteous. In addition, both are locked, requiring a DC 30 Open Lock check to open.

Trap: The chest on the left is trapped—anyone who opens it or successfully picks the lock unleashes a *fireball*.

***Fireball* Trap:** CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fireball*, 8th-level wizard, 8d6 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Treasure: The chest on the right contains 2,000 gp and 3,000 sp. Resting on top of the coins is a left-handed ape paw made of iron, a +1 *buckler*, and a *wand of aid* (50 charges). The ape paw is a strange key, one of two vital in opening the doors that lead into area **15**.

13. Chamber of Bones (EL 9)

Thousands of bones are piled high in the corners and the center of the room, a grisly testament to past atrocities. The sound of bubbling water comes from the dark western end of the room.

Many of the creatures captured by the bar-lguras end up in this room, fed to its hungry inhabitant. Their bones litter the floor here, increasing the DC of all Tumble and Balance checks made in the room by 2. The large bone piles are difficult terrain.

The western alcove in this chamber contains a pair of fountains, filled by water pouring out the fanged maws of large baboon heads. The heads are mounted on the walls just above the fountains. The water is quite murky, making it impossible to see the bottom of either fountain. On top of each baboon head is an iron valve, used to shut off the water. One of these valves is trapped.

Creature: This chamber is the lair of Ilzytik, a spirit naga that has thrown in its lot with the bar-lguras in hopes of gaining even greater power. The naga lives here, guarding the door leading to area **14** and the passageway leading to the main shrine. The demons also use the naga as a source of healing and other simple spellcasting.

Ilzytik, spirit naga: hp 76; *Monster Manual* 192.

Spells Known (CL 7th, +7 ranged touch)

3rd (5/day)—*displacement*, *lightning bolt* (DC 16)

2nd (7/day)—*cure moderate wounds, glitterdust* (DC 15), *scorching ray*
1st (7/day)—*cure light wounds, disguise self* (DC 14), *mage armor, magic missile, shield of faith*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (+7 ranged touch), *cure minor wounds, detect magic, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*

Tactics: Ilzytik casts *mage armor* every day as part of her preparation, and has the spell up when the PCs arrive. Every round of combat in area **8** or **9** gives the naga a chance to become alerted to intruders (DC 5 Listen check). Once alerted, she casts *disguise self*, changing her appearance to that of a zombie naga so as to trick opponents into underestimating her. She then waits until she hears something from directly outside the room (Listen DC 8 for talking, DC 18 for movement). Once she hears characters outside her door, she casts *shield of faith*.

When the characters enter the room, the naga casts *displacement* and waits to see who resists her gaze. On following rounds she attacks those who resist with *lightning bolts, scorching rays,* and *magic missiles* as the situation allows. The naga proudly wishes to display her loyalty to Demogorgon and fights until slain.

Trap: The valve on the southernmost fountain (or left fountain, for those looking into the alcove) is trapped. Manipulating this valve in any way causes the trap to go off.

***Ice Storm* Trap:** CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*ice storm*, 7th-level wizard, 3d6 bludgeoning and 2d6 cold); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

Treasure: If the valve on the northern well is turned off, the water slowly drains from the pool over a period of 20 minutes, revealing a 5-foot-deep pit. At the bottom of the pit, among a mess of silt and bones, is a right-handed iron ape paw. This strange key is one of two vital in opening the doors that lead into area **15**. One of the bones at the bottom is made of copper and is in fact a *lesser silent metamagic rod*. The rod can be located with a DC 20 Spot check or a DC 10 Search check.

In addition, there are a few treasures scattered throughout the bone piles. In the northwest corner is a +1 *spell storing warhammer*. The bone pile in the center of the room hides a *potion of haste*. Both of these items can be found with a DC 15 Search check.

14. Iron Ape Statues

The iron doors leading into this chamber are not locked, but they are very heavy and difficult to open, requiring a DC 25 Strength check to move.

A pair of iron doors, carefully carved with the images of ape demons and burning landscapes, loom in the wall opposite the entrance to this chamber. The walls and floor of this chamber are polished smooth, and two large statues stand in the chamber. Also made of iron, these statues depict hulking simian fiends, each one holding out an arm missing a hand. The statue on the right is missing its left, while the statue on the left is missing its right.

The doors leading to area **15** are locked with a special version of *hold portal* (CL 20th) that only allows them to be opened when the ape paws from areas **12** and **13** are replaced on the correct statues. Otherwise the doors can be forced open with a DC 40 Strength check or destroyed (hardness 10, hp 160).

15. Hall of Howls (EL 1)

This long hall is lit by flaming brands held aloft by iron ape statues placed at even intervals on either side. Each of the ape statues has its head thrown back, as if silently howling at the ceiling above. At the far end of the hall, another pair of double doors, this time made from gleaming copper, stands closed.

The large copper doors at the end of the hall are identical to the ones that led into this room. They are not locked.

Trap: Each of the ape statues is trapped to emit a piercing ape howl when any living creature comes within 5 feet of it. The howling continues until the living creature is more than 5 feet away. While this howling does no physical harm, it is easily heard throughout much of the shrine complex. This trap also causes the ape statues in area **16** to howl, alerting Olangru to the intruder's presence.

Howling Statue Trap: CR 1; magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*ghost sound*, 5th-level wizard); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25.

16. Demogorgon's Shrine (EL 10)

This huge chamber is watched over by five hideous statues. To the east and west stand four towering demonic ape statues in alcoves, facing a roaring fire pit in the room's center. On the opposite side of the room is an even larger stone statue. Possessing the stout, stylized body of an ape, this statue has two stone tentacles where each of its arms should be. Sprouting from its shoulders are two fanged baboon heads. The statue lords over the room atop a great dais, staring out in frozen rage.

This chamber is Olangru's shrine to Demogorgon, built hundreds of years ago by a sect of now long-dead troglodytes. The ceiling is 50 feet high at its domed peak (directly above the fire). Toward the walls, the ceiling is only 40 feet tall. The room is well lit by the fire. The stairs leading into the room rise a total of 5 feet.

The 12-foot-tall statue atop the 5-foot-high raised dais is a stylized image of the Prince of Demons himself—a DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals this. Although the statue is actually a construct, it does not act until later. The smaller 8-foot-tall ape statues in this room are made of iron, and although menacing, are harmless.

The fire pit in the center of the chamber is 5 feet deep, but its flames rise to a height of 10 feet. Anyone falling into this pit takes 6d6 points of fire damage each round. Anyone within 5 feet of the inferno takes 1d6 fire damage every round. Anyone within 20 feet above the fire takes this damage as well.

Creatures: Poor Urol dangles 40 feet above the floor of the room (30 feet above

the fire), suspended by chains that connect to a winch on the east wall of the room. The winch is located 10 feet above the floor, between the two demonic ape statues. If more than one character was kidnapped, all dangle above the pit, connected to the same winch. If he sees the PCs enter the room, he wimpers and cries for help, unfortunately alerting the other denizens of the room.

There are two other creatures in this room, but they do not fight together. The first is the bar-lgura Olangru. If alerted to the PCs' presence, he turns *invisible* and waits for the right moment to strike. The second creature is a terrible construct known as a Lemorian golem. Created centuries ago by troglodyte priests of the Prince of Demons, the Lemorian golem is an "anchor" of sorts that focuses the eldritch influence of Gaping Maw, allowing Demogorgon's Abyssal realm to focus on the immediate region.

Olangru: hp 95; see page 45.

Lemorian Golem: hp 51; see Appendix 2.

Tactics: Assuming he is properly warned, Olangru begins the fight invisible. When the characters enter the chamber, he casts *see invisibility* and *telekinesis*. He uses the latter to unlatch the winch, causing Urol to descend toward the pit at a rate of 5 feet per round. Following this, the fiend charges the most dangerous PC (as determined by their earlier encounter), using his pounce and skirmish abilities to full effect. He continues to charge from foe to foe each round, dealing as much damage as possible until slain. Note that all of Olangru's wounds from the previous fight have been healed by the naga.

Once Olangru is killed, the PCs have three rounds before the Lemorian golem animates and attacks. When this occurs, the giant two-headed statue grinds into angry life. Its tentacles, despite being made of stone, sway and writhe, and its two fanged maws snap and gnash before unleashing a bone-shaking howl.

The Lemorian golem opens combat by using one of its howls. It then moves toward the nearest character to attack. It grapples the first character it can, constricting every round until that character falls unconscious before tossing him aside to grab another. Meanwhile, the Lemorian golem continues to attack with its other two tentacles and howls again. The Lemorian golem does not seek out particular foes, but instead goes after the nearest every round. It fights until destroyed.

Treasure: Aside from Olangru's gear, a small crucible stands on the dais. Used to make offerings to the Prince of Demons, the crucible contains ashes and charred bits of pulverized bone. In the bottom of the crucible lies a *ring of protection +2* that Olangru overlooked before tossing the hand that once wore it into the fire.

Developments: With the destruction of the Lemorian golem, the power of the temple shatters. A terrible oppressive aura fades, and over the course of the next several days, Fogmire reverts to normal jungle and swamp. The fog is the first to fade, and by the the time the PCs emerge from the shrine, it has burned off completely. Monstrous predators soon infest

the region, but the unholy influence of Gaping Maw over this portion of the Isle of Dread never returns.

If rescued, Urol is battered and bruised and refuses to speak of his time in captivity. From this point forward, the gnome is more reserved and quiet. His enthusiasm for the isle has vanished, and he can sometimes be seen staring off into the distance and shuddering.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

When the PCs emerge from the shrine to Demogorgon, they are enthusiastically greeted by any NPCs that were waiting for them outside. With the fog lifted, it's a relatively simple matter to head south, and by the end of a day's march, the PCs are rewarded with a wide trail. A DC 12 Survival check is enough to note that this is no mere game trail—it's a poorly-maintained but nonetheless recently used trail running northwest to southeast. Urol recognizes the trail, and informs the PCs that it leads to the friendly village of Tanaroa to the southeast.

If the PCs aren't quite 9th level yet, feel free to have them encounter a few last monsters as they make their way south toward Tanaroa. A flock of three terror birds, a pack of six deinonychuses, or even another tyrannosaurus all make excellent encounters. If you have the next adventure handy, you can use the information there to round out additional encounters as you see fit. Eventually, the PCs reach the end of the trail at a fifty-foot-high wall of stone blocks. This wall stretches across the two-mile-wide isthmus entirely, but a pair of massive wooden gates in the center allow passage. As the PCs approach, the Tanaroan villagers who guard the wall issue a challenge. The villagers can understand a few words of Common, and as long as the PCs don't take up a threatening posture and can calm the natives with a DC 15 Diplomacy check, they can negotiate passage. Otherwise, the natives make the PCs wait for several minutes while they bring their chieftain to speak to the PCs.

If you wish to expand this section of the adventure, the next adventure in the Savage Tide Adventure Path contains more information about the villagers. In any event, the natives quickly recognize that the PCs are outlanders and come to the obvious conclusion that they are looking for Farshore. After allowing the group a bit of time to rest, a few select villagers escort the PCs to the village of Mora 30 miles to the south. From there, the group is put into a number of simple canoes and taken to the colony of Farshore.

As the PCs approach the colony, it should become obvious that trouble is afoot. Even before the PCs sight the walls of Farshore, they spot plumes of smoke rising in the air. Screams and the unmistakable sounds of battle reach the PCs' ears, and as they grow closer, they recognize Lavinia's ship, the *Blue Nixie*, docked at one of several piers along with multiple smaller ships. Yet there is one ship that does not belong, a rugged-looking caravel with red sails and a crimson jolly-roger flying from its main mast—the pirates of the Crimson Fleet have come to Farshore, and their attack is well under way!

APPENDIX ONE: SHIPWRECK SURVIVIORS

The Frightened Sailor

Amella Venkalie **CR 4**
Female human rogue 4
CN Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16; uncanny dodge
hp 20 (4 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +6 (1d6–1/18–20)
Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2
Atk Options sneak attack +2d6
Combat Gear *potion of remove disease*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Persuasive, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]), Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +11, Bluff +12, Craft (carpentry) +7, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (geography) +7, Profession (sailor) +11, Swim +6, Tumble +9, Use Rope +9
Possessions combat gear, masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork rapier, light crossbow with 20 bolts, *ring of protection* +1, silver ring decorated with tiny emeralds that look like multiple eyes worth 200 gp

A slight but powerful woman with fine blonde hair tied neatly back from her forehead, Amella dresses to fight and sail rather than to please the eye. A thin scar graces her right cheek. Amella is rather foul-mouthed, fond of uttering oaths only heard in the worst dockside taverns. Confident, haughty, and astute, she does not suffer fools gladly. She makes few attachments, having buried one husband—a dashing sea captain named Heldram Flashwell. They once ran a smuggling operation some distance from Sasserine, but were betrayed by a group of shifty gnomes led by a treacherous cur named Shortstone Badgewell—it was this cruel gnome who murdered her husband. This event has left Amella with a poor opinion of gnomes. She makes friends slowly, but once someone has earned her trust, she's quite loyal despite her carefree attitude. At your discretion, one of the PCs might bear a more-than-passing resemblance to her late husband, in which case her reaction to the PC could blossom into romance or degrade into a bitter rivalry, depending on how that PC treats her.

The Demanding Noble

Avner Meravanchi **CR 2**
Male human aristocrat 3
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10
hp 13 (3 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk longsword +3 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Atk Options Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack

Abilities Str 11, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack
Skills Bluff +5, Diplomacy +9, Forgery +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +6, Ride +7

Possessions masterwork longsword, Meravanchi signet ring worth 250 gp, Thunderstrike (light horse), military saddle

Avner is a despicable cur—a slanderer, a deflowerer of maidens, and an utter cad who cares only about himself. Yet on the surface he is charming, helpful, and brave. This is all an act. When trouble appears, he disappears. When coins go missing, he is the culprit. When ladies are left in a lurch at the altar, he's off frolicking with their sisters.

Despite the slow recovery of her wealth, Lavinia couldn't quite finance the expedition to Farshore on her own. She spoke with the other noble families of Sasserine, but only one felt the profits for aiding her outweighed the dangers—the semi-notorious Meravanchis. Of course, Avner's father, Zebula, had an additional reason to send Avner on this trip. By giving Avner the responsibility for representing Meravanchi interests in Farshore, he effectively removes the threat of him embarrassing the family in Sasserine. Avner has no concept that his father wanted to get rid of him, and carries with him a vastly inflated sense of self-importance as a result.

The Island Guide

Urol Forol **CR 3**

Male gnome druid 1/expert 3
NG Small humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +12, Spot +10
Languages Common, Draconic, Druidic, Gnome, Sylvan

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14
hp 26 (4 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8 (+10 vs. illusion)

Spd 20 ft.
Melee quarterstaff +1 (1d4–2)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** –4
Combat Gear *wand of shillelagh* (32 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 1st)
1st—*calm animals* (DC 14), *obscuring mist*
0—*mending, purify food and drink, resistance*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st)
1/day—*dancing lights, ghost sound* (DC 10), *prestidigitation, speak with animals*

Abilities Str 6, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 10
SQ animal companion (crow named Miss Crazzle), spontaneous casting (*summon nature's ally* spells), wild empathy +1
Feats Skill Focus (Knowledge [geography]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature])
Skills Concentration +6, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (nature) +16, Listen +12, Spot +10, Survival +12
Possessions combat gear, *+1 leather armor*, quarterstaff, *cloak of resistance +1*, sleeping cap for Miss Crazzle

Urol is a bent old gnome who constantly squints. He carries the odor of the land about with him, an odor that most find unpleasant. He is talkative and chipper except when the subject of the natural world comes up, whereupon he flies into a frenzy of excited, stuttering bliss, expounding upon obscure and often strangely fascinating (to him, at least) bits of lore.

Urol has actually been to the Isle of Dread before, although his stay, in his words, was, "Unfortunately short—due to events beyond my control, I might add! We've certainly nothing to fear this time around!" He demanded to be part of Lavinia's expedition when he learned about it, and indeed his knowledge of the isle could greatly help the colonists.

Urol often evokes Amella's anger during the adventure, despite his best efforts to win her friendship. As the days pass, it falls to the PCs to keep him out of her hair.

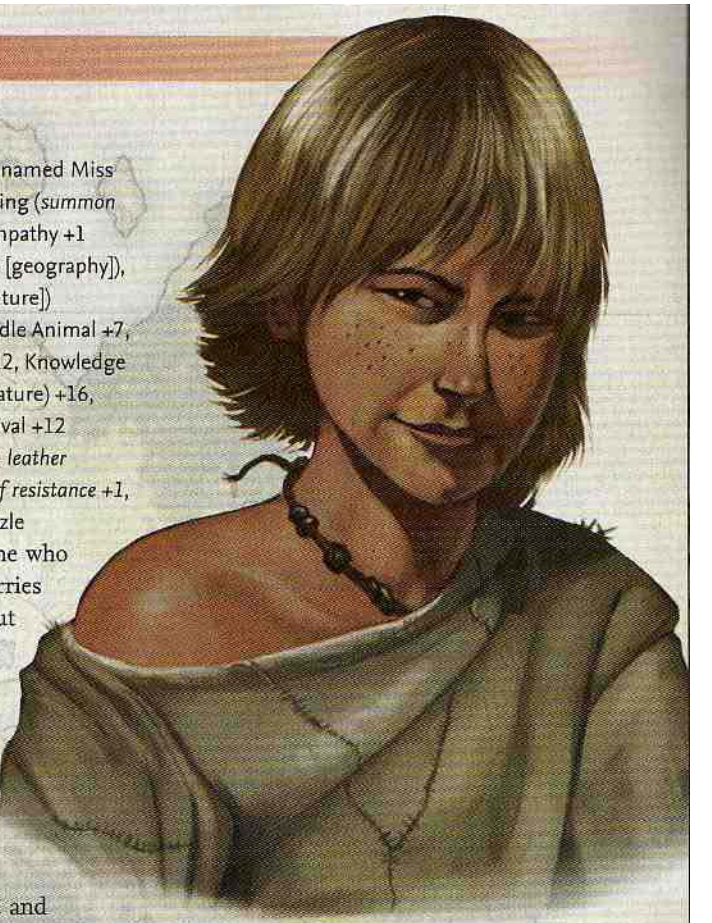
The Impressionable Youth

Tavey Nesk **CR 1**

Male human expert 2
CG Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Dodge
hp 11 (2 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +1 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged dagger +2 (1d4/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*



Tavey Nesk

Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9
Feats Dodge, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor])
Skills Balance +6, Climb +5, Escape Artist +3, Jump +7, Profession (sailor) +7, Tumble +8, Swim +5, Use Rope +6
Possessions combat gear, leather armor, 3 daggers, silk rope (50 feet)

Tavey spent most of his young life aboard the *Sea Wyvern* after he was rescued from the sea six years ago. He remembers little before that time, but has the distinct impression that his parents were sailors (although he usually exaggerates this to claim they were either rich adventurers or deadly pirates). Tavey dreams of one day becoming an adventurer himself and has been following and studying the PCs closely ever since they came onboard. Now that he has the chance to spend time with them, he latches on to the character with the highest Charisma and hopes to get him to teach him everything he knows. Tavey may pester the characters, but he truly is a nice kid and knows when he goes too far. Throughout this adventure, Tavey stays away from fights, standing in the

background and shadow fighting in the same technique as his hero.

APPENDIX TWO: NEW MONSTER

Lemorian Golem

Four stone tentacles extend from the body of this towering statue, each undulating of its own accord. Two sculpted baboon heads sprout from its shoulders, maws agape with a look of menace.

LEMORIAN GOLEM **CR 10**

Always CE Large construct

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +16, Spot +16

Languages Abyssal

AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +14 natural)

hp 96 (12 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine or good

Immune construct traits

SR 18

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 4 tentacles +17 (1d8+8/19–20 plus rot)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +21

Atk Options Combat Reflexes, improved grab, constrict 1d8+12 plus rot

Special Actions howl

Abilities Str 26, Dex 14, Con —, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11

SQ construct traits, dual nature

Feats Ability Focus (howl), Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

Skills Climb +16, Listen +16, Spot +16

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or troop (3–8)

Treasure none

Advancement 13–20 HD (Large), 21–30 HD (Huge), 31–36 HD (Gargantuan)

Constrict (Ex) A Lemorian golem that establishes a hold deals 1d8+12 points of constriction damage and 1d4 points of Constitution damage as the target's flesh rots away into corruption. The Constitution damage can be resisted with a DC 16 Fortitude save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Dual Nature (Ex) A Lemorian golem has two minds. As such, it retains the ability to fight and defend itself while grappling a single foe, also retaining its Dexterity bonus to AC. If a Lemorian golem grapples two foes, it loses its ability to make attacks with its tentacles and its Dexterity bonus to AC.

Howl (Su) A Lemorian golem can howl as a standard action (or as part of a full-attack action due to its dual nature), causing all those within 50 feet to become shaken for 1d6 rounds (DC 18 Will save negates). Each head can howl once per day. A shaken creature becomes panicked for 1d6 rounds if affected by a second howl. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rot (Su) Anyone struck by a Lemorian golem must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage as their flesh rots and turns gangrenous from the unholy contact. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Forged in the pits of Demogorgon's lair in the Abyss, Lemorian golems serve Material Plane cults of the Prince of Demons as focuses for their unholy rites and as guardians of their foul temples and shrines. Named for the Prince of Demons' "capital" city on Gaping Maw, Lemoriax, where these constructs serve as guardians and soldiers, only Demogorgon knows the secret of their construction. When found outside Gaping Maw, they are usually in the temples of cultists, waiting to be used as part of some devious plot.

A Lemorian golem fights with ferocious tenacity, pursuing opponents as long as they remain in sight. Its favorite tactic is to grapple a single foe while howling. Although constructs, Lemorian golems possess a startling degree of intelligence and a modicum of free will. They serve the Prince of Demons in all ways, and if they feel a cult they're associated with is failing their master, a Lemorian golem often takes the cult's punishment or destruction into its own hands. A Lemorian golem without a cult generally remains as a guardian of its shrine, content that Demogorgon will some day send them a new flock.

Reports of Jason Bulmahn's untimely demise in the "Hall of Harsh Reflections" were slightly premature. He has since been animated as an author zombie who spends every undead moment working on adventures, articles, or game books. At press time, his only statement was "I before E-rrrrrgg."

WOODLAND SHRINE
Map of Mystery
Forest Stream
Cliff
Cavern Entrance
Water Cavern
Sinkhole
Waterfalls
Rocky Trail
Shrine
River
Steep Slope
Road
Ford
Campsite
Ridge
To Ancient Fortress
1 square = 5 feet
Woods
WEST

Savage Tide

Tides of Dread

The colony of Farshore has survived on its own for years, a secluded and struggling hamlet perched on the western shore of the tiny island of Temute. An island dwarfed by the savage landscape across a narrow channel to the north, a landscape of rugged mountains, tangled jungles, and trackless swamps. This is the Isle of Dread, and its resources and hidden treasures are matched only by its peril. Yet for all these dangers, what may bring doom to Farshore is not an invasion of inhuman monsters from the mainland, but an invasion of all-too-human monsters from across the sea.

"Tides of Dread" is the fifth chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* Magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* Magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #352 of *Dragon* Magazine features rumors of Farshore, a helpful list of improvements the PCs can make to the colony, and other features to help get PCs oriented in their new home on the Isle of Dread.

The PCs should be 9th level when they begin "Tides of Dread." They should gain enough experience to advance to 10th level at some point during the adventure, and 11th level by its end.

BY STEPHEN S. GREER AND GARY HOLIAN
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | MID LEVEL (6TH–12TH) | WILDERNESS & MASS BATTLE

PLAYTESTED BY ROB ALFORD, STANLEY CRAMER, DAN DEKKER, APRIL GREER, BEN "HUFFSTER" HUFF, PAUL PHAREZ, TODD ROWE, DAYTON RUFF, BEN WILLIAMS

Switching Sides

If your PCs work for the Lotus Dragons (the thieves' guild they tangled with in the first adventure in this campaign), their patron is Rowyn Kellani, not Lavinia Vanderboren. Already bored with controlling Sasserine's harbor, Rowyn has turned her eyes south to Farshore. If she can seize control of the colony, the rare and exotic imports to the north can only increase the fortunes and influence of the Lotus Dragons.

In this scenario, the PCs still arrive at Farshore to find it under attack by the Rat's End pirates, but when they drive off the pirates they find that Rowyn has established herself in a position of power against the Meravanchis. As the PCs prepare for the coming Crimson Fleet assault, they'll need to work with their mistress to ensure that Meravanchi doesn't win control of the colony. Assassination missions are certainly not out of the question.

Without Lavinia in the picture, Vanthus's role in this adventure changes only slightly. He still lusts for Rowyn, even though she has moved on and abandoned him as a bad mistake. His attempt to abduct her at the end of this adventure plays out the same.

Adventure Background

Centuries ago, the Olman Empire spread itself across the length and breadth of the Densac Gulf and as far south as the Pearl Sea. On this southern verge, its most isolated kingdom, Thanaclan, also became its most prosperous. Long after the rest of the Olman Empire succumbed to warfare and strife, the Lords of Thanaclan thrived in their opalescent capital, and their angry gods were pleased. Yet the kingdom of Thanaclan was not destined for immortality. A thousand years ago, a great tragedy threw down the proud kingdom, transforming a prosperous land into what is known today as the Isle of Dread.

For hundreds of years, the Isle of Dread lay in the vast sea, unvisited and unknown save by the few tribes of Olman survivors, who as generations passed looked back upon the age of Thanaclan with growing wonder and fear. Now and then, ships driven off-course by tropical storms wrecked upon the reefs surrounding the isle, but none of these visitors escaped to tell tales of an island ruled by monsters. It wasn't until a few decades ago, when an intrepid explorer named Rory Barbarosa discovered the uncharted island and made it back to the mainland, that proof of the mythical isle reached civilization. Rory's first trip to the isle rewarded him with great riches plundered from ancient Olman ruins, but he knew that if the local legends were true, even greater riches waited deeper in the isle's interior. While Rory never made it back to the Isle of Dread, his legacy lives on. Many explorers and adventurers continue to seek out the isle to this day. Most perish. Until only a few years ago, no one had even dared think about establishing a permanent colony on the isle. This changed with Farshore.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs arrive at Farshore to discover it under attack by pirates. After aiding the colony's defense, the PCs are reunited with Lavinia Vanderboren. She tells them of her own troubles at sea, and of the new problem facing the colony. A pirate captured during the attack reveals that he and his mates were merely scouts. The Crimson Fleet knows of the colony's location, and in approximately two months, they will arrive in force to take what they can and burn the rest.

Before this event, the PCs are called upon to do what they can to prepare Farshore for the attack. Some of these tasks can be handled quickly and locally, but the most important missions take the PCs onto the mainland of the Isle of Dread, where they'll need to forge alliances with native peoples, secure access to natural resources, recover and repair the *Sea Wyvern*, and even face down the physical manifestation of an ancient Olman god. Each of these missions earns the party a number of victory points.

When the Crimson Fleet arrives, the PCs' accomplishments during the ensuing battle earn them additional victory points. In the final encounter they come face to face with Lavinia's brother Vanthus, now the half-fiend captain of a Crimson Fleet ship. At the battle's end, the victory points are totaled to determine the result of the final battle and Farshore's fate.

Adventure Hooks

If you're running "Tides of Dread" as a stand-alone adventure or as part of your own campaign, you might need another introduction to the adventure. Any of the affiliations described in the "Savage Tidings" article of DRAGON Magazine #348 may provide a pretext for the PCs to travel to Farshore, as they all have representatives in the colony. Alternately, you could start your Savage Tide campaign with this adventure, in which case the PCs are members of Farshore already. If you start them at 1st level, use the accompanying Farshore Backdrop as inspiration for low-level adventures before you let the PCs brave the terrors of the mainland.

PART ONE: THE ISLE OF DREAD

Over 1,300 years ago, a fleet of Olman princes from across the eastern sea came upon a bounteous land and claimed it as their own. They cleared vast stretches of jungle on the island to plant crops, and built a fortified city that dwarfed all other settlements in the region atop a massive central plateau. Known as Thanaclan, this city became the heart of one of the wealthiest kingdoms of the far-flung Olman empire. After approximately 300 years of rule, the city-state of Thanaclan fell prey to the first savage tide. The tide washed over the entire island, bringing ruin, madness, and death, and what remained became known as the Isle of Dread.

The isle itself is a large landmass surrounded by treacherous reefs and smaller islands. Most of the island's coastline consists of rugged cliffs, but here and there isolated beaches allow safe landing. Most of the human population of the isle, descendants of the original rulers of Thanaclan, dwell on a southern peninsula, sheltered from the monsters and dinosaurs that rule the mainland by a great wall.

Weather on the Isle of Dread is, at best, uncomfortably warm and humid. Along the coast, temperatures have been

known to dip as low as 64° F, while atop the central plateau or in the depths of the jungles it often rises above 90° F. The bulk of the isle is covered with lush, tropical jungles, yet here and there reminders of the ancient Olmans can be found in the form of collapsed statues, ruined temples, and mysterious standing stones. Few examples of the isle's original fauna survive today (mostly limited to wild boars, rock baboons, or terror birds), for the isle is now overrun with terrible, legendary creatures. Chief and largest among these are the dinosaurs, or "thunder lizards," as the Olman natives call them. Yet there are other monsters dwelling in the hidden reaches of the isle, monsters that couple their fearsome countenances with an equally fearsome intellect.

As the PCs explore the Isle of Dread and its surrounding islands and waters, they'll certainly run afoul of its dangerous denizens. Most of these creatures are little more than animals, but some also possess a degree of intelligence that make them all the more deadly. The Isle of Dread is split into four encounter zones, each with its own table of wandering monsters. Check for random encounters four times a day by rolling d%; once at dawn, once at noon, once at dusk, and once at midnight. The chance of an encounter occurring varies according to the encounter zone. The actual timing of when a random encounter occurs is left to you; an encounter that occurs at "midnight" could take place any time between 10:00 PM and 4:00 AM.

Note: These wandering monster charts differ slightly from those presented in the Isle of Dread backdrop in DUNGEON #114. This is intentional; not only are these new charts tailored for a group of 9th–10th-level characters, but they incorporate some additional monsters while phasing out other monsters that shouldn't be as commonly encountered in the Savage Tide version of the Isle of Dread.

Islands and Peninsula (10% chance of encounter): Dinosaurs are only rarely encountered here, with the majority of monsters being dire animals or other large fauna. In addition, many of these regions are inhabited by Olmans. Their unusual practices of involving necromancy in their burial rituals has the unfortunate side effect of increasing the presence of dangerous undead in these regions.

Surrounding Waters (4% chance of encounter): The waters surrounding the isle are only marginally safer than the isle itself. Most of the creatures encountered here aren't dangerous enough to menace a ship the size of the *Hellfish*, *Blue Nixie*, or *Sea Wyvern*, but those marked by an asterisk certainly could.

Isle Mainland (15% chance of encounter): The Isle of Dread itself is rife with dangerous creatures, the majority of which are dinosaurs. Statistics for several dinosaurs are presented in sidebars in this adventure. Worse, periodic planar breaches between the Isle of Dread and the Abyssal layer of Gaping Maw increase the likelihood of encountering lone demons on the mainland.

Central Plateau: The Isle of Dread's central plateau is shrouded in mystery and rumor; the Olmans view the place as taboo, and do not speak of it with outlanders. While reaching the central plateau is certainly not beyond the PCs' capabilities at this time, what awaits them there is beyond the scope of this adventure. Wandering encounters for the central plateau are detailed in DUNGEON Magazine #145, in the adventure "City of Broken Idols."

Encounter Locations

The following entries give a brief description of specific areas of the Isle of Dread. Many of these locations are detailed further in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, but others are left to you to expand upon.

Aranea Lair: This arboreal village of cavelike webs is inhabited by dozens of araneas.

Ashfall Isle: Ashfall is a desolate rock, constantly in the shadow of Red Belcher's smoky plume. Little lives here.

Badwall Isle: This is a jagged islet with little vegetation and no safe shores upon which to land. A nest of two dozen wyverns claim its peaks.

Blackfen: This swamp is the territory of several bickering tribes of bullywugs, froglike humanoids that rarely venture

Island and Peninsula Encounters

Roll	Monster	Average EL	Source
01–02	1 dire tiger	8	*Monster Manual* 65
03–08	1d4 dire boars	6	*Monster Manual* 63
09–10	1 ahuizotl	6	*Fiend Folio* 14
11–12	1 weretiger	5	*Monster Manual* 174
13–14	1 mummy	5	*Monster Manual* 190
15–18	a anaconda	5	*Monster Manual* 280 (giant constrictor snake)
19–22	1 giant tarantula	5	*Monster Manual* 289 (Huge spider)
23–25	1d4 wights	5	*Monster Manual* 255
26–27	1 wraith	5	*Monster Manual* 258
28–32	1d4 dire apes	5	*Monster Manual* 62
33–35	1d4 terror birds	5	*Fiend Folio* 175
36–38	1d6 rhagodessas	5	DUNGEON #139
39–44	2d4 ghouls	4	*Monster Manual* 119
45–60	2d4 Olman hunters	4	*Dungeon Master's Guide* 117 (human fighter 1)
61–64	1d4 shrieking spiders	4	*Monster Manual* 289 (Large spiders)
65–72	2d6 human zombies	4	*Monster Manual* 266
73–77	3d4 dire rats	3	*Monster Manual* 64
78–83	3d4 human skeletons	3	*Monster Manual* 226
84–88	1 quickdeath mamba	3	*Monster Manual* 280 (Huge viper)
89–91	1 wasp swarm	2	*Fiend Folio* 172
92–95	1 monitor lizard	2	*Monster Manual* 275
96–100	1 jungle cobra	2	*Monster Manual* 280 (Large viper)

Aquatic Encounters

Roll	Monster	Average EL	Source
01–02	1 octopus tree*	12	*Fiend Folio* 131
03–06	1 megalodon*	11	*Monster Manual II* 147
07–15	1d4+2 ichthyosaurs	11	*Stormwrack* 145
16–20	1 plesiosaur*	10	*Stormwrack* 146
21–24	1 shipbreaker crab*	10	*Stormwrack* 142 (Gargantuan crab)
25–30	2d6 dire barracudas	10	*Stormwrack* 147
31–40	1d8 mashers	10	DUNGEON #141
41–45	1 giant squid*	9	*Monster Manual* 281
46–50	2d8 dire eels	9	*Stormwrack* 148
51–55	1 dire shark	9	*Monster Manual* 64
56–65	1d4 elasmosauruses*	9	*Monster Manual* 60
66–75	1d4+1 jellyfish swarms	8	*Stormwrack* 161
76–80	1 giant octopus*	8	*Monster Manual* 276
81–95	1d6 great white sharks	7	*Monster Manual* 279 (Huge shark)
96–100	1d8+4 ixitxachitls	7	*Monster Manual II* 128

far from their marshy homes. The largest tribe, the Burbalarg Tribe, dwells in the half-sunken ruins of an ancient Olman town.

Blisterhill Isle: This island of barren stony slopes is studded with dozens of active geysers.

Bloodwater Lake: This large lake is infested with dangerous menaces, including freshwater reptiles, huge schools of piranha, and worse. The lake is named not for the hue of its waters, but for the ferocity of its denizens.

Cankerdark: The noisome pits of this large cave network are more vertically aligned than horizontal, and are home to countless clinging and scuttling vermin.

Dark Mountain Pass (DUNGEON #142): This ancient Olman undergound pass also served as a tomb, but is now infested with vermin and scavengers.

Dragonhaunt Hollow: Only one true dragon currently dwells on the Isle of Dread. Xiureksor is a very old green dragon who spends most of her time sleeping in a deep cave under this boggy jungle.

Ember Lake: So named for the red, phosphorescent fish that dwell in its depths, Ember Lake is connected to the surrounding sea by several submerged channels. Aquatic reptiles like plesiosaurs are common in these waters.

Emerald Isle: This verdant isle is relatively safe—its largest predators are dire boars, crocodiles, and the occasional anaconda.

The Fangs of Zotzilaha (DUNGEON #143): Twin volcanoes that loom over the surrounding jungle, the Olmans hold that the bat god Zotzilaha dwells somewhere in the numerous caves along these dangerous peaks.

Farshore (DUNGEON #143): This colony, established by Verik and Larissa Vanderboren, is only a few years old—its future is uncertain.

Fireshriek Isle: Although this island is dominated by an active volcano, the eruptions (while common) tend to be relatively minor. The western and southern sections are home to many packs of terror birds, isolated families of dire apes, and smaller prey.

Fogmire (DUNGEON #142): Until recently, this fog-shrouded patch of jungle hid a terrible, secret—a shrine to Demogorgon built centuries ago by troglodyte cultists.

Gargoyle Aerie: This inhospitable reach of ragged mountains is riddled with caves that serve as the home for dozens of gargoyle tribes.

Glasswall Rift: A sizable rent in the mountainside here glitters by day, its razored walls of obsidian and other volcanic glass home to pteranodon nests and monstrous web-spinning spiders of all types. Tunnel entrances and pits in the rift's bed lead into the extensive caverns that riddle the isle's foundations.

Griff Isle: The largest of the isles surrounding the mainland, this verdant isle is named for the numerous flocks of hippogriffs that nest here.

Huhueteotl's Throne: Once a sizable Olman town, all that remains above the sunken swampland of this forgotten city is a black stone ziggurat capped by an immense throne bearing images of the Olman god of fire and the passage of time, Huhueteotl. On certain nights of the year, sinister fires burn in the swamp, and strange shapes can be seen cavorting atop the ruins.

Kopru Tunnel Entrance (DUNGEON #144): This unassuming coastal cavern actually represents the most direct route to the deep caverns and aberrant reaches below the Isle of Dread, places currently inhabited by the amphibious and evil kopru, but which actually far predate even them.

Lizardfolk Lair: This partially flooded cavern houses the largest tribe of lizardfolk on the Isle of Dread.

Lost Citadel: This glittering aerie is the last bastion of the "gods" that survived the destruction of Thanaclan. The citadel is made of gleaming stone covered in an opalescent shimmer that is entirely unspoiled by the ravages of time. The Olman believe their gods sleep here, awaiting the day the isle reverts to a paradise and they can rejoin their people again. Legends record that the courtyard contained nine stone archways and two pools—Truth (filled with blood) and Beauty (filled with crystal-clear water)—used to test souls. The temple is built on an impossibly high terrace cut into the mountains on the isle's western edge. It can sometimes be seen from the western sea or from certain angles on the plateau. A handful of princes did survive Thanaclan's destruction and escaped to this citadel. Some remain in *temporal stasis*, along with their weapons and sorcery.

Mantru (DUNGEON #145): The secrets of this mysterious village are known to very few beyond the edge of the isle's central plateau—none who dwell elsewhere on the island have visited the village and returned to tell of it in recent memory.

Olman Villages (DUNGEON #143): These seven villages comprise the bulk of the Olman population of the Isle of

Scale in Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50
N
Badwall Isle
Red Belcher Isle
Ashfall Isle
Worm Reef
Wreck of the Galliwant
Skystar Peak
Ember Lake
Koprr Tunnel Entrance
Glasswall Rift
Lost Citadel
Valley of Madness
Thanaclan
Mantru
Wreck of the Sea Wyvern
Marsher Reef
Thanaclath River
Tiruens Fall Cave
Dark Mountain Pass
Cankerdark
Stalking Stones
Temple of the Jaguar
Gargoyle Aerie
Skinrazer Rock
Blackfen
Thanaclan Village
Griff Isle
Shrine of Zotzilaha
The Fangs of Zotzilaha
Tanamir
Bluefish Reef
Scorpion Isle
Rat's End
Emerald Isle
Tanarua
Enrouao
Wilson's Reef
Seamy Reef
Fireshriek Isle
Mons
Thunder Reef
Panitube
Farshore
Kirikuka
Blisterhill Isle
Scarlet Brotherhood Encampment
Usi
Dawa
ISLE OF DREAD

Mainland Encounters

Jungle	Swamp	Savannah	Mountain	Aquatic	Monster	Avg. EL	Source
—	—	01–05	—	—	1d12 diplodocuses	17	Page 41
01–03	01–03	—	—	—	1 red sundew	13	*Monster Manual II* 179
—	—	06–10	—	—	1d6 triceratopses	12	*Monster Manual* 61
04–06	—	11–15	—	—	1d4 stegosauruses	12	Page 54
07	04	—	—	01	1 hezrou	11	*Monster Manual* 44
08–10	05–12	16–18	—	—	1d8 parasaurolophuses	11	Page 44
11	13	—	01	—	1 retriever	11	*Monster Manual* 46
12–16	—	19–23	02–09	—	1d6 ankylosauruses	10	Page 37
17–19	14–18	24–26	10–12	—	1 greenvise	10	*Monster Manual II* 120
20–22	19–21	27–29	—	—	1d3 tyrannosauruses	10	*Monster Manual* 61
23–25	22–24	30–32	13–15	—	4 Brotherhood scouts	9	Page 35
—	—	—	—	02–15	1d4 elasmosauruses	9	*Monster Manual* 60
26–30	25–27	33–37	—	—	1d6 megaraptors	9	*Monster Manual* 60
—	—	38–40	16–20	16–18	1 roc	9	*Monster Manual* 215
31	28	41	21	19	1 vrock	9	*Monster Manual* 48
—	—	42–44	22–26	20–27	1d6 wyverns	9	*Monster Manual* 259
32–36	29–33	—	27–31	—	1d8 araneas	8	*Monster Manual* 15
37–41	34–36	45–49	—	—	2d4 deinonychuses	8	*Monster Manual* 60
—	37–39	—	—	—	1 treeleg spider	8	*Monster Manual* 289 (Gargantuan spider)
42–44	40–42	50–52	—	—	1 allosaurus	7	Page 35
—	—	53–57	32–39	28–35	2d4 dire bats	7	*Monster Manual* 62
—	—	—	40–44	—	1 emperor scorpion	5	*Monster Manual* 287 (Huge scorpion)
—	—	—	45–52	36–40	1d6 gargoyles	7	*Monster Manual* 113
—	43–50	—	—	41–52	1d6 giant crocodiles	7	*Monster Manual* 271
—	—	58–62	53–60	53–54	2d4 hippogriffs	7	*Monster Manual* 152
—	—	—	—	55–61	1d4 piranha swarms	7	*Stormwrack* 162
—	—	63–67	61–68	62–64	1d10 pteranodons	7	Page 47
45–49	—	68–72	—	—	1d6 terror birds	7	DUNGEON #142
—	51–58	—	—	65–72	2d6 bullywugs	6	DUNGEON #140
50–52	59–63	—	—	—	1d8 dimetrodons	6	Page 40
—	64–71	—	—	—	2d6 lizardfolk	6	*Monster Manual* 169
—	—	—	69–76	—	1d6 sawtail scorpions	6	*Monster Manual* 287 (Large scorpion)
53–57	72–76	—	—	—	1 shambling mound	6	*Monster Manual* 222
58–60	77–79	—	—	—	1 tendriculos	6	*Monster Manual* 241
61–64	80–87	—	77–84	—	2d6 troglodytes	6	*Monster Manual* 246
65–69	88–94	—	—	73–86	1 anaconda	5	*Monster Manual* 280 (giant constrictor snake)
70–72	—	73–77	—	—	1 giant tarantula	5	*Monster Manual* 289 (Huge spider)
73–80	—	—	—	—	2d4+4 phanaton rangers	5	Page 47
81–83	95–97	78–82	—	—	1d6 rhagodessas	5	DUNGEON #139
84–88	—	83–87	85–92	—	2d6 neanderthals	5	*Frostburn* 145
—	—	88–92	93–00	—	2d6 baboons	4	*Monster Manual* 268
89–91	98–00	—	—	—	1d4 shrieking spiders	5	*Monster Manual* 289 (Large spiders)
92–00	—	93–00	—	87–00	2d4 Olman hunters	4	*Dungeon Master's Guide* 117 (human fighter 1)

Dread. Although independent, the leaders of these villages generally look to the village of Tanaroa for direction.

Phanaton Village: This village of arboreal platforms and cleverly hidden huts is inhabited by nearly 550 phanatons, small raccoonlike humanoids native to the Isle of Dread. Other phanaton settlements exist in the nearby jungles, but none are as large as this one.

Rat's End: This ragged settlement, built from ruined ships converted into poor-quality huts, has housed nearly two dozen pirates for several years. After the assault on Farshore at the start of this adventure, this village stands empty.

Red Belcher Isle: An active volcano makes this rugged isle uninhabitable to all but a few flocks of tenacious wyverns and pteranodons.

Reefs: Six major reefs surround the Isle of Dread—each is infested with dangerous sea creatures like monstrous crabs, dire eels, and mashers.

Rivenskull Cave: Actually several dozen caverns connected by narrow fissures, Rivenskull Cave is inhabited by five warring tribes of savage humans, throwbacks devolved from Olmans due to exposure to the mysterious primal fogs that sometimes visit the island's reaches.

Scarlet Brotherhood Encampment: The large number of dangerous creatures dwelling on this nameless island have traditionally warded the Olmans away from settling here. Not so for a small group of Scarlet Brotherhood missionaries, evil priests who follow Pyremius, god of fire, poison, and murder. The missionaries are a vanguard, evaluating the possibility for a future invasion of the isle. Although details of the encampment are beyond the scope of this adventure, PCs who explore the Isle of Dread are likely to encounter one of the encampment's exploration parties before long. A Brotherhood exploration party consists of four multiclassed monk/clerics. They scour the Isle of Dread for hidden magic and forgotten Olman relics, and view anyone else they encounter as competition fit only for swift murder. Only if one of the PCs happens to belong to the Scarlet Brotherhood can a violent clash be avoided.

BROTHERHOOD SCOUT **CR 5**

Human monk 2/cleric 3
LE Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +3
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 14
hp 31 (5 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk kama +6 (1d6+1) or mwk kama +4/+4 (1d6+1)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Stunning Fist 2/day (DC 15), smite 1/day (+4 attack, +3 damage)
Special Actions rebuke undead 2/day (+1, 2d6+2), turn water creatures or rebuke fire creatures 2/day (–1, 2d6+2)
Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (2d20 charges), Large scorpion venom (5 doses, DC 18, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str)
Spells Prepared (CL 3rd, +4 touch, +5 ranged touch)
2nd—*lesser restoration*, *produce flame*[D], *sound burst* (DC 15)
1st—*burning hands*[D] (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *sanctuary* (DC 14)
0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *guidance*, *resistance*
D domain spell; **Domains** Destruction, Fire

Abilities Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8
SQ spontaneous casting (inflict spells)
Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +4, Concentration +9, Hide +7, Jump +3, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Tumble +7
Possessions combat gear, masterwork kama, *amulet of natural armor +1*

Scorpion Isle: This rugged island is infested with all manner of monstrous scorpions, including an enormous ancient monster the size of a house the Olmans call "Cerattakatha."

Shrine of Zotzilaha (*Dungeon* #143): This cavern is visited once every few months by Olmans who bring offerings to appease the anger of the bat god.

Skinrazer Rock: Like Blisterhill Isle, dozens of geysers can be found on this inhospitable swath of stone that barely rises two dozen feet above sea level at its highest point. In many places, the rock itself is searing hot to the touch, heated

ALLOSAURUS **CR 7**

N Huge animal
Monster Manual II 70
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +10, Spot +11

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 13
hp 78 (10 HD)
Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

Spd 50 ft.
Melee bite +12 (2d8+7) and 2 claws +7 (2d4+3)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +22
Atk Options improved grab (bite), rake +12 (2d8+3)
Special Actions swallow whole, trample 1d8+10

Abilities Str 24, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 11
Feats Alertness, Run, Toughness, Track
Skills Listen +10, Spot +11

Rake (Ex) An allosaurus can make two rake attacks against any opponent it successfully grapples, provided it begins its turn already grappling the foe.
Swallow Whole (Ex) An allosaurus can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to two sizes smaller than it by making a successful grapple check. A swallowed creature takes 2d8+8 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round, and can cut its way out with a light slashing or piercing weapon. The allosaurus's stomach is AC 12 and has 25 hit points. Once a creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. An allosaurus's gullet can hold 1 Medium, 4 Small, 16 Tiny, or 64 Diminutive or smaller opponents.
Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 22. The save DC is Strength-based.

Recruiting Dinosaurs

Although it doesn't occur to Lavinia, one of the greatest resources on the Isle of Dread is its dinosaurs. Spells like *charm animal*, *dominate animal*, and *awaken*, as well as abilities like wild empathy can be used to "draft" numerous local denizens of the isle to Farshore's aid. Of course, managing dangerous animals is a task in and of itself, and if the PCs aren't careful, they could cause more harm then help by "recruiting" too many dinosaurs, only to have some (or all) of them revert to their true nature within Farshore's walls. A rogue allosaurus or frightened diplodocus can do as much (if not more) damage to the colony than the Crimson Fleet, so this plan must be executed carefully.

Only creatures of CR 2 or higher can really make a difference in the battle to come. When the Crimson Fleet attacks, award Victory Points to the PCs equal to twice the total of all recruited dinosaurs' CR scores. Thus, if the PCs recruit three ankylosauruses and a tyrannosaurus, they earn 58 Victory Points. The maximum amount of VP that can be earned from dinosaur recruits is 200 VP.

from below by pockets of lava and superheated steam.

Skyscar Peak: The highest peak on the Isle of Dread, the slopes of Skyscar Peak are a favored nesting ground for rocs.

Standing Stones: Olman ruins abound on the isle, yet few can match these immense standing stones in sheer spectacle. Two dozen stones stand here, said to mark the lost tombs of Olman princes.

Tar Pits (*Dungeon* #143): Often visited by Olman natives, this immense tar pit provides materials used to waterproof boats and the roofs of huts.

Temple of the Jaguar (*Dungeon* #143): This mysterious temple hides a cache of magic weapons left by an extinct tribe of catlike humanoids known as the rakastas.

Thanaclan (*Dungeon* #145): Once the heart of the Olman empire, this ruin is known now as the City of Broken Idols. What terrifying menace now rules here is unknown.

Thanegioth River: The mightiest river on the Isle of Dread, the frequent rapids along this waterway make it a poor choice for exploration via boat.

Valley of Madness: Although the plant known locally as "loco weed" can be found in many places on the Isle of Dread, the narcotic plant grows most thickly in this secluded valley.

Wreck of the *Gallivant* (*Dungeon* #144): The largest sunken shipwreck off the shores of the Isle of Dread, this immense galleon is now the home of an equally immense dragon turtle named Emraag.

Wreck of the *Sea Wyvern* (*Dungeon* #143): This is where the PCs' ship wrecked at the end of "The Sea Wyvern's Wake."

PART TWO: RAIDERS FROM RAT'S END

After Vanthus Vanderboren's botched robbery in "The Bullywug Gambit," the scoundrel fled the Sasserine region on a small ship crewed by thugs he'd hired for the job. One thing led to another, and after a bloody mutiny, Vanthus was set adrift in a longboat to die of starvation. Yet fate had another destiny in mind for the treacherous cur, and two days later he was captured by a Crimson Fleet ship called the *Brine Harlot*.

Over the next few months, Vanthus's skill at lying, treachery, and misdirection was put to good use. The same glib tongue and willingness to do whatever it takes to get ahead that served him so well in becoming a ranking member of the Lotus Dragons saved him from more than a keelhauling, and by the end of his second month aboard the *Brine Harlot* he was a respected and feared member of the crew. Upon reaching the Crimson Fleet's home port of Scuttelcove, Vanthus wasted no time selling out his captain to the mysterious leaders of the fleet, revealing the *Brine Harlot*'s hidden allegiances to the Scarlet Brotherhood. The rest of the *Harlot*'s crew was put to death, and Vanthus was granted captainship of the vessel as a reward.

Faced with a responsibility to find new venues for pillaging, Vanthus recalled a fat ledger written in his father's hand that he'd stolen from the family vault. Although he'd long since lost the ledger, he remembered its contents—extensive notes on a colony named Farshore his father established on the Isle of Dread. Eager to appear useful to his new masters, Vanthus took this information to them. What Vanthus couldn't know was that the Crimson Fleet already had interests on the Isle of Dread, albeit at the opposite end of the isle from Farshore. Likewise, the Crimson Fleet had no inkling that a burgeoning Sasserine colony was located on the isle of Temute to the south of their own sinister interests. To show their thanks, the leaders made Vanthus a captain in their fleet—after submitting him to an Abyssal initiation and transformation that would change young Vanderboren for the worse.

Defending Farshore

The pirates of Rat's End are a sorry lot. Led by a murderous scoundrel named Slipknot Peet, these outcasts from piratical fleets across the Vohoun Ocean have grandiose plans of building their own fleet and taking to the seas. Unfortunately, infighting and bickering take precedence, and every time a plan to organize comes along, internal treachery cuts it down. Slipknot Peet is the latest in a long line of leaders of Rat's End—the fact that he's held the position for nearly a year is due more to his luck and reputation than to any real leadership qualities.

When Slipknot Peet was contacted by the Crimson Fleet (via a *crystal ball* with *telepathy*) about scouting out the supposed colony, he saw it as an opportunity. He browbeat the entirety of Rat's End onto their only seaworthy ship, the *Hellfish*, and sailed for Farshore immediately. At first, the scouting mission went without a hitch; the pirates observed Farshore without being spotted for three days. Yet Slipknot Peet's greed soon got the best of him.

Not long before the PCs arrived at the end of "Here There be Monsters," the *Hellfish* sailed into Farshore. Half the crew boarded the *Blue Nixie* while the rest stormed into the settlement. Their plan was simple: kill and subdue the weaker colonists and burn what buildings didn't look like they held any loot.

The PCs arrive well after the attack on Farshore has begun. The Rat's End pirates are focused on the colony itself, and aren't paying attention to anything approaching from the sea. The Olman guides transporting the PCs want nothing to do with the fight, but are willing to row up quietly and allow the PCs to debark at the northernmost pier of the Farshore waterfront.

Screams fill the smoke-filled air as cackling, howling men dressed in filthy armor and waving rusty, ragged weapons press the attack against Farshore's unorganized defense. Up the hill, several buildings have been lit on fire, and issuing from one nearby are frantic screams. Lying in the sand in front of another building is the body of a well-dressed man with a bloody wound to the chest and a savage gash across his face. His body is surrounded by fragile glassware spilled from a case he was carrying. His chest rises and falls feebly, though for how much longer is uncertain.

Further south, a large band of filthy men are happilly smashing in the windows of what appears to be a chapel. More pirates are busy trying to bash in the chapel's front doors with a heavy wooden beam. Terrified screams coming from within punctuate each of the ram's blows.

Nearby, a hulking half-orc with blotchy, yellow skin and a leering, toothy smile chases a red haired young woman around a neighboring building, shouting lurid propositions.

Deeper in the village, a group of young men armed with swords make a stand against what appears to be the pirate leader, a tall and dangerous-looking human who laughs as he deflects their attacks with obvious ease.

Finally, a group of colonists desperately try to extinguish a fire consuming a large building to the southeast, while others brave the flames to rescue its contents. More commotion can be heard from deeper in the village, but the thick, billowing smoke effectively masks what is transpiring there.

In order to successfully drive off the pirates, the PCs must complete five of the following encounters. Some of the conflicts are on timers; if the PCs take too long to get to them, the encounter is automatically lost.

1. Trapped! (EL 2)

Burning roof beams block the entrance to this building. The only windows are at the front, and each is engulfed in flames. A character that tries to clamber through the window takes 1d6 points of fire damage and must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid catching fire. He must also make a DC 10 Climb check to reach the window, which is six feet off the ground.

Attempts to bash down the front door take a DC 22 Strength check. With each check, a character must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid taking 1d6 points of fire damage.

The woman trapped in the building is **Hilde Swenten** (NG female human commoner 3; hp 10; Fort +1, Ref +0), an accomplished farmer from Sasserine who saw in the Vanderboren's plan for Farshore great opportunity. She hid in this storage hut when the pirates attacked. One of them tossed a vial of alchemist's fire through a window, and the hut went up like dry kindling. Hilde huddles at the back of the building, furthest from the flames, but is too terrified to attempt an escape on her own.

Development: Starting two rounds after the PCs land, Hilde Swenten must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) each round to avoid choking and coughing from the smoke. If she chokes for 2 consecutive rounds, she takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Once she takes 11 points of nonlethal damage, she falls unconscious; 1d6 rounds later she begins to suffocate and drops to 0 hit points. The next round she drops to –1 hit points, and on the third round she dies.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs rescue Hilde, grant them a CR 2 experience award.

2. Bleeding Out

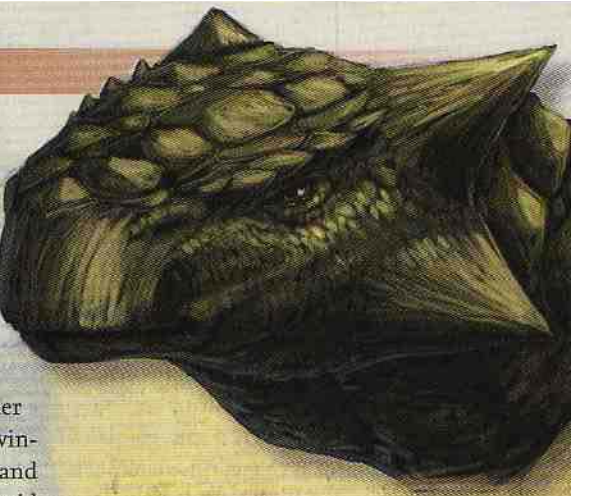
When the pirates landed, Professor **Hevrik Aldwattle** (NG human wizard 5/expert 2) was here in his laboratory. As he saw the pirates racing up toward his home, he gathered a boxful of lab equipment and tried to flee, only to stumble into a passing pirate who quickly cut him down with a critical strike to the chest.

Although he's stable, Aldwattle isn't out of danger. Every five rounds, there's a 20% chance a passing pirate notices the dying man and takes 1d4+1 rounds to loot his body before finishing him off.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs move Professor Aldwattle to somewhere safe, revive him, or protect him until the attack is over, grant them a CR 2 experience award.

3. Church Crashers (EL 6)

Terrified screams come from within this large, simple church. A group of pasty-skinned brutes are the cause—two of the five Rat's End pirates assaulting



ANKYLOSAURUS **CR 7**

N Huge animal

Monster Manual II 70

Init –2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +7

AC 22, touch 6, flat-footed 22

hp 121 (9 HD)

Fort +16, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Spd 20 ft.

Melee tail slap +13 (2d6+13)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +23

Special Actions trample 2d12+13

Abilities Str 29, Dex 7, Con 26, Int 1, Wis 9, Cha 8

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Iron Will

Skills Listen +7, Spot +7

Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 23. The save DC is Strength-based.

the church amuse themselves by breaking out windows and leering in at the colonists cowering inside. The other three use a makeshift battering ram to break the barricaded front doors down.

Creatures: Within the chapel huddle twelve defenseless colonists who sought out the church on instinct when the attack came. The chapel's keeper, **Vesserin Catherly** (NG male half-elf cleric 6), is currently aiding the Jade Ravens and Lavinia in a prolonged battle with more Rat's End pirates near the Clayworks to the south, and won't be able to make it back here in time to aid in the chapel's defense. The five pirates intent on menacing the colonists here are unaware of the PCs unless they call attention to themselves.

Every other round (starting on the round after the PCs arrive), the pirates make an attempt to break open the doors to the chapel. Working together with the improvised battering ram, they have a +9 Strength check; it takes a DC 24 Strength check to batter down the doors. Once they knock down the doors, the pirates begin butchering the colonists inside—every 1d4 rounds, one of the colonists is murdered.

Rat's End Pirates (5) **CR 2**
Human rogue 1/fighter 1
CE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14
hp 18 (2 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee scimitar +4 (1d6+2/18–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding
Feats Great Fortitude, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar)
Skills Balance +3, Climb +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Profession (sailor) +6, Swim +2, Tumble +3, Use Rope +5
Possessions studded leather armor, scimitar, light wooden shield

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs save all of the colonists in the chapel, grant them a CR 3 experience award.

4. The Chase (EL 2)

A muscle-bound pirate, his pus-yellow skin patchy with warts, doggedly pursues a red haired woman around this building. This is Anvil, the first mate of the *Hellfish*, and he's been chasing the woman, **Ruby the Weaver** (NG female human expert 1), for some time already.

Only 3d4 rounds after the PCs arrive, Ruby stumbles and falls, exhausted. Anvil's on her immediately, but before he can carry out his plan, Ruby finds a hidden reserve of strength. She grabs a splintered piece of wood and jams it into Anvil's neck, inflicting 2d4 points of damage. In a fit of rage, Anvil lashes back at her one round later with his scimitar, killing her.

Anvil, Rat's End Pirate: hp 18; see above (Rat's End Pirate).

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs rescue Ruby, grant them a CR 2 experience award.

5. Slipknot Peet (EL 10)

A group of swordsmen surrounds a tall pirate with deeply tanned, leathery skin. He wields a wickedly curved rapier in one hand and a punching dagger in the other, and coils of knotted rope are wrapped around his arms and torso in a tangled display. Many of the ropes are fashioned into nooses, and hanging from quite a few are morbid trinkets like jawbones, skeletal hands, and leathery trophies. From his neck dangles a tattered hangman's noose, and as he leads the fight against the colonists in this square, he curses and roars orders to his fellows, who seem almost as frightened of him as the colonists he's trying to murder.

This is Slipknot Peet, the captain of the *Hellfish* and lord of Rat's End. Years ago he had his own ship and raided along the coast near Sasserine. Eventually he was captured and taken to the city square in Sasserine to be hanged. As he stood on the block with the noose around his neck, he defiantly spat at and cursed the assembled crowd. An agent of the Crimson Fleet happened to be among them. Peet's indomitable spirit impressed the agent, so when Peet dropped, the agent severed the hanging rope with a well-placed arrow. He then helped Peet escape and smuggled him out of the city.

Peet later became a member of the Crimson Fleet, rising quickly in rank and earning the nickname "Slipknot." Eventually, his foul manner and loose tongue landed him in trouble with the Fleet—not enough to have him executed, but enough that the Fleet sent him into exile to the Isle of Dread, ordering him to take up command of a small band of loosely-affiliated pirates and scoundrels stationed at Rat's End on nearby Emerald Isle.

As the PCs reach this fight, Slipknot Peet cuts down the last colonist and he and his men turn to face the PCs, covered with blood and leering with menace. In his bloodlust, Peet doesn't realize that the PCs are unlikely to be mere colonists (what with their better equipment and likely diverse makeup), and brings the attack to them as well. If things start to go poorly, he howls for aid. Any pirates that remain alive in areas 3 and 4 abandon their tasks and quickly come to aid their captain. Slipknot Peet fights to the death.

Slipknot Peet **CR 9**
Male human rogue 6/dread pirate 3
CE Medium humanoid
Complete Adventurer 39
Init +7; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16; uncanny dodge
hp 55 (9 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +11, **Will** +2; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *keen rapier* +12 (1d6+2/15–20) or +1 *keen rapier* +10 (1d6+2/15–20) and mwk punching dagger +9 (1d4/×3)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +8
Atk Options sneak attack +4d6
Combat Gear flask of alchemist's fire (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2)

Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 15
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +2

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Appraise +8, Balance +13, Bluff +13, Climb +7, Intimidate +17, Jump +11, Knowledge (geography) +3, Profession (sailor) +13, Swim +9, Tumble +13, Use Rope +11

Possessions combat gear, *+2 studded leather armor*, *+1 keen rapier*, masterwork punching dagger, belt pouch containing a pink crystal frog worth 350 gp, golden death's head amulet worth 150 gp, seven jeweled silver and gold bracelets worth a total of 1,000 gp, platinum hoop earring worth 300 gp, 35 gp

Rat's End Pirates (6): hp 18 each; see page 38.

6. History Aflame (EL 3)

The Farshore Hall of Records has been put to the torch by the pirates. The men and women struggling to save the contents of this building gesture desperately for help, and are having little success extinguishing the hungry flames with their bucket brigade. Aware of this, some colonists dart in and out of the building to rescue armloads of books and other records. The entire affair is organized by a frantic **Jeran Emrikad** (LN human wizard 2/rogue 1), the keeper of the hall of records.

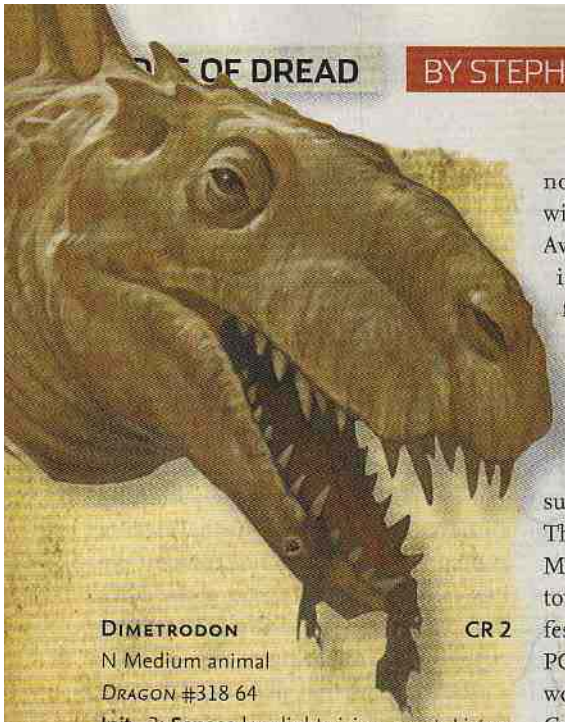
If the PCs act quickly, they may be able to save the Hall of Records from burning to the ground. Some spells, such as *quench*, multiple *pyrotechnics* spells, or *sleet storm* can quickly extinguish the flames. Others, such as *haste* or *summon monster* can speed the bucket brigade or augment the number of helpers to the point where the fire can be contained. Spells like *resist energy* or *protection from energy* can also help, granting the colonists the ability to target burning sections without fear of harm. You should judge the efficiency of any plan the PCs come up with—if it seems like the plan could extinguish the fire within a few minutes, the building can be saved.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs put out the fire, grant them a CR 3 experience award.

The Smoke Clears

As the PCs fight, other groups of pirates are busy attacking other parts of Farshore. These pirates are opposed by Lavinia and her mercenary band, the Jade Ravens. As long as the PCs survive and defeat the pirates in the preceding encounters, you can assume that Lavinia and the rest are equally successful. If the PCs fail to defend Farshore, the Rat's End pirates are eventaully defeated but at the cost of more lives. This imparts a –500 victory point penalty when you determine their overall success at the end of the adventure..

Once the pirate attack is over, frightened citizens slowly emerge from battered homes and shelters. Lavinia appears out of the smoke tired and bewildered, accompanied by the Jade Ravens. She quickly spots the PCs and rushes over to greet them, her joy at



DIMETRODON **CR 2**
N Medium animal
DRAGON #318 64
Init –2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +2, Spot +6

AC 13, touch 8, flat-footed 13
hp 33 (4 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1

Spd 10 ft., swim 10 ft.; burst of speed
Melee bite +7 (1d8+6)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +7

Abilities Str 18, Dex 6, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 10
Feats Alertness, Toughness
Skills Listen +2, Spot +6, Swim +15

Burst of Speed (Ex) Up to three times per hour, a dimetrodon can increase its land speed to 60 feet for one round as a free action. During this round, it gains a +2 dodge bonus to its Armor Class.

being reunited washing away the terror of the pirate attack. Lavinia and the Jade Ravens are detailed in the accompanying Farshore backdrop article, but if you're playing the entire campaign, the PCs need no introductions to their patron and the Jade Ravens. Not long after the PCs are reunited with Lavinia, a new figure arrives on the scene. This is Lord Manthalay Meravanchi, a towering and handsome man with a well-groomed beard, clad in a shining suit of mithral chainmail. If Avner Meravanchi is with the PCs, he immediately abandons them to greet his uncle Manthalay, who seems surprised to see Avner. A DC 20 Sense Motive notes that this surprise is tempered with frustration and perhaps anger—Avner's reputation as a troublemaker is well known to Manthalay, but he's family, so he's accepted with open arms nevertheless.

Lavinia soon suggests that everyone retire to the Farshore Chapel to discuss not only the PCs' arrival but, more importantly, the nature of this surprise attack by the pirates of Rat's End. The PCs, Lavinia, the Jade Ravens, and the Meravanchis are joined by the rest of the town council as well. This includes Professor Hevrik Aldwattle (assuming the PCs saved him in area **2** above), a tired and worried-looking man named Vesserin Catherly (keeper of the Farshore Chapel), a bruised and angry woman named Telda Syren (an herbalist, naturalist, and expert on the flora of the Isle of Dread), and a gruff and short-tempered man named Ulvar Kabbanja (leader of the Farshore millita). Any NPC allies who survived the *Sea Wyvern's* wreck and the journey south with the PCs in "Here There Be Monsters" are also present.

Lavinia's first order of business is to ask the other council members for a report on the damage to Farshore. Each council member speaks of damage to buildings, a few losses to fire, and a few deaths, but in the end, Farshore was lucky. Only ten colonists were killed (in addition to any the PCs weren't able to save), resulting in the colony's current population of 240 (as presented in the Farshore backdrop in this issue). The pirates were disorganized and seemed to be more interested in spreading fear and robbing people than actually doing a lot of damage—everyone agrees that the fortuitous arrival of the PCs may well have been the key factor in weathering the pirate attack with few losses.

Lavinia then addresses the PCs, telling them that when their ships were separated at sea during the storm, Lavinia feared the worst. She's overjoyed to see that they survived, and officially introduces them to the rest of the town council, calling them her personal heroes and explains to the council that the PCs are, in large part, responsible for the supplies and her return to Farshore. This favoritism, of course, may immediately compound any rifts or sense of competition with the Jade Ravens, and certainly sets up Manthalay Meravanchi's camp as politically opposed to the PCs, but for now, everyone keeps their opinions to themselves.

Lavinia then inquires about the *Sea Wyvern* and the PCs' adventures since they were separated. Allow the PCs to recount their exploits, and when they're done Lavinia promises them that she'll do what she can to aid in the recovery and repair of their ship. At this point, several colonists burst into the room, shouting excitedly and waving a sheaf of papers. It seems that something dire has been discovered on board the captured *Hellfish*—this piratical assault was only a scouting party. The Crimson Fleet is coming to Farshore.

The Interrogation of Lefty the Pirate

Fortunately, there is one source that may be able to help. During the battle, one of the Rat's End pirates was captured alive. This should be a pirate that the PCs captured, but if they left no survivors, the pirate's one that the Jade Ravens caught. An interrogation of the captive is the best way to find out more about the Crimson Fleet's interest in Farshore, and if the PCs don't think of it, Lavinia suggests it.

The pirate in question is a pitiful scoundrel named Lefty. Lefty was part of a merchant ship's crew that mutinied and fled south to avoid capture, only to be caught by an ocean current on the unforgiving rocks of Scorpion Isle. He managed to make it south to Emerald Isle on a home made raft, and joined with the pirates of Rat's End after he proved his reprehensible worth by killing two of his crewmates in a violent bloodsport put on for the pirates' entertainment.

Lefty's features are bruised and sunken. His skin is hot to the touch, one of his eyes is blackened, and he is missing his left hand. Only this last wound is old. Lefty's initial attitude is unfriendly—the amount of information the PCs can extract from him depends on his attitude, as detailed below. Lavinia volunteers to try to interrogate him using her skills at Diplomacy, but

cedes the actual work to the PCs if they prefer. Other methods, such as Intimidate checks or enchantment spells, can also extract Lefty's lore.

Hostile (Diplomacy DC 4 or less): Lefty curses and threatens the PCs, promising to return after death to murder them if they don't let him go.

Unfriendly (Diplomacy DC 5): Lefty remains surly, quiet, and unresponsive. He's pretty sure the colonists have already decided to execute him, and doesn't see how telling their leaders anything can change his fate.

Indifferent (Diplomacy DC 15): Lefty begs for his life, arguing that he only went along with the Rat's End pirates because he was a coward. His eyes widen if asked about the Crimson Fleet, but he has nothing to say about them other than to confirm that, "They're coming... and ye'd best not be here when they arrive!"

Friendly (Diplomacy DC 25): Lefty admits that he and the other pirates came from Rat's End, and that no one remains there to be a problem now. Their captain, Slipknot Peet, brought everyone on this attack, which was supposed to be a scouting mission. Slipknot Peet had been in contact with the Crimson Fleet (Lefty's not sure how, only that "magic was involved"), and they'd promised the Rat's End pirates a place in their fleet if they scouted out Farshore for the next few weeks. Apparently, a large force of Crimson Fleet ships is scheduled to arrive in the region "on other business," and at that time they would like to ransack Farshore, using the intelligence gathered by the Rat's End pirates to ensure victory. Slipknot didn't reveal to his crew how many Crimson Fleet ships were on the way, but when he decided to attack Farshore on his own, he did mention that they had two months to loot the place and escape to other waters with their booty before the Crimson Fleet got here.

Helpful (Diplomacy DC 40): Lefty reveals everything (as detailed above under the entry for "friendly") and honestly regrets his wicked life. He begs for mercy, and if granted it, could become a loyal henchman to one of the PCs.

Lefty's fate is left to the PCs to decide. Lavinia would rather keep him alive and give him a chance to redeem himself if he's at least made friendly, otherwise she suggessts imprisoning him until the *Blue Nixie* can make her way back to Sasserine, whereupon he'll be turned over to the city for justice. Manthalay Meravanchi would rather see Lefty executed, arguing that his crimes were committed in Farshore, so he should be tried and punished in Farshore. Lefty could quickly become a poster child for the campaign for lord-mayor of Farshore (see the Backdrop article for more details on this political event).

Dreadful Exploration

News of the advance of the Crimson Fleet should send chills down the PCs' spines; it certainly does to the rest of Farshore. The magnitude of the threat is no more obvious than in the fact that preparing Farshore for a defense against the imminent attack is one of the only things that Lavinia and Manthalay can agree upon. Both hope that the PCs are willing to help, although only Lavinia's not too proud to ask the PCs directly for their aid.

In going over the colony's defenses, Lavinia comes to several conclusions:

- There are a lot of places where Farshore could be improved and fortified. Lavinia's created a list of possible places for improvement, including the chapel, the harbor, the infirmary, the militia, the palisade, and the watchtowers. Other areas of Farshore can certainly be improved as well, although these improvements aren't likely to have military applications. *Dragon* Magazine #352 presents a full list of these improvements, and the Farshore backdrop provides details on how the PCs can organize these improvements and what they grant.
- Farshore's militia isn't enough to defend against a large-scale attack; the fact that it was barely able to hold its own against one small ship makes this clear. Without help from the Olman islanders who dwell in the nearby seven villages, things look grim indeed. Lavinia needs the PCs to travel with all haste to the village of Tanaroa

Diplodocus **CR 12**

N Colossal animal

Dragon #318 64

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +21, Spot +22

AC 14, touch 2, flat-footed 14

hp 406 (28 HD)

Fort +27, **Ref** +16, **Will** +10

Spd 20 ft.

Melee* tail slap +20 (4d8+35)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.

Base Atk +21; **Grp** +54

Atk Options Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

Special Actions tail sweep, trample 2d8+24

*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 44, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats Alertness, Awesome Blow, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Attack (tail slap), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Listen), Skill Focus (Spot)

Skills Listen +21, Spot +22

Tail Sweep (Ex) As a standard action, a diplodocus can sweep a half-circle with a radius of 40 feet extending from an intersection on the edge of its space. Any creatures smaller than the diploducus within the swept area take 2d8+24 points of damage (Reflex DC 41 half). The save DC is Strength-based.

Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 41. The save DC is Strength-based.

(the largest of the seven villages) and do whatever it takes to gain the support of the Olman warriors.

- In addition, there are other, stranger tribes of humanoids dwelling in the interior, tribes whose aid would doubtless further shore up Farshore. The phanatons are one such tribe—securing their aid can help Farshore's defenses. Local legends also tell of a race of catlike humanoids called "rakastas." The locals believe that the last of the rakastas have died out, but they were renowned for their masterwork weapons. Perhaps hidden caches of rakasta weaponry still exist at the sites of their old temples.
- Many supplies were damaged in the recent attack, supplies that could be replaced by the cargo still carried by the *Sea Wyvern*. For that matter, if the *Sea Wyvern* herself could be repaired, she could give Farshore a huge advantage in defending against pirates. Lavinia needs the PCs to return to the wreck site, effect repairs, and sail the *Sea Wyvern* back with her cargo.
- The Isle of Dread itself has resources that could prove helpful. A large tar pit could supply the isle with tar to shore up defenses and repair damaged ships and buildings, but only if access to the tar pits can be gained.

Once the PCs are familiar with the situation, they are free to handle their tasks in any order they wish. Farshore becomes their home base for these explorations, and there's certainly a large amount of work that needs to be done there as well. The accompanying backdrop on Farshore presents several additional adventures and tasks the PCs can take on to prepare for the assault, as well as numerous NPCs with which the PCs can interact. The rest of this chapter concerns itself with what lies beyond Farshore's walls.

Lefty

During this adventure, as the PCs accomplish their various missions, they earn victory points. When the Crimson Fleet arrives, the PCs' successes and failures during the battle also earn them victory points. When the battle is finally over, the total number of victory points amassed by the PCs throughout this entire adventure is what determines the final outcome and Farshore's fate.

PART THREE: ZOTZILAHA'S WRATH

Although Farshore is on good terms with the Olmans of the surrounding seven villages, the Olmans have been wary about using their own to aid in the defense of this new colony. The villagers of Tanaroa in particular have been hesitant about supplying such aid, and since the other six villages look to the Tanaroans for leadership, the other villages have been falling in line. If the village of Tanaroa can be convinced to come to Farshore's aid, the other six villages will do so as well.

Tanaroa is located at the southern end of the narrow isthmus that connects the southern peninsula to the mainland of the Isle of Dread. Preventing the passage of the terrible beasts of the mainland into this sheltered peninsula is the Great Wall, a fifty-foot-high barricade that stretches over two miles. Built during the height of the Olman empire over 1,000 years ago, the Great Wall's original purpose is long forgotten. Today, it serves as an important barrier, protecting the seven villages from the monsters that dwell to the north.

Tanaroa's proximity to the Great Wall is the primary reason it is the most important of the seven villages. They share a similar layout—four groups of huts set at four equidistant points delineate the compounds of four clans and surround a central pyramid that serves as a temple and town square. Currently, the four clans are the Ape, Tiger, Boar, and Sea Turtle clans. Members of a clan hold that these animals represent their inner selves, which has led to specialization between the clans. The people of the Boar clan are the builders and craftsmen, the Ape clan are farmers and entertainers, the Tiger clan hunters and gatherers, and the Sea Turtle clan fishermen and sailors.

Although each village clan has a male leader, command of each village falls to a female chieftain. The only other official of importance is the village's Zombie Master (or Mistress)—an advisor to the chief and the religious leader of the village. The animation of zombies is an important part of Olman culture, who view the creation of "walking ancestors" as a necessary evil to protect their underground catacombs.

Tanaroa (Village): Conventional, Magical; AL NG; Population 418; 200 gp limit; Assets 4,180 gp; Islolated (100% humans)

Authority Figures: **J'kal**, chieftain (NG female human ranger 6); **Mvembi**, zombie master (N male human cleric 6)

Wings of Fire (EL 9)

Arriving in Tanaroa, the PCs find the village in the middle of a religious ceremony. A pulsating rhythm pounded out

on hollowed logs accompanies a frenzied dance by dozens of warriors wearing large masks depicting a monstrous bat. All the while, the villagers chant to a charred bat totem at the center of a huge flaming pyre erected at the foot of the central pyramid. The word they chant is the same one, over and over: "Zotzilaha."

The entire village of Tanaroa is at the ritual, and as the PCs approach, the villagers pay them little attention. Before the PCs can make their presence fully known or reach any of the village's leaders, the effigy flashes with a sudden blast of brilliance. A cascade of sparks and flame from the burning pyre elicits startled screams from the villagers. A shape becomes momentarily visible in the fire as the effigy itself comes to life. A lean humanoid figure covered in short black fur rises from the flames, its head that of a snarling bat with glowing red eyes. Large membranous wings from its back beat against the flames like a bellows, sending hot cinders swirling. The creature shrieks out a short phrase in Olman—anyone who speaks the language (or who asks what the creature said later) understands it: "Zotzilaha hears your sniveling prayers! You would appease the Great Bat? Then return what has been stolen or burn!" If any of the PCs carries the bat idol found in the city of Tamoachan in "The Sea Wyvern's Wake," he can understand this threat even if he doesn't speak Olman—further, he knows that what the creature speaks of is the idol he carries.

The batlike humanoid form bursts into flame, sending a flight of bats with wings of fire spiraling into the air above the effigy. At the same moment, a tremor rumbles through the ground and in the distance to the northwest, the two great volcanoes known as the Fangs of Zotzilaha flash with fresh plumes of fire and smoke. The eruption itself is minor, one of many the active volcanoes constantly emit, yet its timing is enough to send the village into a blind panic.

Creatures: The PCs have just witnessed a visitation from Zotzilaha, the bat god of the Olmans. The fire bats that emerged from the fire are his minions, and quickly set to spreading word of his displeasure by attacking the villagers. There are seven fire bats in all; the villagers do little but run from the elementals. Once any PC attacks one of the bats, all of them focus on the PCs.

Fire Bats (7) **CR 3**

NE Small elemental (fire)
Monster Manual II 102
Init +3; **Senses** blindsense 120 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Ignan

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13
hp 21 (6 HD); regeneration 5
Immune fire; elemental traits
Fort +1, **Ref** +8, **Will** +0
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 10 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)
Melee bite +8 (1d6–1 plus 1d6 fire)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** –1
Atk Options attach, burn, devour

Abilities Str 8, Dex 17, Con 8, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 5
Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse
Skills Hide +10, Listen +5, Spot +5

Attach (Ex) If a fire bat hits with a bite, it latches onto its opponent, effectively grappling its prey, and is considered flat-footed. An attached fire bat can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached fire bat through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the fire bat.
Burn (Ex) Anyone hit by a fire bat must make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid catching on fire. The fire burns for 1d4 rounds, and may be extinguished with a move action. Creatures hitting a fire bat with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take 1d6 fire damage, and also catch fire if they fail this save. The save DC is Constitution-based.
Devour (Ex) Once attached, a fire bat devours flesh, automatically dealing 1d6–1 points of damage and another 1d6 points of fire damage each round it remains attached. After dealing 6 points of bite damage, it is sated; on the next round it detaches and flies away to digest its meal.
Regeneration (Ex) Cold deals lethal damage to a fire bat.

Appeasing the Bat God

How the PCs handle themselves in this fight determines how the villagers respond to them. Only if the PCs help defend the village and fight off the fire bats do they have a chance at securing Olman aid for the coming Crimson Fleet attack. While the villagers are still too frightened to exit their huts, the chieftain of Tanaroa, a wizened old woman named J'kal, readily approaches the party. J'kal speaks Common, and she either showers the PCs with thanks for their role in defending the village or curses them for being cowards and standing idly by.

J'kal informs the PCs that, while their heroic aid against the fire bats certainly deserves reciprocation, she cannot spare any of her village's warriors while Zotzilaha is angry. Recently, the Fangs of Zotzilaha have been shaking the island with tremors and sending thick clouds of ash into the air. Divinations have revealed that Zotzilaha himself has grown angry over an idol of the bat god stolen from his shrine in the northern volcano Nextepeua ("He Who Rains Ashes"). The villagers have tried to appease Zotzilaha with offerings, but Zotzilaha's wrath grows. If the idol is not found and returned to the shrine, they believe that Nextepeua will erupt and destroy them all.

Zotzilaha Lore

Characters may make Knowledge (religion) or bardic knowledge checks to determine what they know of Zotzilaha. When a PC makes a skill check, the information below is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC	Result
20	Zotzilaha is the Olman god of bats and horrible things that fly in the night. He also holds influence over the Olman underworld, and is associated with diseases and plagues.
25	Zotzilaha is a regional name for the deity; he is known in other Olman settlements by the name Camazotz. Locally, Zotzilaha has increasingly taken on the fire aspect of another Olman god called Huhueteotl.
30	Zotzilaha is part man, part bat, and can manifest an aspect on the Material Plane when he is displeased. Only holy weapons may cause his aspect lasting harm, though nobody has ever dared try. His mere gaze strikes fear in his enemies.

PARASAUROLOPHUS **CR 7**

N Huge animal

DRAGON #318 67

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +14, Spot +11

AC 14, touch 8, flat-footed 14

hp 142 (14 HD)

Fort +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6

Spd 40 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee slam +16 (1d8+12)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +26

Special Actions trample 1d8+12

Abilities Str 26, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 10

Feats Alertness, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Lightning Reflexes, Run, Skill Focus (Hide)

Skills Hide –5 (+5 in areas of heavy vegetation), Listen +14, Spot +11

Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 25. The save DC is Strength-based.

Of course, the stolen idol is the same one the PCs recovered in "The Sea Wyvern's Wake." As detailed there, these events have been orchestrated by the demon queen of succubi, Malcanthet, who hopes to lure the PCs into a hidden treasury in the Zotzilaha shrine where they'll discover an item that will be of great value later in the campaign.

Revealing to the villagers that the PCs have the bat idol is best broached with tact, lest the villagers take the PCs for the thieves who stole it. With a DC 15 Diplomacy check or a promise to return the idol to the volcano, the PCs can calm J'kal; in any event, she promises them that if they return the idol to the shrine, she'll be more than willing to send her warriors to Farshore to defend it when the time comes.

The Tanaroans eagerly provide directions to the Zotzilaha shrine entrance on the lower slopes of Nextepeua. This entrance is a large cave mouth, its rim marked with bat carvings and numerous niches for offerings. Beyond this entrance, a winding tunnel bores deep into the volcano's core—the Olmans make the pilgrimage to the shrine chamber itself only once a year, and typically do so under the protection of *endure elements*. Temperatures in the tunnel are severe, rarely dipping below 110° F. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 303, for the effects of severe heat. The winding tunnel climbs three miles through the volcano before reaching the shrine, so a party moving at a speed of 30 feet can reach their goal in about an hour. During this journey, periodic tremors shake the volcano—nothing strong enough to knock people down, but enough to remind them that they are inside an active volcano.

Shrine of Zotzilaha (EL 14)

The sloping lava tunnel widens into a large round chamber filled with smoke and ash from fissures riddling the rock walls and floor. A fiery glow and thunderous rumble comes from the west, where rents in the cave wall open out directly into the active volcano's throat. The walls of the cave are riddled with niches, some of which contain offerings of food, trinkets, and animals, while others are empty or contain only ash. Through the haze, an eight-foot-tall bat leers from where it has been carved in relief out of the far wall. The bat's wings rise over its head, with its claws meeting at a curiously shaped niche that appears to be empty.

This shrine is where the Olmans visit every year to offer treasures and trinkets to placate Zotzilaha's anger—they believe that doing so is all that prevents a more destructive volcanic explosion. Only by the grace and divine sanctity of Zotzilaha does this shrine remain undestroyed during the volcano's periodic eruptions. The niches on the walls contain various offerings given to Zotzilaha by the natives over the past several years; none of them are particularly valuable. The niche in the large bat carving's claws once held the bat idol the PCs discovered in Tamoachan.

The idol was removed and placed in the path of the PCs as part of a convoluted scheme to ensure the PCs would come to this shrine and discover the secret treasure room beyond the sculpture. The mastermind is none other than Malcanthet, Demon Queen of Succubi, who sees the PCs as a means to an end. More about her schemes and other powers involved will be revealed in future installments of the Adventure Path.

Creature: Since the theft, an aspect of the bat god Zotzilaha has guarded this chamber against more indignities. The aspect spends much of its time cavorting in the searing inferno of the volcano's caldera, but always knows when creatures enter this cave, and arrives via one of the openings to the west only 1d4+2 rounds after the PCs arrive, accompanied by a flock of seven fire bats he has recently summoned.

Zotzilaha: hp 161; see page 58.

Fire Bats (7): hp 21; see page 43.

Tactics: The aspect fights to the death, pursuing foes from the volcano if necessar, returning to its shrine only if it perceives new intruders or if its prey flees more than a mile from the volcano's lowest slopes.

The aspect of Zotzilaha is brutal and violent, much like its divine source, yet it immediately ceases its attack if the PCs present it with the missing bat idol. It resumes its attack in four rounds unless someone replaces the bat idol in the niche on the northern wall. If the idol is returned, the aspect of Zotzilaha sighs in relief and relaxes, sending any remaining fire bat minions back into the volcano as it bows deeply to the party. In a grating baritone voice, the creature speaks in

halting Common: "Zotzilaha thanks you for returning his treasure. Know, mortals, that Zotzilaha rewards those who serve him. You may each choose something of value from his vault. If you have questions about a prize, you need but ask me. Choose quickly, for you must leave this place before I grow hungry..."

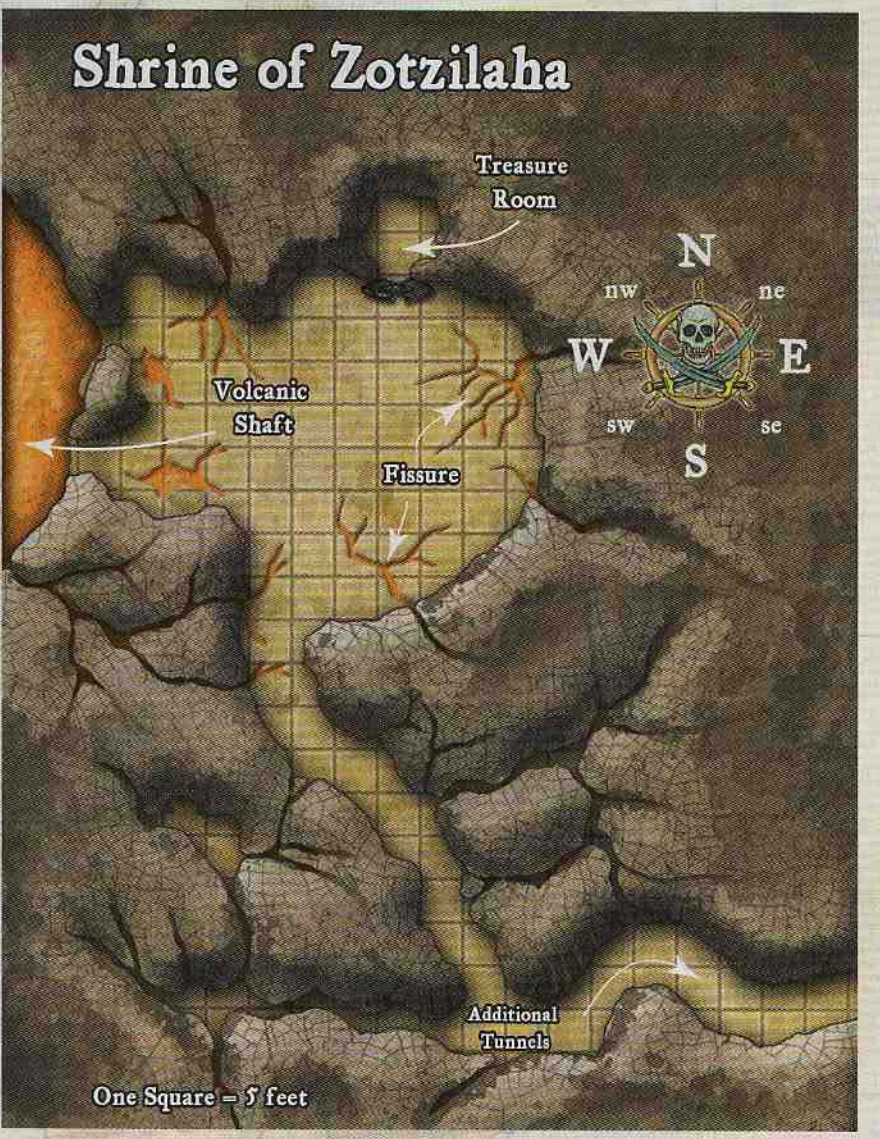
Treasure: The bat carving is in fact a cleverly hidden secret door that can be discovered with a DC 30 Search check. The door can be opened by a *knock* spell, the will of the aspect of Zotzilaha, or with a DC 30 Use Magic Device check; it does not open via conventional means. (Of course, methods like *passwall* or *dimension door* can also allow access to the chamber beyond.) When opened, the bat carving rumbles to life, lifting its wings to reveal an archway that leads into a ten-foot-square room beyond.

Any item of value offered to Zotzilaha is placed in this room rather than allowed to sit on display on an outer niche. Some of the treasures in this chamber date back hundreds of years. Each of the following constitutes one "choice."

- a small wooden coffer containing 500 ancient platinum coins bearing a serpent on one side and a crown on the other
- an ivory carving of an elephant-headed humanoid gripping a tarnished scepter encrusted with jade, worth 3,000 gp in all
- a wooden carving of a tiger with two small sapphires for eyes worth 250 gp
- a necklace with a single dragon tooth worth 100 gp
- a masterwork buckler in the shape of the holy symbol of Olidammara
- a *+4 mithral breastplate*
- a *flame tongue longsword*
- a *ring of invisibility*
- a *pearl of power* (4th-level spell)
- a *stone of good luck*
- an *amulet of natural armor +3*
- a rolled up strip of leather containing a long, thin fang

Feel free to adjust the contents of the vault to more closely match the abilities and skills of your players, choosing from items worth 20,000 gp.

The aspect of Zotzilaha can reveal the magical properties of any item, if asked, but doesn't recognize the fang in the rolled-up strip of leather. It is not one of Zotzilaha's treasures, and doesn't count as a "choice" if the PCs wish to keep it. This fang is in fact a minor artifact known as the *Tooth of Ahazu* (see Appendix), one of the legendary *Teeth of Dahlver-Nar*. This item was placed here by an agent of Malcanthet, and it can aid the PCs greatly later on in the Savage Tide Adventure Path.



If the PCs attempt to take more than their share of treasure, the aspect of Zotzilaha roars and attacks, this time fighting to the death. If the aspect is defeated, taking any of the treasure angers Zotzilaha. Unlike the case of the bat idol, though, his attention is turned to this shrine when the PCs are here, so his wrath at any stolen treasures is more focused. Rather than manifesting as a possibly explosive volcano, any PC who steals more than his share from this chamber must make a DC 30 Will save; failure indicates his body twists and deforms in some horrible way, permanently reducing his highest ability score by six points. This curse is divine in nature, and quite difficult to remove as a result. The curse functions at CL 20th, and may only be removed via a caster of equal or higher level. If the stolen treasure is returned, any caster may remove it with *remove curse* or *break enchantment*.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs return the bat idol and don't take more than they are due from the vault, award

them XP as if they'd defeated the aspect of Zotzilaha in combat.

Victory Points: For returning the bat idol and securing the aid of the Olman tribes, the PCs gain 250 VP.

PART FOUR: A TRIP TO THE TAR PITS

The colonists of Farshore have made a few excursions to the Isle of Dread's immense tar pit before, but the journey has always been a harrowing and deadly one—it's far easier to simply trade with the Olmans for what tar the colonists need. Yet for the coming attack, Farshore needs a lot more tar than ever before. Obtaining a large supply to aid in repairing damage done to the colony by the first attack or to aid in repairing the *Sea Wyvern* would certainly go a long way toward defeating the Crimson Fleet assault.

To repair the *Sea Wyvern*, damage to the *Blue Nixie* and other ships in Farshore harbor, and the damage to the palisade and other buildings, the colonists must be able to transport the tar safely. A well-traveled footpath between Tanaroa and the tar pits exists, and the colonists can certainly use it to transport what is needed.

The problem lies with the fact that one of the isle's oldest and angriest dinosaurs has recently settled in the region.

Temauhti-tecuani (EL 11)

The villagers of Tanaroa have been unable to gather tar from the pits for several weeks, and are quick to warn anyone who indicates that they wish to do so as well. It seems that a grizzled tyrannosaurus (known locally as Temauhti-tecuani), has claimed the tar pits as his territory. The dinosaur has learned that it's easier to simply eat creatures that have become stuck in the tar, and views the entire thing as his banquet table now. Although the tar pits are large, the dinosaur is relentless in his patrols of his territory, and not long after anyone attempts to gather a significant amount of tar, the monster's arrival causes panic and mayhem. Before Farshore can gather the tar it needs, someone needs to deal with Temauhti-tecuani.

Creatures: The PCs won't need to look long to find the cantankerous dinosaur. Only 1d4 hours after they begin their patrol of the tar pits, the sound of enraged roars and strangely high-pitched shrieks of terror and pain tear through the air. Emerging from the jungle, the PCs witness Temauhti-tecuani's wrath firsthand.

The Olmans and the colonists aren't the only denizens of the Isle of Dread who use the tar pits. A native race of humanoids known as phanatons also make frequent trips to the pits to waterproof their roofs and walls. When the PCs arrive, a band of a dozen phanaton tar-gatherers have been challenged by Temauhti-tecuani, and the dinosaur is making short work of the diminutive creatures.

A phanaton resembles a cross between a raccoon and monkey. They possess long, prehensile tails and folds of skin between their arms and legs that allow them to glide for short distances. Temauhti-tecuani himself is a horribly scarred survivor of countless battles with the isle's other predators. One of his eyes is missing, and one of his arms ends in a jagged stump, bitten off long ago by another tyrannosaurus.

TEMAUHTI-TECUANI **CR 11**

Male elite advanced tyrannosaurus
N Huge animal
Monster Manual 61
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +21, Spot +21

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 17
hp 337 (currently 320, 25 HD)
Fort +22, **Ref** +17, **Will** +11

Spd 40 ft.
Melee* bite +17 (3d6+26/19–20)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +37
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, improved grab (bite)
Special Actions swallow whole
*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 32, Dex 16, Con 26, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Armor (4), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack
Skills Listen +21, Spot +21

PHANATON TAR-GATHERERS (12) **CR 1**

Male and female phanaton ranger 1
CG Small humanoid
DRAGON #339 62
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +7, Spot +3
Languages Phanaton, Olman

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 9 (1 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Spd 20 ft.; gliding
Melee dagger +2 (1d3/19–20) or spear +2 (1d6/×3)
Ranged dagger +5 (1d3/19–20) or spear +5 (1d6/×3)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** –3
Atk Options favored enemy +2 (animal)

Abilities Str 11, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ forest awareness, wild empathy +0
Feats Stealthy, Track
Skills Climb +6, Hide +13, Jump +0, Listen +7, Move Silently +13 (+17 in forested areas), Spot +3, Survival +5
Possessions leather armor, dagger, spear

Forest Awareness (Ex) Phanatons gain a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws while in a forested location.
Gliding (Ex) A phanaton can glide, negating damage from a fall of any height and allowing 20 feet of forward travel for every 5 feet of descent. Phanatons fly at a speed of 20 feet (average) while gliding, but can never hover (even if their maneuverability improves). A phanaton cannot glide while carrying a medium or heavy load, and falls if it becomes unconscious or helpless.

Tactics: Temauhti-tecuani is hungry and angry, and the PCs would make a better meal than the small phanatons. Once the dinosaur spots the PCs, he ignores the phanatons (who race for cover) and attacks them instead. Temauhti-tecuani is fantastically territorial, and doesn't know the meaning of retreat. The dinosaur fights to the death.

Once the PCs enter the fray, the panicked phanatons begin cheering, quickly joining the PCs in the battle by throwing their spears and daggers. They avoid engaging Temauhti-tecuani in melee, instead running around the battlefield to reclaim daggers and spears that miss to reuse them.

The tar pit presents an additional tactical wrinkle to the battle. There's a strip of open ground forty feet wide between the tar pit's edge and the jungle. The first five feet of tar pit is only a foot or two deep, but grows deeper quickly. A character moving through the tar pit within five feet from shore may do so by spending three squares of movement per square. In the deeper tar, a character must make DC 25 Swim checks to move through it. In addition, the tar is boiling hot, and inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage per round to anyone who moves through it. Someone immersed in tar takes 3d6 fire damage per round. Tar continues to burn for 1d6 rounds after a character emerges. Removing tar from a creature takes 1d6 consecutive full-round actions. Spells like *prestidigitation* can clean the tar off quickly.

Treasure: A search of the dead tyrannosaurus reveals hundreds of arrowheads, spearheads, and other projectile weapons embedded in scar tissue and thick patches of scales on the beast's hide. A DC 20 Search check reveals a *+1 keen cold iron kukri* lodged deep in the folds of scales on the dinosaur's right foot.

PTERANODON **CR 2**

N Medium animal
DRAGON #318 68
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +4, Spot +15

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12
hp 27 (5 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Spd 10 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)
Melee bite +5 (1d6+3)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5
Atk Options dive

Abilities Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 18, Cha 12
Feats Flyby Attack, Skill Focus (spot)
Skills Spot +15

Dive (Ex) If a pteranodon makes a charge attack and lowers its altitude by at least 30 feet as part of the charge, it gains a +4 bonus on its attack roll and deals 2d6+6 points of damage with its bite if it hits.

Victory Points: If the PCs defeat Temauhti-tecuani, the tar pits become safe to harvest. It'll take only 1d4 days for Farshore to gather all the tar necessary for repairs, at which point the PCs gain 100 VP.

Visiting the Phanatons

The phanaton tar-gatherers are among the bravest of their kind, but naturally shy. If the PCs aid them in fighting the tyrannosaurus and any of them survive, the phanatons gather in a small group to chatter and watch the PCs. If the PCs can establish communication with the phanatons, they thank them dozens of times for killing Temauhti-tecuani. The phanatons are initially friendly, and if they can be

made helpful with a DC 20 Diplomacy check, they ask the PCs to accompany them back to their village to the north.

The journey to the phanaton village from the tar pits is about 45 miles—it'll likely take the PCs a few days to reach it. During the journey, the phanatons grill the PCs ceaselessly for stories of their homeland. Their irrepressible curiosity extends to the PCs' gear, and while the phanatons aren't thieves, their habits of taking items that don't belong to them just to examine them for a few minutes before they return them might set some PCs on edge. As long as the PCs are patient (and as long as they can keep at least one phanaton alive during any wandering monster fights they have along the way), the arrival at the phanaton village is one of noisy excitement.

When word of the PCs' triumph over Temauhti-tecuani spreads, the phanatons become joyful and impressed. The PCs become the guests of honor during an impromptu feast of fruits and unusually tasty fried insects. Feel free to play out this feast as much as you like; during the feast, have the PCs make a DC 20 Diplomacy check to determine how the phanatons take to them. Alternately, a PC that wishes to entertain the phanatons can instead make a DC 20 Perform check. Success with either check indicates that the phanatons accept the PCs as tribe-friends, and are willing to trade with them or let the PCs stay in their village as honored guests. Characters who sleep in the village need fear no wandering monster encounters.

If the PCs explain Farshore's troubles to the phanatons, and if they've become tribe-friends of the village, the phanaton leader Teketek promises to send a group of his strongest hunters south to Farshore to do what they can to aid in the colony's defense.

The phanatons also know quite a bit about the Isle of Dread, and can give the PCs a fair amount of basic information about many of the locations indicated on the map of the isle. If asked for advice on where to look for more resources to aid them in the coming conflict with the Crimson Fleet, they're quick to point the PCs in the direction of the Temple of the Jaguar, explaining that the "cat people" who once lived there were very warlike. They're gone now, but their weapons might remain hidden in the ruins of their village somewhere.

Note that the PCs could contact the phanatons before visiting the tar pit. In this case, the phanatons react warily to the strange visitors and make a proposition. If the PCs can make the tar pits safe for harvesting by defeating

Temauhti-tecuani, the phanatons promise to aid them as well.

Victory Points: Securing phanaton aid for the battle earns 200 VP.

PART FIVE: TEMPLE OF THE JAGUAR

At the height of Thanaclan's power, some folk abandoned the comforts of urban living for a more traditional lifestyle in the wild. The most prolific of these groups were several cults of shamanistic shapeshifters who embraced the ancient ways and became lycanthropes. Few of these groups were as successful as the Cult of the Jaguar. When Thanaclan fell to the savage tide, these cults were sheltered from the apocalypse and managed to live on for several generations. In time, most of them died out as well, victims of the savage new predators that had clamed the isle. Alone among them, the Cult of the Jaguar survived. Over the generations, these werejaguars developed and changed, becoming an entirely new race of creatures known as rakastas.

Unfortunately, the Isle of Dread is an unforgiving place, and the last known rakasta tribe on the isle recently fell victim to raiders from the central plateau—ironically, members of the Cult of the Jaguar who had not escaped the initial savage tide and had, over the last 1,000 years, developed into a much more destructive race of fiendish catfolk. Normally confined to the central plateau, these cultists became creatures called skinwalkers, and their periodic forays into the lowlands to war against their distant cousins came to a bitter (for the lowlanders) end as recently as a few years ago. There may still be small groups of rakastas dwelling in hidden reaches of the Isle of Dread, and it's certain that some escaped the isle entirely to settle on distant shores, but as an organized nation, the rakastas are now a dwindling memory.

The skinwalkers make no appearances in this adventure, but become a primary foe in "City of Broken Idols," the seventh Savage Tide adventure. Additional details will appear in *Dungeon* Magazine #145.

Although the rakastas are gone, their works remain. Hidden south of the great plateau is an abandoned village of huts that have nearly been reclaimed by the jungle. Looming nearby is an ancient temple where the rakastas once performed their sacred rites. Now overgrown with vegetation, the temple houses a fantastic cache of weapons the rakastas had stockpiled in anticipation of the skinwalker attack on their tribe. They were unable to reach the stockpile when the surprise attack finally came, and now these weapons may spell the difference between success and failure in the coming conflict with the Crimson Fleet.

Finding the Temple

Although the PCs learn of the rumor of a rakasta weapons cache early on in this adventure, actually locating the site of their temple is more problematic. The Farshore colonists know nothing of the rakastas. The Olmans know more, and observe that while they've not encountered any of the catfolk recently, they were most often encountered in the jungles northwest of Bloodwater Lake. The phanatons used to trade with the rakastas, and if befriended, they can easily mark the location of the rakasta temple on a map. Of course, the PCs could also simply decide to explore the jungle on their own. Each day spent within five miles of the Temple of the Jaguar, allow the character in the party with the highest Survival check to attempt a DC 30 Survival check; other characters can aid this roll. Success indicates that the PCs stumble upon the overgrown rakasta village and its stony temple.

1. Temple Entrance (EL 10)

A squat ziggurat crouches here, embraced in the green of the jungle. Tall niches along its walls hold moss-covered statues of men with jaguar heads. A natural curtain of thick vines and creepers hangs over a wide opening at the base of the southern wall.

A DC 25 Search of the temple's perimeter reveals signs of battle; statues with deep gouges, strange bones of catlike humanoids, and other telltale remnants of the skinwalker assault on the last rakasta tribe several years ago. The skinwalkers did not enter the temple itself—they saw no need, as they had slaughtered the rakastas to a man.

Creature: A huge green anaconda clambered up above the entrance to the pyramid several days ago to digest a meal. The enormous snake has recently wakened from its torpor, and remains hidden until anyone attempts to enter the pyramid, at which point it strikes.

Emerald Anaconda **CR 10**

Advanced elite giant constrictor snake
N Gargantuan animal
Monster Manual 280
Init +4; **Senses** scent; Listen +14, Spot +14

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 14
hp 230 (20 HD)
Fort +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +6

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.
Melee bite +25 (3d6+21)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +41
Atk Options improved grab (bite), constrict 2d6+21

Abilities Str 38, Dex 19, Con 22, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 4
Feats Alertness, Endurance, Diehard, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Skill Focus (Hide), Stealthy
Skills Balance +12, Climb +22, Hide +8, Listen +14, Move Silently +6, Spot +14, Swim +22

Tactics: The anaconda attacks the first creature to attempt to enter the temple from its ledge ten feet above. While constricting one foe, it continues to defend itself from other attacks, but it drops its prey and flees if reduced to less than 75 hit points.

2. The Jade Jaguar (EL 6)

Shafts of light from broken portions of wall and ceiling thirty feet above illuminate this large open chamber within the crumbling pyramid. The walls are covered with faded murals and bas-relief carvings, while the center of the room is filled with a variety of antique totemic statues facing a central platform supporting a large jade figurine of a jaguar—these statues seem curiously untouched by the passage of

Tonatiuh

time, and retain the finest lines of detail, as if the unknown sculptor had finished the job only yesterday.

The statues that surround the central platform depict gorillas, snakes, crocodiles, bats, tigers, and other wild animals in positions of rage and territorial defense. The entire central array of statues and pillar are in fact a *permanent illusion* (CL 15th) intended to lure would-be thieves into a trap.

Trap: A fifteen-foot-wide, fifty-foot-deep pit is hidden by the illusory pillar—anyone who attempts to climb onto the pillar to examine the (also illusory) jade jaguar must make a DC 25 Reflex save to avoid tumbling through the illusion into the pit below. Success indicates that the character catches himself as his hand or foot passes through the pillar (also granting a DC 17 Will save to disbelieve the *permanent illusion*). Carved into the pit's northern wall are niches, forming a ladder that descends to a narrow ledge leading to area **3** of the temple.

The bottom five feet of the pit is filled with brackish, tainted water, enough to expose anyone who falls into it to blinding sickness but not enough to cushion a fall. The pit walls within 20 feet of the water's surface are slippery (DC 25 Climb check), but above that they're dry (DC 20 Climb check).

Pit Trap: CR 6; mechanical; location trigger, automatic reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 50 ft. deep (5d6, fall); tainted water (blinding sickness, Fort DC 16, 1d3 day incubation, 1d4 Str plus blindness); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

3. Tunnel Statuary

A gently sloping tunnel winds downward into darkness. The walls of the tunnel are riddled with niches filled with ancient statues of jaguars looking down from their perches. Their eyes glitter with red, blue, and green gemstones.

Treasure: The niches hold a total of 20 jaguar statues, each weighing approximately 50 pounds and worth 150 gp apiece. The 40 gemstone eyes are each lapis lazulis worth 10 gp apiece.

4. The Great Jaguar (EL 10)

Flickering torches in bamboo sconces light this tall chamber. The walls are adorned with murals of armored men and women with the heads of cats fighting against troglodytes, dinosaurs, and other, less-identifiable demonic monsters. In some scenes, the catfolk ride large saber-toothed tigers, while in others they worship at large pyramids. Ancient pillars carved in leafy patterns support the twenty-foot-high ceiling and surround a bamboo platform covered in reed mats.

This inner sanctum is where the rakastas came to offer prayers to their ancestors and perform sacred rites. The four everburning torches provide the ambient (and perpetual) light.

Creature: Before the savage tide struck down Thanaclan, the wilds around the region were the purvey of creatures sacred to the Olmans—couatls. These feathered serpents were viewed as oracles, advisors, and defenders of the wild. When the savage tide struck, the couatls were spared due to their natures (outsiders are immune to the effects of a savage tide), but could do little to help the Olmans. They became bastions of good in the savage new realm, but over time their numbers on the Isle of Dread have dwindled dramatically. Some fled to other planes, most have been slain by demons. Yet a few, like Tonatiuh, the guardian of this chamber, remain on the isle out of a sense of duty to history.

Tonatiuh deeply regrets the loss of his rakasta allies, even though he only appeared to the tribe's religious leaders. When the skinwalkers struck, Tonatiuh did what he could to defend them but was forced to flee in the end, an act that has wracked the couatl with guilt ever since. He emerges now only to hunt for food, and spends much of the rest of his time asleep atop the central pillar of this room. If he hears the PCs approach, he becomes invisible and uses *detect thoughts* to study them before revealing himself.

Tonatiuh does not initiate combat, but fights to the death to protect this temple from intruders. Although Tonatiuh is lawful good, he's suspicious of intruders as long as there's a possibility they may be allied with the skinwalkers of the City of Broken Idols. The couatl's initial

attitude toward the PCs depends on their alignment. Normally, his attitude is indifferent. If Tonatiuh cannot determine all of the PCs' alignments, he assumes the worst and his initial attitude is unfriendly; likewise, if there are no good characters in the group, he is unfriendly. If there are any evil characters in the group, his initial attitude is hostile. And if everyone in the group is lawful good, his initial attitude is helpful.

Only if the PCs can befriend Tonatiuh and adjust his attitude to friendly does the couatl revealthat his rakasta "children" were recently slaughtered by demonic humanoids known as skinwalkers from the central plateau. He goes on to say that the rakastas knew the attack was coming, and spent many years crafting and stockpiling magic weapons to fight the skinwalkers, but when the attack finally came it was swift and without warning. The rakasta didn't have a chance to get to the cache of weapons hidden in this room.

If told about the situation with the Crimson Fleet, and as long as he's been made friendly, Tonatiuh shows the PCs how to open the hidden cache under the central platform, and allows them to take what they wish from the stockpile within. He regretfully informs the PCs that he cannot help them in the battle—he has decided he must return to the outer planes to seek atonement for his failure. Once the weapon cache is gone from this place, he sees no further reason to remain on the Material Plane. He does grant a boon to the party before leaving, giving them three brightly colored feathers from his tail. If one of these feathers is used as an additional material component in casting *planar ally* to call Tonatiuh for aid, the spell costs no XP to cast.

Tonatiuh, couatl: hp 58; *Monster Manual* 37.

Tactics: If forced to fight, Tonatiuh makes liberal use of *charm monster* and *scorching ray*, avoiding melee until the odds are one-on-one. One of his favorite tactics is to use his *plane shift* spell-like ability to cast intruders into outer planes better suited to their alignment. He does not attempt to slay those who he successfully renders unconscious, and is quick to accept surrender. Still wracked with guilt over his perceived failure to defend the rakastas, Tonatiuh does not flee any conflict here.

Treasure: A DC 30 search of the central platform's north side reveals a hidden button; pressing it causes the entire platform to rise out of the ground, revealing a hollow region within the rising pillar filled with racks of weapons. The rakastas were masters of weaponcraft, and these weapons represent the pinnacle of their art. The weapons include 40 masterwork war claws (spiked gauntlets fashioned to look like tiger claws), 20 masterwork longbows, 600 arrows, 10 masterwork shortspears, 10 masterwork longspears, and 30 masterwork javelins. Additionally, three potent magic weapons are stored here as well, each resting on a low plinth in the center of the vault. These include a +1 *wounding war claw*, a +2 *evil outsider bane longbow*, and a +1 *holy greatsword*.

Victory Points: Delivering the masterwork weapons to Farshore earns 200 VP.

PART SIX: RECLAIMING THE WYVERN

The kopru are a race of amphibious monsters that have long dwelt in the submerged caverns below the Isle of Dread—they have been the isle's true masters for much of the last 1,000 years. While the next adventure, "The Lightless Depths," delves into the kopru's underground empire in detail, not all of the kopru adhere to the same beliefs. There are outcasts among their kind, members who seek other ways to exert their evil and need for domination. One such outcast is the druid Skephilipika, a kopru who has become obsessed with the savage ecology of the island's surface regions and believes that in these regions lie the secrets for true power. His beliefs were at odds with the rest of his kin, and so Skephilipika left the eldritch city deep below for the waters above.

After the PCs abandoned their ship *Sea Wyvern* at the start of "Here There Be Monsters," the wreck didn't remain uninhabited for long. At about the time the PCs started this adventure, Skephilipika claimed the wreck as his new home. He and his elasmosaurus animal companion have dwelt here ever since.

The Wrecked Wyvern (EL 10)

The *Sea Wyvern* sits on the reef just offshore from the northeastern coast of the Isle of Dread, just as the PCs left her. Lavinia recommends that the PCs use the *Blue Nixie* to reach the site rather than travel overland, but also recommends that they scout out the site before they attempt repairs or expose the *Blue Nixie*'s crew to possible peril—shipwrecks tend to be quickly inhabited by dangerous monsters, and it's been some time since the *Wyvern* arrived. Who knows what might dwell in its hold now?

Creatures: Skephilipika spends much of his time in the submerged aft section of the *Sea Wyvern*, and of late has been focused on creating a *periapt of Wisdom +4*, a task that has consumed the kopru's waking moments for days. While he works, his elasmosaurus animal companion Bloodtooth patrols the surrounding waters. If Bloodtooth notices the approach of a ship or other intruders, she quickly alerts her master and joins him in the defense of his new home.

A kopru is only humanoid from the torso up. It's lower body is serpentine, with a tail consisting of three powerful flukes, each ending in a cruel hook. The creature's taloned hands are webbed, and its head is that of a horrible large-eyed fish with facial tentacles surrounding a pucker-like maw filled with tiny sharp teeth.

SKEPHILIPIKA **CR 10**

Male kopru druid 8

NE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

Monster Manual II 134

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +12, Spot +12

Languages Aquan, Olman

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16

hp 104 (16 HD)

Fort +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +15; resist nature's lure
Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee tail slap +18 (1d6+4) and
2 claws +16 (1d4+2) and
bite +16 (1d4+2) or
flame blade +17/+12/+7 touch (1d8+6 fire) and
tail slap +16 (1d6+2) and
claws +16 (1d4+2) and
bite +16 (1d4+2)
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +24
Atk Options improved grab (tail slap), constrict (3d6+4)
Special Actions dominate person, wild shape 3/day (Large)
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 12th)
4th—*dispel magic, freedom of movement*
3rd—*call lightning* (DC 16), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *poison* (DC 16)
2nd—*barkskin, flame blade, bear's endurance, resist energy*
1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *entangle, longstrider, speak with animals*
0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic, know direction, read magic, resistance*
Abilities Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 14
SQ amphibious, trackless step, wild empathy +10, woodland stride
Feats Ability Focus (dominate person), Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Natural Spell, Practiced Spellcaster (+4 to druid caster level)
Skills Concentration +21, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Spot +12, Survival +6, Swim +11
Possessions *ring of protection +2, amulet of mighty fists +1, dusty rose prism ioun stone,* necklace of pearls and shark teeth worth 350 gp

Dominate Person (Su) Once per day, a kopru can produce an effect like that of a *dominate person* spell (CL 10th, DC 16 negates) to a range of 180 feet. This effect lasts for 8 days. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) A kopru has a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks. If a kopru hits an opponent its size or smaller with a tail attack, it can attempt to grapple the foe as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it constricts its foe.

Bloodtooth, elasmosaurus animal companion: hp 111; *Monster Manual* 60.

Tactics: Skephilipika casts *freedom of movement, barkskin,* and *bear's endurance* prior to combat if possible. He then casts *speak with animals* in preparation for spontaneous *summon nature's ally* spells. If the PCs approach in the water, Skephilipika prefers to summon Huge or Large sharks. If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, Skephilipika wildshapes into a squid and jets out to sea to escape, leaving Bloodtooth to cover his flight. The elasmosaurus fights to the death. If he escapes, Skephilipika calls a new elasmosaurus animal companion the next day, and then returns to the wreck site to attack the PCs again as they attempt repairs.

Repairing the Sea Wyvern

The *Sea Wyvern* is significantly damaged, but rests high enough on the reef that it is effectively drydocked except during high tide. As long as the PCs have secured the tar pits and brought along enough repair

materials in the *Blue Nixie*, their ship can be repaired with some work.

The *Sea Wyvern* took a beating during the storm that wrecked her, and over the past several weeks she's been slowly falling to pieces. Of her 24 hull sections, 9 are completely destroyed. Additionally, all three of her rigging sections are destroyed. These 12 sections must be repaired before the ship can be sailed again. Repairing a hull section requires a day of work and a successful DC 20 Craft (carpentry) check—up to three sections may be worked on in a day. Use of spells like *wood shape* and *make whole* grant a +5 circumstance bonus on these repair checks. If none of the PCs is an accomplished carpenter, they can bring along an NPC ally like Amella Venkalie (Craft [carpentry] +7) or Dranys Sellis from Sellis' Woodworks and Smithy (Craft [carpentry] +9) to aid in repairs. Remember to check for wandering monsters each day; if an encounter occurs, it is an aquatic encounter 50% of the time, otherwise it's a jungle encounter as a creature stumbles onto the beach just 60 feet from the wrecked ship.

Once all 12 sections are repaired, it's simply a matter of waiting for high tide, whereupon the *Sea Wyvern* is lifted off the reef and can finally complete her journey to Farshore.

Victory Points: Repairing the Sea Wyvern earns the PCs 200 VP.

PART SEVEN: CRIMSON SUNSET

The PCs have about two months to prepare for the Crimson Fleet; once this time has passed, the characters would be well-advised to stay close to Farshore, so they'll be there to aid in its defense. Lavinia employs several small and fast fishing boats to patrol the waters surrounding the southern islands. The Crimson Fleet has neither the desire nor the capability to hide its advance with magic, instead opting for a more menacing approach. The scouts return to Farshore with news of the approaching fleet approximately two months after this adventure begins. Once the scouts make this report, the colony has only a couple of hours to prepare. If the PCs are on the other side of the Isle of Dread at this point, they may well miss the entire attack. Not only does this mean that they miss out on the opportunity to earn additional Victory Points during the battle, but their absence itself imparts a penalty of –400 Victory Points to their total. If the PCs have done well in preparing for the attack, they may still have enough that Farshore can survive the attack, but the battle will be close indeed.

The attacking fleet consists of five caravels (*The Hag, Sea Witch's Curse, The Kraken*, the *Stygian Shark*, and the flagship—the *Brine Harlot*), each with a full compliment of bloodthirsty pirates itching for a fight. Vanthus himself, now transformed by the leaders of the Crimson Fleet into a half-fiend, captains the *Brine Harlot*.

Each ship boasts a crew of thirty pirates, but you don't need to run a full-scale battle between 150 pirates and 240 colonists. The battle's resolution is instead determined by a combination of what the PCs and the colonists have done to prepare for the battle, and what "mini-missions" the PCs accomplish during the battle. Once the scouts return to report on the approaching fleet, find out from the players how they plan to aid the colonists during the conflict. Use their responses to decide which of the encounters below take place during the battle. Their success or failure in each determines the final total of Victory Points earned during the adventure, and thus the outcome of the battle (see Concluding the Adventure).

The Fleet's Attack Plan

The Crimson Fleet attack comes in four waves. When the five ships first arrive in the harbor, they launch their attack with catapults and ballistae. Longboats of pirates swarm the beaches and docks of Farshore. A group of flesh golems controlled by the yuan-ti V'sesslin joins the battle on the shore at this time.

The Crimson Fleet then pushes deep into Farshore, driving back the defenders to higher ground. The yuan-ti V'sesslin launches *fireball* after *fireball* into the colony. As the colonists make a desperate attempt to repel the pirates, Vanthus releases a flight of vrocks into the streets of Farshore. Finally the pirates make a last push, this time with Vanthus Vanderboren himself at the lead of the assault. Vanthus confronts Lavinia, and without the PCs aid, he may well murder their patron.

The following several encounters represent key battlefield events the PCs can tackle to aid in Farshore's defense.

Fighting Pirates (EL 9, VP 25)

Creatures: At the start of the battle, the PCs have a chance to fight a group of six pirates on their own. These pirates could be attempting to set fire to a building, chasing defenseless colonists, or simply prowling the streets looking for a fight.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (6) **CR 4**
Male human fighter 2/rogue 2
CE Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13
hp 30 (4 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +7 (1d6+2/18–20) or mwk rapier +5 (1d6+2/18–20) and mwk dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ trapfinding
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Focus (dagger)
Skills Balance +9, Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Profession (sailor) +7, Swim +7, Tumble +7
Possessions masterwork studded leather, masterwork rapier, masterwork dagger, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, 50 gp in jewelry and coin

Amphibious Assault (EL 11, VP 100)

Creatures: The Crimson Fleet brought along four flesh golems stitched together from the parts of disobedient crewmen to aid in the assault. A yuan-ti sorcerer named V'sesslin is the creator of these four golems—defeating him and his kin is the focus of this battlefield event.

Before the battle begins, V'sesslin orders his four flesh golems to leap into Farshore Harbor and walk due southeast until they

STEGOSAURUS **CR 10**

N Huge animal

DRAGON #318 68

Init –2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +26, Spot +3

AC 21, touch 6, flat-footed 21; dorsal plates

hp 250 (20 HD)

Fort +21, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9

Spd 30 ft.

Melee tail slam +24 (2d6+16/19–20)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +34

Atk Options toss

Abilities Str 32, Dex 6, Con 24, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (tail slam), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Iron Will, Run, Weapon Focus (tail slam)

Skills Listen +26, Spot +3

Dorsal Plates (Ex) As a move action, a stegosaurus can lower its body to place its dorsal plates between it and a single creature. This grants the stegosaurus a +4 armor bonus to its Armor Class against the chosen creature. Additionally, if the chosen creature attacks the stegosaurus with a light weapon or natural weapon, the sharp dorsal plates inflict 1d10 points of slashing damage (DC 18 Reflex half). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Toss (Ex) A creature that is at least two sizes smaller than the stegosaurus that is hit by its tail slam must make a DC 31 Reflex save or be thrown 30 feet in a random direction away from the stegosaurus. The creature takes 1d6 points of damage from being tossed, plus an additional 1d6 points of damage if it strikes a solid object before it travels the full distance. The tossed creature is prone when it lands. The save DC is Strength-based.

reach land, at which point they are to dismantle any buildings they encounter. The golems' emergence from the waves causes swift panic as the defenders quickly realize that their weapons are doing little damage to them. The PCs must intervene and destroy the four golems before they can tear apart the colony's buildings and defenses.

Flesh Golems (4): hp 79 each; *Monster Manual* 135.

Take Out the Snakes (EL 11, VP 100 or 200)

Creatures: The majority of the Crimson Fleet's assault force are infantry—pirates who swarm the beaches and attack anyone they meet. A few remain behind on the ships to man the catapults and ballistae, but on the *Stygian Shark*, another menace altogether has come to Farshore.

A yuan-ti pureblood sorcerer named V'sesslin has hired the services of himself and his three halfblood bodyguards to the *Stygian Shark* for this mission. V'sesslin belongs to a yuan-ti slaver ring based in Scuttlecove, and hopes that by offering his services to the Crimson Fleet for this mission he can cement a stronger alliance between their two organizations.

V'sesslin and his guards remain on the *Stygian Shark* (which is anchored only 30 feet off shore) and provide what amounts to artillery support. The yuan-ti readies his *wand of enlarged fireballs*, and whenever one of the pirates on land activates a red-tinged smokestick, V'sesslin fires a fireball into the targeted area one round later (in theory, giving the pirate who gave the signal time to get out of the blast radius). In this manner, V'sesslin targets buildings, large groups of colonists, and other key areas. Taking him out removes a potent force from the fleet's offense.

If the PCs defeat the yuan-ti, they can gain an additional 100 Victory Points by scuttling the *Stygian Shark*.

V'SESSLIN **CR 10**

Male yuan-ti pureblood sorcerer 9

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Monster Manual 263

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13

hp 66 (80 with *false life*, 13 HD)

SR 23

Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 *shock dagger* +8/+3 (1d4 plus 1d6 electrical)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +7

Special Actions *alternate form*

Combat Gear *wand of enlarged fireballs* (38 charges)

Spells Known (CL 9th, +11 ranged touch)

4th (5/day)—*animate dead, enervation*

3rd (7/day)—*fly, haste, lightning bolt* (DC 19)

2nd (8/day)—*bull's strength, false life, mirror image, scorching ray*

1st (8/day)—*animate rope, charm person* (DC 17), *identify, mage armor, shield*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash, arcane mark, detect magic, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)

1/day—*animal trance* (DC 18), *cause fear* (DC 17), *darkness, entangle* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 22

SQ *detect poison*, summon familiar (Tiny viper named Zarlian)

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Construct, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Bluff +16, Concentration +18, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +3, Spellcraft +12, Spot +10

Possessions combat gear, +1 *shock dagger*, *cloak of Charisma* +4

Yuan-Ti Halfbloods (3): hp 38 each; *Monster Manual* 264.

Scuttle a Ship (EL 10, VP 100 per ship)

Creatures: The five Crimson Fleet ships not only provide artillery support with their ballistae, but serve as a symbol for the pirates. Scuttling one of these ships can severely damage the pirates' morale. In order to sink a Crimson Fleet ship outright, the PCs must either engage it with their own ship or use powerful magic. In this case, you should refer to *Stormwrack* for rules on naval combat.

Alternately, the PCs could simply board one of the five ships and attack the skeleton crew left behind to defend it. On the *Stygian Shark*, this crew consists of the four

yuan-ti detailed in the previous encounter. On each of the other ships, a group of seven Crimson Fleet pirates await the PCs; if they can be defeated, their ship is rendered helpless. It's a simple matter to burn the flag, set fire to the ship, set it adrift into the rocks, or otherwise scuttle a ship once it's undefended.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (7): hp 30 each; see page 53.

Kill the Vrocks (EL 12, VP 150)

Before the battle began, Vanthus was contacted by the Crimson Fleet via a *crystal ball* with *telepathy*. His report of the failure of the Rat's End pirates and what appears to be some fortifications and greater-than-anticipated defenses at Farshore encouraged the Fleet to send a little more help, and three vrocks called up from the Abyss were allowed to peer into the *crystal ball* and then *greater teleport* to Vanthus' side.

Vanthus keeps the vrocks a secret for most of the battle, ordering them to teleport into Farshore once the battle reaches its height. The demons appear with a shriek and immediately attempt to summon more vrocks before turning to the task of killing as many colonists as they can. Once battle begins, three of the vrocks begin a dance of ruin; if one of them is stunned, paralyzed, or slain, the remaining vrocks focus their wrath on the one foolish enough to disrupt their dance. The vrocks are bound by powerful magic, and do not try to flee—they fight to the death.

Vrocks (3): hp 115 each; *Monster Manual* 48.

A Family Matter (EL 14, VP 300)

As the battle for Farshore draws to a close, the outcome should be fairly apparent. If the PCs have amassed enough Victory Points already, the pirates may be in a fighting retreat or even a full rout. Alternately, the pirates might have captured most of the colony, forcing the defenders into the smaller complex surrounding the two manor houses. In any event, the last battle of the assault is as personal as it is deadly, for Vanthus finally chooses to reveal himself to the PCs and his sister Lavinia.

Creature: Vanthus has changed since the PCs last encountered him at the start of this campaign—as a reward for his services to the Crimson Fleet, he has been transformed into a specific breed of half-fiend known as a lemorian. A look of horrified recognition crosses Lavinia's face as she recognizes her brother. She cries out his name in shock as he swoops down from the sky to land nearby.

Vanthus's low profile during the battle is engineered so that he'll have the advantage of shock and surprise when he reveals himself—his unhealthy obsession with his sister has only magnified during the months after his transformation, and once he discovered she was here on Farshore, his primary goal became her abduction.

Vanthus Vanderboren **CR 14**

Male lemorian aristocrat 1/rogue 5/fighter4/tempest 2

CE Medium outsider (native)

Monster Manual 148, *Complete Adventurer* 81

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen –1, Spot –1

Languages Common

AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 22; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge

hp 106 (12 HD); **DR** 10/magic

Immune poison

Vanthus Vanderboren

Victory Points

Listed here are all possible Victory Points attainable in this adventure or in the accompanying Farshore article.

Condition	VP Award
Upgrade harbor	50 VP
Upgrade palisade	50 VP
Upgrade watchtowers	50 VP ea. (100 max)
Cast *hallow* on cemetery	25 VP
Defeat troglodyte tribe	25 VP
Recruit additional militia	25 VP ea. (100 max)
Meravanchi is lord mayor	–250 VP
Vanderboren is lord mayor	150 VP
Aid at Farshore Chapel	25 VP ea. (200 max)
Fix infirmary's efficiency	50 VP
Each Jade Raven slain	–100 VP
Recruit dinosaurs	2 VP/CR (200 max)
Secure aid of Olman tribes	250 VP
Defeat Temauhti-techuani	100 VP
Secure phanaton aid	200 VP
Deliver rakasta weapons	200 VP
Repair the *Sea Wyvern*	200 VP
Fighting Pirates	25 VP ea. (75 max)
Amphibious Assault	100 VP
Take Out the Snakes	100 VP
Scuttle a Ship	100 VP ea. (500 max)
Kill the Vrocks	150 VP
Defeat Vanthus	300 VP
PCs miss final battle	–400 VP
Savage tide hits Farshore	–2000 VP

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 22

Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +3; evasion

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)

Melee +3 *longsword* +16 (1d8+8/19–20) or +3 *longsword* +15/+10 (1d8+8/19–20) and +1 *keen sickle* +12/+8 (1d6+2/19–20) and tail +8 (1d6+1 plus poison)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Atk Options Spring Attack, smite good 1/day (+12 damage), sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 18), *command* (DC 15)

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 19), *fear* (DC 18), *mass suggestion* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 21, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 18

SQ ambidexterity, tempest defense +1, trapfinding, trap sense +1

Feats Dodge, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting , Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Balance +11, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +7, Forgery +10, Intimidate +18, Jump +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Profession (sailor) +7, Sense Motive +8, Swim +6, Tumble +17

Possessions +3 *mithral shirt*, +3 *longsword*, +1 *keen sickle*, masterwork dagger, *ring of protection +2*, *amulet of health +2*, *boots of speed*, *shadow pearl*, 4 gold earrings worth 300 gp each

Ambidexterity (Ex) Vanthus's penalties for dual-wielding weapons are lessened by 1 when he's not wearing medium or heavy armor.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Wis. Vanthus can poison a melee weapon with this venom as a standard action. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Tempest Defense (Ex) When wielding two weapons, Vanthus gains a +1 bonus to his Armor Class as long as he's not wearing medium or heavy armor.

Tactics: When Vanthus arrives, he greets the PCs with a sneer, then demands that Lavinia join him. If she agrees, he promises to leave Farshore in peace. Of course, he has no real intent of doing so, and Lavinia knows it, replying to his "invitation" with a curse, telling him her brother died the same night their parents did—the mockery standing before her now is nothing but filth wearing his skin like some monstrous parasite.

Vanthus does not take this well, and attempts to dominate her—with the Jade Ravens locked in combat with other pirates, it falls to the PCs to intervene and protect Lavinia from her demonic brother.

Vanthus uses his flight to stay at range at the start of a battle, using his spell-like abilities to cause chaos among the PCs. He uses *suggestion* to try to make the PCs abandon Lavinia to go aid the other colonists against the pirates, or to get them to fight him "like men" by casting aside their weapons and armor to fight unarmed and unarmored. After a few rounds of this, Vanthus loses his patience and swoops in to attack in melee, activating his *boots of speed* as he does so.

Although Vanthus does not flee, he does have one last trick if faced with defeat. Once he's brought below 10 hit points, he glares at the nearest PC, reaches into a pouch, and pulls out something he managed to steal from his superiors before he left Scuttlecove—a bloodstained *shadow pearl*.

The PCs have seen what a *shadow pearl* can do during "The Bullywug Gambit." To activate the pearl, Vanthus must retrieve it from his pouch (a move equivalent action that provokes an attack of opportunity) and anoint it with blood (also a move equivalent action). He then drops the pearl on the ground (a free action), whereupon it cracks open and activates. If a character is within five feet of Vanthus when he drops the pearl, the character can attempt to catch it before it falls by making a DC 20 Reflex save, but doing so provokes an attack of opportunity from Vanthus. If the PC makes the save and isn't slain or knocked out by Vanthus's attack of opportunity, he prevents the pearl's activation. As long as he holds it, though, Vanthus can activate it by successfully sundering the held pearl.

If the pearl is activated, it shatters and unleashes a cloud of choking green gas in a 20-foot spread. Any creature in this area takes 1d6 points of acid damage per round. The crushed pearl smokes and sputters in this manner for one minute before exploding into a one-mile-radius tide of green energy. All corporeal aberrations, animals, dragons, fey, giants, humanoids, magical beasts, and monstrous humanoids in this area must make a DC 15 Will save. Success indicates the creature is nauseated for one round, but failure indicates the savage tide washes away the victim's sanity and transforms him into a savage creature. See DUNGEON #140 for details on this template, but if it comes to this, Farshore is likely doomed. In any event, if the savage tide engulfs Farshore, the PCs suffer a –2,000 Victory Point penalty.

Once activated, the PCs have a minute to deal with the *shadow pearl*. Its effects function at Caster Level 20th; if the magic can be dispelled, the savage tide is averted. Placing the activated pearl in an antimagic zone until the minute

passes also prevents the savage tide. Otherwise, the only real option may be to use magic to transport the *shadow pearl* to a relatively uninhabited area so that when it detonates, the savage tide doesn't affect as many souls.

If the activated pearl is put into an object that can withstand its acidic vapors (such as a *bag of holding*, a *bead of force* sphere, or even just a strong container), the savage tide can be effectively contained. The blast of savage energy dissipates quickly once the pearl explodes, and only a round later, all that remains are the nonmagical fragments of a large black pearl.

Although Vanthus' death doesn't necessarily ensure victory for the PCs, it does signal the end of the assault on Farshore, one way or another.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Vanthus's defeat, the Crimson Fleet pirates either flee for their lives or begin the task of pillaging the colony. At this time, add up all of the Victory Points the PCs have earned to determine their success or failure.

2,400 or more Victory Points (Triumph)

The Crimson Fleet pirates are destroyed with minimal damage or loss of life to Farshore and its allies. All non-scuttled Crimson Fleet ships are claimed as the property of Farshore, and word of the defeat, when it reaches Scuttlecove, convinces the Crimson Fleet to leave Farshore alone. Increase Farshore's assets by 20,000 gp. Each PC gains a share of 5,000 gp of the loot (a character that forgoes this award can increase Farshore's assets by this amount). Award the PCs experience points as if they had defeated a CR 13 creature.

1,400—2,399 Victory Points (Victory)

The Crimson Fleet pirates are defeated with moderate damage and loss of life to Farshore and its allies. 1d4 unscuttled enemy ships are captured and taken as prizes, but the remainder escape. No named NPC allies are slain, but Farshore's population is reduced to 2d20+190. Increase Farshore's assets by 5,000 gp. Each PC gains a share of 1,000 gp of the loot (a character that forgoes this award can increase Farshore's assets by this amount). Award the PCs experience points as if they had defeated a CR 11 creature.

1,000—1,399 Victory Points (Survival)

The Crimson Fleet pirates are defeated with severe damage and loss of life to Farshore and its allies. One unscuttled enemy ship is captured and taken as a prize, but the remainder escape. Several named NPC allies are slain (including some that may have become important to PCs—only Lavinia escapes this fate), and Farshore's population is reduced to 2d20+100. Increase Farshore's assets by 1,000 gp. Each PC gains a share of 500 gp of the loot (a character that forgoes this award can increase Farshore's assets by this amount). Award the PCs experience points as if they had defeated a CR 8 creature.

600—999 Victory Points (Defeat)

The Crimson Fleet pirates defeat Farshore, but take noticeable losses of their own. They sack the colony and burn many buildings, then retreat to Rat's End to regroup and recover. Lavinia survives, as do 1d3 Jade Ravens and 1d4 other named NPCs from the colony. Award no loot or experience points to the PCs. Ruined and at a loss, Lavinia and the surviving colonists limp onto the *Blue Nixie* and try to return to Sasserine, abandoning Farshore to the pirates, who return to Farshore in 2d6 days and claim the colony in the name of the Crimson Fleet.

Less than 600 Victory Points (Slaughter)

The Crimson Fleet pirates raze Farshore to the ground after looting anything remotely of value. Those not slaughtered in the streets are captured and become slaves; anyone who distinguishes themselves as "heroes" during the battle is executed. If Vanthus survives, he claims Lavinia as his personal slave; otherwise she is executed publicly at dawn along with any captured PCs or Jade Ravens.

Recovery

The Savage Tide Adventure Path assumes that the PCs and Farshore survive the Crimson Fleet attack (by having earned at least 1,000 Victory Points). If not, you can continue the campaign, but now the PCs must escape the burning colony. Eventually, they may learn that the Crimson Fleet has more interests in the region than Farshore, and can move on to the next adventure (although without the support of a nearby base of operations).

Assuming the PCs are victorious, though, the next few days in Farshore are filled with celebration marred only by funerals for those who fell to the assault. The colonists have grown stronger by surviving the ordeal, and the PCs are now held as local heroes.

Lavinia puts on a brave face during those days, but the revelation of her brother's fate has given her much to ponder. With the support of the PCs, she soon recovers and is stronger than before, bolstered by the knowledge that Vanthus can no longer cause pain to her or her friends and eager to get on with her life. Vanthus' body is buried in Farshore cemetery, in a lonely plot to the south marked only by a simple wooden stake carved with the Vanderboren family crest—Lavinia's sole concession to any remaining shred of humanity that might have lingered in her brother's corrupted soul.

After the battle, you are free to have as much downtime as you wish. Give the PCs time to recover, craft magic items, continue to improve Farshore, establish trade routes, and explore the Isle of Dread to their hearts' content. One matter should intrigue the PCs during this time, though. It takes several days to sort through the loot captured from the pirates, but papers recovered from the *Brine Harlot* indicate that the Crimson Fleet has been to the Isle of Dread before, to meet in a cove on the northern coast with a group referred to only as the "Lords of Dread." Further investigation reveals something chilling—it would seem that there are more *shadow pearls* out there, and that their source is somewhere in the lightless depths below the Isle of Dread.

Lemorians

The leaders of the Crimson Fleet are outsiders known as lemorians, humanoids transformed by a secret process in the city of Scuttlecove into half-demons. Lemorians have large patches of black scaly skin (in some cases covering their entire bodies), claws, pointed ears, horns, red eyes, batlike wings, small fangs, and long tails tipped with a poisonous stinger.

Lemorians use the rules for half-fiends as detailed in the *Monster Manual*, but with the following modifications:

- Instead of a bite attack, they gain a poison sting attack (damage remains unchanged from bite attack). The DC to resist the poison is equal to 10 + half the lemorian's Hit Dice + his Constitution modifier. Its initial and secondary damage are the same: 1d6 Wisdom damage. A lemorian often poisons his melee weapons with this venom.
- Ability score increases become Str +4, Dex +4, Con +2, Int +2, Cha +4
- Spell-like abilities change as follows:

HD	Abilities
1–2	*command* 3/day
3–4	*suggestion*
5–6	*fear*
7–8	*charm monster* 3/day
9–10	*dominate person*
11–12	*mass suggestion*
13–14	*unholy aura* 3/day, *unhallow*
15–16	*mass charm monster*
17–18	*summon monster IX* (demons only)
19–20	*dominate monster*

APPENDIX 1: THE TOOTH OF AHAZU

The *tooth of Ahazu* is an ancient magic artifact that grants a physical link to a long dead demon lord. This single tooth is part of a larger collection known to scholars and sages as the *teeth of Dahlver-Nar*. Later in this campaign, the tooth could give the PCs an advantage in their quest, as long as they're willing to trust the heirs of the Abyss.

A DC 35 Knowledge (the planes) check is enough for a character to recall that the demon lord Ahazu the Seizer was known for his obsession with abducting powerful abyssal creatures (the more powerful the better) and imprisoning them in a place called the Wells of Darkness. Ironically, Ahazu himself is now imprisoned there.

To employ the *tooth of Ahazu*, you must remove one of your own teeth and fit the *tooth of Ahazu* in its place. This bloody process requires a full-round action and deals 1 point of damage. Replacing a tooth with the *tooth of Ahazu* does not affect bite damage or give you a bite attack if you normally lack one.

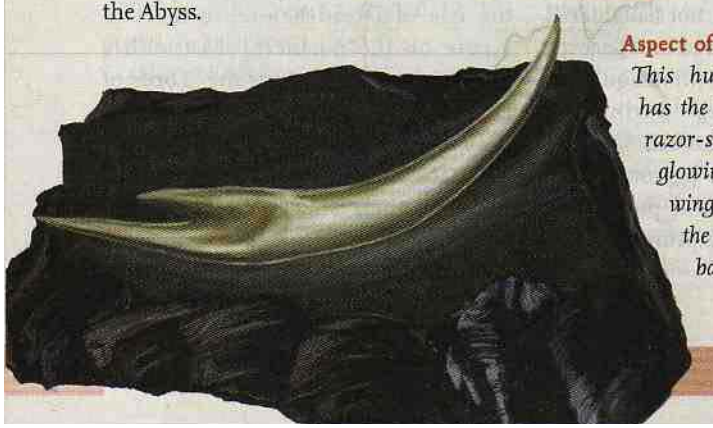
You must have the *tooth of Ahazu* in your mouth for one full day before you can use its ability. After this time, the tooth allows you to make grapple checks as if you were one size category larger than your actual size, effectively granting you a +4 size bonus on all grapple checks.

As long as his tooth is in your mouth, the fell influence of Ahazu seeps through your body. Your skin becomes cold to the touch, and the inside of your mouth turns black. Ahazu's avarice infects you, encouraging you to steal small, precious objects whenever the opportunity presents itself. You may choose to ignore Ahazu's influence, but if you do you take a –1 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks as long as you continue to resist his influence and the tooth remains in your mouth.

The only way a foe can get your tooth is to render you helpless and physically remove it. Such a removal deals no damage. The tooth of Ahazu does not occupy a magic item body slot.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Price 6,000 gp.

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTER



Aspect of Zotzilaha

This humanoid-shaped creature has the head of a monstrous bat, razor-sharp fangs, and orange glowing eyes. Membranous bat wings covered in thin black fur the color of coal jut out of its back. Its hands end in long, cruel claws, and its body radiates waves of intense heat.

ASPECT OF ZOTZILAHA **CR 12**

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, fire)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness, speak with bat; Listen +23, Spot +23

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal, Olman; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 24 (+4 Dex, +14 natural)

hp 161 (14 HD); **DR** 5/epic

Immune fire, paralysis, poison, sonic

Resist acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 22

Fort +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15

Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 30 ft.; fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee* bite +19 (1d8+15 plus 1d6 fire plus 1d6 Strength drain) and
2 claws +17 (1d6+10 plus 1d6 fire plus 1d6 Strength drain)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with claws)

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +24

Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack

Special Actions breath weapon, *summon bats*

*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 30, Dex 18, Con 25, Int 7, Wis 22, Cha 25

Feats Cleave, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Hide +21, Intimidate +26, Listen +23, Move Silently +21, Search +23, Spot +23

Breath Weapon (Su) 30-foot cone of unholy fire, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 8d6 (half fire, half unholy), Reflex DC 24. A character that fails to save against this attack has his flesh scoured away by the ravenous unholy flames, and must make a DC 24 Fortitude save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Heat (Su) An aspect of Zotzilaha is infused with the fire of the volcano. It inflicts an additional 1d6 points of fire damage whenever it strikes a foe with its bite or claws. A foe that strikes the aspect with a natural weapon or an unarmed strike also takes 1d6 points of fire damage.

See In Darkness (Ex) An aspect of Zotzilaha can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by *deeper darkness*.

Speak With Bats (Ex) An aspect of Zotzilaha can *speak with animals* with all bats and batlike creatures.

Strength Drain (Su) Any creature damaged by an aspect of Zotzilaha's bite or claws takes 1d6 points of Strength drain as he is inflicted with feverish tremors.

***Summon Bats* (Sp)** An aspect of Zotzilaha may summon 2d6 fire bats or dire bats once per day. The bats appear immediately and serve the aspect for up to 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 6th-level spell.

Zotzilaha often dispatches aspects of his divine might to his shrines, as much to display his wrath and power as for any other cause. The manifestation of an aspect in his shrine on the Isle of Dread is relatively recent, spurred by the theft of an idol from the shrine several weeks ago (see DUNGEON #141).

In combat, the aspect uses his breath weapon at the start of any fight. He then summons fire bats (if in a cramped area such as the shrine in this adventure) or dire bats to aid him. His arms have a surprisingly long reach that his foes often underestimate since he usually keeps them folded in front of him like those of a mantis.

Stephen S. Greer is proud to have been able to contribute to the Savage Tide Adventure Path alongside so many talented writers. The thought of helping kill off countless characters on the Isle of Dread makes him feel all warm and fuzzy inside.

Gary Holian is delighted to see the Isle of Dread sprout again from the seeds he planted in DUNGEON #114. May it bury another million adventurers in shallow graves.

Aspect of Zotzilaha

Scaling the Adventure

"Tides of Dread" is designed for a group of four 9th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 7th–8th-level or 10th–11th-level characters. Simply adjust all NPC character levels up or down as appropriate by a number equal to the increase or decrease in average party level from 9. Don't forget to adjust treasure accordingly. Specific changes to the adventure are as follows:

7th–8th-level characters: Give the PCs an additional few weeks or an extra month to prepare for the Crimson Fleet attack. Remove one of the fire bats from the "Wings of Fire" encounter, and reduce the aspect of Zotzilaha's HD by 2–4. Replace Temauhti-tecuani with an unadvanced but still elite tyrannosaurus. Reduce the emerald anaconda to 16 HD and Huge size. Remove one of the flesh golems from "Amphibious Assault," all of the yuan-ti halfbloods from "Take out the Snakes," and 1–2 of the vrocks from "Kill the Vrocks."

10th–11th-level characters: Reduce the amount of time the PCs have to prepare for the Crimson Fleet attack by two or three weeks. Add 2–4 fire bats to each encounter with these creatures, and increase the aspect of Zotzilaha's HD by 2–4. Increase Temauhti-tecuani's HD by 3–6. Increase the emerlad anaconda's HD by 3–6. Increase the HD of the golems in "Amphibious Assault" by 3–6, and add 1–2 more vrocks to "Kill the Vrocks."

BY STEPHEN S. GREER AND GARY HOLIAN

Savage Tide
Farshore
City of Hope

BY STEPHEN S. GREER AND GARY HOLIAN
BY BEN WOOTEN
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

The Isle of Dread has long been the stuff of legend. Tales of its existence, dating back to the Age of the Explorer Kings, were used to spook new deckhands and fascinate children in seaside ports. Yet the Isle was only a mystical mirage until recently, when the discovery of famed explorer Rory Barbarosa's journal brought it back to prominence and sparked a desire among the adventurous to locate its distant shores.

Hidden deep in the Vohoun Ocean, thousands of miles from the civilized lands to the north, those who attempted to use Barbarosa's journals to find the Isle of Dread found the undertaking exceedingly difficult, and many ships were lost in the attempt. Until, that is, Captain "Mad" Madsen Atirr, one of Barbarosa's original crewmen, braved the southern waters again in his infamous ship, the *Morningstar*. In the process, he created the first accurate seacharts to the Isle of Dread.

Accompanying Atirr was an adventurous young woman named Larissa Iomundi, who became one of only a few to own a copy of this highly prized map. After the successful journey to the Isle of Dread and her subsequent return to Sasserine, Larissa was unable to forget the wondrous sights and exotic locales she'd experienced. Several years later, after marrying into nobility, she told her husband Verik Vanderboren of her journey, and the two hatched an outrageous plan. They would not only return to the Isle, but would settle it, establishing a colony on the island.

Four years ago, after considerable preparation, the Vanderborens outfitted two ships for the journey. They assembled a crew of explorers, sailors, and colonists, and secured the aid of Lord Manthalay Meravanchi, a veteran explorer of the Amedio Jungle and one of the few Meravanchis to escape his family's reputation for debauchery. After an arduous passage, the colonists finally reached the Isle of Dread. Unlike others drawn in by lurid tales from Barbarosa's diary, the Vanderboren Expedition

Shopping in Farshore

It's likely that Farshore will be the only place the PCs have to sell treasure and purchase gear for some time. Although the colony's gp limit and assets are higher than most settlements its size, they're still quite a bit lower than what the players might expect. This should force PCs to adapt to the treasure they find during the course of the adventures. As a result, you should strongly consider customizing some of the treasure found in this adventure path to your particular campaign. If your party's fighter happens to have Weapon Focus (falchion) and Weapon Specialization (falchion), you should consider altering a magic weapon here or there so that he can take advantage of it. Likewise, if your party wizard is a necromancer who can't use conjuration magic, you might consider changing that *wand of stinking cloud* into a *wand of vampiric touch*.

As the PCs aid in the colony's development, upgrading its resources and helping to establish trade routes, Farshore's gp limit and assets increase. Once trade routes with Sasserine and other northern cities are established, it's possible to purchase goods worth up to 40,000 gp, with significant delays in delivery. Characters with access to *teleport* and other powerful travel spells can of course make their own journey back home to Sasserine to shop, but keep in mind that Farshore is about 1,800 miles from Sasserine, and the terrain between the two locations is far from hospitable...

didn't seek to pillage or exploit the Olman natives living there. Instead, they won their trust and grudging respect, returning at least as much value as they took in trade. After much bargaining, the Vanderborens forged a treaty with the people of the Seven Villages and won control of the 25-square-mile islet of Temute on which to build the colony.

Temute ("the abandoned place") became the site of the first true northern settlement in the archipelago. The initial effort was challenging. Temute had been uninhabited by the Olman for years, and coaxing them to its shores to assist in constructing the colony proved difficult. Metal was in short supply. Eventually, the Vanderborns decided to return to Sasserine to organize a re-provisioning, leaving Lord Manthalay in charge of the colony. One of the ships, *The Mercurial*, was lost at sea after an attack by a monstrous leviathan, but the *Blue Nixie* managed to return to Sasserine safely, if only just. It took several months to repair the badly damaged ship, and after that, other developments kept the Vanderborens from returning to Farshore with more supplies. They remained in periodic contact with Lord Manthalay via spells like *sending*, but every attempt to return met with failure for one reason or another. And just as they'd purchased a new ship to accompany the *Blue Nixie* on a return voyage, treachery laid the Vanderborens low. Their own son, Vanthus, burned them and their new ship to ashes on its maiden voyage.

Farshore has thus spent the last several years on its own. Local Olman villagers, attracted by the wonders the northerners produced, aided them in expanding and building, and taught them many secrets about their new home. Expeditions to the mainland of the isle were common, although most of those that attempted to explore the interior never returned. Within two years, the colony was nearly completed, and a hard-won community was established on Temute. Flushed with potential, but with need of further supplies, Farshore now waits patiently for more resources from Sasserine before it can finally become the self-sustaining trading post envisioned by the Vanderborens so many years ago.

"Tides of Dread" begins and ends in Farshore, and its citizens can become close allies of the PCs as they contribute crafts and supplies, provide information, and aid in its defense. This detailed description of the colony and its residents offers endless roleplaying opportunities and adventures for your players. Welcome to Farshore!

Farshore (hamlet): Conventional; AL NG; Population 240; 800 gp limit (Farshore's resources and lack of real competition grant the hamlet a higher gp limit than normal); Assets 9,600 gp; Isolated (220 humans, 7 half-elves, 6 halflings, 4 dwarves, 3 gnomes).

Authority Figures: **Lavinia Vanderboren**, nominee for Farshore lord mayor (NG female human aristocrat 2/swashbuckler 6), **Lord Manthalay Meravanchi**, nominee for Farshore lord mayor (LN male human aristocrat 3/fighter 5), **Professor Aldwattle**, Council Member (CG male human wizard 5/expert 2), **Vesserin Catherly**, Chaplain and Council Member (NG male half-elf cleric 6), **Telda Syren**, Council Member (CG female half-elf expert 4), **Militia Captain Ulvar Kabbanja**, Council Member (LG male human fighter 4).

FARSHORE

Farshore was established as a permanent base from which to explore the Isle of Dread and export its resources to Sasserine. The colonists chose a small harbor dubbed Verik's Cove on the western face of Temute as the colony site, since two natural seawalls would provide shelter from storms and attack from sea. A five-member Expedition Council meets weekly to direct colony affairs, but as Farshore has grown, the need for a leader has grown as well.

The colony is still a work in progress, but is built to last. Approximately sixty buildings nestle within the palisade, built primarily from local materials with considerable additional labor supplied in barter by the local natives. The structures are wooden, as stone is difficult to quarry and reserved for the colony's rainwater collection wells. The buildings are mostly single-story structures composed of tightly spaced horizontal logs cut from the surrounding jungle. The exteriors are covered in reddish-hued adobe consisting of clay, water, and dried vegetation to give the buildings a smooth surface that keeps them cool during the day and warm at night. The roofs are covered in a darker red tile that is fired within town.

Farshore was originally designed as a trading post. Several short wooden piers of various heights and lengths jut out into Verik's Cove from the Farshore waterfront, and long warehouses near the docks are used for storage. Stone jetties extending from the cliffs flanking the cove provide protection against storms and erosion.

Fifty-three families live in Farshore, the majority of which are former resi-

dents of Sasserine who have cast their lot with the colony. A handful of Olman natives have taken up semi-permanent residence in Farshore as well, but most of them are transient day laborers and traders who live in the seven surrounding villages. The colony economy is primarily sustained through trade with the Seven Villages, and food and clothing are provided for locally. Fishing is a daily activity, and hunting is plentiful on Temute and the surrounding islands. The natives trade pearls and precious coral with Farshore for manufactured goods. Rare woods, plants, and spices are collected from within the jungle and stored in the warehouses for eventual shipment back north. Overall, the settlement has very good prospects if it can establish a trade route with Sasserine.

With Lavinia Vanderboren's arrival in Farshore, the political scene in the colony becomes complex. A third of the colony's citizens are staunch supporters of the Vanderboren name, and are overjoyed to have a scion back in town. Another third have grown embittered at a perceived abandonment of the colony by the Vanderborens, and are strong supporters of Lord Manthalay Meravanchi and his plan to annex several of the Olman villages for Sasserine. The final third of Farshore's citizens remain undecided. By the time the PCs reach the colony, plans are already afoot by the Expedition Council to set up a vote to determine who should serve as Farshore's lord mayor: Lavinia Vanderboren or Manthalay Meravanchi.

Farshore Map Locations

Listed below are notes for several key locations in Farshore. Each location is also given an upgrade task; if the PCs accomplish the task listed to upgrade the building or area, the colony improves in the manner indicated. In some cases, these upgrades have little or no short-term impact on Farshore, but all of them can increase the morale and defense of the colony.

Many of the upgrades require time and labor in order to take effect. As a general rule, one group of laborers (a workforce) consists of a crew of 20 people. Not everyone in the colony is a skilled laborer, but there are enough to field up to 4 at a time. Additional workforces can be gathered from allied Olmans (this requires a visit to the Seven Villages and a DC 30 Diplomacy check—each check takes 1d4 days to attempt), or from any affiliations the PCs belong to. If a PC has an affiliation score of 15 or higher, he can organize a single workforce to toil on a project. A workforce assigned to an upgrade project cannot be used on a second project at the same time. You can assume that payment for the laborers comes from the Farshore or affiliation treasury—the PCs don't have to pay the workers from their own funds.

Each upgrade is assigned a number of Victory Points ("VP")—each time the PCs complete an upgrade, add the indicated number of points to their total when determining their level of success against the Crimson Fleet assault at the end of "Tides of Dread." Most upgrades also have a workforce requirement ("WF") and a time requirement listed, while others simply say "Adventure," indicating that the upgrade must be handled by

the PCs—the amount of time such an upgrade takes depends entirely upon their methods and solutions. If the PCs are on good terms with the Jade Ravens (see page 69), they can assign an adventure upgrade to them. You can assume that it takes the Jade Ravens 1d6 days to complete and recover from an adventure upgrade. An upgrade listed simply as "Check" or "Spell" indicates that a PC must spend the listed amount of time working on the upgrade, at which point he makes a specific skill check or casts a spell to achieve success. A skill check may be attempted numerous times, but once successful, additional checks cannot further enhance the location. If the PCs have a good relationship with an NPC, he can be convinced to spend this time and make the appropriate skill check instead with a DC 15 Diplomacy check.

1. The Docks

The Farshore waterfront bustles with activity most of the day, as over half the colonists have some interest in what goes on here. Fishing boats and launches depart daily, the latter destined for neighboring isles, including the Isle of Dread. At any time of day, two guards (human warrior 1) keep watch here, and signal fires atop the jetties are lit at night so that stragglers at sea can find their way home.

Upgrade (50 VP; 1 WF, Check; 1 week or more): The entrance into Farshore harbor is a natural bottleneck that serves well to protect the colony from attacks from the sea, yet there is certainly more that can be done to shore up these defenses. A character trained in Knowledge (architecture and engineering) can plan several changes and enhancements to the harbor entrance, such as installing siege engines or sniper posts along the cliffs, creating artificial sandbars or submerged traps to slow the advance of enemy ships, and establishing more efficient patrol routes. This character must spend at least two hours a day for a week supervising the work. At the end of the week, he must make a DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check; success indicates that the improvements are sound, while failure indicates that at least another week of work is required. Each week work continues, the PC gains a cumulative +2 bonus on his Knowledge check.

2. Warehouses

A few long warehouses line the shore, storing goods ready for trade with the Seven Villages or awaiting export to the city of Sasserine. The warehouses are nearly full after three years of storage, and the exotic lumber, preserved spices, and other bulky bounty harvested from the isle are ready to go as soon as trade routes are established.

Despite increased guards, someone continues to steal supplies and equipment from the warehouses. A relatively recent development, these thefts have confounded all security attempts to date. Stolen items come in all shapes and sizes, but the thief has yet to leave any trace of his passage. Several colonists have begun to suspect treachery within the Farshore council, and violence could break out soon.

Upgrade (0 VP; Adventure): The thief is not one of the colonists, but a greedy ethereal filcher that has been sneaking into the settlement, taking things, and stashing them in its cave on the northeast shore of Temute. The creature stages its attacks at different times in the night, never striking more than once a week. If the PCs don't set up a sting to catch the aberration, rumors of a four-armed hopping monster soon start to spread throughout Farshore.

Ethereal Filcher: hp 22; *Monster Manual* 104.

3. Palisade

A 15-foot-high wooden palisade surrounds the landward approach into Farshore. While functional, the fortification was built by colonists who didn't have an experienced engineer to lead them, and a DC 15 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check reveals that the wall isn't nearly as strong as it could be.

Upgrade (50 VP; 1 WF, Check; 1 week or more): A character trained in Knowledge (architecture and engineering) can plan several changes and enhancements to the palisade, including adding sharpened poles atop it and jutting from the base, greased walls, a low moat, and other changes that can fortify the wall. This character must spend at least two hours a day for a week supervising the work. At the end of the week, he must make a DC 25 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check; success indicates that the palisade improvements are sound, while failure indicates that at least another week of work is required. Each week work continues, the PC gains a cumulative +2 bonus on his Knowledge check.

4. Watchtowers

In all, four watchtowers stand on the Farshore palisade, two each over the gates into town. Currently, each tower is manned by a single guard (human warrior 1). In cases of emergency, an iron bell hangs from the guardpost's ceiling.

Upgrade (50 VP per watchtower; 1 WF each; 3 weeks each): The watchtowers serve well for any dangers that approach Farshore from the east and south, but not so well for attacks from the north or the west. A new watchtower could be constructed in the northeastern corner of the palisade, and one could be built on the southwestern bluff that overlooks the harbor.

5. South Gate

The road leading south from Farshore is used most often by laborers who work in one of several gemstone mines further inland on the isle of Temute. The mines produce a steady outflow of gems, but they aren't particularly efficient.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Profession (miner) check, a character can increase the gemstone mines' efficiency. This increases Farshore's assets by 10,000 gp.

6. Farshore Cemetery

Farshore's cemetery is tended by chapel priests, and is surrounded by a partially completed low stone wall. The colony has held its own over the last three years, and as a result the cemetery only has two dozen graves so far, mostly fishermen and hunters slain by troglodytes or wild beasts.

Upgrade (25 VP; Spell): Although Farshore has not had many problems with

undead, there are no clerics in the colony capable of casting *hallow* on this site. A PC who casts *hallow* here increases the community's morale, resulting in a stronger drive to defend the colony from attack when the inevitable occurs. The additional protection afforded to the cemetery frees up the priests of Farshore Chapel to focus more time on providing services and crafting magic items rather than guarding the cemetery—as a result, Farshore's gp limit increases by 1,000 gp.

7. East Gate

The road leading east from Farshore is used most often by hunters and farmers of the outlying regions. Temute is far enough from the mainland that dangerous predators don't overrun its wilds, yet the island is far from safe.

Upgrade (25 VP; Adventure): A small but tenacious tribe of troglodytes that dwells near the center of Temute has long been problematic for the colonists. These troglodytes dwell in a sizable cave overlooking a forest of banana trees and other specimens that are ideal for lumber, especially shipbuilding and repairs, but the colonists cannot enter the area without being viciously attacked by the fiercely territorial monsters. Worse, in the last few months, attacks have crept increasingly closer to the colony's boundaries. If the PCs can defeat the warlike trogs and their giant lizard pets, the colony's increased safety and new access to lumber and exotic fruits increases Farshore's assets by 5,000 gp. Further, the access to shipbuilding materials makes establishing trade routes much simpler. Three months after the PCs defeat the troglodyte tribe, Farshore's gp limit increases by 1,000 gp as the colony begins making contact with seagoing merchants and other settlements to the north.

Troglodytes (20): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 246.

Monitor Lizards (6): hp 22 each; *Monster Manual* 275.

8. Militia Barracks

Farshore's militia consists of a mere 18 human guards (human warrior 1), of which six are on duty for 8-hour shifts during most hours of the day. Only half of these guards live here, although the barracks can house three dozen with ease. **Militia Captain Ulvar Kabbanja** (LG male human fighter 4), a member of Farshore's town council and the mercenary company known as Zelkarune's Horns, has done his best to recruit for the militia, but he's not a very charismatic man. With the arrival of the *Blue Nixie*, Jade Raven **Tolin Kientai** (see Appendix) joined the militia and has managed to attract the interest of several other Farshore citizens, but if the militia is to become an actual force, they'll need more help recruiting.

Upgrade (25 VP; Check; 1 week): A character who spends a week trying to recruit people to the militia can increase the militia by 5 with a DC 20 Diplomacy check. This upgrade can be repeated each week (for up to four additional VP awards), but each time the DC of the check increases by 5.

9. Vanderboren Manor

Not quite as big as Lord Manthalay Meravanchi's Estate, this structure is still larger than other homes in the settlement. A small dome set with stained-glass windows depicting fair seas and sailing ships gives the structure a memorable look. Built by Larissa and Verik Vanderboren several years ago and maintained in their absence by four loyal servants, this simple yet elegant manor has only recently come back into use with Lavinia Vanderboren's return to Farshore. This manor features six guest rooms, all of which Lavinia makes available to any PCs who don't want to stay elsewhere.

Members of the Dawn Council who don't wish to involve themselves with the Meravanchis can take care of affiliation business here as they wish.

Upgrade (Special): The PCs can campaign for Lavinia Vanderboren, encouraging Farshore's residents to vote for their patron in the coming election for lord mayor. Initially, 80 citizens are undecided on who to vote for. After a week of campaigning, a PC may make a DC 20 Diplomacy check. Success indicates that he's convinced 1d10 of these citizens to vote Vanderboren. For every 10 points by which he exceeds this check, 1d10 more join the Vanderboren camp. Failure indicates that 1d10 citizens decide to vote for Meravanchi instead.

Lavinia Vanderboren **CR 7**

Female human aristocrat 2/swashbuckler 6
NG Medium humanoid
Complete Warrior 11

Init +7; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Dodge +2
hp 53 (8 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *rapier* +11/+6 (1d6+3/18–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +11 (1d4+2/19–20)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +7
Atk Options acrobatic charge, improved flanking
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of haste*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Weapon Finesse
Skills Appraise +7, Balance +10, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +25, Gather Information +10, Jump +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +7, Perform (stringed instrument) +8, Profession (sailor) +6, Sense Motive +7, Tumble +16
Possessions combat gear, +1 *leather armor*, +1 *rapier*, masterwork dagger, *ring of protection +1*, *gloves of Dexterity +2*, *cloak of resistance +1*, gold earrings (100 gp each), jade signet ring (80 gp)

Acrobatic Charge (Ex) Lavinia may charge through difficult terrain that would normally slow movement. She may charge through squares occupied by allies.
Dodge Bonus (Ex) Lavinia may designate an opponent during her action and receive a +1 dodge bonus to AC against melee attacks from that opponent. This bonus stacks with that granted by the Dodge feat, but Lavinia loses this bonus when she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.
Improved Flanking (Ex) Lavinia gains a +4 bonus to attack a flanked opponent.
Insightful Strike (Ex) Lavinia applies her Intelligence bonus on damage rolls with weapons that can gain the benefit of Weapon Finesse. This additional damage does not apply to targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits. Lavinia loses this bonus when she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.

10. Meravanchi Manor

The largest home in the colony, Meravanchi Manor is surrounded by an immaculate garden and boasts two stories and an attached tower used mainly as a museum for the eccentric trophies of Lord **Manthalay Meravanchi's** (LN Male human aristocrat 3/fighter 5). Manthalay chose to accompany Lavinia's parents on their expedition to the Isle of Dread partially because he was intrigued by the exotic new discoveries promised by such a locale, and partially because he had grown disgusted with the excessive debauches of his brother Zebulah, the family head of the Meravanchis in Sasserine. His not-so-secret goal is to build enough wealth, resources, and power in Farshore so that someday he can return to Sasserine and wrest control of the family from his brother.

Over the past several years, Manthalay has become the de facto leader of Farshore; Lavinia's arrival has disrupted his plans and left him in a particularly foul mood. If the PCs manage to deliver his nephew Avner (see "Here There Be Monsters") safe and sound, Manthalay quickly puts him in charge of gathering votes for the coming election.

Manthalay also represents Zelkarune's Horns in Farshore. Characters who belong to the Sasserine-based mercenary guild can use Manthalay as a point of contact.

Upgrade (Special): The PCs can campaign for Manthalay Meravanchi, encouraging Farshore's residents to vote for him in the coming election for lord mayor, as detailed in area 9 above. Avner Meravanchi spends his weeks campaigning for his uncle, making Diplomacy +9 checks to gather votes. If he ever fails two consecutive checks, he becomes frustrated with the process and gives up.

Lavinia

11. The Clayworks

Clay tiles, earthenware crockery, adobe bricks, and even glass are manufactured in this large building. The raw materials for these projects (most of which go toward the upkeep of old structures and the construction of new ones) are gathered locally. **Greffold "Redfoot" Fiddlebitter** (CN male halfling expert 3) manages the clayworks with his family.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Craft (pottery) check, a character can increase the Clayworks' efficiency, increasing Farshore's assets by 3,000 gp.

12. Sellis' Woodworks and Smithy

This large building is home to **Dranys Sellis** (N male dwarf expert 2) and his staff of carpenters and smiths. Dranys and his workers almost single-handedly provide the raw materials for building and arming Farshore, and are generally thought to be the hardest-working folk in the colony. A treasure seeker at heart, Dranys awaits that "one big strike" on the islands that could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Craft (armorsmithing, carpentry, or weaponsmithing) check, a character can increase the efficiency of this opperation. Each one of the three checks made increases Farshore's assets by 2,000 gp, for a total of a 6,000 gp increase if all three are made.

13. Tehrik's Tannery

The colony's hunt master, **Tehrik Arrelion** (CG male human ranger 3), doubles as Farshore's chief leatherworker and furrier. His two sons, Gerriss and Dantrik, and wife Galliana help him run the business.

Upgrade (0 VP; Adventure): There are countless sources for exotic leather and fur on the Isle of Dread, but many of them are too dangerous to harvest. The megafauna of the isle can provide quality components if a PC can harvest their hides without too much damage. Harvesting a hide takes a Survival check (DC 10 + the creature's CR). Hides from creatures of CR 5 or less do not noticeably aid Tehrik. Each CR 6 to CR 10 hide delivered to the tannery increases Farshore's assets by 250 gp (to a maximum increase of 2,000 gp). Each hide from a creature of CR 11 or higher delivered increases Farshore's assets by 1,000 gp (to a maximum increase of 10,000 gp).

14. The Last Coconut

This cozy gathering place within earshot of the docks is the colony's only tavern and inn. A dozen round tables and a small bar fill the airy common room. It serves tasty fare and potent drinks in a warm and inviting atmosphere provided by its gregarious proprietor, **Malfus Fairwind** (N male human bard 3) who often takes up his lute to provide rousing music for his clientelle. The Coconut is a place for relaxation and recreation

for the hardworking colonists and is often the first destination of visitors. The second floor features a half-dozen double rooms and one four-guest suite (currently rented by the Jade Ravens). One of the guest rooms is also currently inhabited by **Amella Venkalie** (CN female human rogue 4), assuming she survived the previous two adventures.

Upgrade (0 VP; 1 WF; 24 weeks): Lavinia Vanderboren is eager to load up the *Blue Nixie* with trade goods for Sasserine to establish the trade route between the two locations. With the possible exception of one of the PCs, Amella Venkalie's the best candidate to captain the *Blue Nixie* on such a trip. By giving her a workforce of sailors and laborers, she can be off to Sasserine at any time. (She bids a stoic farewell to any PC she has become romantically involved with, and promises to return as soon as she can). The *Blue Nixie's* return in about six months (along with a half-dozen more trading ships filled with colonists and goods) is enough to bring Farshore's population up to 450 souls. More importantly, the PCs can purchase or sell goods at this point as if they were in Sasserine (40,000 gp limit, Assets 31,300,000 gp), albeit with a six-month delay.

15. Farshore Chapel

A smartly finished building of adobe stands near the center of the colony. This single-story chapel features a belltower that rises higher than any other building in Farshore, a bell that not only announces the start of services but also serves the colony as a warning bell. The large pew-lined common room doubles as a meeting place for meetings of the Expedition Council or other public gatherings.

The primary purpose of the building is as the religious center of the settlement. The colony's initial size precluded the construction of multiple temples, so the colonists agreed that the various faiths would share one roof. The main worship room is non-denominational, with numerous small shrines in alcoves along the walls that contain small statuettes of various deities. The most popular deities venerated here are Ehlonna (the patron of the chapel's current caretaker), Pelor, and Fharlanghn, although all of the non-evil deities listed in the *Player's Handbook* have shrines here.

The resident cleric and caretaker of the chapel is **Vesserin Catherly** (NG male half-elf cleric 6). He is a short, wiry, and eminently pleasant man who has managed to serve as Farshore's spiritual guide without ostracizing any one particular faith, a task he is rightfully proud of.

Vesserin is a member of the Church of the Whirling Fury, although this is not public knowledge. He chose to travel to the Isle of Dread after hearing rumors of demonic influences in the region, and hoped to be able to spend some time investigating (and possibly quashing) such influences. So far, he's not had a chance to do so, as tending to Farshore's needs have taken up most of his time. If any PCs are members of the Church, Vesserin contacts them soon after they arrive to recruit their aid.

Only four acolytes (human cleric 1) serve Vesserin, although with the arrival of the *Blue Nixie* he gained a more powerful follower as well. The last time the PCs spoke with Liamae Teslikaria of the Jade Ravens, the capricious human sorcerer may not have seemed overly religious, but a near-death experience during the storm that separated the *Blue Nixie* from the *Sea Wyvern* in "The Sea Wyvern's Wake" put her in a coma, from which she was lucky to emerge. Since regaining her senses in the chapel, Liamae found that she's developed an entirely new set of magical skills. Her lucky escape from death drew the attention of (or perhaps was due to the intervention of) Rudd, the goddess of luck. Now a favored soul of Rudd, she looks to Vesserin for advice—if any PCs are divine casters, she may look to them in a similar way.

One thing that's been gnawing at Vesserin's consience for nearly a year is the fate of a Pelorian missionary named Noltus Innersol, who came to Farshore over a year ago independent of the other colonists. Noltus sought to spread the teachings of his faith up and down the Olman peninsula, and spent several days preparing for his missionary work here in Farshore before setting off into the island's interior. He hasn't been seen since, and Vesserin hopes he still lives. He asks the PCs to keep an eye out for signs of the missing missionary when he learns they intend on exploring the Isle of Dread themselves. Noltus's fate is revealed in the upcoming Savage Tide adventure, "City of Broken Idols."

Upgrade (25 VP; Check; 1 week): Vesserin welcomes any clerical aid he can get in handling the day-to-day chores of running the chapel. Any PC that can cast healing spells can spend a week helping him in various tasks such as healing, maintenance, sermons, and other spiritual matters. At the end of the week, a DC

Casting Votes

At some point during "Tides of Dread," when the PCs are in town but at least a few weeks before the Crimson Fleet attack, the Farshore Expedition Council holds a public meeting during which all citizens of the colony are invited to cast votes on who should become lord mayor. When "Tides of Dread" begins, roughly 1/3 of Farshore is undecided, and the PCs can choose to influence the result if they wish, as detailed in the upgrades for areas **9** and **10**—the PCs need only convince 41 colonists to vote one way to determine the victor. If the PCs do not take part in either upgrade, this adventure assumes that Meravanchi wins the election.

If Manthaly Meravanchi wins, he reorganizes much of Farshore's efforts at becoming a well-defended trading post and focuses on annexing the Seven Villages. After 1d6 months, Farshore's gp limit increases by 5,000 gp, but the loss of focus on defense reduces the PCs' VP total by 250. The Olmans are unlikely to take these developments well, and such actions could incite some of them to violent rebellion against Farshore.

If Lavinia Vanderboren wins, the colony continues on its course of becoming a well-defended trading post that exists in peace with the Olmans. This grants the PCs 150 VP, but may make an enemy out of Manthaly Meravanchi, which could have repercussions later in the campaign.

20 Knowledge (religion) check indicates that the spiritual well-being of the colony increases morale, granting the listed VP award. This award can be earned up to eight times for a total award of 200 VP.

16. Farshore Hall of Records

This modest building serves Farshore as a library and a hall of records. All important documents are kept here, protected by two iron safes, while other books and idle works of art line shelves in the main room. The hall is under the watchful eye of **Jeran Emrikad** (LN human wizard 2/rogue 1), an energetic and bright-eyed man in his late forties who fancies himself an explorer.

Upgrade (0 VP; Adventure): Jeran recently learned a local legend of a mysterious eighth Olman village said to once have been located on Temute. As the legend goes, the Kawibusas had a marked taste for warfare. Their warriors and zombie-masters braved the jungles beyond the Great Wall often to explore the ruins of the island's old "gods." On one of their forays, they uncovered a sunken temple deep within the jungle that contained an idol of a great ape, carved from a thick piece of obsidian encrusted with gemstones. The Kawibusas proudly carried the stolen idol to their home and placed it at the center of their village. That very night, a great fog rose up and engulfed their settlement. By dawn the entire tribe had mysteriously vanished. Olman visitors who came to the site several days later found the Kawibusa village empty, save for the ominous ape idol. They buried the idol, hoping to end its curse, and never returned. Since then, the story of the eighth tribe has become a popular tale among the Olman.

Jeran very much wants to discover the site of this lost village and the strange ape idol, although the site has proven difficult to locate, as the jungle has reclaimed it in the decades since they vanished. The site itself is located a mile inland from the northeastern coast of Temute—discovering its location based on Jeran's notes takes a DC 30 Survival check (one check may be attempted every 1d6 days). The empty ruins are now haunted by six wights. Once the undead are dealt with, a careful search of the ruins reveals a treasure trove of ancient Olman cultural artifacts, including some very valuable carved stones, a favorite of the ancient "gods." No sign of the ape idol can be found, but a DC 25 Search of the ruins uncovers a gold and jade necklace (worth 400 gp) bearing a strange symbol of a circle surrounding two jagged lines. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check reveals this to be the holy symbol of Zagyg, a demigod of eccentricity and mischief. How it came to be here is a mystery.

If the Olman artifacts are returned to Farshore, they can be sold to northern collectors. Once trade routes are established, this increases Farshore's gp limit by 1,500 gp.

Wights (6): hp 26 each; *Monster Manual* 255.

17. The Apothecary's Infirmary

This building serves Farshore as a sickhouse. The few clerics in Farshore can't be counted on to deal with every illness, and while they pay regular visits to the infirmary, day-to-day care of the sick and wounded generally falls to **Telda Syren** (CG female half-elf expert 4), a skilled herbalist who's also spent her time studying the island flora and fauna in hopes of discovering new medicines, foods, and herbs. She was a close friend of Larissa Vanderboren, and has taken news of her death hard.

Telda has been studying the Olman tribes since her arrival and has learned most of their language and pictograms. She is concerned for their plight, considering the inherent dangers of the isle and the cultural disruption that the presence of the colonists no doubt presents. Her arguments with Lord Manthalay and Professor Aldwattle on how best to interact with the Olmans are legendary in Farshore, as she advises caution and non-interference in native affairs.

Upgrade (50 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Heal check, a character can increase the infirmary's efficiency so that when the attack comes, more of Farshore's residents will be in better shape to help defend the colony.

18. The Greenhouse

This unique building is located behind the infirmary, and sports a peculiar roof composed of a wooden frame overlaid by crude glass that allows sunlight in and provides a decent shelter for the plants and herbs within. Until recently, Telda Syren maintained the greenhouse on her own, but with the *Blue Nixie's* arrival, Jade Raven **Kaskus Kiel** has taken it upon himself to help. If he survives the previous two adventures, **Urol Forol** also ends up spending much of his time here.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check, a character can increase the greenhouse's collection of exotic spices, herbs, and other plants. Once trade routes are established with Sasserine, this increases Farshore's gp limit by 1,000 gp.

19. Aldwattle's Laboratory

This building houses the laboratory of an eccentric alchemist and naturalist from the mainland named **Hevrik Aldwattle** (NG human wizard 5/expert 2). Thrilled at the opportunity to be the first to catalogue and research the minerals, substances, and emanations of the isles, Aldwattle was an eager member of the original Vanderboren Expedition. Hevrik is also a member in good standing with the Witchwardens, and PC members of this affiliation may use him as a point of contact.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): The lab is a treasure trove of compounds, herbs, and chemicals. Any PC that has at least one item creation feat who spends a week with Hevrik Aldwattle can attempt a DC 25 Spellcraft check—success indicates he's taught Aldwattle some time-saving techniques. This increases Farshore's assets by 5,000 gp.

20. Farms

Although several smaller farms support Farshore beyond its walls, these two farms are the closest and therefore most important to maintaining the colony's food supplies. If he survived the previous adventure, **Tavey Nesk** is taken under the wing of one of these farming families.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Profession (farmer) check, a character can increase the farms' efficiency. This increases Farshore's assets by 5,000 gp.

THE JADE RAVENS

The PCs aren't the only adventurers in Lavinia's employ. The Jade Ravens consist of a group of mercenaries and adventurers who have served the Vanderborens for many years. During "The Bullywug Gambit," the Jade Ravens were captured by the monstrous invaders of Vanderboren Manor—the PCs had a chance to rescue them during the course of that adventure. Since then, the Jade Ravens have had little contact with the PCs. How they react to the return of Lavinia's favored heroes depends in large part on how they were treated by the party during "The Bullywug Gambit."

The Jade Ravens are unlikely to accompany the PCs on adventures , although if a PC takes Leadership one could become a cohort. They can be used to handle minor tasks required by adventurous types on Temute, and during the Battle of Farshore, they play an important role in the colony's defense, protecting parts of the colony the PCs aren't. Each Jade Raven unable to take part in the defense of the colony during this battle (due to death or other reasons) causes a –100 VP penalty.

The stat blocks given below represent the most likely ways in which the Jade Ravens progressed to 7th level over the course of the last few adventures. If, in your campaign, they have made different choices, you should alter them to more closely adhere to your preferred versions.

Tolin Kientai

Tolin is as vain and brash as he is handsome, a rugged man whose rustic good looks have served him well over the years. He may take an interest in an attractive female PC, although his ego might make him difficult to get along with.

As Tolin adventured, he came to realize that what truely appealed to him about his lifestyle was looking good in a fight. Growing less and less enamoured with the natural world, in part due to Kaskus Kiel's somewhat zealous streak of crusading for the same, Tolin abandoned the ranger class and began to focus solely upon perfecting his twin short sword fighting style.

Tolin's obsession with Lavinia is not as secret as he suspects. Certainly, the rest of the Jade Ravens know that he's been pining for their beautiful patron for many months, if not years. Lavinia herself has already made it clear that the feelings aren't mutual, so Tolin's been forced to supress his feelings. If Lavinia is romantically involved with a

PC, Tolin's jealousy might force him to do something rash, like challenge that PC to a duel, attempt to frame him for some sort of minor crime, or even seek out Meravanchi aid in finding a way to one-up his rival.

Tolin Kientai **CR 7**
Male human ranger 3/fighter 4
LN Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common
AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Dodge, Mobility
hp 39 (7 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6
Spd 30 ft.
Melee *+1 short sword* +12/+7 (1d6+6/19–20) or *+1 short sword* +10/+5 (1d6+6/19–20) and *+1 short sword* +10 (1d6+4/19–20)
Ranged mwk composite longbow +6 (1d8+3/x3)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +10
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of haste*
Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 12
SQ wild empathy +6
Feats Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Track, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword)
Skills Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Listen +7, Ride +8, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+9 nature or underground)
Possessions combat gear, *+1 chain shirt*, 2 *+1 shortswords*, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 40 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, 56 gp

Zan Oldavin

A jaunty, flamboyant man who takes perhaps too keen an interest in his dagger collection, Zan's carefree and sometimes irresponsible attitude tends to get all four of the Jade Ravens into trouble with the authorities. Of course, Zan doesn't view his pranks and stunts as anything more than charming attempts to keep things lively and interesting.

Of the Jade Ravens, Zan is the least happy with Farshore. Although Liamae had a rougher time on the journey here, Zan hated every moment of it with a passion. He misses the press of the city crowd, the wide range of choices when it comes to entertainment and alcohol, and the raw sense of civilization that Sasserine offers. Only his eroding sense of loyalty to Lavinia and the Jade Ravens got him on the *Blue Nixie*, and now he regrets that choice bitterly. His situation is compounded by an irrational fear of the jungle. He's had several glimpses of what dwells in its depths, and wants nothing to do with the Isle of Dead. As a result, he increasingly spends his time at the Last Coconut, drinking away the weeks and growing angrier and angrier. It's quite likely he comes to see the PCs as symbols of his situation, and as the weeks go on, they become the primary target of his pranks and tricks.

Zan Oldavin **CR 7**
Male half-elf rogue 7
N Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Elven, Orc
AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; uncanny dodge
hp 41 (7 HD)
Immune sleep
Fort +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1; evasion
Spd 30 ft.
Melee *+1 rapier* +9 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +9 (1d4/19–20/x3) or shortbow +8 (1d6/x3)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5
Atk Options Combat Expertise, sneak attack +4d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of invisibility*
Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ trap sense +2
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +12, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +3, Hide +10, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Search +14, Tumble +10, Use Magic Device +8
Possessions combat gear, *+1 studded leather*, *+1 buckler*, *+1 rapier*, shortbow with 20 arrows, 8 masterwork daggers, *goggles of minute seeing*, 14 gp

Kaskus Kiel

Kaskus has a deep and noisy love of mountains and caverns, and longs to return there some day after he's repaid a debt of loyalty to Lavinia, whose father rescued Kaskus from slavery to the Scarlet Brotherhood nearly a year ago.

Kaskus Kiel's loyalty to the Jade Ravens is matched only by his loyalty to Lavinia and the natural world. Although he spent much of the voyage seasick, he's fallen in love with the Isle of Dread and its exotic environs. One of the first things he did upon arriving was to forge a bond with an animal companion from a nearby lagoon—a cantankerous giant crocodile Kaskus has named Kruthkur. After several unfortunate misunderstandings, Kaskus no longer allows Kruthkur inside of Farshore; the crocodile has instead taken to living in the river just west of the colony.

Kaskus has been trying to convince the Jade Ravens to make an expedition into the Isle of Dread's interior, but so far, he's only been able to convince Liamae to join him. His obsession with the natural world has all but blinded him to the fact that the Jade Ravens are close to disolving as a group. When he learns that the PCs are planning on an expedition into the mainiland, he may volunteer his aid (especially if you feel that the PCs could use some help with what awaits them in the depths of the isle).

Kaskus Kiel **CR 7**
Male dwarf druid 7
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Dwarven, Druidic, Sylvan
AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17
hp 56 (7 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7; resist nature's lure
Spd 20 ft.
Melee *+1 scimitar* +6 (1d6+1/18–20)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5
Special Actions wild shape 3/day

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (35 charges), *potion of expeditious retreat*
Spells Prepared (CL 7th, +2 melee touch, +3 ranged touch)
4th—*spike stones*
3rd—*call lightning* (DC 16), *meld into stone, stone shape*
2nd—*bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, hold animal* (DC 15), *lesser restoration*
1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *longstrider, produce flame, speak with animals*
0—*create water, cure minor wounds* (2), *guidance, light, purify food and drink*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 6
SQ animal companion (giant crocodile named Kruthkur), trackless step, wild empathy +7, woodland stride
Feats Augment Summoning, Natural Spell, Spell Focus (conjuration)
Skills Concentration +10, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +9, Spot +9, Survival +4 (+6 nature)
Possessions combat gear, *+1 hide armor, +1 heavy wooden shield, +1 scimitar, pearl of power* (2nd level), 35 gp

Liamae Teslikaria

Liamae is a rebel against her noble parents who ran away from home to the exotic south to experience what life has to offer. She may become romantically involved with a handsome PC, but her capricious and sometimes self-destructive lifestyle habits (ranging from a fondness for exploring dangerous regions on her own to an increasingly morbid fascination with how lucky she really is) might put long-term relationships under undue strain.

When the Blue Nixie was caught in a storm during "The Sea Wyvern's Wake," Liamae was struck by a bolt of lightning and nearly killed. She woke from her coma at Farshore, her only memory of the incident a vision of an athletic woman wearnig tight clothing and a flowing blue cloak. In the vision, the woman defied all manner of peril, relying on what seemed to Liamae to be a delightful combination of physcial prowess and pure dumb luck. She's since come to realize that this vision was of the goddess of luck and skill, Rudd. Her newfound faith has softened her cynical and bitter edges to a great extent, and if she treated any of the PCs poorly before, she takes pains to make amends. Of course, since she may invite her new friends on any number of dangerous and frivilous adventures just to "test their luck" agaisnt the isle, her attention may quickly grow old.

Liamae Teslikaria CR 7

Female human sorcerer 4/favored soul 3 (Rudd)
CG Medium humanoid
Complete Divine 7
Init +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common, Dwarven, Druidic, Sylvan

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11
hp 32 (7 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged mwk shortbow +8 (1d6/×3)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3
Combat Gear *wand of mage armor* (15 charges), *wand of spiritual weapon* (32 charges)
Favored Soul Spells Known (CL 3rd, +6 ranged touch)
1st (6/day)—*command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds, divine favor, shield of faith*
0 (6/day)—*cure minor wounds, guidance, mending, resistance, virtue*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th, +6 ranged touch)
2nd (4/day)—*Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 17)
1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 16), *magic missile, shield*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash, daze* (DC 15), *detect magic, light, prestidigitation, read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18
SQ summon familiar (snake named Irradar)
Feats Alertness, Brew Potion, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (shortbow), Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Focus (shortbow)
Skills Bluff +7, Concentration +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Spellcraft +7
Possessions combat gear, mwk dagger, mwk shortbow with 20 arrows, *ring of protection +1, cloak of Charisma +2*, silver holy symbol worth 50 gp, 78 gp

Mt.Zogon

ANCIENT FORTRESS
Map of Mystery
20 ft. Defensive Wall
Ruined Keep
Chapel
Mausoleum
Fractured Wall
Garrisons
Well
Broken Gate
Carriage House
To Forgotten Tombs
Rocky Trail
Gate Towers
Stables
Collapsed Turret
Steep Slope
Road
Forward Guard Tower
Cave
To Woodland Shrine
Ridge
1 square = 5 feet
WEST

Savage Tide

The Lightless Depths

Deep beneath the Isle of Dread, in a place forgotten by the world of light, an ancient, unfathomable evil festers. Within the desiccated ruin known as Golismorga, the debased kopru servants of Demogorgon work foul rites, steeping immature *shadow pearls* in pits of liquid insanity. None from the world above have yet fathomed what terrors lurk beneath the Isle of Dread, nor what mad scheme roils to profane life deep within the city's gangrenous corpse.

"The Lightless Depths" is the sixth chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in DUNGEON magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out DRAGON magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. DRAGON #353 features ways to improve the PCs' vessel, the *Sea Wyvern*, as they take their adventures back to the seas.

The PCs should be 11th level when they begin "The Lightless Depths." They should gain enough experience to advance to 12th by the time they reach Golismorga, and to 13th by the end of the adventure.

BY F. WESLEY SCHNEIDER AND JAMES LAFOND SUTTER
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | MID LEVEL (6TH–12TH) | UNDERDARK AND DUNGEON CRAWL

BY F. WESLEY SCHNEIDER AND JAMES LAFOND SUTTER

Switching Sides

If the PCs have teamed up with Rowyn and the Lotus Dragons, they should by now have firm control over the colony of Farshore. From this point on in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, things quickly begin to change focus as the true depth of peril facing the world becomes clear. Demogorgon's plot to trigger dozens of savage tides endangers the Vanderborens, the Lotus Dragons, and everyone in between equally.

In this case, the rest of this campaign becomes one of "fight fire with fire." Do your best to portray the evil and chaos of Demogorgon's savage tide as something that only society's misfits and outcasts can hope to prevail against, and you'll give your PCs the feeling that their choices were part of the campaign all along.

Adventure Background

Ages ago, the Olman empire spanned vast reaches of the Vohoun Ocean and the continents to either side. Perhaps their greatest achievement was the city of Thanaclan, a masterpiece of lakes and stone ziggurats built high on a remote island's central mesa. They were a wise and powerful people, with abilities far beyond their current descendants.

Yet even before the Olmans arrived, the island was home to an empire older and greater than their own. Far below the surface, in dark places unseen by human eyes, a submerged menace woke to their presence. In the city of Golismorga, the aboleth took affront to the human encroachment above, and sent an enslaved army up through the tunnels and waterways into the heart of Thanaclan itself. Contact, when it came, was swift and bloody, but though the Olmans were initially taken by surprise, they were not defeated. Fighting for their lives, every man and child took up arms against waves of skum that emerged from below, staunching the flow wherever it emerged.

For all their resilience, the Olman leaders knew that they couldn't hold out forever. Unlike the aboleths, with their seemingly inexhaustible supply of enslaved shock troops harvested from the depths below the isle, the Olmans needed time to harvest, hunt, and replenish their numbers. A war of attrition was one they would eventually lose. To prevent this, they gathered their most powerful spellcasters and set them to work creating a weapon capable of ending the assault in a single decisive blow. After weeks of frantic research, they created something they could use against their inscrutable enemies—*Tlaloc's Tear*.

Their creation came not a moment too soon. The Olmans gathered a group of their finest warriors and priests and sent them with *Tlaloc's Tear* into alien Golismorga, where the wrath of the rain god would drive from the aboleth city the one thing they could not live without—water. All knew it to be a suicide mission, and the ferocity of this final push surprised the aboleths long enough for the few surviving Olmans to reach the submerged city and trigger the *Tear*. In an instant, the device tore a hole between the Material Plane and the Olman afterlife, releasing the raw energy of centuries of angry spirits and infusing them with Tlaloc's wrath. The resulting explosion pushed all the water from the city, laying waste to buildings and aboleth alike. When the wave reached its apex it froze, holding back the sea and leaving Golismorga bone-dry. The surviving aboleth, helpless outside of their element and unwilling to further test the limits of the rain god's power, abandoned Golismorga and returned to the depths of the sea.

Over the centuries, the surface world forgot the slumbering menace. Stories of the great aboleth war were superceded by legends of the island's savage transformation as an entirely separate catastrophe struck Thanaclan. In the silent subterranean city, the koprus of the surrounding ocean moved in and capitalized on the aboleth's misfortune, attempting with limited success to extract the city's alien secrets for their own aggrandizement. Now, after centuries of failed attempts to contact the unknowable aboleth patrons, entities known as the Elder Evils, the koprus have finally made progress, thanks to the patronage of Demogorgon. Through them, the demon prince can harness the power of the Elder Evils, using it to fortify and strengthen his seeds of destruction.

Adventure Synopsis

After learning that the Crimson Fleet has been purchasing *shadow pearls* from troglodytes on the north shore of the Isle of Dread, the PCs venture forth to put an end to the *shadow pearl* production. Upon arriving, they discover that the troglodytes are merely a front for more sinister subterranean forces. Venturing below with the help of a reluctant troglodyte guide, the characters pass through the ancient Olman ward known as the Cerulean Curtain, designed to hold back the water that would release the aboleths from hibernation. From there, the party takes its ease in a town of inbred mongrelfolk before journeying farther, making their first contact with an aboleth in a long-forgotten Olman temple. Imprisoned by the kopru in a pool of conjured water, this aboleth informs them that the only way to stop the *shadow pearl* operation is to destroy the Cerulean Curtain, flooding Golismorga and freeing the aboleth to take revenge on their usurpers. To do so the party must push further, into the very heart of the enemy city. There, they must distract the kopru guardians by destroying *Tlaloc's Tear*, flooding the city and allowing them to assault the kopru leader at the seat of his power.

Adventure Hooks

Working off of intelligence gained from ship logs and pirates captured in the final attack on the colony, the PCs learn that the Crimson Fleet has been buying *shadow pearls* from a mysterious group called the "Lords of Dread." This group is located in a secluded bay on the north shore of the island. Naturally concerned about the threat of these artifacts, Lavinia urges the PCs to contact these "Lords of Dread," determine their role in the production of the *shadow pearls*, and, if possible, end the production of the dangerous weapons once and for all.

If you're not running this adventure as part of the Savage Tide Adventure Path,

there are still several ways to involve your PCs in the action. Instead of a demonic plot, the *shadow pearls* might be part of a kopru plan to wipe the island's surface clean of sentient races, or a sacrifice necessary to gain the favor of the Elder Evils. Even if you wish to avoid the *shadow pearls* altogether, the inherent lure of a lost subterranean city filled with ancient and alien secrets might be enough to persuade PCs to venture below.

Finally, keep in mind that although this adventure appears chronologically before "City of Broken Idols" in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, there's no reason the PCs need to tackle the alien depths below the Isle of Dread before they travel to the central plateau and explore the ruins of Thanaclan. Production of the *shadow pearls* occurs at both sites, and in order to permanently shut them down, both need to be disrupted. Of course, the challenges that await the PCs in the City of Broken Idols are deadlier than those waiting for them in the aboleth ruins of Golismorga, so you should do your best to subtly encourage the PCs to head down before they head up.

PART ONE: NEGOTIATING WITH MONSTERS

Having survived the wrath of the Crimson Fleet, the people of Farshore are slowly putting their lives back together. The PCs can take this opportunity to indulge in some well-deserved rest, do some magical crafting, ingratiate themselves with the locals by helping in the colony's reconstruction, or perhaps even take on a side quest or two. *Dungeon* #143 details numerous possibilities for adventure in and around the Isle of Dread, and any encounters left unused from "Tides of Dread" are a good place to start. The adventure timeline is fluid at this point; give the PCs as long as they need to settle in to life at Farshore.

In the wake of the Crimson Fleet assault, numerous rumors have spread through Farshore. The death of Lavinia Vanderboren's brother Vanthus, his involvement with the Crimson Fleet, and his demonic nature are all tales that has been told and exaggerated again and again. In the wake of these stories, some have come to question Lavinia's right to lead the people of the colony, and whispers of a hidden fiendish taint in her soul and ties to the Crimson Fleet grow stronger every week. This slander is fueled in large part by not-so-secret whispers from the Meravanchis, yet it still erodes Lavinia's (and by extension, the PCs') authority in Farshore. It isn't long before Lavinia hears the tales herself and requests the PCs join her for a morning meal.

Vanderboren Manor is one of the largest and most lavishly appointed homes in Farshore. Rivaled only by Lord Meravanchi's Estate, the whitewashed mansion's two-story height is crowned by a small dome set with stained-glass windows that depict sailing ships and fair seas. Within, much of the house remains unused, dusty gray sheets covering fine furniture and artwork in all the rooms except the kitchen, dining hall, Lavinia's quarters, and the rooms she's invited the PCs to occupy. Having taken up the reins as Farshore's leader, Lavinia has spent little time seeing to her personal affairs.

Realizing the impact the colonists' unease might have on her control over Farshore, Lavinia has no intention of letting the people dwell on fanciful conspiracies and rumored faults. To that end, she has a simple breakfast of toast, coffee, and boiled turtle eggs prepared, over which she describes her latest mission to the PCs.

"In the past hours I've discovered that Farshore wasn't the only victim of the pirates' attack—it seems that my personal reputation also took a bit of fire. The people of Farshore have seen too much panic and death under my leadership, and the appearance of the pirates and Van—," Lavinia chokes on the name, and takes a moment to steady herself before continuing, "—the pirates and my brother startled them. Now some of the colonists claim that my family is cursed, while others whisper that I somehow orchestrated the attack."

Lavinia takes a sip of her tea, then continues. "Although it aggravates me after all we've been through, I won't allow a few rumors to discourage me from my work here. Part of me even understands the people's concerns, and I'd like to do what I can to dissuade their fears. This would be where you come in."

"Along the north coast of the isle, a dragon turtle of gigantic proportions makes his home. The beast calls himself Emraag, but the locals know him as 'The Glutton.' If we're to believe the rumors, it's a miracle that any of us are sitting here

Excerpt From the Brine Harlot's Log—

We reached Gallivant Cove with no incident, although the Seventh Coil yuan-ti renewed their demands for shore leave. I denied them again, promising them all the leave they could want once my sister's little project is mine. Payment to the Glutton went smoothly (that beast's teeth would make fine trophies!), and I personally led a group of five to the caves. The trogs looked worse than they stank—some sort of malady afflicts them for certain. Lords of Dread? Hardly. Yet they took our payments and slaves readily enough.

There was only one shadow pearl ready for us. I made clear my displeasure, but the simpering lepers convinced me that they were being truthful, and promised several more in a few months' time. I've tried to avoid staring at the pearl overmuch. Its depths are hypnotic. After seeing the number one of these little beauties did on Kraken's Cove, I make sure to keep it in a padded container at all times.

It's too bad we can't just toss the thing into Farshore with a catapult and let them kill each other off, but I'll not be the one to tell command we broke another of their toys!

Directing the Adventure

By the time the PCs begin this adventure, they have become great heroes in their own right. At this point, the onus of adventure falls partially upon them; while Lavinia sends them out to investigate the "Lords of Dread," following this investigation through to the end is in the PCs' hands. The troglodyte heretic Irgzid (area **B2**) can help steer the PCs on the right path, as can the aboleth N'glothnoru in area **I**. Should the PCs resort to divination spells, you should use the results granted to encourage the exploration of Golismorga, the destruction of *Tlaloc's Tear*, and the ruin of the bilewretch in Holashner's Ziggurat.

now, as the Glutton supposedly has a taste for ships and sailors. Yet apparently the thing's vices aren't limited to swallowing down whole crews. The Crimson Fleet made a deal with the creature, bribing it to leave their ships intact on their visits to Gallivant Cove. Lord Merivanchi, however, has refused to 'negotiate with monsters'—apparently preferring that our supply ships be eaten and our people go hungry.

"Therefore, my thought to ease the concerns of the colonists is to appease the beast that's already caused them so much hardship. I'd like you to sail to the isle's northern shores and seek out Emraag the Glutton. I'll provide you with a cache of treasures to bribe the brute—a down payment on Farshore's "tribute" to him, offered for the assurance that he leaves vessels flying my family's colors be. If an agreement can be met, excellent. If not... well, I trust in your ability to conquer that arena as well.

"More to the point, there's the matter of the Crimson Fleet's interest in Gallivant Cove. According to logs and papers we've recovered from my brother's ship, the *Brine Harlot*, they've made several visits to a beach on the southern shore of the cove to meet with a group they call the 'Lords of Dread.' According to these notes, they've been purchasing large quantities of what they're calling 'shadow pearls.' I believe you've had some experience with these things before, as one of them was apparently the cause of the trouble at Kraken's Cove some months ago, just before your visit there. The thought of dozens of shadow pearls in the possession of the Crimson Fleet is chilling."

Putting her cup down, Lavinia looks to you each in turn. "I know it's dangerous, dealing with such a beast, but if you can convince Emraag to accept our offer, you might even be able to learn a few things from him. In any event, securing the dragon turtle's goodwill should allow free access to the Lords of Dread. And it'd be a huge step in turning this colony from an isolated backwater into a destination for merchants from the world over. Therefore, I ask you this not just for myself, but on behalf of all the people of Farshore. Will you help?"

After making her offer, Lavinia welcomes questions from the PCs. Some of the most likely ones follow, along with her responses.

"How much are we being paid to negotiate with a monster?" Lavinia offers each of the party members 1,000 gp, but honestly hopes that by this time, the PCs don't ask for additional payment.

"What do you plan to bribe Emraag with?" Lavinia's parents expected to eventually return to Farshore, and left a modest amount of wealth (mostly jewelry and artwork) at their manor. Lavinia wants to use this treasure—some with considerable sentimental value—to barter with the dragon turtle. She trusts the PCs not to squander or abscond with it.

"Do you know where the dragon turtle lives?" Natives have warned colonists away from the inlet where Emraag makes his lair. It's a sizable bay that became known as Gallivant Cove after an infamous ship bearing that name sank in its waters.

"How do we contact the beast once we're in the right place?" Lavinia has already bartered for a strange native instrument the colonists have dubbed a "sea skirl." These sets of long reed pipes are used by the Olmans to attract sea creatures, but also produce a strange kind of drowned music if the pipes are played underwater. Emraag should hear and respond within an hour of these pipes being sounded.

"When should we leave?" Lavinia has already made arrangements to have her bribe for Emraag collected and loaded aboard the *Sea Wyvern*. Everything should be in order for the PCs to depart as soon as the following morning.

"Why don't we just kill Emraag?" Lavinia hesitantly agrees that this would indeed be the best solution, but points out that if the dragon turtle's reputation is even half-deserved, he may well be a foe beyond the capabilities of even such great heroes as the PCs. Lavinia urges caution if the PCs seem eager to take this route.

While there's no great rush for the PCs to get their voyage north underway, Lavinia urges them to set sail as soon as the *Sea Wyvern* is properly provisioned and prepared. Soon after her discussion with the party, several workers load Emraag's bribe into the *Sea Wyvern*'s hold. This cargo consists of four large wooden chests, an impressive, 8-foot-tall statue of Ventrue Vanderboren (a famed explorer and privateer), and the sea skirl. The chests contain jewelry, coins, and waterproof artwork with a total value of 16,000 gp, with the statue worth 4,000 gp alone. After loading the bribe into the *Sea Wyvern*, one of Lavinia's workers provides the PCs with a set of brass keys to the chests before departing.

To Gallivant Cove

The journey to Gallivant Cove covers about 350 miles—assuming normal wind speed, this voyage takes the *Sea Wyvern* just under five days. The checks to set course to Gallivant Cove and to pilot the ship are low enough that, as long as the ship hugs the coast, there's no real chance of becoming lost unless no one on board has any ranks in Knowledge (geography). If no PC has this skill, the gnome Urol Forol gladly accompanies them to aid in navigation. The journey north can be as detailed or as brief as you wish. Issue #144 of DUNGEON provides a detailed wandering monster chart for the waters off the coast of the Isle of Dread. Alternately, you can use any of the following encounter ideas to liven up the journey north. Of course, parties with powerful magic or methods

of transporting large quantities of treasure (such as teleportation and *portable holes*) may be able to avoid taking the *Sea Wyvern* entirely, although this adventure assumes that they do.

Shipwreck/Ruin: Numerous shipwrecks and half-submerged Olman ruins dot the isle's treacherous coast. During their travels, the PCs spot such a ruin, either the weathered timbers of a shattered galley or eroded obsidian columns and statues jutting from the surf. If the PCs choose to investigate the remains they discover (roll 1d4): (1) 750 gp worth of supplies or ancient artifacts, (2) a pair of ghostly sailors or Olman warriors (ghost 5th-level fighters, *Monster Manual* 117), (3) unstable structures resulting in falling timbers or rock dealing 5d6 points of damage (Reflex save for half), or (4) a random minor magic weapon or wand guarded by a giant octopus (*Monster Manual* 276).

Roc: A curious roc (*Monster Manual* 215) dives low to investigate the *Sea Wyvern*. Seeing the ship's draconic figurehead alarms the gigantic bird, inciting it to make several low swoops as it puzzles out what manner of creature the *Sea Wyvern* is. The roc makes for a startling sight, but ultimately poses no threat, flying off after a minute or so. The beast only attacks if members of the crew attack it first.

Feeding Frenzy: The water churns in a bloody frenzy where a school of six great white sharks (Huge sharks, *Monster Manual* 279) fight over the carcass of a 30-foot-long giant squid. Hidden below the chaos circles a scarred old dire shark (*Monster Manual* 64), waiting for additional prey attracted to the kill. Interfering PCs make just the sort of meal the dire shark craves.

Plesiosaur: A hungry plesiosaur (*Stormwrack* 146) raises its head from the waves and attempts to grab a PC or crewman from the deck of the *Sea Wyvern*. The gigantic reptile has no interest in a prolonged fight and, upon grabbing a victim, dives underwater to drown and consume its meal.

Indulging the Glutton (EL 16)

Emraag the Glutton dwells beneath the murky waters of Gallivant Cove. The vessel that gives the bay its name is merely one of the Glutton's most recent and memorable victims. Its splintered wreck marks the entrance to Emraag's den, a deep sea cave filled with the cargo of a hundred ships and the treasure of dozens of costal Olman ruins. Emraag styles himself the lord of the seas surrounding the Isle of Dread, although his claim is largely hollow. The aboleth that dwell in the deeper waters give the Glutton a wide berth, not interfering with his endless rampage and preferring to let air-breathers believe that an arrogant dragon turtle is the greatest threat that lurks beneath the waves.

The sea skirl Lavinia loaded onto the ship along with her bribe proves the simplest method of contacting the dragon turtle. Like a long, complicated set of pan pipes or didgeridoos, one end of the sea skirl dips into the water, allowing a musician to create a variety of bubbling noises. The strange music coaxes Emraag from his lair within in 2d6 minutes. How he responds to the noise depends on the skill of the sea skirl's player. With a DC 20 Perform (wind instruments) check, the dragon turtle is intrigued by the music and his initial attitude is indifferent as he rises next to the ship to discover its source. If the check produces a lower result, Emraag is annoyed to find a noisy human ship disturbing his rest and emerges near the *Sea Wyvern* with a hostile attitude.

After attracting Emraag's attention, the PCs must negotiate with the capricious creature. In order to get Emraag to grant the *Sea Wyvern* permission to ply these waters, he must be made friendly; to secure permission from him to allow Farshore's ships unrestricted passage through his territory, he must be made helpful. If he's pleased by the sea skirl's sound when he arrives, he gives the PCs 1d3 minutes to present their case before he grows impatient, allowing one Diplomacy check per minute. If he's hostile, he only gives the PCs 1d6 rounds (remember, Diplomacy checks suffer a –10 penalty if rushed as a full-round action).

In this encounter, allow the players to present their case to the dragon turtle. The PC that does the most talking during this encounter is the one who rolls the primary Diplomacy check to influence Emraag's attitude; all other PCs may attempt to aid the primary check by making a DC 10 Diplomacy check. The PCs may attempt as many checks as they have time for. Modify the results of each check if the PCs bring up any of the topics in the sidebar above.

If made friendly, Emraag agrees to let the *Sea Wyvern* pass through Gallivant Cove for the span of a week. If made helpful, he extends this exception to all ships flying the flag of Farshore for the span of a year, with the option to extend safe passage for another year with further tribute. In either case, Emraag remains in the area long enough to entertain any questions the PCs might have for him. While he knows nothing of *shadow pearls*, the savage tide, or the Lords of Dread, he does know that the Crimson Fleet paid him a fortune in gold and exotic goods to meet with a tribe of degenerate troglodytes living near the southernmost shores of Gallivant Cove. With his directions, it's a simple matter to find this cove. Emraag's patience doesn't last forever, and a few minutes later he retires to his lair with the tribute. Any attempt to draw him to

Emraag Diplomacy Modifiers

Presenting the bribe to Emraag.	+10
Referring to the bribe as "tribute."	+5
Flattering Emraag, referring to his dominance over the area.	+4
Continuing to play the sea skirl with at least a DC 24 result.	+2
Adding tribute in addition to Lavinia's offer (per 5,000 gp value).	+1
Referring to any creature as being more powerful than Emraag.	–8
Referring to Lavinia's offer as a bribe.	–5
Continuing to play the sea skirl with a result less than DC 24.	–2
Each previous check.	–4 cumulative

the surface again annoys him, decreasing his attitude one step.

If the PCs fail to placate the Glutton, he roars in rage and blasts the *Sea Wyvern* with his breath weapon. He then submerges, only to rise again 1d3 rounds later in an attempt to capsize the *Sea Wyvern*. If the PCs escape and the dragon turtle still lives, they may have to sneak into Gallivant Cove. Emraag watches for the ship during daylight hours for the next week, immediately attacking if the PCs return. During the night and after a week's time, however, the dragon turtle grows lax and the party might slip by. Upon hearing that the PCs were unsuccessful in their mission, Lavinia is visibly disappointed with them—doubly so if they gave the dragon turtle her bribe and still failed. If the PCs managed to kill the Glutton, she gives them each a 500 gp bonus. This bonus increases to 1,000 gp if they managed to retain her family's wealth.

EMRAAG THE GLUTTON **CR 16**
Male advanced dragon turtle
NE Gargantuan dragon (aquatic)
Monster Manual 88
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +29, Spot +29
Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

AC 27, touch 6, flat-footed 27
hp 337 (25 HD)
Immune fire, sleep, paralysis
Fort +21, **Ref** +14, **Will** +15

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.
Melee* bite +25 (6d6+24) and 2 claws +20 (3d8+17)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +25; **Grp** +51
Atk Options Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Snatch
Special Actions breath weapon (20-ft. by 25-ft. by 50-ft. cloud; 12d6 fire; DC 29), capsize (20% chance vs. *Sea Wyvern*)
*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 38, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12
Feats Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claw), Power Attack, Snatch
Skills Diplomacy +3, Hide +16 (+24 when submerged), Intimidate +29, Listen +29, Search +19, Sense Motive +19, Spot +29, Swim +50

Development: If the PCs defeat Emraag and seek out his treasure, you can develop his submerged lair into a memorable side-quest by populating it with a few aquatic pets the dragon turtle keeps. His treasure should be significant, worth a total of 90,000 gp, although no more than half should be in portable magic items.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs secure safe passage from Emraag, give them a CR 16 award.

PART TWO: DREAD DESCENT

After dealing with Emraag the Glutton, the PCs are free to investigate Gallivant Cove and search for the source of the Crimson Fleet's *shadow pearls*. The waters of Gallivant Cove are uniformly deep and, unless something forces the *Sea Wyvern* against the cliffs edging the bay, the party should have little trouble navigating its waters.

The journey into the caverns below the Isle of Dread is perilous, ultimately leading to the ruined aboleth city of Golismorga, nearly 2 miles below sea level. This far below the surface of the earth, the environment is strange and alien. The route from Gallivant Cove to Golismorga is shown on the map of the Underdark below the Isle of Dread. For the sake of clarity, the vertical scale of this map is distorted. Actual distances traveled between each location listed are given in the adventure text.

While their abundance of life suggests that they may once have been connected to further networks, the tunnels and caverns beneath the Isle of Dread differ considerably from the standard

Isle of Dread Underdark Encounters

Roll	Monster	Average EL	Source
01–02	1 beholder	13	*Monster Manual* 26
03–05	1 purple worm	12	*Monster Manual* 211
06–08	1 roper	12	*Monster Manual* 215
09–11	1d8 spectres	11	*Monster Manual* 232
12–13	1 retriever	11	*Monster Manual* 46
14–18	2d4 wraiths	10	*Monster Manual* 258
19–23	1 chasm spider	10	*Monster Manual* 288 (Gargantuan spider)
24–25	1 bebelith	10	*Monster Manual* 42
26–29	1d4 destrachans	10	*Monster Manual* 49
30–33	1d12 centipede swarms	9	*Monster Manual* 238
34–37	1d4 umber hulks	9	*Monster Manual* 249
38–41	1d8 blackfang rhagodessas	9	Page 53
42–46	1d4+2 troglodyte lepers	9	Page 38
47–50	1d6 hook horrors	9	Page 45
51–56	1d6 koprus	9	Page 54
57–61	1 dark naga	8	*Monster Manual* 191
62–66	1d4+1 phase spiders	8	*Monster Manual* 207
67–70	1 ghostbelly spider	8	*Monster Manual* 289 (Gargantuan spider)
71–73	1d6 cloakers	8	*Monster Manual* 36
74–76	1 black pudding	7	*Monster Manual* 201
77–82	1 pit scorpion	7	*Monster Manual* 287 (Huge scorpion)
83–86	1d6 carrion crawlers	7	*Monster Manual* 30
87–92	1 hornback centipede	6	*Monster Manual* 286 (Gargantuan centipede)
93–95	1 gibbering mouther	5	*Monster Manual* 126
96–00	1 ribbonweb spider	5	*Monster Manual* 289 (Huge spider)

Underdark environment. Missing from these caverns are most of the the classic underdark races—no drow, duergar, or mind flayers dwell under the Isle of Dread. Unless otherwise noted, floors, ceilings, and walls are all made of natural stone, carved by water and volcanic activity from the foundation of the isle itself. Other than what illumination the characters and other creatures bring with them, the passages are completely lightless.

The tunnels shown on the map represent the largest and most stable routes through the Dread Underdark. These tunnels range from ten to thirty feet in width, and are generally as tall as they are wide. Countless other routes exist, secondary passages that are rarely more than ten feet wide. These routes are untrustworthy at best, opening and closing with the Dread Underdark's tectonic shifts. If you wish to expand the encounters in this adventure, or extend the adventure into the numerous other regions hinted at on the map, the *Underdark* sourcebook provides a wealth of ideas.

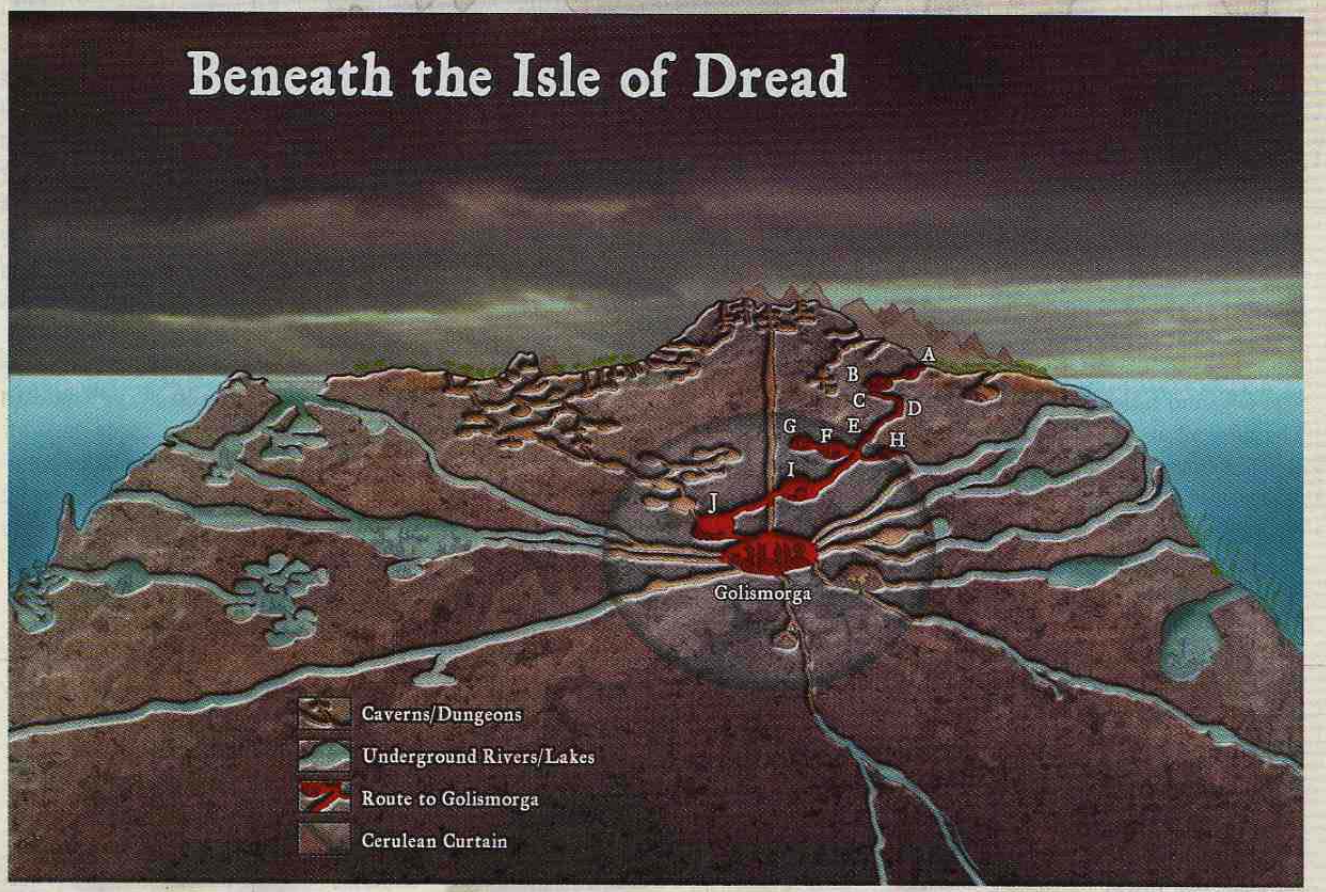
Several set encounter locations await the PCs along their journey. Check for random encounters four times a day; once at morning, once at noon, once at dusk, and once at midnight. The chance of a wandering monster encounter is 12% in the upper caverns. Inside of the Cerulean Curtain (areas **E–J**), the scarcity of water makes for more sparsely-populated tunnels; the chance of an encounter here is only 6%.

A: Entrance Caverns

The shores of Gallivant Cove are sheer cliffs that plunge directly into the watery depths below, yet near the bay's farthest inland point, a crude pier of rocks and yellowed bones extends from the maw of a treacherous-looking sea cave. Twin rows of hollow, yellowed skulls burn with an eerie green fire day and night, making the ramshackle dock easy to locate. This morbid pier is where the diseased troglodytes known as Laogzed's Redeemed meet every few months to deliver shipments of *shadow pearls* to the pirates of the Crimson Fleet. Vanthus Vanderboren paid these troglodytes a visit on his way to Farshore—the *shadow pearl* he tried to trigger at the end of "Tides of Dread" was the Fleet's most recent acquisition.

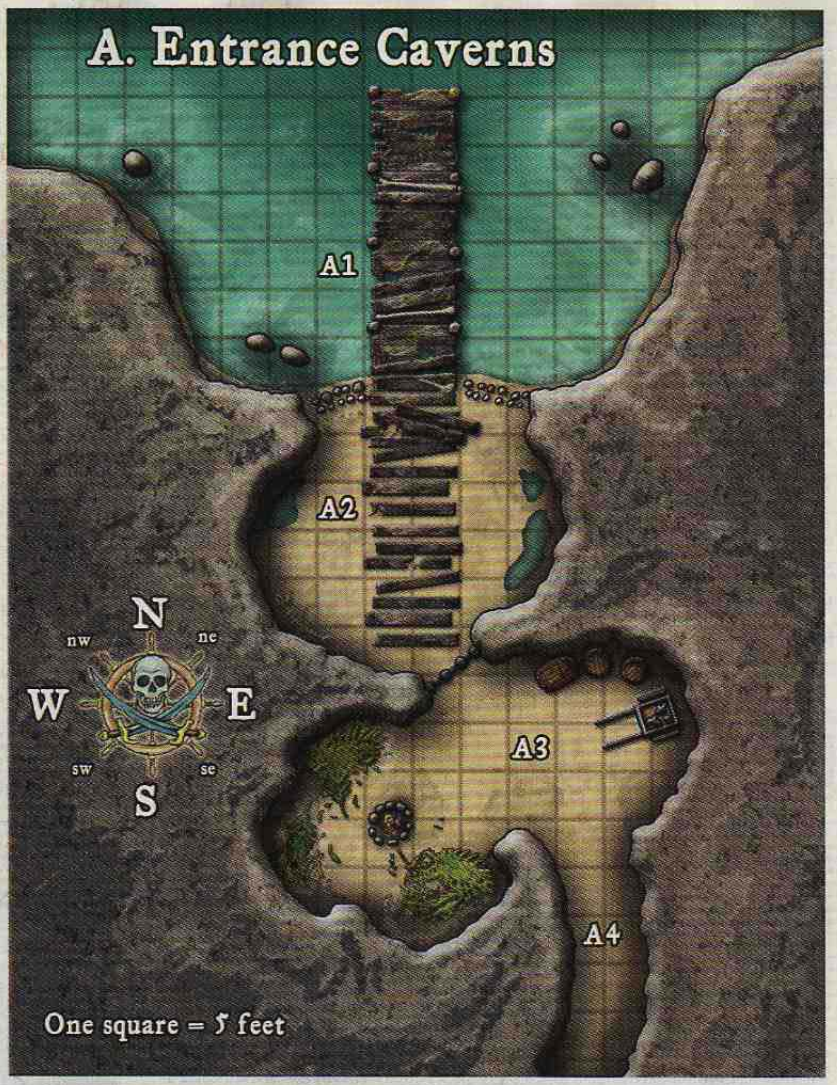
The troglodytes of Laogzed's Redeemed share one unfortunate trait—they are plague carriers. Nearly all of them suffer from a rare and hideous disease called vile rigidity. While it's actually a side effect of extended exposure to the freshly created *shadow pearls* they've been providing the Crimson Fleet pirates, the troglodytes of Laogzed's Redeemed have interpreted the plague as a blessing from their deity. They refer to it as "Laogzed's Embrace" and welcome it, piling their dead in a charnel pit at the community's center and encouraging the affliction's constant spread.

Vile rigidity at first seems like a boon. One day after failing a DC 19 Fortitude save to resist infection, the victim's skin toughens, granting him a



+1 natural armor bonus. On the second failed save, this becomes a +2 bonus. On the third failed save, the natural armor bonus improves to +3, but the victim takes a –2 penalty to Dexterity. Each day thereafter that he fails his save, the victim's skin becomes thicker, adding a cumulative +1 natural armor bonus and a –2 penalty to Dexterity. This lasts until the victim's Dexterity reaches 0, indicating that his ever-thickening flesh has entrapped him. Soon thereafter, the victim dies of suffocation.

The troglodytes have developed a foul-smelling treatment for the disease to prevent it from lingering long enough to cause suffocation. This treatment is known as *black pulp poultice* (see sidebar).



A1. Putrid Pier

Seemingly held together by brine and urchins, this rickety pier of rotted wood and gigantic bones looks as much a scavenger-picked corpse as a derelict berth. Twin rows of skulls impaled upon spears line the pier, their eye sockets flickering with otherworldly green flames and venting sickly vapors. This unnatural light illuminates an eerie path into the darkness of a yawning cave entrance fifteen feet above the surf below.

Constructed of bones and driftwood, this pier juts 30 feet into the murky green waters of Gallivant Cove. While the surf is mild, the water is 15 feet deep, forcing those who fall in to make DC 10 Swim checks. The pier's pilings rise 15 feet above the surf at high tide, requiring a DC 20 Climb check to ascend, although a slippery ladder at the end of the pier can be ascended with a DC 10 Climb check.. It's only a DC 15 Climb check to ascend the ragged cliffside from the surf up to the cave entrance above.

The spears along the pier's edges display human and troglodyte skulls. Set 10 feet apart, these morbid torches burn a mixture of rare molds, swamp plants, and the preserved musk glands of dead troglodytes. This concoction causes revolting smoke to spill from the skulls' mouths and eye sockets. Any creature within 15 feet of one of these skulls must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or be nauseated for as long as they remain in the area and 2d6 rounds thereafter. Treat this effect as an inhaled poison.

A2. Sea Cave (EL 7)

Soggy planks ascend the sloped floor of this salt-encrusted grotto. Refuse and broken crustacean shells litter several shallow pools near the walls, making easy meals for a small flock of sickly gulls roosting in the cracked walls. A ten-foot-wide opening in the southern wall has been closed off by a rusty iron gate.

A natural staging place for meetings between the Crimson Fleet and Laogzed's Redeemed (which the pirates call "canker skinks"), a DC 21 Survival check in the area by someone with the Track feat reveals a large number of footprints in this chamber, some booted (pirates), some bare (slaves given to the troglodytes as partial payment for the *shadow pearls*), and some reptilian (troglodytes).

The troglodytes built a crude grate of crooked bars to prevent intruders from wandering into their caves. While simply made, the grate is quite heavy—it's a full-round action to open or close it.

Iron Grate: 1 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 30; Break DC 25.

Creature: The troglodytes keep a guardian and pet in this room, an immense and cantankerous reptile known as a dimetrodon. The monster looks like a short-snouted, 15-foot-long lizard, but her most distinctive feature is the 8-foot-tall sail-like fin that rises from her back. Named Vethvusk (after

of one of Laogzed's many festering consorts), this dimetrodon is infected with vile rigidity—her flesh is thick and crusty, and large shingles of excess growth hang from her sail. The troglodytes treat her with *black pulp poultices* to mitigate the worst of her condition.

When she notices the PCs, Vethvusk immediately begins barking and roaring. The noise is certain to alert the troglodytes in area **A3**, who come to investigate in 1d3 rounds. Vethvusk has been trained to attack only in self-defense or if a non-troglodyte attempts to move more than 10 feet into this room. If the PCs provoke the dimetrodon, she attacks immediately, pursuing foes into the waters of Gallivant Cove for up to 200 feet before giving up and returning to her lair here. Vethvusk fights to the death once her blood is up.

VETHVUSK **CR 7**

Advanced elite dimetrodon
N Large animal
DRAGON #318 64
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +3, Spot +18

AC 16, touch 6, flat-footed 16
hp 162 (12 HD)
Fort +16, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Spd 10 ft., swim 10 ft.; burst of speed
Melee bite +18 (2d6+15)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +23

Abilities Str 31, Dex 5, Con 26, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
SQ vile rigidity
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Iron Will
Skills Listen +3, Spot +18, Swim +14

Burst of Speed (Ex) Up to three times per hour, Vethvusk can increase her land speed to 60 feet for one round as a free action. During this round, she gains a +2 dodge bonus to her armor class.

Vile Rigidity (Ex) Vethvusk suffers from vile rigidity; her toughened skin improves her natural armor bonus by +3, but penalizes her Dexterity by –2. Daily applications of *black pulp poultices* stave off further developments of her sickness. A *remove disease* spell removes the adjustments to her natural armor and Dexterity, adjusting her AC to 14.

Development: As Vanthus has just recently picked up the latest *shadow pearl* from the troglodytes, they aren't expecting a visit from the Crimson Fleet for some time. Nevertheless, the sheltered troglodytes have great difficulty telling one fleshy humanoid from another, and unless the PCs immediately attack them, they are likely to mistake the party for agents of the Crimson Fleet. Assuming the PCs haven't attacked the dimetrodon by the time the troglodytes arrive to investigate her barking, the lead troglodyte approaches and rasps a greeting in Common: "May Laogzed gnaw you slowly." Their initial attitude is indifferent—they view their interactions with the Crimson Fleet as a necessary evil in spreading the influence of their deity by trading *shadow pearls* for slaves and treasure.

The reptilian savages snarl and complain about the PCs' unusually early arrival, pointing out that they've just handed over their latest *shadow pearl* and that more aren't expected to be ready for months. As long as the PCs don't reveal their true identities (such as by making a poor Bluff check), the troglodytes remain relatively calm, but once they realize something strange is going on they retreat to area **A3** to prepare a defense.

If the PCs manage to converse with the troglodytes on civil terms, they can draw out some information from the dim-witted creatures. The troglodytes have been trading *shadow pearls* to the pirates for nearly two years now, in exchange for large numbers of slaves and shipments of drugs and trinkets. If asked about these payments, the troglodytes admit that while they get to keep all the drugs and trinkets, they are only allowed to keep a few slaves as sacrifices. The bulk of these slaves are led deep below, to be given to the Lords of Dread in return for more of the *shadow pearls* at a meeting place called the Temple of the Ancient Ones. Asking too many questions eventually makes the troglodytes suspicious, leading them to question the PCs in return and possibly attack.

Black Pulp Poultice

Concocted from rare and near-poisonous molds found under the Isle of Dread, the preparation of *black pulp poultice* requires stewing the fungus within the body of a disease-ravaged corpse. Any creature that applies a warm layer of this stinking black glop to the neck and chest halts the progress of any nonmagical disease for 24 hours. The poultice allows the subject to skip the required saving throw against the disease for the day that the treatment is in effect. During this period, the subject accrues no further ability damage from the disease. A skipped saving throw counts as neither a success nor a failure for the purpose of recovery from the disease. Furthermore, the incubation period of any disease to which the subject is exposed during the *black pulp poultice's* duration does not begin until the remedy expires.

Faint conjuration (healing); CL 2nd; Prerequisite Brew Potion, *delay disease* (*Spell Compendium* 63); Market Price 50 gp; Weight —.

Of course, the pirates know better than to attack the troglodyte's dimetrodon guard—if the PCs have killed Vethvusk, any troglodytes that respond to the sound of combat and find the PCs quickly realize that they're not members of the Crimson Fleet. They retreat to area **A3** to prepare a defense of the caves.

A3. Emissaries' Den (EL 8)

The stench of waste and decay lingers in the briny air. Two alcoves form this claustrophobic grotto. To the north, three piles of matted and moldering palm fronds cluster around a mound of ash and dying embers. Opposite them rest several misshapen clay jars, a rack on which hang dead octopi and cave lizards, and a rickety cart filled with large black rocks that glisten wetly. A low passage in the western wall descends steeply into darkness.

Creatures: Four troglodyte lepers linger here, guarding the entrance to the lower caverns and patiently awaiting the next scheduled visit from the Crimson

Bilestone

Known in most rare texts as "The Hunger Below," Holashner is one of the Elder Evils, an ancient and powerful entity that existed before the dawn of the Material Plane. Holashner burrows constantly through the depths of the earth, eating magma, creatures, stone, and anything else in its path. The material it leaves behind is called the "Black Bile of the World." When this volatile stuff dries, it hardens into a black material called bilestone. Similar to obsidian in texture and strength, bilestone feels slightly greasy and warm to the touch. Large concentrations have a debilitating effect on the minds of all non-aberrations within 30 feet. If such a creature is within this range of a cube of bilestone 5 or more feet to a side, it takes a –2 penalty on all saving throws against mind-affecting effects and on all Wisdom-based skill checks. Prolonged exposure to bilestone may have other debilitative effects on creatures—such exposure is the source of the vile rigidity that plagues the troglodytes in this adventure.

Fleet in several months' time. These troglodytes are all afflicted with vile rigidity, which infests their flesh with hard tumors and ever-thickening layers of dry skin. To ease their suffering, the lepers wrap themselves in bandages soaked in numbing salves and *black pulp poultices*. Despite the pain, they fanatically view their affliction as a divine blessing sent by their god, Laogzed. They grow their nails incredibly long and constantly scrape at their dead flesh, transforming their claws into cruelly diseased weapons.

Unless they hear a commotion in area **A2** and go to investigate, the troglodytes lie on filthy piles of seaweed, meditating on their pain. If the PCs manage to reach this area undetected, they startle the troglodytes, who clamber to their feet and hiss in surprise. Canny PCs may be able to convince the savages they are members of the Crimson Fleet (see area **A2**). If not, the troglodytes see the party's intrusion as a blasphemy against Laogzed and attack.

Trogodyte Lepers (4) **CR 4**

Troglodyte rogue 1/cleric 3 (Laogzed)
CE Medium humanoid (reptilian)
Monster Manual 246
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +1
Aura stench (30 ft., DC 16)
Languages Common, Draconic

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19
hp 56 (6 HD)
Fort +11, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +6 (1d6+2 plus disease) and bite +3 (1d4+1)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5
Atk Options smite 1/day (+4 attack, +3 damage), sneak attack +1d6
Special Actions death touch 1/day (3d6), rebuke undead 2/day (–1, 2d6+2)
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd)
2nd—*hold person* (DC 13), *shatter*[D] (DC 13)
1st—*bless*, *cause fear*[D] (DC 12), *doom* (DC 12), *divine favor*
0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *guidance*
D domain spell; **Domains** Death, Destruction

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 8
SQ spontaneous casting (inflict spells), trapfinding, vile rigidity
Feats Brew Potion, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Hide +8 (+12 in rocky or underground areas), Knowledge (religion) +1, Listen +6, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +0
Possessions *bracers of armor +1*, *black pulp poultice* (1d4 doses)

Disease (Ex) Any creature damaged by a troglodyte leper's claws must make a DC 19 Fortitude save to avoid catching vile rigidity.
Vile Rigidity (Ex) The troglodytes suffer from vile rigidity; their toughened skin improves their natural armor bonus by +3, but penalizes their Dexterity by –2. Daily applications of *black pulp poultices* stave off further developments of the sickness. A *remove disease* spell removes the adjustments to their natural armor and Dexterity.

Tactics: Two of the troglodyte lepers rush forward to engage intruders while their allies hang back to support the fighters with spells. Should the battle obviously turn against the melee attackers, however, those staying back flee down the hall through area **A4** to warn their people in Laogroat of the attack.

The clay jug nearest the grate leading to area **A2** is filled with green slime—the troglodytes use it to dispose of waste. On the second round of battle, one of the lepers casts *shatter* on the jar, causing the slime to spill out over everything within 5 feet. Creatures in that area must make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid being spattered with slime (see page 76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details on green slime).

Treasure: Two of the three jars along the wall contain three doses of *black pulp poultice*. The large black rocks are geodes comprised of sharp black crystals and a sickly black ooze—these stones are the remains of protective bilestone shells (see sidebar)—containers used to transport *shadow pearls* from Holashner's Ziggurat (area **Q**). A DC 16 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that these stones are mere shells and that something spherical was once suspended inside. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes the rock as bilestone; fortunately, there's not enough of the foul stuff here to impact the minds of nearby non-aberrations. There are 12 fractured bilestone geodes in all, each weighing 10 pounds and worth 50 gp apiece.

A4. Hall of Visions

Foul-smelling dyes and flaking pigments cover the cracked stone walls of this sloping passage. Decaying organs—perhaps the morbid palettes of the walls' brutish artists—lie in reeking heaps on the ground.

Between the primitive markings and bloody claw-prints, a lengthy series of crude pictograms extends down the hall. While many are faded and obscured, three stand out clearly. In the first, spear-bearing reptiles wander a maze of ever-descending tunnels. In the next, a large lizardlike creature exalts amid columned ruins, holding a black circle above its head as smaller creatures bow and are stricken dead. In the final section, a reptilian skull surrounded by a smoky mass of spiraling tentacles rains black spheres upon a cracking, smoking island.

Painted by clerics of Laogzed, these walls depict the troglodytes' misled vision of the creation and purpose of the *shadow pearls*. There are no words on the walls and nothing specific can be deciphered. If the PCs have captured a troglodyte, it might be able to interpret that these images show members of their tribe traveling deep to gather the *shadow pearls*, a priest of Laogzed claiming one of the pearls at the Temple of the Ancient Ones, and Laogzed himself creating the *shadow pearls* to sow destruction upon his people's enemies.

B. Laogroat

Elevation: 180 feet below sea level
Distance from Entrance Caverns: 4 miles

The cavern-village of Laogroat is dying. This wretched community of over 50 troglodytes is primitive even by their standards. The village consists of a dozen crude mud and stone huts, each built at a respectful distance from a 20-foot-tall statue of Laogzed. This image of the troglodyte god, however, is significantly warped from the standard interpretation, reflecting the corruption of their faith by the Demogorgon-worshiping koprus. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check correctly identifies the symbolisim of the change.

Three passages connect to the cavern housing Laogroat. The two eastern ones are secured by iron grates, and while they are kept unlocked, they're awkward and difficult to move without a great deal of noise (see area **A2**). The northern tunnel leads back to area **A**, while the southern one quickly turns into a warren of narrow tunnels that eventually connects to other troglodyte lairs and exits into the jungles of the Isle of Dread above. The third exit from this cavern is at area **B6**, and leads further down. A DC 10 Survival check is enough to note a path that has been worn from the northern passageway into the cavern toward **B6**, and that the entrance to the southern passageway appears relatively untraveled.

The horrific reek that fills this cavern forces any non-troglodyte to make a DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid being nauseated as long as they remain in this chamber. A character who leaves the cavern for at least ten minutes may attempt to re-enter, making a new Fortitude save to avoid becoming nauseated again.

The troglodytes of Laogroat are sedentary and do not expect visitors unless a troglodyte from area **A** made it here to warn them. Unless the PCs are particularly loud or carry bright lights, the lepers in area **B5** don't notice their arrival in the cavern. If they do, they quickly move to intercept the intruders, dealing with them as detailed in area **B5**.

B1. Troglodyte Hovels

Cobbled domes of rock and mud cover shallow pits in this large cavern. Entered through holes in the stone roofs, each damp dwelling reeks of rotting meat, reptile, and pungent herbs. Crude paintings on the wall depict all manner of reptilian creatures feasting on humanoid shapes. Many of these reptiles have two heads.

Creatures: Within each warren dwell four troglodytes deep in the ecstatic throes of vile rigidity. The troglodyte lepers tend to these suffering, linen-wrapped creatures, using *black pulp poultices* to keep them on the verge of death, where their minds can be more open to visions from their god. The diseased troglodytes aren't quite helpless, but fight only to defend their particular hovels and do not join in a defense of the cavern proper. Killing them is almost a mercy.

Diseased Troglodytes (44): AC 17, touch 5, flat-footed 17; Init –5; Ref –5; hp 13 each; Dex 1; *Monster Manual* 246.

B2. Blessing Cages (EL 7)

A pair of large cages with wooden bars sits precariously at the edge of a thirty-foot-wide charnel pit in the center of this cavern. Each cage contains two dead reptilian humanoids, their bodies twisted masses of tumors and shingles of unnecessary skin.

Laogzed's Redeemed have taken to raiding nearby troglodyte and lizardfolk tribes living to the south and on the island surface above. They imprison their captives here, allowing them to contract (and then die from) vile rigidity. Captured PCs likely end up here as well, facing the same fate.

Irgzid Uzeye

Creatures: The village's only heretic languishes among the dead within one of the cages, slumped on his side and appearing as dead as his cellmate. Irgzid Uzeye was once a member of the tribe's priest caste and one of the first servants of Laogzed to accept the blessed *shadow pearls* in the Temple of the Ancient Ones. Yet, while his brethren were blessed with Laogzed's Embrace soon after, due to some serendipitous resilience Irgzid never developed signs of the disease. Fearing what this suggested, Irgzid followed the other priests' lead, growing his claws to a wicked length and wrapping his body in rags. Over the course of several visits to the Temple of the Ancient Ones, Irgzid watched in silent despair as his tribe grew more and more sickly, and as his fellow priests seemed to drift further astray from the proper teachings of Laogzed. When the other priests took to adding a second head to the statue of Laogzed in area **B4**, Irgzid realized something horrible was happening to his people, and decided to do something about it.

The next time the troglodytes traveled to the Temple of the Ancient Ones to receive a shipment of *shadow pearls*, Irgzid gave his dim-witted kin the slip and snuck back into the flooded chamber after the meeting. He hoped to cross to the other side and explore the tunnel from which the koprus emerged, to find out what they were doing to his people, but he never quite made it across. For imprisoned within the waters of this sunken chamber was an ancient and tormented aboleth named N'glothnoru, a creature that had been held captive by the koprus for centuries. With no koprus present to punish it, the aboleth seized the opportunity and surfaced to speak with Irgzid as he entered the temple alone. Unable to enslave the troglodyte due to a *glyph of suppression* placed in the chamber long ago by the koprus, N'glothnoru was forced to use subtlety. Using *veil* to assume the form of a ghostly troglodyte priest, he then projected an image into the room above to speak to Irgzid, fooling the troglodyte into believing he was speaking to an ancestor ghost of a bygone age.

N'glothnoru realized Irgzid was not afflicted as his brothers and preyed on the troglodyte's fears. Threatening to reveal that the troglodyte was not "blessed" by their god, the aboleth also hinted that the secret truths the koprus were telling his people were lies and that Laogzed's Embrace was actually a disease spread by the Lords of Dread. N'glothnoru offered to keep the troglodyte's secret and free his people if he returned home and gathered warriors capable of slaying the aboleth's captors.

Upon returning to Laogroat, Irgzid tried to rally the strongest among his people to his cause. His coup quickly backfired with the unintended revelation of his health. Unwilling to murder one of their own, the lepers caged Irgzid, along with the corpses of several who had died of their affliction, hoping that forced proximity would break through his immunity.

Irgzid has spent the past several months imprisoned here, with lepers visiting him daily to preach to him of the sins of health. The priests hope that Irgzid will contract Laogzed's Embrace, so that he may again walk among his people. Irgzid clings to N'glothnoru's words, however, and daily seeks ways to escape and fulfill his promise to the aboleth. With the PCs' coming, he might just find a way to do both.

Small for his race and terribly emaciated, Irgzid is swaddled in filthy rags and salve-soaked bandages. Currently, Irgzid huddles within a large red cloak, which he stole from one of the corpses placed within his cage. As soon as he notices the PCs, he calls out to them, first in Draconic, then in Common. He begs them to set him free, offering the wealth and magic of the tribe's lepers (little more than the idols and fetishes in the priests' warren). If that doesn't work, he offers them his aid in obtaining whatever they came for. Should the party mention that they seek the source of the *shadow pearls*, Irgzid grows excited and exclaims that he knows where they're from and, if the PCs free him, he promises to lead them there. At this point, Irgzid should make an opposed Bluff check against the PCs. If he fails, it's obvious that the troglodyte is hiding something. If pressed on this matter, Irgzid admits that he believes the Lords of Dread have led his people away from the truth of Laogzed's worship and infected them with the disease they suffer from. Short of being tortured or magically compelled, Irgzid does not mention N'glothnoru or his deal with the aboleth. Once freed, the troglodyte leads the PCs to area **B6**, although, this probably attracts the attention of the lepers in area **B5**.

Irgzid isn't the only prisoner kept here. On a recent raid above, the lepers captured a rare prize—an Olman warrior. They've left him in a cage here, and once he's deep in the clutches of vile rigidity, they plan on sacrificing him to Laogzed.

This man is named Jakara, a member of a select group of Olmans who rely upon totems to aid them in their lifelong quests to rid the Isle of Dread from its demonic influences. Jakara recently encountered a Pelorian missionary named Noltus Innersol who was spreading the word of his god to the more savage tribes of humanoids dwelling in the isle's interior. Noltus was impressed with Jakara's skills and devotion to the slaughter of demons, and convinced the totemic demonslayer to travel to Farshore to show Vesserin Catherly (the colony's resident cleric) his methods and gifts.

Unfortunately, Jakara never made it to Farshore. He was attacked not long after he left Noltus's company by a group of skinwalkers (feral half-demon Olmans in thrall to the current lord of Thanaclan). He defeated them, but not before one of their sorcerers managed to *feeblemind* him. Reduced to little more than an animal, he wandered the jungles for several days before being captured by a group of troglodyte lepers and brought back here.

Since his capture, Jakara has also contracted vile rigidity. This, plus his feebleminded state have left him in a near catatonic state. If cured of his maladies, he thanks the PCs graciously and fervently, but is eager to return to the world above and continue on his trek to Farshore. If the PCs mention they come from there, Jakara promises to speak with them more when they return from their current mission.

The information Jakara has can serve as an adventure hook for the next installment in the Savage Tide Adventure Path. In addition, he may be willing to teach his methods of combatting demons to a PC he deems worthy. Further details on Jakara may be found in the next adventure, "City of Broken Idols," and in DRAGON #354's installment of Savage Tidings.

IRGZID UZEYE **CR 7**

Male troglodyte rogue 3/cleric 4
CE Medium humanoid (reptilian)
Monster Manual 246

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +2
Aura stench (30 ft., DC 16)
Languages Common, Draconic

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16
hp 82 (9 HD)
Immune disease
Fort +13, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +6 (1d6–1) and bite +3 (1d4–1)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Atk Options smite 1/day (+4 attack, +4 damage), sneak attack +2d6
Special Actions death touch 1/day (4d6), rebuke undead 3/day (+0, 2d6+4)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd—*bear's endurance, cure moderate wounds, death knell*[D] (DC 14), *sound burst* (DC 14)
1st—*bless, cause fear*[D] (DC 13), *command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds, obscuring mist*
0—*create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, resistance*
D domain spell; **Domains** Death, Destruction

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 10
SQ spontaneous casting (inflict spells), trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Balance +2, Bluff +3, Concentration +9, Hide +9 (+13 in rocky or underground areas), Intimidate +3, Jump +6, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +7, Move Silently +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Tumble +7

Jakara of the Tiger Clan: hp 97; currently suffering from *feeblemind* and late stage vile rigidity; DRAGON #354.

B3. Charnel Pit

This ten-foot-deep, thirty-foot-wide sinkhole is rimmed with wooden stakes. Disturbing fetishes and bits of bone hang from these rotting lengths of wood. Within the pit, dozens of reptilian bodies lie heaped in various stages of decay. The bodies are strangely dry, their skin flaking off the bone in brittle sheets and cancerous hunks.

Dozens of troglodytes have died as a result of Laogzed's Embrace, smothered by their own scales. To show their devotion to their god and his fatal boon, Laogzed's Redeemed have dug this 10-foot-deep pit that serves as an open-air grave. Any creature that falls into the pit must make a DC 12 Fortitude save to resist catching filth fever, and a second DC 19 Fortitude save to resist contracting vile rigidity.

B4. Laogzed's Altar (EL 9)

An immense statue of a rearing lizardlike beast crouches against the wall here. A second visage, that of a crudely carved fanged toad, juts from its exposed stomach, its maw partially open before a bloodstained altar stone.

This statue and altar are the spiritual center of Laogroat. Village meetings, daily prayers, and sacrifices to Laogzed are conducted here. Despite being a fanatically devout community, the vision Laogzed's Redeemed have of their deity is unlike that held by the majority of their race. This dual-headed interpretation of Laogzed stems from the influence of the Lords of Dread. Through continued contact and increasing influence, the koprus hope to gradually convert Laogzed's Redeemed to the worship of Demogorgon.

Creatures: Aside from the statue, two large piles of swamp plants and mud flank the altar. These masses are utilized by the troglodyte lepers as places to fixate on their pain and Laogzed's will. Of the 12 troglodyte lepers that dwell in this cavern, six are generally found here, deep in meditation and prayer. They rise quickly to defend any intrusion, fighting to the death. Once combat begins here, the remaining lepers in area **B5** arrive in 1d3 rounds.

Troglodyte Lepers (6): hp 56 each; see page 38.

B5. Priests' Warren (EL 9)

This mud and stone hut is festooned with chains of herbs, dried animal parts, and nasty-looking fungi. Between these decorations, images of fanged, two-headed reptiles have been painted on the stone in blood. South of the hut, several bloated reptilian bodies float within three stinking pools of briny fluid.

This hut is the dwelling place of the troglodyte lepers. Within, the hut is a cramped chamber that allows up to a dozen lepers to sleep at the same time. The clerics of Laogzed use the nearby pools to brew their *black pulp poultice*, sharing it first among themselves and distributing the remainder to their people.

Creatures: Within the warren, several of the tribe's oldest clerics lie immobilized on leafy pallets, their bodies trapped under the weight of Laogzed's Embrace. Fending off death through the use of *black pulp poultice*, these clerics drift in and out of pain-filled consciousness. These elders have the same stats as troglodyte lepers, but are so disease-addled that they don't perceive the PCs as threats. The six lepers that attend to the elders, however, attack the party on sight.

Troglodyte Lepers (6): hp 56 each; see page 38.

Treasure: A DC 20 Search of the filth within the priests' warren reveals a shed troglodyte skin partially filled with shiny rocks, hunks of glass, bits of metal, and chips of gold and silver. The skin's contents are worth 450 gold.

Against one wall of the chamber are dozens of vials of a strange bluish liquid. This stuff is sannish, a drug popular in Scuttlecove for the euphoria it induces in its users. Although the drug also numbs pain, and would work wonders for the troglodyte's suffering, the troglodytes view their pain as a gift from Laogzed and to use the drug to lessen it would be blasphemous. In fact, sannish is a primary ingredient in the crafting of the *black pulp poultices* they constantly brew. There are 110 doses of the drug here—each dose is worth 15 gp on the black market. Additional information on sannish (as well as rules for addiction) can be found on pages 41–43 of the *Book of Vile Darkness*.

Outside the warren, the three pools contain nearly complete brews of *black pulp poultice*. Any character who makes a DC 20 Spellcraft check or a DC 25 Heal check can draw eighteen doses of *black pulp poultice* from the pools, given an hour of nauseating toil.

B6. The Black Way

A deep crevice yawns in the stone here, dropping away into the inky dark below. A rickety wooden lift descends into the darkness, raised and lowered by a primitive pulley system of frayed ropes.

This shaft serves as a passage into the lightless reaches below the Isle of Dread, and ultimately the ruined aboleth city of Golismorga. The lift can be operated by hand from above or on the lift itself. If more than 400 pounds is placed upon the lift, the whole thing plummets into the cavern 60 feet below.

A DC 10 Survival check is enough to note that there's been a lot of activity around the edge of this pit, and that a path has been worn between the pit's edge and the northern passageway to the east. If Irgzid is with the party, he tells them the source of the *shadow pearls* is down this shaft, and warns the PCs of the lift's maximum weight.

C. The Burning Pools (EL 13)

Elevation: 510 feet below sea level
Distance from Laogroat: 2 miles

Trickles of water emerge from a crack in the ceiling of this cavern, splitting into numerous rivulets that roll slowly down stalactites and drip off into the deep, milky pools that dot the floor of this chamber.

The liquid in this chamber may look like murky water, but is in fact highly acidic. Each pool is 40 feet deep, following a twisted course through softer veins of metal that have long since eroded away, leaving behind polished stone walls the liquid cannot consume. A splash of this stuff deals 1d6 acid damage, while total immersion deals 10d6 acid damage. Worse, the fumes rising from the acid fill this cavern with toxins, constituting an inhaled poison (Fortitude DC 13, 1 Con damage/1d4 Con damage).

If Irgzid is guiding the PCs, he stops them before entering this cavern and warns them of the burning pools and that they must hurry through the cave while holding their breath to avoid breathing the toxic air. Unfortunately, he doesn't know about the amorphous predator that has moved into the cavern.

Creature: An elder black pudding seeped up from the depths below to claim this cavern as its lair a few days ago. Immune to poison but not acid, the ooze has learned to avoid the pools of caustic liquid on the floor, spending most of its time heaped against the southeastern wall by the passageway leading down. It swiftly moves to attack anything that intrudes into the room.

Elder Black Pudding: hp 290; *Monster Manual* 201.

D. The Hanging Forest (EL 12)

Elevation: 960 feet below sea level
Distance from the Burning Pools: 8 miles

This seventy-foot-wide cavern drops away into a black gulf below. A forest of stalactites hangs from the ceiling, some dropping away out of sight into the darkness. A ledge, its surface glistening with moisture and mold, winds down the inner wall of the cavern, a descending path of dubious safety.

Once a volcanic shaft, this cavernous chasm drops 400 feet into a rubble-strewn field of petrified trees of all sizes, subsumed by the earth in some geologic upheaval and subsequently petrified. Chunks of shattered branches litter the floor, but a number of the logs are still surprisingly lifelike.

The ledge leading down the walls of the shaft is slippery but safe as long as it is navigated at no faster than a creature's base speed. A creature that takes faster action on this ledge (such as fighting or a double move) must make a DC 12 Balance check. Failure by 5 or more indicates a fall off the ledge.

Creature: This vertiginous cavern has long been the lair of a cantankerous roper. The creature feeds on vermin and other creatures that wander through the cave, but allows the diseased troglodytes to pass through on their voyages to and from the depths below for two reasons: the troglodytes never fail to offer it one of the slaves they're transporting below, and the roper's found that diseased troglodytes are particularly unappetizing. It has no qualms about eating PCs, of course, and once they come within 60 feet of the floor of this cave, it attacks with its strands.

If Irgzid is with the party, he warns them of the roper's presence but is at a loss on how it might react to the PCs; he knows only that when the troglodytes pass through here, they offer it a prisoner as a snack.

Roper: hp 85; *Monster Manual* 215.

Treasure: The roper has 43 pp and 5 garnets (each worth 100 gp) inside its gut. Other treasures can be found among the hundreds of bones that lie scattered across the floor of this cave. With a DC 20 Search check, ten minutes of searching turns up one of the following: a silver and ivory scepter worth 1,200 gp, a +1 *disruption flail*, a *cloak of protection* +3, or a *staff of frost* with 24 charges remaining.

Development: The roper's initial attitude is hostile, but if the PCs call out to it before they come within reach, they may be able to secure its cooperation (at least temporarily) with Diplomacy or Intimidate. If made friendly, the roper lets the PCs pass if they offer it a live snack or at least 1,000 gp in gems. If made helpful, the roper lets them pass without an offering.

E. The Cerulean Curtain

Elevation: 1,800 feet below sea level
Distance from the Hanging Forest: 16 miles

The tunnel widens into a large cavern nearly two hundred feet in diameter. A shimmering curtain of rippling blue light bisects this cavern from left to right and floor to ceiling. The light resembles a translucent membrane that swirls and sparkles like the surface of a pond. The cavern on the other side is visible through this sheen, and the tunnel proceeds around a corner at the far end. Shapes and figures seem to ripple and writhe along this curtain of cerulean light, and now and then these shapes pass by slowly enough to be identified as Olman warriors in full battle regalia, their mouths open in silent screams. A low whispering fills the room, but the cave is otherwise silent.

This strange wall of light is the boundary of the Cerulean Curtain, a shell of energy miles across that encircles the ancient aboleth city of Golismorga like a bubble, its edges passing harmlessly through air and stone alike. Created ages ago when a group of Olman warriors triggered *Tlaloc's Tear* at the end of the aboleth war, the Cerulean Curtain has two effects. First, the curtain is a potent ward against the influence of aberrant thoughts and magic. The curtain automatically dispels any ongoing mind-affecting effect on any creature that passes through it. Likewise, mind-affecting effects cannot target creatures on the opposite side of the curtain from the source. In this way the Olmans ensured that the aboleth would not be able to simply send hordes of enslaved minions after them or their device.

The Curtain's second effect is that it blocks the waters of the submerged ocean from flooding the caverns within. While water in containers or as part of a creature can pass through with ease, freely flowing water cannot. Here and there, small flaws in the curtain allow water to trickle in, preventing the caverns within from becoming completely lifeless. These narrow streams pool and seep through the caves to eventually collect in Golismorga and other caverns, forming small pools of water that serve to keep those who live in this region alive. Yet for the aboleths, such trace amounts of water are little more than a tease.

Seen in small sections, the Cerulean Curtain appears as a flat blue membrane that's easily penetrated and cool to the touch. The spirits of countless Olman warriors who died during the aboleth war inhabit the Curtain—these spirits are periodically visible to anyone observing the Curtain's face. Though incapable of taking direct action on their own, it is these spirits who infuse the shield with its power. Their whispers permeate the Cerulean Curtain, occasionally resolving into snatches of the Olman language. Within 30 feet of the curtain, these whispers are unmistakable, but beyond this range they are much more subdued.

As a creature passes through the Curtain, this whispering rises sharply to an almost painful roar, as of a thousand people shouting as many different phrases, then falls quiet again just as quickly when the traveler emerges from the other side. From that moment on, those within the sphere find themselves subject to random bursts of disconcerting mutterings, particularly at times of great stress.

Though the Olman spirits have no power to directly affect the PCs, occasional spates of ghostly whispers are an excellent way to drive home the creepy atmosphere of this adventure. An attempt to comprehend these whispers requires a DC 15 Listen check and the ability to understand the Olman language. While the content of these otherworldly diatribes is left up to you, consider using them to foreshadow coming events, dropping hints like "two faces watch the tide" or "the maw flows forth to bite" between incoherent ravings. The whispers should be at their strongest near places of Olman significance, such as the ruined temple in area **I** or the crater at area **P**.

The Cerulean Curtain functions at caster level 20th, but as long as *Tlaloc's Tear* still exists in area **P**, no form of mortal magic can dispel or suppress this field.

F. The Way to Barbas

Elevation: 2,100 feet below sea level
Distance from the Cerulean Curtain: 1 mile

The primary tunnel branches one mile from the Cerulean Curtain cavern. One 30-foot-wide tunnel continues south, while a 20-foot-wide cavern angles off to the west. A DC 20 Survival check made by a character with Track is enough to indicate that the amount of traffic heading down the 20-foot-wide tunnel is much more than the trickle heading west.

If Irgzid is with the PCs, he pauses at this intersection, explaining that the southern route leads on to where the troglodytes have met with the Lords of Dread. He then grows thoughtful, telling the PCs that the western route leads to a tangled maze of chambers, but at the far end is a secluded settlement called Barbas. Irgzid has been to Barbas only once as a child—before the troglodytes of Laogroat forged their alliance with the Lords of Dread and fell victim to the sickness, they often traded with the town. Now, though, the Barbans have closed their borders to the troglodytes, having little desire to accept their pestilence within their walls. Barbas is likely to be the only place where the PCs will find safety and shelter in the lightless depths, and further, they may know more about the *shadow pearls* and the mysterious koprus. A visit to Barbas shouldn't take too long, and while he is reluctant to accompany the PCs, Irgzid encourages them to do so.

F1. The Maze (EL 7)

Between this intersection and the village of Barbas is a large but low-ceilinged cavern called the maze. This area is little more than a 10-foot-high horizontal crack in the earth, 200 yards wide and covered with scree and gravel, as well as larger boulders torn loose from the ceiling. Due to the density of these scattered monoliths, visibility is reduced to a maximum of 30 feet in any direction. Between the stones, patches of color hint at plant life, suggesting a subterranean pasture of epic proportions. The temperature in this vast vault is noticeably lower than elsewhere in the tunnels.

To protect themselves against wandering monsters and other unwelcome visitors, the citizens of Barbas have carefully cultivated the fungus in this chamber to hide a deadly secret. The fungus is laced with patches of yellow and brown mold (both detailed on page 76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), leaving a single winding trail of safety from one end to the other. The 10-foot-wide trail through the Maze winds roughly a thousand feet in all. Anyone who doesn't know the safe route can navigate it by making five DC 25 Survival checks to avoid the dangerous mold. Each failure exposes the group to both patches of mold. Any fire source brought into the maze immediately

triggers a nearby patch of brown mold, causing it to expand into a ten-foot square containing the offending PC, potentially covering that section of the path.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs make it across the maze successfully, give them a CR 7 award.

F2. The Killing Field (EL 11)

Here the ceiling rises to twenty feet and the vast plain of moldy gravel parts, giving way to a large hemisphere of bare stone dotted with short pillars. Ahead, makeshift walls of wood and stone surround a sprawling shantytown.

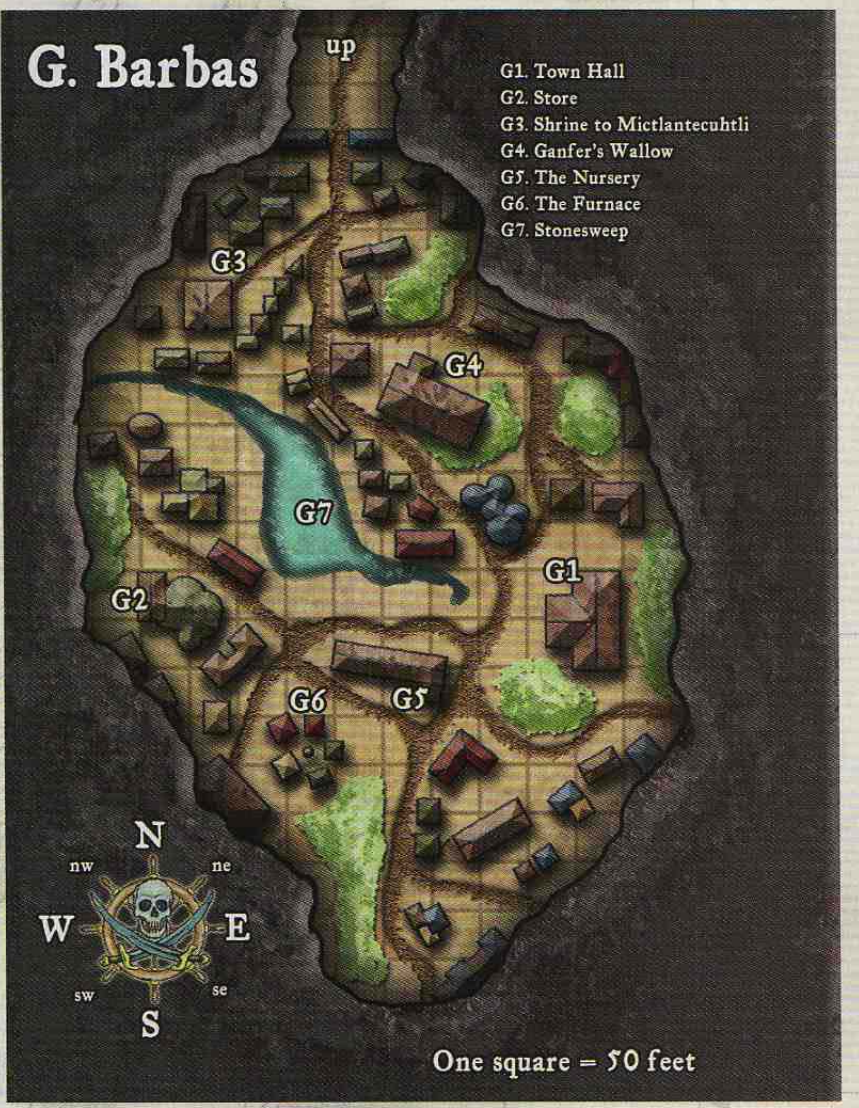
Creatures: For those invaders, monstrous or otherwise, who manage to make it through the maze and approach Barbas's gates, one final defense awaits. In the cleared field before its gates, six hook horrors prowl the grounds. The hook horrors are fed and cared for by the citizens of Barbas, and the beetle-like creatures quickly rally in a line in front of the gates to Barbas if they notice anyone emerging from the maze, howling an alarm and clashing their hooklike arms together in a threatening display intended to scare off intruders and alert their masters.

A hook horror is a 9-foot-tall insectoid humanoid creature, with a vulturelike head and two powerful arms that end in immense curved hooks.

Hook Horrors (6) **CR 6**
N Large aberration
Monster Manual II 126
Init +3; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +17, Spot +1
Languages Undercommon

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19
hp 65 (10 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8
Weakness light sensitivity

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee 2 claws +13 (1d6+7) and bite +8 (2d6+3)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +18
Atk Options improved grab (both claws), power sunder, rending bite (3d6+10)



Abilities Str 24, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9
Feats Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Listen)
Skills Climb +15, Hide +3 (+11 in subterranean areas), Listen +17

Light Sensitivity (Ex) Exposure to bright light imposes a –2 penalty on a hook horror's attack rolls.
Power Sunder (Ex) A hook horror that attempts to sunder does not provoke attacks of opportunity and inflicts double damage to any object struck.
Rending Bite (Ex) If a hook horror wins a grapple check, it automatically hits with its rending bite attack on the same round (this replaces its normal bite attack for that round).

Tactics: The citizens of Barbas are isolationists, and generally assume anyone that comes to their village these days is an enemy. When the hook horrors raise the alarm, dozens of Barbas's deformed citizens clamber up onto the walls to watch the hook horrors defend the city. As long as the PCs don't intrude more than 5 feet from the maze into the killing field, the hook horrors don't attack. This should give the PCs a chance to shout out greetings to the village of Barbas. Assume the village's initial attitude is unfriendly. If the PCs can convince Barbas of their peaceful intentions by adjusting this attitude to helpful, the guards call down commands to the hook horrors to stand aside and allow the PCs entry.

Otherwise, any attempt to approach Barbas results in the hook horrors attacking. The ceiling is only 20 feet high over the killing fields, so even flying PCs are

still in reach of the hook horrors' attacks. If defeated, the citizens panic and retreat to their homes, leaving the gates to Barbas undefended.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs talk their way past the hook horrors, award them experience as if they had defeated them in combat.

G. Barbas

Elevation: 1,600 feet below sea level
Distance from the Way to Barbas: 1/2 mile

The town of Barbas squats in a dead-end cavern, the ceiling of which rarely rises above thirty feet and in many places dips down as low as ten feet, creating a claustrophobic shantytown. The town's structures appear makeshift at best and nearing collapse at worst, their walls built from rubble, moldy wood, caked mud, and bone. A tepid pond shimmers in the center of town, fed by a trickle of water from the western cave wall. A haze hangs in the air, a mixture of smoke, spores, and stink lit by dozens of feebly burning torches mounted on stalactites or facades. The only areas not claimed by crumbling buildings are the crooked streets and several farms of faintly glowing fungi and pallid mushrooms the size of men.

After the Olmans activated *Tlaloc's Tear* and drove the waters from Golismorga, the surviving aboleth caught outside the Cerulean Curtain attempted to reclaim their city by sending wave after wave of enslaved minions into the caverns, hoping that at least a few would manage to reach Golismorga and destroy the *Tear*. Passing through the Curtain freed the slaves, however, and they fled to the darkest corners within to escape their horrific captors. Over the course of several years, these freed Olmans, lizardfolk, rakasta, phanatons, bullywugs, and other humanoids gathered together for safety in this dead-end cavern, inside the Cerulean Curtain yet far from the haunted city of Golismorga. Over dozens of generations, inbreeding and interspecies affection saw something of a homogenization of these folk, and in time they grew more alike than not.

Against all odds, Barbas has persevered. Its citizens have mastered the art of farming fungi and lichen and keep subterranean vermin like giant beetles as livestock. Stone and ore pried from the cavern walls provide their smiths and craftsmen with adequate materials, while gems harvested in bulk from certain volcanic caves allow them to trade for wood and other much-needed surface supplies with the occasional troglodyte merchant. Though a few of the humanoid races, such as lizardfolk and troglodytes, have arrived in sufficient numbers to breed true, the average resident is humanoid in basic frame only. Squat, pale, and sporting a myriad of bizarre deformations, these are mongrelfolk, and tales of the surface world are told as legends to their twitching, malformed children.

In addition to their strange appearances, mongrelfolk can emulate any race for the purposes of using racially-specific magic items, and can mimic any voice or sound they've heard—a trait that may unnerve PCs as the naturally curious residents begin aping their speech and mannerisms. The residents of Barbas go out of their way to avoid conflict with the PCs—they've lived this long thanks to a healthy dose of cowardice and self-loathing. As a result, no statistics are provided for mongrelfolk, but if required, they may be found on page 125 of the *Fiend Folio*.

Barbas (Hamlet): Conventional; AL LN; Population 147; 100 gp limit; Assets 735 gp; Isolated (132 mongrelfolk, 8 troglodytes, 7 lizardfolk).

Authority Figure: **Headman Vertram Xapatalo** (male mongrelfolk expert 3/wizard 2).

G1. Town Hall

The largest building in Barbas, and certainly the most well-made, is the town hall. This area is described in "Visiting Barbas" below.

G2. Store

Run by a one-armed and thrice-tongued freak named **Shifred Ogsmoth** (male mongrelfolk expert 3), "Store" remains the first and only establishment of its kind in Barbas. Most of the residents prefer to barter with each other in the streets, a practice that Shifred doesn't mind, as it allows him to snap up bargains and sell them back to the public as need demands. Inside the shop, customers are confronted with a wide variety of goods and knick-knacks, from swords and alchemical gear to fodder and jewelry—and of course, the boisterous proprietor himself.

G3. Shrine to Mictlantecuhtli

While the isolation of Barbas's residents has eroded all but the most cursory knowledge of religion and history, the need for some sort of spirituality has led them to worship an ancient stone statue in the center of the settlement, a crude depiction of a skeletal figure wrapped in a large python. While the villagers know their god only as the "Snake Father," a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check is enough to identify the idol as belonging to Mictlantecuhtli, the Olman god of death. This same check reveals that the rituals surrounding his worship here are entirely the residents' invention, and in some cases go directly against Olman canon, though the few clerics who keep this shrine happily use their healing spells on residents and travelers in exchange for the bare necessities. Whether it's actually Mictlantecuhtli granting these powers is anyone's guess.

G4. Ganfer's Wallow

Rebuilt numerous times over the town's history and maintained as a group effort, the structure known as Ganfer's Wallow is a public hall used for everything from weddings to funerals. **Ganfer** (male lizardfolk expert 2), the gruff and aging lizardfolk in charge of the establishment, makes his living as a professional host and master of ceremonies. Though a creature of few words, Ganfer's halting Common belies the razor wit that's kept him the town's resident entertainer for so long.

G5. The Nursery

The children of Barbas are too precious a commodity to be left in the care of their

parents. As soon as a child is born, it is taken into the custody of the nursery staff, where mongrelfolk midwives and tutors educate and care for the young until the age of fourteen, at which point they're considered adults and sent out to work in the profession most befitting their skills. As a result, Barbas's citizens regard numerous folk in the village as their parents, referring to all older residents as "Mother" and "Father."

G6. The Furnace

Due to the short supply of fuel in the caves, blacksmithing is an expensive and exacting profession. In order to help mitigate this, Barbas's smiths share a communal forge. Situated directly beneath a narrow chimney in the vault's ceiling, the resulting smoke is quickly drawn upward and out of the cavern by a constant draft.

G7. Stoneweep

Although the stream that feeds the central pond in Barbas looks natural, it is in fact artificial. Perhaps the most important duty of Barbas's priests is the daily ritual in which they cast several *create water* spells to replenish the supply of water here. Overflow drifts to the west along an ancient creek bed, evaporating before accumulating enough to burst its meager banks.

Visiting Barbas

If the PCs enter the town after defeating the hook horrors, they are subjected to the nervous stares of residents who peer, awed and anxious, from partially closed hovel doors.

After a few moments, a tall albino mongrelfolk male, far less deformed than the others (to the extent that he almost looks human), steps forward and addresses the party. The crowd grows quiet as he speaks. If the PCs understand Olman, read them the following.

"Greetings, travelers. My name is Vertram, and I am the headman here. I apologize for the... inconveniences... you have faced with our guardians, but the tunnels in this region become more dangerous with each year. Regardless, our city is open to you. Please put away your weapons, and be welcome in Barbas."

If the PCs make no aggressive moves, Vertram nods slightly, and the party suddenly finds itself swarmed by children and other residents, curiously prodding and examining both their gear and their bodies. After a moment Vertram steps forward and leads the party through the narrow streets to the town hall, asking questions and pointing out various landmarks. Once there, he invites the PCs to stay with him in the hall, and immediately orders the preparation of a feast. If Irgzid is still with the party, Vertram is a little suspicious of the troglodyte, but as long as the PCs vouch for him, he treats him as a guest as well.

The town hall itself is two stories tall and significantly larger than the other structures, though built of the same scraps and detritus. Inside, Vertram directs the PCs to several guest rooms with exactly enough beds to go around, mattresses piled high with strange but soft animal pelts, before leading them to a large chamber used for town meetings. The feast is attended by himself and the PCs only, and consists of a bland dinner of mushrooms and tough, salty meat from a monstrous centipede.

Vertram (male mongrelfolk expert 3/wizard 2) is an anomaly among the citizens of Barbas. Despite generations of incest and interbreeding, his Olman blood has remained dominant. While still a mongrelfolk, he could pass as human. That said, life in the caves has still left its mark—in addition to his red eyes and albino skin, Vertram's left cheek bears a swirling, puckered scar that pulls that side of his face into a permanent smirk, and shoulder-length hair does not quite hide the fact that he's completely missing his right ear.

Vertram encourages the party to rest and recoup, bartering with the locals for anything they might need and sharing stories of the surface world. After they've eaten and taken care of any immediate business, however, he sits the party down and confesses to them that he fears for the safety of his people. For many generations, they've lived in relative peace with the troglodytes of the upper caverns. Yet recently, one tribe in particular has become more aggressive, and more warlike. The maze and the hook horrors have done well enough to keep these troglodytes from directly assaulting Barbas, but for the past several years it's been much more dangerous than anyone can remember to travel the outer caverns.

Vertram believes that change is coming to Barbas. He's heard whispers in the air warning of dire events, of something stirring deep below. The citizens of Barbas know of the kopru of Golismorga only as vague stories of monsters that dwell in the forbidden caverns, and while Vertram knows little more than that, he does believe that these creatures, known as the Lords of Dread, have become more active. In these whispers and in his dreams, he's seen images of "men and women from the land of light" who come to Barbas to deliver her from these dark times. He does not go as far to say that the PCs are the ones he's dreamed of, but his expression says enough.

Unfortunately, Vertram knows little more about what awaits the PCs. He can relate the legends and history of Barbas, of how the ancestors of the surface waged war with a city of demon fish deep below, and of how they drew that war to an end by casting down the tear of the god of rain and storms into the depths. This tear burst, and drove the waters of the flooded caverns away, and the spirits of the fallen ancients now guard this region. Their presence holds the waters at bay, and as long as they persist, the demon fish cannot return. Yet Vertram believes that something else has filled the void left by the expulsion of the fish. He fears that whatever has moved into the ruins of Golismorga may be seeking the vile secrets of the demon fish, and that if they discover these secrets they may become an even greater threat to the world.

Vertram is prepared to let the PCs stay in Barbas as long as they wish, but once they speak of a need to leave, he asks if they would like to see one of the demon fish. If the PCs would, he smiles cryptically, gathers several mongrelfolk

guards, and leads them back through the maze and down to area **H**.

As the PCs leave Barbas, they notice its residents silently packing their few belongings, and note many expressions of sadness and fear. If they ask Vertram, he explains that his visions have warned him that the doom that comes to Barbas cannot be diverted. After he returns from guiding the party to the Cavern of the Sleeping God, he intends to lead his people up to higher caves, or perhaps even the surface. Barbas's time has come and gone. If the PCs return here later in the adventure, they find the place deserted.

H. Cavern of the Sleeping God

Elevation: 2,300 feet below sea level
Distance from the Way to Barbas: 2 miles

On the far side of this large cavern, a shimmering blue wall extends all the way to the sixty-foot-high ceiling. Across its surface, ghostly Olman warriors shimmer and flicker. Just beyond it, the occasional bubble or flash of scales reveals the presence of thousands of gallons of water, their awesome weight held at bay by the shell of energy.

On the floor in the center of the cave is a strange-looking mound of stone shaped like an enormous, petrified fish.

Though aboleths are capable of leaving the water and dragging themselves along the ground with their tentacles when necessary, their mucous-like skin dries out quickly, eventually hardening to a shell so stiff that they find themselves unable to move at all. In this situation, the effectively immortal creatures do not die, but instead enter a state of hibernation known as "the Long Dreaming" until immersed in water, at which point they return to their normal state in a matter of minutes. While petrified, an aboleth remains awake and aware of its surroundings, but is unable to take any actions, even purely mental ones. Over time, this horrific state drives most aboleths mad, and this particular one (caught over a thousand years ago by the detonation of *Tlaloc's Tear*) is no exception.

If the PCs were led here by Vertram, he unveils his prize with considerable pride and pomp. Though the citizens of Barbas discovered the creature long ago, few have been brave enough to place an ear to its side and hear the sloshing, rhythmic thud of the creature's inner organs, and fewer still have been granted permission by the headman to study it, lest they somehow awaken the sleeping giant. That, however, is exactly what he recommends the party do, urging them to "open it up" and learn as much as they can from the creature before continuing on to Golismorga.

PCs who approach and examine the hibernating horror can make a DC 17 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check to recognize the petrified fish as an aboleth. A DC 17 Heal check made while examining it reveals that the aboleth is still alive, but in some form of hibernation that renders it immobile, even when attacked. The leathery, dried husk grants the aboleth a +6 bonus on its natural armor (offsetting the penalty for being reduced to a Dexterity of 0) and damage reduction 5/adamantine. Nonetheless, since the aboleth is unable to defend itself, the PCs gain no experience for killing it.

I. Temple of the Ancient Ones (EL 8)

Elevation: 4,000 feet below sea level
Distance from the Way to Barbas: 20 miles
Distance from the Cavern of the Sleeping God: 16 miles

The tunnel walls here change suddenly from rough natural stone to an intricately carved corridor bearing glyphs and mosaics of Olman design, just before they open into an immense flooded chamber. The walls of the square chamber rise up in steps,

forming an inverted ziggurat with an apex forty feet above the dark waters that flood the room to just below the edge of the entrance. The floor is a ruin of smashed pillars and small islands constructed in the same roughly pyramidal fashion. In the center, a line of destroyed columns and altars protrudes a few feet above the surface, creating a makeshift bridge that dips briefly into the water before reaching the continuing passage on the far side.

This chamber is where the troglodytes meet with the koprus to receive *shadow pearls*. This close to his aboleth patron, Irgzid grows more and more excited, but does his best to maintain his composure. Any PC that speaks with Irgzid within a mile of this location can make a Sense Motive check opposed by Irgzid's Bluff check to realize the troglodyte is just barely restraining his excitement. If questioned, Irgzid admits that they're coming close to where the troglodytes receive shipments of *shadow pearls* from the Lords of Dread. Only if magically compelled or threatened with a successful Intimidate check does he reveal the presence of the aboleth N'glothnoru, at which point he begs the PCs to speak to the creature for fear of the implied repercussions for his tribe.

The water in this chamber varies from 10 to 50 feet in depth, and is thick with dark, foul-smelling algae and ribbons of slime from the long confinement of its prisoner.

The troglodytes arrive at the northern landing on the day of the meeting and wait for the koprus to arrive at the southern entrance. When the koprus arrive, one swims across the room while the others stand guard, prepared to leap into the water to punish their prisoner (see Creature, below) if it causes any problems. Emerging at the troglodyte end of the room, he unfolds a *portable hole* that contains the latest shipment of 1d4 *shadow pearls*, still cradled in their bilestone shells; the troglodytes take the *pearls* and load them onto a palanquin made of bones and leather, handing the listless, drugged slaves provided by their Crimson Fleet contacts over to the koprus in payment. The slaves are loaded into the *portable hole* and the kopru returns with his kin to Golismorga, while the troglodytes return to Laogroat to crack open the bilestone shells, remove the

Aboleth Master Glyphs

Aboleths have developed a method of creating powerful magic glyphs. Most of these glyphs simply duplicate the effect of a *glyph of warding*, but there are other, more powerful glyphs called master glyphs that can be used to create more potent effects, such as enhancing their supernatural abilities or harming enemies who draw too near. Master glyphs affect a creature upon its initial entry into the glyph's range. The effects of multiple glyphs do not stack; the glyph with the highest caster level suppresses any lesser glyph effects. Like other magic items, a glyph can be destroyed (although this typically requires the destruction of the structure or surface on which the master glyph is inscribed)—the aboleth glyphs in Golismorga have long since been ruined. Some kopru have mastered the feat of crafting master glyphs as well—the *glyph of suppression* in area I being a prime example of their work.

Glyph of Suppression: Any aboleth within 120 feet of this glyph cannot use its enslave special attack.

Moderate abjuration; CL 9th; Craft Aboleth Glyph (*Lords of Madness* 22), *break enchantment*; Price 40,000 gp.

shadow pearls, and wait for the next visit from Scuttlecove to begin the process anew.

Creature: The aboleth N'glothnoru was trapped in this cavern when *Tlaloc's Tear* drove the water from these caves. Quickly succumbing to the Long Dreaming, the stranded aboleth was the first one discovered by the Olmans who came down to investigate the results their work, and it became a symbol for the triumph over Golismorga. The Olmans erected a temple around the dreaming aboleth, carving away at the cavern walls to surround their captured foe with the marks of their own civilization.

After the Olman empire collapsed, N'glothnoru spent several hundred years alone in this isolated cavern. Not long after the koprus discovered the ruins of Golismorga, a band of scouts came across this cavern and were bemused by the aboleth's plight. They'd seen other petrified aboleths elsewhere, but this one's obvious torment amused them. Using aboleth glyph magic they'd discovered and mastered in Golismorga, kopru priests inscribed an inverted *glyph of extension*, transforming it into a *glyph of suppression* that blocks N'glothnoru's enslave ability. They then used a *decanter of endless water* to fill the bottom half of the chamber, awakening the aboleth into its new prison.

The aboleth has been tortured and tormented by the koprus for hundreds of years now. Indeed, much of what the koprus know now about Golismorga's secrets was pried from N'glothnoru. Yet despite the period of Long Dreaming and the following centuries of equally frustrating torment, N'glothnoru has retained a good portion of its cognition. While it knows that it stands a good chance of overpowering its oppressors and escaping the chamber, it has no idea how far it is to open water and doesn't relish the idea of entering the excruciating Long Dreaming again. For centuries, it has been content to wait and see what happens.

N'glothnoru remains ever vigilant, and as soon as it notices the PCs' arrival in the cave, it uses *veil* on itself to assume the shape of a ghostly troglodyte highpriest, then uses *project image* to manifest an image of its disguise atop the eastern balcony. Even if the PCs are stealthy about their entrance, if Irgzid is with them, the troglodyte moves ahead of the PCs into the room to loudly announce himself, saying, "I have brought you the heroes you asked for, Father! What do you wish of them?"

Through the *projected image* of his troglodyte priest-ghost, N'glothnoru addresses the PCs (and Irgzid, if he's there), telling them it is a manifestation of the tormented spirits of this realm. It speaks in Draconic at first, but due to its Memory Eater feat, it can easily switch to any other language to communicate if it wishes.

N'glothnoru wants one thing, and one thing only: the destruction of the Cerulean Curtain. It knows that something in Golismorga is sustaining the barrier, and gladly relates this information, telling the PCs that the Curtain's anchor lies within the ruins of Golismorga, and that it is somehow connected to the Olman god of rain, Tlaloc. In addition, being present for countless *shadow pearl* hand-offs has given it a vague outline of the related plot, though it remains ignorant of the plot's true mastermind. As soon as the PCs arrive, the aboleth realizes that its salvation is at hand—if it plays its cards right. In talking with the PCs, it uses any means necessary to convince the characters to continue on to Golismorga to break the Curtain, lying or telling the truth with equal ease and relying on its powerful alien mind to shield its true motives. For some parties, it might offer a portion of the truth—that destroying the Cerulean Curtain and flooding Golismorga is the best way to take out the koprus' *shadow pearl* operation completely—though whether it states this as itself or in the guise of the troglodyte spirit depends on the party. It might even attempt blatant bribery or suggest that the koprus are prepared to launch an all-out *shadow pearl* attack on the surface world. Whatever the story, N'glothnoru tries to ensure that the party comes away from the conversation with two key pieces of information: that the Cerulean Curtain is generated from somewhere in Golismorga, and that destroying it is the only way to permanently disrupt the *shadow pearl* creation process.

N'glothnoru has no interest in combat, but if attacked it uses its *projected image* to create *hypnotic patterns* and illusions to try to trick the PCs into entering the water below so it can attack them physically. If also tries to trick the party into destroying the *glyph of suppression* on the ceiling above, perhaps claiming that it is the only thing that keeps the water in this chamber from vanishing.

N'GLOTHNORU **CR 8**

Elite aboleth

LE Gargantuan aberration (aquatic)

Monster Manual 9

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +13, Spot +13

Aura mucus cloud (1-ft., Fort DC 21)
Languages all

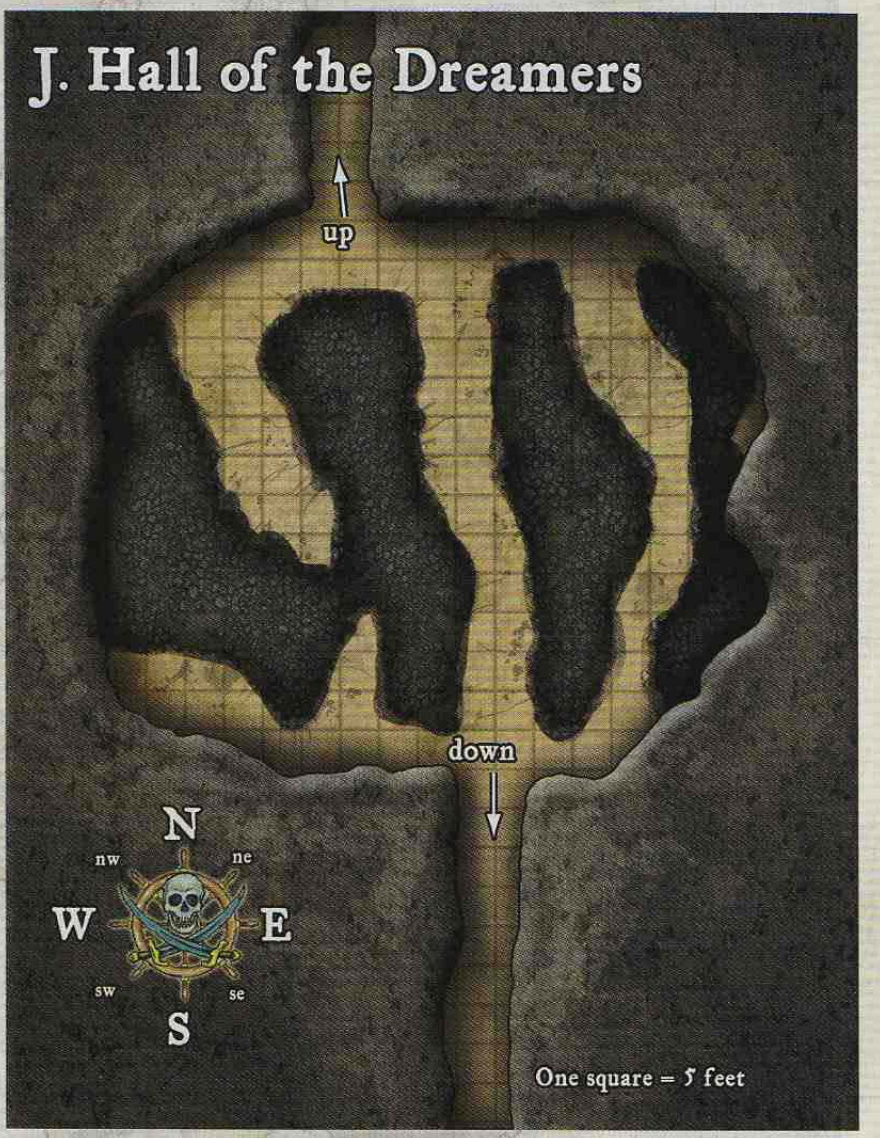
AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 15
hp 92 (8 HD)
Fort +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.
Melee 4 tentacles +13 (1d8+9 plus slime, DC 21)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +23
Special Actions enslave (DC 19, cannot use in this encounter)
Psionics (CL 16th)
At will—*hypnotic pattern* (DC 17), *illusory wall* (DC 19), *mirage arcana* (DC 20), *persistent image* (DC 20), *programmed image* (DC 21), *project image* (DC 22), *veil* (DC 21)
3/day—quickened *illusory wall* (DC 19)

Abilities Str 29, Dex 14, Con 24, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 21
Feats Improved Natural Attack (tentacle), Memory Eater, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*illusory wall*)
Skills Concentration +18, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Listen +13, Spot +13, Swim +17

Memory Eater This feat (*Lords of Madness* 22) allows N'glothnoru to retain all of the memories of any eaten creature, granting it the ability to make untrained skill checks in any skill and the ability to speak all languages.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs avoid combat with N'glothnoru and learn about *Tlaloc's Tear* and the koprus from it, give them a CR 9 experience award.



J. Hall of the Dreamers (EL 12)

Elevation: 7,000 feet below sea level
Distance from the Temple of the Ancient Ones: 17 miles

The passageway opens into a roughly circular cavern. A ten-foot-wide ledge runs across the northern and southern faces of the room, with a passage leading away from each. Graceful arcs of natural stone bridge the two ledges in three places, although the easternmost bridge has collapsed in the center, leaving a five-foot-wide gap. Above, the ceiling rises up to a height of nearly forty feet, while below the ground drops away an equal distance into a rubble-strewn gulf. What appear to be six immense petrified fish lie on the floor of the crevice. The sound of whispering wells up from below, and the ground looks almost like it's moving.

The natural stone bridges are wide but smooth and slippery, with edges that slope away dramatically from a fairly narrow band of level ground down the center of the bridge. A character who runs or fights on a bridge must make a DC 12 Balance check. Failure by 5 or more indicates a slip and 40-foot-fall into the rubble below.

The six fishlike shapes are aboleth that have succumbed to the Long Dreaming. They've lain in close proximity for centuries, unable to make contact with each other or affect their surroundings. Yet they are not alone.

The whispering sound and strangely moving ground are the result of chittering swarms of grubs, white spiders, whip scorpions, centipedes, and other vermin. Although horrifying to observe, this immense swarm is physically harmless to larger creatures. Nonetheless, any creature standing on the ground in the pit is quickly swarmed by the creatures, and must make a DC 14 Fortitude save each round or be nauseated for 1 round. The larger vermin that dwell in this cavern are not so hindered by the swarms.

Creatures: While the majority of the insects swarming in the pit are harmless vermin, the three horse-sized arachnids that clamber about on the walls are not. These monsters are blackfang rhagodessas, spider-like creatures with dark brown and yellow striped bodies. The front pair of their ten spindly legs end

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in terrible discs studded with dozens of hooked suckers. Even more horrifying are their oversized heads dominated by twin pairs of vertically snapping black mandibles the size of scimitars. Characters may recognize the general shape of these monsters from their first encounter aboard the *Blue Nixie* so long ago, yet these creatures are nearly three times the size of the rhagodessas they fought in Sasserine.

The blackfang rhagodessas quickly clamber up the walls to attack anyone who enters, and pursue as long as they can to complete their meals.

Blackfang Rhagodessas (3) **CR 9**
Advanced rhagodessa
N Large vermin
Dungeon #139 46
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14
hp 102 (12 HD)
Immune vermin traits
Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.
Melee 2 pedipalps +17 (0 damage) and bite +15 (2d6+13)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +26
Atk Options Spring Attack, improved grab (pedipalp), powerful bite

Abilities Str 28, Dex 10, Con 18, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 6
Feats Multiattack, Spring Attack

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a rhagodessa must hit a creature of its size or smaller with a pedipalp attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it can make a bite attack as a free action, gaining a +4 bonus on its attack roll with this attack. The hooks and suckers the rhagodessa uses to clutch prey tear flesh if a grapple creature escapes with an opposed grapple check, causing 1d6 points of damage to the escaping creature. A creature that escapes with Escape Artist does not suffer this damage. A rhagodessa has a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks.

Powerful Bite (Ex) A rhagodessa's bite is always a secondary attack, yet the powerful muscles in its jaws allow it to apply 1.5 times its Strength modifier to damage rolls with it.

Feats A rhagodessa gains Multiattack and Spring Attack as bonus feats.

Treasure: A DC 25 Search check uncovers the skeletal body of a long-dead kuo-toa explorer, obscured by the swarm of vermin (if the vermin are disposed of, the body is automatically discovered). Most of the kuo-toa's gear has rotted away, but glittering on one of its skeletal fingers is a coral *ring of evasion*.

PART THREE: CITY OF MADNESS

Miles beneath the Isle of Dread's central mesa and the ruins of ancient Thanaclan festers a cavity in the endless rock. There, over the course of eons, the aboleths raised their profane, half-living city: Golismorga. For uncountable centuries they worked their foul plots, lit only by the unhealthy violet light of the Pillars of Y'chak, until the Olman people came to the land above. And with the aid of their god of rain, they drove the water from the city.

For centuries, Golismorga lay unclaimed, until the koprus, led through the labyrinthine darkness by the whispers of their unholy master Demogorgon, discovered the dried and gasping ruins. In that pit of insanity, the Prince of Demons taught his favored priests how to utilize the foul creations of the aboleths and work bilestone, the secretion of unfathomable beings known as Elder Evils. Koprus have haunted Golismorga's ruins ever since, working the will of their demon master, though harassed by seemingly endless abominable remnants of the aboleths' ancient rule.

Golismorga

Golismorga occupies a massive, 300-foot-high cavern nearly 2,000 feet across and over 3,000 feet wide, surrounded by numerous adjoining caves. Once filled completely with water, the aboleth metropolis contains structures of rock, hardened mucus, living flesh, and other even more alien materials. When the ancient Olmans unleashed *Tlaloc's Tear* upon the city, the banished waters not only drove out the aboleths but ruined many of the city's structures, which used the water for support. Stone buildings have partially collapsed, and organic edifices have gasped, rotted, and suffered centuries-long declines, growing thick with mold and infection.

Golismorga is a terrible ruin of stone rubble, rampant fungi, and great hunks of black, fleshy resin too foul to decay. After their encounter with N'glothnoru or the use of divination spells, the PCs likely have one of two objectives in mind—an assault on the kopru-held section of the ruins, or a seek-and-destroy mission to *Tlaloc's Tear*. While both locations are relatively close by, the mazelike nature of the ruins means that making these treks by foot takes three times as long. Flight makes travel only slightly easier, as the city's gnarled spires and fleshy appendages twist at impossible angles as they claw toward the cavern ceiling.

K. Entrance to Golismorga

Elevation: 10,500 feet below sea level
Distance from the Hall of the Dreamers: 6 miles

Within this immense cavern broods a realm of gigantic polyps and intricate fungi so large and elaborate that they seem almost to compliment the twisted towers, temples, the myriad constructions of an insane city. Ruined citadels of cyclopean grandeur tangle amid spires that look to have been grown rather than built—homes for beings with unspeakable forms. Senseless bridges reach to suicide heights, dropping away into squamous slums and melted ghettoes. Seemingly accidental avenues and inaccessible alleys form an unfathomable maze, a labyrinth that stretches to the subterranean horizon. Across it all bulge images of gnarled, tentacled things and red domes that glisten like unblinking, demoniac eyes. The already stale air has grown foul and close in this place, as if the smell of rot was somehow trying to crowd out the final gasp of freshness reaching these forsaken depths.

Bursting from the demented cityscape, three titanic columns of unearthly violet flame churn silently like the pillars of some gigantic temple, bathing the entire cavern in a nauseating violet light—a light that

seems somehow more horrible than the darkness that lurks at the edges of this nightmare grotto.

The cavernous ledge is approximately 200 feet from the cavern floor. Eroded smooth, the walls are difficult to climb, requiring a DC 27 Climb check to traverse without aid.

L. Secondary Entrances

Four additional entrances exist into Golismorga at each location marked "L" on the map. These tunnels eventually lead back to the Cerulean Curtain, arriving at points where the caves are flooded. Little but monstrous vermin dwell in these tunnels.

M. Deep Entrances

These four lower passageways connect to Golismorga via deep rents in the cavern floor (area **N**). These passageways lead even deeper into the Underdark, often leading to smaller abandoned aboleth outposts similar to (but smaller than) Golismorga. These passages become flooded once they reach the Cerulean Curtain, and lead on from there to undersea exits.

N. Chasms

Four deep chasms drop away from the cave floor in Golismorga. These chasms vary from one hundred to three hundred feet deep, and allow access to the deep entrances to the cavern. Ropers, monstrous vermin, and climbing oozes are common in these foul depths.

O. Pillars of Y'chak

Four violet columns of churning fire light Golismorga (although the fourth is set in a side cavern to the northwest). These magical pillars of fire are ancient aboleth creations that survived the detonation of *Tlaloc's Tear*, and still provide an unearthly light. These eldritch columns of fire are monuments to one of the Elder Evils, an entity called Y'chak who, unlike the majority of Elder Evils, takes an active interest in the ruin of civilization. The fact that these monuments survived the ruin of Golismorga is not coincidental.

The pillars of Y'chak radiate a cold, nauseating aura. Any creature that approaches within 50 feet of one of these pillars must make a DC 30 Fortitude save to resist becoming nauseated for 2d6 rounds. A creature that enters one of the pillars must make a DC 30 Fortitude save each round to avoid being destroyed; a creature slain by the fires of Y'chak can only be restored to life by *miracle*, *true resurrection*, or *wish*. The denizens of Golismorga have long since learned to avoid the pillars.

P. Tlaloc's Crater

This area is detailed in Part Four.

Q. Holashner's Ziggurat

This area is detailed in Part Five.

Other Encounters in Golismorga

The ruins of Golismorga are extensive, and far from safe. Rather than detail numerous keyed encounter locations, this section provides several encounters that could occur anywhere in the ruins. These encounters have been left fairly undetailed, so you can expand upon them as you wish, tailoring them to your campaign. The PCs should have at least one encounter before they reach either destination if they head directly to Tlaloc's Crater or Holashner's Ziggurat.

Evidence of Life

As the PCs explore, they witness ever more evidence of Golismorga's oppidan dementia. While not immediately dangerous, the party randomly (roll 1d4) sees one of the following: (1) A monstrous tongue, split in a triple fork, rolls from a structure's fleshy abscess, licks the red domes upon its surface, then recoils; (2) a great pillar of violet flame nearly 60 feet high appears in the PCs' path, burns for 3 rounds, then vanishes; (3) a two-story-tall lung heaves on the side of a structure, gasping irregularly; (4) the walls of a building are alive with cilia that retract if the PCs touch them, causing the building to growl.

Kopru Scouts (EL 10)

The koprus dwelling near Holashner's Ziggurat regularly send groups into the surrounding ruins, both to patrol for intruders and to seek ancient magic. Each of these scouting parties consists of four koprus and eight dominated troglodyte slaves. Each pair of slaves bear a single kopru on a leathery palenquin. If these scouts detect the PCs, they attempt to dominate them and bring them before their leader for questioning. Alternatively, if the PCs are stealthy, they might follow the koprus back to their redoubt at Holashner's Ziggurat. In all, there are two bands of kopru scouts active in Golismorga; once they are defeated, the PCs face no more koprus until they near Holashner's Ziggurat.

A kopru is only humanoid from the torso up. It's lower body is eellike, with a tail consisting of three powerful flukes, each ending in a cruel hook. The creature's taloned hands are webbed, and its head is that of a horrible large-eyed fish with facial tentacles surrounding a pucker-like maw filled with tiny sharp teeth.

KOPRUS (4) **CR 6**

CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual II 134
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Aquan, Olman

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13
hp 36 (8 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee tail slap +10 (1d6+2) and 2 claws +8 (1d4+1) and bite +8 (1d4+1)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +17
Atk Options constrict 3d6+3, improved grab (tail slap)
Special Actions dominate person (DC 16)

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ amphibious
Feats Ability Focus (dominate person), Iron Will, Multiattack
Skills Concentration +8, Escape Artist +8, Move Silently +6, Search +4, Swim +10
Possessions coral holy symbol of Demogorgon worth 50 gp

Dominate Person (Su) A kopru can attempt to dominate person once per day, as the spell (CL 10th), save that the range is 180

feet and the duration is eight days. A DC 16 Will save resists the domination. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) If a kopru hits a target its own size or smaller with a tail slap, it can attempt to start a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it can constrict. A kopru has a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks.

Troglodytes (8): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 246.

Scholarly Devourer (EL 11)

An ancient devourer named Rakis-Ka came to Golismorga several months ago and became fascinated by the ruins. He is particularly interested in the lore of the Elder Evils, and hopes to discover a way to feed upon and draw power from the endless essences of these godlike beings. It's likely he notices the PCs' entrance into Golismorga and seeks them out to discover what they know of the Elder Evils and arrogantly converse about what he has learned (little more than the beings' names and what structures the aboleth built to honor them, see page 27 of *Lords of Madness*). You can use an encounter with Rakis-Ka to help guide the PCs toward Holashner's Ziggurat or Tlaloc's Crater if they need some direction but regardless of how amenably the PCs conduct themselves, the devourer is tempted by the party's essences and stalks them not long after they part ways, intent on consuming at least one of their souls.

Rakis-Ka, devourer: hp 78; *Monster Manual* 58.

Screaming Buildings

A blood-curdling scream rises from some distant place within the city. A moment later, the sound echoes back, although slightly distorted. Then again it echoes, though taking on a gurgling tone, and again, closer, even more distorted. Any PC that makes a DC 18 Listen check perceives that the "echoes" are actually coming from the fleshy buildings themselves.

Shaboath Pools (EL 12)

The PCs come to an area decorated with a pair of shallow pools of dark water. Damaged stone statues of tentacled eyes devouring stars and suns coil out of each pool. The pools are still filled with what looks like brackish water, but a character may make a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check to notice that there is something fundamentally wrong with the fluid. These waters are actually ancient constructs left behind by the aboleths, guardians crafted from their own slimy extrusions known as shaboath golems. A shapeless mass of semi-transparent sludge and water, a shaboath creates four large tentacles to crush its victims once it attacks. Largely indistinguishable from water when at rest, the constructs lay in ambush and do not attack until a non-aboleth comes within ten feet of a pool's edge. Once one activates, the other does as well, and both fight until destroyed.

SHABOATHS (2) **CR 10**

N construct (cold)

Lords of Madness 166

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20

hp 60 (11 HD); **DR** 10/—

Immune acid, cold

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

Weakness vulnerable to fire

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee 4 slams +14 (2d10+7)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +19

Atk Options improved grab

Special Actions engulf, wall of ice

Abilities Str 25, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

SQ watery concealment

Engulf (Ex) A shaboath can attempt to engulf a grappled opponent of its size or smaller by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, a victim takes 2d10+10 points of crushing damage per round. If the opponent cannot breathe water, it must hold its breath or begin to drown. An engulfed creature can escape by making a successful grapple check or Escape Artist check. A shaboath can engulf 1 Large, 2 Medium, 4 Small, 8 Tiny, 16 Diminutive, or 32 Fine creatures at one time.

Wall of Ice (Su) A shaboath can generate a wall of ice (as the spell, CL 20th) once per minute as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Watery Concealment (Ex) An underwater shaboath is difficult to see, and gains concealment (50% miss chance).

Sloughed Skin (EL 9)

The vibrations of the party's passage disrupt the husk of a nearby rotting building, trigging an avalanche of decaying fleshlike resin. The resulting slide is 80 feet wide with a 40-foot bury zone in the center and a 20-foot slide zone on either side. Treat this as a normal avalanche, as detailed on page 90 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but any creature damaged by the massive amount of decaying flesh must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract red ache (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 292).

Wandering Brain Collector (EL 7)

When *Tlaloc's Tear* detonated, the resulting storm of Olman magic and failing aboleth incantations caused a momentary ripple in reality. In that instant, a powerful creature from the Far Realm, a hideous monster called a neh-thalggu (brain collector) was drawn into the world. The otherworldly thing

Affiliation Awards

If your PCs belong to any of the affiliations detailed in DRAGON #348's "Savage Tidings," goals exist in "The Lightless Depths" that can increase their affiliation score. Each of the following criterions grants an affiliation score modifier of +1.

Church of the Whirling Fury: Rescue Jakara from Laogroat.

The Dawn Council: Establish safe passage from Emraag the Glutton.

The Scarlet Brotherhood: Deliver someone suffering from vile rigidity for use as research.

The Seekers: Donate the bilestone-encased unfinished *shadow pearls* to Seeker holdings.

The Witchwardens: Collect rubbings or sketches of several ruined aboleth master glyphs from Golismorga.

Zelkarune's Horns: Salvage a dead brain collector or the bilewretch of Holashner as an exotic trophy.

lingered in Golismorga for a time, feasting on the aboleths' terrified skum servants and eventually spawning countless young. The original neh-thalggu had long since departed Golismorga even before the koprus settled here, but its spawn have lingered in the city over the centuries, seeking brains even as they desire to stay near *Tlaloc's Tear*, hoping it might again open a way to their terrifying home.

Brain Collector: hp 85; see Appendix.

Worm Food (EL 12)

A dull grinding noise resonates from around a corner. Investigation reveals the body of a gigantic purple worm, its body pinned to the ground by a terrible building with a bulbous black exterior riddled with gill-like gashes. The building seems to have partially collapsed on the massive predator, but the way rows of pale, cartilaginous steeples have fallen make it look more like the structure bit down on the worm as it slithered by. Unable to escape and slowly bleeding to death, the worm vents its primal rage on any creature that comes within its reach. Although it cannot move, the purple worm can make full use of its attacks upon anything that stumbles in reach of its bite or sting.

Wounded Purple Worm: hp 200 (currently 120); *Monster Manual* 211.

PART FOUR: TLALOC'S CRATER

A wide crater in the shattered cavern floor has become an abscess for all the pungent fluids that seep and bleed from the alien city. Rent as if by some great impact, the cracked depression blossoms with sickly molds and tumid blue and white mushrooms several heads taller than a full-grown man. Languid veins of mucus trickle down the sides of the crater to pool at the basin's floor, leaving only a small patch of fractured earth undespoiled. At the crater's bottom sits the ten-foot-wide stone head of a reptilian creature with bulging eyes, a forked tongue, and a headdress of feathers and spikes. The stone head is cracked and damaged, and as the black sludge pools around the stump of its neck it sizzles and evaporates into swirling blue-green wisps of vapor.

When the priests of Thanaclan sought to purge Golismorga, they used their great magic to bore a shaft directly from their city into the aboleths' realm below, puncturing the roof of the cavern directly above this point. They then sent *Tlaloc's Tear* hurtling into the depths, accompanied by their greatest warriors and priests. Moving into position over the center of the dread city, the terrible weapon of the god of rain worked its potent magic, driving all the water from Golismorga and holding it back indefinitely. Its initial purpose fulfilled, the artifact spiraled into the collapsing city below, striking the trembling cavern floor with the force of its deific creator's might and opening a sizable crater upon impact. *Tlaloc's Tear* has remained there for centuries.

Tlaloc's crater is 150 feet across and 50 feet deep. Its sides angle at a 45° slope, requiring a DC 10 Climb check to traverse. The crater floor is strewn with rubble and counts as difficult terrain. The fungi and bilious secretions that trickle down the walls of the crater here are as dangerous as they are disgusting. The patches of mold, despite their noxious green hue, react to motion as yellow mold (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 76). The rivulets of corruption are ripe with disease—anyone who touches the stuff must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or contract slimy doom (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 292). The pool of infectious ooze at the crater's base is five feet deep.

The stone head at the center of the crater can be identified with a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check as the head of Tlaloc, the Olman god of rain.

Creatures: The koprus know of this site and the strange magic that lingers within, but have been deterred from investigating it more thoroughly by a horror beyond reasoning that dwells within. This is an immense neh-thalggu, one of the original spawn of the alien that visited this site over ten centuries ago. After a millennium of studying the ripples of magic energy around *Tlaloc's Tear*, this gigantic brain collector believes that, given a few more short decades, it will have determined the method of awaking the ancient artifact to rend time and space again, allowing it to return to its true home and complete its transformation into a monster of epic potential.

Until that point, the neh-thalggu guards this site with a horrific tenacity.

NEH-THALGGU SCION **CR 14**

Advanced brain collector loremaster 4
CE Huge aberration
Dungeon Master's Guide 191, Page 64
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +22, Spot +2
Languages Aboleth, Neh-thalggu; telepathy 60 ft.

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 20
hp 242 (257 with *false life*, 20 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune critical hits, disease, poisok
Fort +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +17

Spd 60 ft.
Melee bite +25 (4d8+18)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +34
Special Actions extract brain, metamagic
Spells Prepared (CL 10th, +25 touch, +14 ranged touch)
5th (5/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 25), *hold monster* (DC 25), *telekinesis* (DC 25)
4th (7/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 24), *dimension door*, *confusion* (DC 24), *greater invisibility*
3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *haste*, *tongues*, *vampiric touch*
2nd (8/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 22), *false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 22), *mirror image*, *resist energy*, *see invisibility*, *web* (DC 22)
1st (9/day)—*comprehend languages*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 21), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *true strike*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 20), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 20)

Abilities Str 35, Dex 12, Con 26, Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 30
SQ otherworldly physiology, no breath, loremaster lore +9, loremaster secrets (weapon trick, dodge trick)

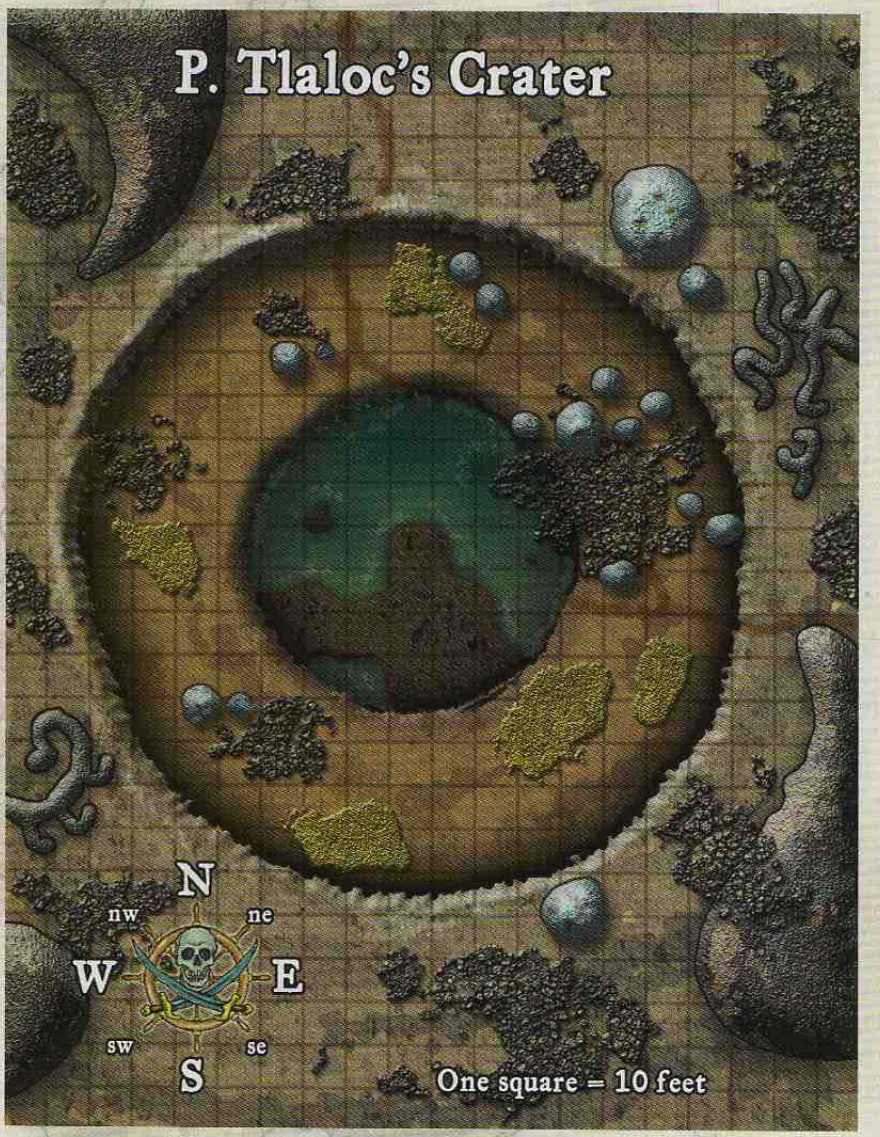
Feats Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Maximize Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Widen Spell

Skills Concentration +27, Hide +12, Jump +43, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (the planes) +24, Listen +22, Spellcraft +26

Tactics: The neh-thalggu scion spends most of its time at the bottom of the crater, endlessly studying *Tlaloc's Tear*. It emerges only to defend its territory or to seek out new brains, hoping that one of its meals might some day possess useful knowledge for how the artifact works. The creature starts each day by casting extended *mage armor* and *false life* spells on itself, and if it has a chance to prepare for combat, also casts *greater invisibility, see invisibility, fly, shield, haste,* and *mirror image.*

The aberration knows that the ooze and fungi in its crater are dangerous to other creatures, and often moves through the mold patches to trigger explosions of spores, or uses *telekinesis* to hurl foes into the diseased ooze. The brain collector doesn't pause to extract brains unless it can do so safely or if it desperately needs a new spell to handle an unexpected situation; the monster's ability to effectively relearn spells on the fly by absorbing brains gives it a unique degree of magical diversity.

In any event, the neh-thalggu has little interest in perishing when it's only a few perceived decades away from ascension. If brought below 40 hit points, it attempts to flee via *dimension door*, returning in 1d4 hours to check on the situation in the crater. If it realizes the PCs wish to destroy *Tlaloc's Tear*, though, it fights to the death to protect what it believes to be the key to its apotheosis.



Destroying Tlaloc's Tear

While few would mistake the Olman god of rain and fertility for a sympathetic deity, Tlaloc is ferocious in protecting his worshippers. When Thanaclan offered prayer and bountiful sacrifice to their gods for a solution to the threat of Golismorga, Tlaloc answered by speaking to his high priest through the head of one of his statues. He told this priest he must take this head and deliver it unto the enemy, and thence Tlaloc would speak to them.

Tlaloc's Tear is this head, a stone representation of Tlaloc's reptilian visage upon which seem to swirl all the colors of the rain and sea. The artifact's sole purpose was the creation of the Cerulean Curtain that drove the waters from Golismorga and disrupted the mental control the aboleths had over their enslaved armies. Today, the *Tear* serves only as an anchor for the curtain, and as long as the Cerulean Curtain exists, it also anchors *Tlaloc's Tear*. It cannot be moved, physically or magically, from this location.

Yet time and the eldritch influence of the brooding alien city around it have worn upon its visage and strength. The head is cracked in some places and appears to be crumbling away to dust in others. Once indestructible, *Tlaloc's Tear* is now practically begging for release from its ancient duty. The head can be destroyed by enough physical damage, and has no particular protection against spells like *stone shape*. As a result, destroying the Cerulean Curtain's anchor is surprisingly simple.

As soon as *Tlaloc's Tear* is destroyed, the ever-present whispers suddenly rise to a crescendo and then fall silent as the Cerulean Curtain parts and an entire ocean of water is released from a millineum-long restraint. Walls of seawater cascade down through the tunnels, discernable at first as a distant rumbling with a DC 20 Listen check. For the next

three hours, earth tremors increasingly shake the city of Golismorga (Reflex DC 12 to avoid being knocked prone) as this low rumbling increases in volume until finally the four upper entrances (area **K**) transform into tumultuous waterfalls. While the PCs might fear that they must now rush to complete any remaining objectives, this is something of a misconception. Entire mazes must refill below Golismorga before it becomes a drowned city once again. From the point at which *Tlaloc's Tear* is destroyed, the PCs have approximately 16 hours to escape the city before being forced to deal with dangerously rising waters.

A greater potential threat lies in the reawakening of the dozens of slumbering aboleths in the caverns surrounding Golismorga. Within minutes of the waters rushing over their dried bodies, they awaken from their long sleep. Lethargic and with only enough water to make the barest movements, by the time Golismorga is once again flooded, the aboleth have already begun the grim task of reclaiming their ancient home. They may recognize that they have the PCs to thank for their salvation, or they may not—in either event, these hateful alien fish see any intruders in Golismorga (PCs included) as fit for slavery at best.

Tlaloc's Tear: 5 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 450.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: For destroying *Tlaloc's Tear* and flooding Golismorga, give the PCs a CR 12 experience award.

PART FIVE: THE HEART OF MADNESS

The koprus have carved out a small demesne of their own along the eastern wall of Golismorga, centered on an ancient aboleth ziggurat first viewed by their religious leaders in visions granted them by Demogorgon. The bulk of the fragmented kopru empire is not to be found here, nor in the ruins of Thanaclan on Taboo Island above (see "City of Broken Idols" in the next issue of DUNGEON)—they dwell in flooded caverns elsewhere under the Isle of Dread, close enough to the surface that they can visit as needed.

Holashner's Ziggurat is a 140-foot-wide ziggurat. It was here, long ago, that the aboleth kept repositories of bilestone to honor Holashner, one of the Elder Evils. This bilestone, transformed back into its liquid state by an ancient abomonation created by the aboleth long ago for expressly this purpose, was precisely what Demogorgon needed to complete the creation of the *shadow pearls*.

Very few koprus are allowed into the ziggurat. Currently, 38 normal koprus, 16 hulking kopru behemoths, 10 dark nagas the koprus have allied with, and 70 enslaved troglodytes dwell in the ruins immediately surrounding the ziggurat. The koprus have created numerous pools of water (using a *decanter of endless water*) to serve them as shelters where they can dwell comfortably outside their preferred aquatic environment. They find the surrounding architecture of Golismorga strangely soothing, yet have not done much to explore the ruins. Demogorgon's will brought them to the ziggurat, but they dare not stray far (with the exception of the two scouting parties detailed in Part Three). As a result, it's difficult for the PCs to whittle away at the creatures' ranks. Any alarm quickly rouses all the inhabitants of the community, and while the normal kopru and half the behemoths move to engage the invaders, the remaining behemoths rush to reinforce those already stationed at Holashner's Ziggurat. Ulioth emerges from within the ziggurat quickly to join the battle.

An easier way to infiltrate Holashner's Ziggurat is to create a massive distraction—such as that suggested by N'glothnoru. The destruction of *Tlaloc's Tear* sends the kopru into a panic. Ulioth immediately sends all the behemoths (except those guarding the ziggurat) to areas where they know dried aboleth linger, hoping to kill the aberrations before the coming waters waken them. The rest of the koprus and all of the dark nagas are sent into the ruins and the surrounding caverns on a multitude of tasks in hopes of discovering the reason for the flooding and stemming it. A small contingent is even ordered to report the flooding to the kopru's masters on the plateau above. When the PCs arrive in this vicinity after destroying *Tlaloc's Tear*, they find the place unguarded save for what few behemoths wait for them on and in the ziggurat itself.

Koprus (38): hp 36 each; see page 54.

Kopru Behemoths (16): hp 102 each; see page 60.

Dark Nagas (10): hp 58 each; *Monster Manual* 191.

Troglodytes (70): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 246.

Holashner's Ziggurat

A parasite gnawing through the vitals of the world, the Elder Evil Holashner, the Hunger Below, endlessly feeds its cosmic hunger in the unfathomable depths below the Underdark. Where this godthing passes, it excretes a fluid foulness known as the black bile of the world. Terrible beyond mortal understanding and profane beyond the capacity of most deities, Holashner is held in high regard by the aboleths, who dedicate great monuments to his name. Holashner's Ziggurat is one such monument.

Once a half-living tower of purple flesh oozing black bile of the world, the koprus have perverted the ziggurat to Demogorgon's needs, covering it with stone quarried from the surrounding caves and etching it with unholy runes. The place is now a doubly profane monument dedicated to The Hunger Below and the Prince of Demons.

Q1. Ziggurat Exterior (EL 13)

Amid ruined towers of melted stone and malls of quivering ooze, a wide area lies clear of rubble and less wholesome debris. From these cleared acres rises a stone pyramid that looks out of place from the surrounding madness, its dimensions having the look of lucid design and bearing comforting right angles of masonry. The sides of the ziggurat are festooned with detailed carvings of reptilian and simian monsters wrapped and cradled in endless coils of tentacles. Steep steps rise into the darkened, noxious cavern air to a simple platform at the ziggurat's summit. Not all seems right, though, as several cracks mar the pyramid's masonry, revealing

sections of diseased purple flesh within. In addition, two sides of the pyramid look to be partially overgrown, covered in putrid swaths of pale green mold. In places, great slicks of tacky, dried blood stain the ziggurat's sides.

A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the monster and tentacle motifs that decorate the ziggurat as associated with Demogorgon. At the summit, it becomes evident that the koprus have not finished their work of encasing the original organic structure in stone, as bruised, purple flesh quivers beneath gaps in the stonework. The bloodstains that mar the ziggurat's sides are all that remains of the countless slaves the koprus have collected from the troglodytes in exchange for the *shadow pearls*. Sacrificed atop the ziggurat to Demogorgon, their mortal remains have been eaten.

Those who examine the stepped pyramid closely quickly notice that the structure is no mere building, but a shell of masonry over a semi-living aboleth creation. The fleshy interior building possesses an animalistic form of intelligence, functioning more in terms of instinct than thought. The building even has a system of brainlike organs that are susceptible to mind-affecting spells and effects, allowing its masters to make demands of the place directly. Sharing a similar power to an aboleths' enslave ability, the koprus found themselves uniquely suited to usurp their predecessor's control. This control is far from perfect, but it's enough that this building has finally accepted the koprus as inhabitants, even if the mold and the city itself have not.

Foul green mold grows over much of the southwestern side of the ziggurat. Not seen anywhere else in the city, this mold has the same properties as green slime, dissolving any organic material it touches, with the exception of the fleshy resin of aboleth buildings. Even stone slowly succumbs to the ooze, becoming pockmarked and melted as it dissolves at a near geological rate. The koprus have no explanation for the presence of this mold, yet many fear that the city itself grows tired of their intrusion. A DC 30 Knowledge (nature) check is enough to reveal that the mold is unlike any other known fungus, and that it is closely related to green slime. Creatures that enter a square covered in this mold are affected as if they entered a square of green slime (see page 76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Despite the strangeness of the mold, however, it can be affected by *diminish plants* and *remove disease*, which destroys 5 feet of the mold per caster level. Fire also swiftly consumes the mold, with 5 points of fire damage destroying a 5-foot square.

In scaling the pyramid, the PCs are likely to come across several areas where the masonry of the ziggurat's exterior is incomplete or has cracked and fallen away. Through the thick layer of stone twitches the live, plum-colored flesh of the true structure beneath, a living incubator for black bile of the world. PCs that investigate such a crack are likely to see partially exposed gills, black animalistic

eyes, slits like wide, toothless mouths, and stranger features. Every square foot of exposed flesh has hardness 2 and 10 hit points, but heals at an incredible rate, as if it had fast healing 5. Damaging the flesh causes the entire structure to quiver (not so much as to throw one off balance) and causes a muffled, unsettling whining to issue from someplace deep within the structure's innards. The barrier of flesh between the structure's interior and the outside is 8 feet thick.

At the apex of the pyramid waits the entrance to the chambers within—a domelike bulge of constricted, bruise-colored muscle. Slightly tougher than the surrounding flesh (hardness 4 and 15 hit points per foot) and with the same fast healing, the barrier is difficult to breach. The entrance is air-tight when closed, preventing entry via *gaseous form*. There are several ways to open the passage. Any compulsion mind-affecting effect, such as *suggestion* or *dominate person*, that targets the barrier can command it to open (language is not a factor in this usage). The passage remains open until it is ordered to close in the same way.

Alternately, a DC 24 Search check reveals four deep circular fissures that break the surface of the flesh around the barrier. These sickening, woundlike rents protect muscled pads. If all four are depressed at the same time, the organic "door" reflexively snaps open. The fourth of these fissures is obscured by green mold, which must be destroyed if the PCs are to safely employ it.

Finally, the organic door has a Strength score of 36. A creature that succeeds on an opposed Strength check against the door can force it open as a full-round action.

Once the door is open, its a 15-foot drop to the floor of area **Q2** below.

Creatures: Ulioth has stationed three powerful kopru behemoths at the ziggurat's peak as guards. They have orders to keep watch over the ziggurat and prevent all creatures from disturbing their master's work, and unlike the other kopru, remain here even if the cavern begins flooding after the destruction of *Tlaloc's Tear*.

KOPRU BEHEMOTHS (3) **CR 10**

CE Large monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual II 134
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Aquan, Olman

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 20
hp 102 (12 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10

Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee* tail slap +15 (1d8+14) and 2 claws +13 (1d6+9) and bite +13 (1d6+9)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +32
Atk Options constrict 3d8+13, improved grab (tail slap)
Special Actions dominate person
Combat Gear *potion of fly* (3)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 28, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12
SQ amphibious
Feats Ability Focus (dominate person), Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack
Skills Escape Artist +17, Move Silently +17, Swim +17
Possessions combat gear, *+3 studded leather armor*, coral holy symbol of Demogorgon worth 50 gp

Dominate Person (Su) A kopru can attempt to dominate person once per day, as the spell (CL 10th), save that the range is 180 feet and the duration is eight days. A DC 17 Will save resists the domination. The save DC is Charisma-based.
Improved Grab (Ex) If a kopru hits a target its own size or smaller with a tail slap, it can attempt to start a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it can constrict. A kopru has a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks.

Tactics: If enemies attempt to climb the pyramid, the behemoths drink *potions of fly* and move to engage the PCs in melee. A favored tactic against climbing intruders is using Improved Bull Rush to force them into the green mold.

Development: The cavern ceiling 200 feet above the ziggurat has been shaped via a *stone shape* spell. A DC 30 Search check of this section of ceiling reveals a 10-foot-square area with a strangely smooth surface. A DC 25 Spellcraft check reveals that this area was created by *wall of stone*. This *wall of stone* is 15 feet thick, and plugs the entrance to a vertical shaft that eventually connects to the same shaft the ancient Olmans used to deliver *Tlaloc's Tear* so long ago. After they did, the Olmans sealed both ends of the shaft, but the kopru above and below reopened them to allow delivery of partially completed *shadow pearls* from the City of Broken Idols above down to Golismorga below. Ulioth uses *stone shape* to open and close this plug as necessary whenever the kopru from above arrive with a new shipment of half-finished *shadow pearls*.

It's unlikely that the PCs discover this route into Thanaclan at this time, but if they do, refer to the next adventure in the Savage Tide Adventure Path to determine what they encounter along the way.

Q2. The Room That Watches

This room is alive. The bruised purple walls pulse and quiver, heaving irregularly like the breath of a dying thing. Growths jut from the walls—exposed, fleshy things like black lungs, giant many-chambered and inside-out hearts, rolling milky white eyes, and other organs with no humanoid analog. Unfinished stonework covers patches of the floor, as if some optimistic architect hoped to merely brick over the room's obscene nature. An open chute with a strange ladder, its rungs curved and awkwardly placed, opens through part of the masonry floor, descending deeper into the structure's depths.

This room is both guard post and guardian. Several of the eyes positioned throughout the room watch all who enter. Unless the PCs are invisible or otherwise disguise their entry, the structure becomes aware of intruders and reports the intrusion to Ulioth in area **Q3** below, at which point he begins casting spells to prepare himself for any coming conflict. The ladder is optomized

for a snakelike creature like a kopru. Humanoid creatures must make a DC 10 Climb check to navigate it.

Z3. Corrupted Shrine (EL 14)

The ziggurat's organs continue to twitch, roil, and watch. The half-laid stonework glistens amid pools of water. To the east looms a huge bust of a demonic countenance with twin baboonlike heads set in a fearsome double roar sprouting from its over-muscled chest. Across the ground lie hunks of shattered black resin and, near the statue, a black tumor grows from the fleshy floor, its size and shape reminiscent of some grotesque divan.

The religious leader of the Golismorga koprus, Ulioth, oversees the final stage of the creation of *shadow pearls* from this room, spending much of his time offering prayer to his demonic overlord or toiling on his latest project, a half-completed *strand of prayer beads*.

A stone trapdoor with a broad iron ring is set in the masonry of the floor near the statue of Demogorgon, opening into area **Q4** below.

Creature: Ulioth, the leader of the koprus in Golismorga, spends much of his time meditating on Demogorgon's will, receiving visions and direction from the Prince of Demons himself. If the PCs have managed to reach this area undetected, they find Ulioth resting upon his throne of tumors. More likely, though, the kopru cleric knows of the PCs' intrusion and has already prepared for their arrival as detailed in Tactics below.

Ulioth

ULIOTH **CR 14**

Male kopru cleric 8/thrall of Demogorgon 4
CE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)
Monster Manual II 134, *Book of Vile Darkness* 66
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Aboleth, Abyssal, Aquan, Olman

AC 27, touch 14, flat-footed 26
hp 170 (20 HD)
Fort +15, **Ref** +10, **Will** +19

Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee *+2 anarchic spear* +23/+18/+13/+8 (1d8+6/19–20/×3) and tail slap +20 (1d6+2) and bite +20 (1d4+2)
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +28
Atk Options ignore hardness 1/day, reaching touch 3/day
Special Actions dominate person, hypnosis 1/day, rebuke undead 5/day (+2, 2d6+10), touch of fear 3/day
Combat Gear *potion of blur, potion of resist acid 10, wand of cure moderate wounds* (12 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 10th, +21 touch, +19 ranged touch)
5th—*feeblemind*[D] (DC 21), *greater command* (DC 21), *spell resistance, wall of stone*
4th—*air walk, control water, cure critical wounds, dimensional anchor*[D], *sending*
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 19), *contagion*[D] (DC 19), *cure serious wounds, dispel magic, protection from energy*
2nd—*blindness/deafness*[D] (DC 18), *bull's strength, cure moderate wounds* (2), *death knell* (DC 18), *shatter* (DC 18), *silence* (DC 18)
1st—*command* (DC 17), *cure light wounds, divine favor, doom*[D] (DC 17), *entropic shield, protection from good, sanctuary* (DC 17)

o—*create water* (3), *cure moderate wounds*, *guidance*, *light*

D domain spell; **Domains** Corruption, Demonic

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 23, Cha 14

SQ amphibious, dual actions 2/day, spontaneous casting (inflict spells)

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Critical (spear), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Multiattack, Thrall to Demon (Demogorgon), Willing Deformity

Skills Concentration +14, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +6

Possessions *+4 chain shirt*, *+2 anarchic spear*, *periapt of Wisdom +4*, *ring of protection +3*, *bracers of health +2* (as *amulet of health +2*), *portable hole* filled with cold, brackish water, gold unholy symbol of Demogorgon worth 500 gp

Dominate Person (Su) A kopru can attempt to dominate person once per day, as the spell (CL 10th), save that the range is 180 feet and the duration is eight days. A DC 16 Will save resists the domination. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Dual Actions (Su) Twice per day, Ulioth can take two full rounds' worth of actions in the same round.

Hypnosis (Su) Once per day, Ulioth can produce an effect identical to that of the *hypnotism* spell, except that it functions as a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet. A DC 16 Will save negates this effect; the save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) If Ulioth hits a target its own size or smaller with a tail slap, he can attempt to start a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If he establishes a hold, he can constrict. Ulioth has a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks.

Reaching Touch (Su) Three times a day, as a free action, Ulioth can cause his arms to stretch unnaturally, increasing his reach by 5 feet for 1 round.

Touch of Fear (Su) Three times per day, Ulioth can cause a creature he strikes with a touch attack to become frightened for 1d4 rounds. A DC 16 Will save means the creature touched is merely shaken for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Domains The Corruption domain allows Ulioth to ignore a struck object's hardness once per day. The Demonic domain grants him a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls with unarmed strikes and natural weapons.

Feats Thrall to Demon allows Ulioth to gain a +1 luck bonus on any attack roll once per day when performing an evil act. Willing Deformity grants a +2 deformity bonus on Intimidate checks.

Tactics: As soon as Ulioth realizes the PCs are drawing near, he casts the following spells on himself: *spell resistance*, *air walk*, *protection from energy (fire)*, and *bull's strength*. Once this is done (or on the first round of combat, if the PCs reach him earlier) he uses *control water* to raise the pools of water on the floor up to the 20-foot-high ceiling, flooding the room with water so that he's more mobile while hopefully the PCs are hindered.

In combat, Ulioth prefers opening with his dual actions, making full attack actions while also moving away to cast a spell or using dominate person at range. If a battle turns against him, he retreats to area **Q4**. Once there, he uses his *potion of resist acid 10*, allowing him to swim in the pools of black bile unharmed while he heals his wounds and readies to defend the denizen of that chamber from the invaders.

Treasure: Any character who makes a DC 18 Search check of the tumorous "throne" in this room finds several of Ulioth's most prized treasures hidden amid its folds. These include a strangely shaped gold and ivory tiara of coiling snakes and shrieking monkeys worth 2,400 gp, a ruby *ring of wizardry (II)*, a *necklace of adaptation*, and a *decanter of endless water*.

In addition, the four eyes in the bust of Demogorgon are black pearls worth 500 gp each.

Q4. Holashner's Honor (EL 13)

The sticky heat and pulsing walls of this cloying room augment perfectly the revolting stink of bile mixed with crude oil. Four pools of putrid black muck bubble and spurt in the floor, their edges determined by either rigid stone blocks or dimples in the fleshy ground. Four pillars separate the pools and hold the sagging flesh of the ceiling aloft. Within the basins of roiling foulness float pristine black orbs, each the size of a man's head and shimmering with an unsettling inner light.

The construction of a *shadow pearl* is a long and involved process that begins in the ruins of Thanaclan on the plateau high above. By the time they're shipped down to Golismorga, they've already undergone a months-long creation process, yet when they finally reach this chamber they still have months to go. At this point, the *shadow pearls* are allowed to steep in the pits of black bile, building up a shell of hardened bilestone while they absorb the inherent madness festering in the leavings of an Elder Evil.

The four bubbling black pools are each 20 feet deep and filled with black bile of the world, the liquid state of bilestone. All four of the pools are connected by wide passages underground, allowing something that dives into one to rise from another—should it survive. The effects of black bile of the world are detailed in the sidebar on page 64.

Currently, a total of eight unfinished *shadow pearls* float in the four pools. They still need at least a month of steeping in the bile before their bilestone shells can be cracked open and the *shadow pearls* within are ready to release a savage tide.

Creature: A living monument to the Elder Evil known as a bilewretch of Holashner lurks in this chamber. Without this creature's presence, the bile pits would soon harden into bilestone and thus become useless for the finishing stage of *shadow pearl* creation. The monster has befriended Ulioth, and the kopru priest is thus the only creature the bilewretch suffers in this room—all other intruders are attacked at once.

Bilewretch of Holashner: hp 189; see Appendix.

Tactics: Knowing the effects of bilestone on fleshy creatures, the bilewretch stays within or above the pools of black bile in the room, making use of its breath weapon liberally and then retreating beneath the surface of a pool to emerge from another pool one or two rounds later. Should the

bilewretch be forced into melee it attempts to grapple whenever possible. Using its breath weapon on grappled opponents, the aberration also attempts to dive into the nearest pool while grappling a foe, relying on the disgusting fluid to drown or dissolve its victim.

Development: By destroying the bilewretch, the PCs can effectively disrupt the creation of *shadow pearls*. Within a day, these pools harden into bilestone and any unfinished pearls still within crack as their latent magic fades away in a noxious green puff.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

In order to disrupt the use of Golismorga as a place to finish the creation of *shadow pearls*, the PCs must both destroy the bilewretch and flood the cavern by destroying *Tlaloc's Tear*. This one-two punch throws the koprus off for months, but there remains much to do in the world above. If the PCs don't continue the fight and confront the demonic residents of Thanaclan, the powerful forces there are certain to turn their resources elsewhere. The first battle against the Lords of Dread may be won, but their demonic lord still dwells in the City of Broken Idols above.

Though it takes time for the water to completely reclaim Golismorga and the surrounding caverns, the effects of this deluge should be immediately apparent and give the PCs a sense of urgency. While many players undoubtedly prefer magical means such as *teleport*, the route the PCs used to reach Golismorga in the first place is the last tunnel to flood. The rising waters eventually reach sea level, flooding most of the caverns below the Isle of Dread once again. The refugees of Barbas were wise to flee to the upper caverns when they did.

The aboleths, freed from their long sleep, are temporarily content to reclaim their former realm, repairing the damage that time and ignorant races have done to their magnificent edifices. These alien creatures exist on timescales unfathomable to mortals, and it may be decades or even centuries before they again turn their attentions to the world above.

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTERS

Brain Collector (Neh-thalggu)

A hungry polyp upon twelve insectoid legs skitters madly across the floor. Larger than a horse, the thing's tumid mass writhes with

Black Bile of the World

A reeking fluid, thicker than oil but thinner than tar, black bile of the world is the putrid excretion of the Elder Evil Holashner. In its purest state, black bile (sometimes referred to as liquid madness) is among the foulest substances in existence. Rancid, caustic, and flamable, any creature that comes into contact with the viscous stuff takes 1d6 points of acid damage on contact and another 1d6 points of acid damage for the next 2 rounds as the ooze clings and continues to burn. A large quantity (at least a quart) of liquid can wash off the bile. Black bile radiates a strong chaotic aura and deals double damage to creatures with the lawful subtype.

Black bile is also flamable, yet not so much as to be truly explosive. Exposed to flame, a pool of black bile burns for hours without consuming its substance before the fire simply dies.

A single flask of black bile can be used as a thrown weapon like acid, dealing 1d6 points of acid damage that persists for the following 2 rounds on a direct hit, and 1 point of acid damage to all creatures in the splash radius, dealing double damage to creatures with the lawful subtype.

Long-term exposure to either black bile of the world or bilestone is thought to have all manner of corruptive effects. Only the foulest of creatures can handle the substances for any significant period without contracting evil diseases or even spontaneously bestowed curses.

stunted, whipping tentacles. A lipless mouth heavy with protruding rows of dagger-length teeth, and a ridge of four bulging eyes glares from above this nightmare gash. A cluster of twelve knots crown the abomination's misshapen form, the gray wrinkles of brains trapped within pressed against the semi-transparent membranes.

BRAIN COLLECTOR (NEH-THALGGU) CR 7

Usually CN, NE, or CE Large aberration

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +15, Spot +2

Languages Neh-thalggu; telepathy 60 ft.

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 85 (10 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Immune critical hits, disease, poison

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11

Spd 60 ft.

Melee bite +13 (2d8+10)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +18

Special Actions extract brain, metamagic

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 6th, +13 touch, +9 ranged touch)

3rd (4/day)—*dispel magic, displacement, fly, haste, vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 18), *ghoul touch* (DC 18), *invisibility, mirror image, resist energy, see invisibility*

1st (8/day)—*expeditious retreat, feather fall, grease* (DC 17), *mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield, true strike*

0 (6/day)—*dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 16), *mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic, touch of fatigue* (DC 16)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 22

SQ otherworldly physiology

Feats Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Concentration +17, Hide +12, Jump +32, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (any one other) +18, Listen +15, Spellcraft +20

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure double standard

Advancement 11–14 (Large), 15–30 (Huge)

Extract Brain (Ex) Using its claws with the precision of surgical tools, a brain collector can remove the brain of a helpless opponent in reach as a full-round action. This action provokes an attack of opportunity, and immediately slays the target at the end of the round. This power is useless against constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, and undead, and is not instantly fatal to foes with multiple heads, such as ettins and hydras. Once extracted, the neh-thalggu can swallow the brain as a free action, storing it in one of its twelve brain sacs.

Metamagic (Su) A brain collector can absorb a captured brain to enhance the effects of its spellcasting. While these effects resemble metamagic feats, they do not raise the effective level of the spell being cast, nor do they increase the casting time of spells that are spontaneously cast. Note that each brain absorbed removes the spell being cast from the brain collector's list of spells known—in order to "relearn" that spell, it must collect a replacement brain. When a brain collector absorbs a brain to enhance a spell, it may apply one of the following three effects to the spell being cast:

- It may cast the spell without using verbal or somatic components.
- It may cast a spell that normally has a range of touch at any distance up to 30 feet (the spell effectively becomes a ray, so the brain collector must succeed on a ranged touch attack to bestow the spell upon the recipient).
- As part of a bite attack, the brain collector may cast any spell that targets a single creature (other than a spell that targets itself only). If the bite attack is successful, the spell affects the creature bitten. Casting a spell in this manner is an immediate action (allowing the brain collector to cast a spell like this as part of an attack of opportunity), and counts as a quickened spell for determining how many spells you can cast in a round. Casting a spell in this manner does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If the bite attack fails, the spell is lost.

Otherworldly Physiology (Ex) A brain collector does not have fixed organs as most organisms do. As such, it is immune to critical hits, death from massive damage, sneak attack, and coup de grace attacks. Their alien bodies are also immune to disease and poison. Brain collectors do not age and, barring violence, can live forever.

Spells A brain collector casts spells as a 6th-level sorcerer. A brain collector can store additional spells known in its collected brains, increasing the total number of spells it knows and can cast. If it absorbs a brain, it loses one of its known spells. When it collects a new brain to replace an absorbed brain, it may select a new spell to replace the spell lost. A brain collector may know any number of spells in this manner, although the number of spells known of any particular level cannot equal or exceed the number of spells known of a lower level. The stat block above assumes a brain collector with a full complement of 12 brains.

Denizens of the madness that lurks behind reality, brain collectors (neh-

thalggu in their own insane language) encroach on the Material Plane from the inconceivable Far Realm in what is actually their larval stage. Terrible beings of unspeakable and unwholesome desires, these monsters are driven to collect brains, and use the knowledge locked within these organs to further their own transformation into beings of godlike power (*Epic Level Handbook* 207). Uncaring of the empty husks cast aside by their feeding, these alien predators use their fleshy meals to generate great bursts of arcane energy. While even the weakest are capable of devouring the sentience from whole regions, a fully ascended neh-thalggu rivals even the eldest dragons and some demon lords in ferocity and arcane might.

Bilewretch of Holashner

Many-jointed legs and squirming tentacles cloak this horror in a haze of repulsive motion. A thing half-centipede and half-squid, a single alien, black eye stares fathomlessly from an octopoid head. Curled upon itself like a titanic shrimp, the thing glistens like a scarab's shell even as it bathes itself in an endless flow of oily black drool.

Bilewretch of Holashner **CR 13**

Always CE Huge aberration

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Aboleth (cannot speak)

AC 29, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (–2 size, +5 Dex, +16 natural)

hp 189 (18 HD)

Immune acid, fire, inhaled toxins, mind-affecting, suffocation

SR 21

Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

Spd 40 ft., swim 40 ft.; air walk

Melee 4 tentacles +19 (1d8+8/19–20 plus 1d6 acid) and tail +14 (2d8+4)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +29

Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Blind-Fight, black bile, constrict 2d8+4, improved grab

Special Actions breath weapon

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th) 3/day—*confusion* (DC 14), empowered *poison* (DC 16), *deeper darkness*

Abilities Str 27, Dex 20, Con 22, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 10

SQ black bile affinity, no breath

Feats Ability Focus (*poison* spell-like ability), Combat Reflexes, Blind-Fight, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*poison*), Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Listen +8, Move Silently +12, Spot +8

Environment underground (near bilestone deposits)

Organization solitary, pair, or nest (3–8)

Treasure none

Advancement 19–27 HD (Huge), 28–40 HD (Gargantuan), 41–54 HD (Colossal)

Air Walk (Su) A bilewretch may move through the air as if under the effects of an *air walk* spell. This effect cannot be dispelled.

Black Bile (Su) A bilewretch's tentacles constantly seep black bile of the world. Any creature struck by a tentacle takes an additional 1d6 points of acid damage, and then an additional 1d6 points of acid damage the next round before the bile from that attack becomes inert. Creatures with the lawful

Scaling the Adventure

"The Lightless Depths" is designed for a group of four 11th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 9th–10th-level or 12th-level characters. Simply adjust any NPC character levels by 1 for every level by which your party's average deviates from 11. Specific changes to the adventure include:

9th–10th-level characters: Consider removing the encounter with Emraag entirely. Replace the elder black pudding in area **C** with three standard black puddings. Reduce the number of hook horrors encountered at area **F2** to three or four. Remove one or two of the blackfang rhagodessas from area **J**. Don't use the Shaboath Pool encounter or the Worm Food encounter in Golismorga. Remove one of the kopru behemoths from area **Q1**.

12th-level characters: Advance the elder black pudding in area **C** and the roper in area **D** by 4 Hit Dice. Advance the hook horrors that guard Barbas by 4 Hit Dice, or alternately add two more to the encounter. Add another blackfang rhagodessa to area **J**. Add a dark naga to the kopru scouts in Golismorga, and advance Rakis-Ka the devourer by 4 Hit Dice. Add two dark nagas to area **Q1**, and advance the bilewretch by 4 Hit Dice.

subtype take double acid damage from this attack.

Black Bile Affinity (Ex) As a full-round action, a bilewretch can transform a 5-foot block of bilestone into black bile of the world. A bilewretch can swim through black bile unimpeded, and may see through it as if it were clear. While at least partially submerged in black bile, a bilewretch gains fast healing 15.

Breath Weapon (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a bilewretch can expel a 30-foot-long line of black bile of the world that deals 6d6 points of acid damage to every creature in the area. If this bile is exposed to air, it also ignites, inflicting an additional 6d6 points of fire damage. Creatures with the lawful subtype take double damage from the acid portion of this attack. A DC 25 Reflex save halves both the acid and fire damage. On the round after suffering damage from a bilewretch's breath weapon, a creature takes an additional 3d6 acid damage (6d6 for creatures with the lawful subtype) and 3d6 fire damage (Reflex DC 25 negates) as the stuff clings and continues to burn, unless the victim takes a full-round action to wash or scrape off the bile. If it chooses, a bilewretch may use its breath weapon on a single creature it is currently grappling. To do so, it must grapple the foe with at least two tentacles. If successful, it heaves bile upon the victim, inflicting damage as detailed above (no save). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Constrict (Ex) A bilewretch deals automatic tail damage on a successful grapple check with its tail.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, the bilewretch must hit with a tentacle or a tail attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold with its tail, it can constrict. If it establishes a hold with at least two tentacles, it can use its breath weapon against that foe as detailed above.

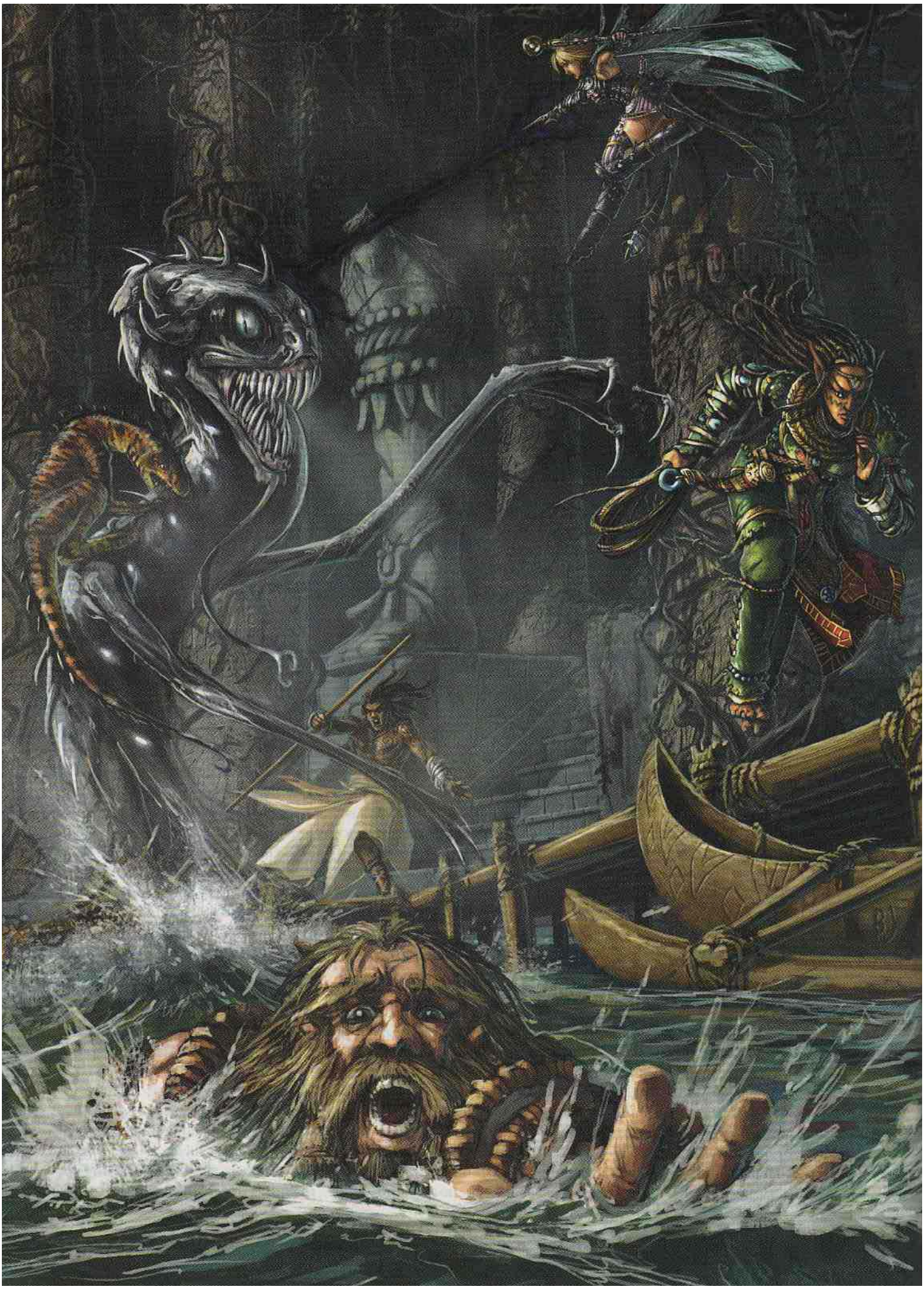
No Breath (Ex) A bilewretch does not need to breathe.

Monstrous aberrations sculpted from unknowable samples harvested eons ago from Holashner itself, bilewretches exist to perpetuate the transformation of black bile of the world into bilestone and then back again. Like an intelligent fountain, these monsters live only to endlessly break down bilestone and excrete it as liquid madness, protecting that which they have reformed. Often ordered by their masters to guard sites honoring the Elder Evils, these aberrations' limited intellects myopically focus on their instructions, devising and honing the most effective methods of protecting that which they were created to honor.

An Associate Editor of DRAGON *magazine, F. Wesley Schneider believes the shorter the author bio, the—.*

You would think that, as an Assistant Editor for DUNGEON, *it would be easy for James Lafond Sutter to write an author bio. You would be wrong.*

FORGOTTEN TOMBS
Map of Mystery
Individual Tombs
Bridge Activation Pillars
Natural Cavern
To Ancient Fortress
Acid Pit
S
S
To Deep Grotto
Secret Catacomb
Ancillary Vault
Ancillary Vault
Limestone Cavern
The Grand Vault
Seal of the Ancients
Beast Den
Secret Crypt
S
Rock Fissure
Cave
Blocked Passage
Underground Lake
1 square = 5 feet
Natural Passage
WEST



Savage Tide

City of Broken Idols

Atop the crown of the Isle of Dread, a hateful monster broods. Spawned by the Prince of Demons, the architect of the *shadow pearls* dwells deep under the ruins of ancient Thanaclan. As long as this vile monster lives, the threat of the savage tide remains, looming dark on the horizon.

"City of Broken Idols" is the seventh chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in DUNGEON magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out DRAGON magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #354 of DRAGON magazine features the totemic demonslayer, a new prestige class that focuses on fighting and defeating demons, be they at the heart of the Isle of Dread or encountered in the depths of the Abyss itself.

The PCs should be 13th level when they begin "City of Broken Idols." They should gain enough experience to advance to 14th level halfway through the adventure, and 15th by the end.

BY TITO LEATI
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH, HIGH LEVEL (13TH–20TH), WILDERNESS AND DUNGEON CRAWL

Adventure Background

Olman myth tells of a terrible earthquake, of a time when the Fangs of Zotzilaha opened and lit the skies on fire. A time when the gods' wrath cast down their ancestors from the lofty peaks. After that fateful day, the Olman Empire was no more. All that remained were ruins of a once-great city and a scattering of tribes destined to endure disease, famine, and monstrous predators. The Olman people proudly point to the fact that they have survived, despite the trials their gods have placed before them. Their ancestors must have angered them greatly indeed, and as a result, the Olmans of the Seven Villages regard the ancient ruins, particularly the central plateau of the isle, as taboo. It is unwise to tread upon ground cursed by the gods.

The truth of what brought down the ancient Olman Empire is much different. In the weeks before the fall, their civilization was at the height of its glory. Its people had settled a wild frontier, survived a terrible war against the aboleths of the alien city of Golismorga, and constructed an incredible city atop the central plateau. This was Thanaclan, the "Land of the Pearl." Yet after the aboleth war, the people of Thanaclan grew complacent, even decadent. When a new threat arose from the flooded tunnels below their isle, they were ill prepared to defend themselves.

As the Olmans finished construction of a Great Temple to honor their gods, the koprus of the island's depths took action. Their prayers to the Prince of Demons were answered with a vile plot. For four decades, the koprus toiled in their subteranean lairs, cultivating and nurturing the largest black pearl the world had ever seen. Birthed from a fiendish giant oyster and poisoned with malign magic and liquid madness harvested from the ruined aboleth city, the koprus placed this first *shadow pearl* where the Olmans of Thanaclan would find it.

Before long, the irresistible beauty of the *shadow pearl* was ensconced within the Great Temple, and its fell influence began to surface. The religious leaders of Thanaclan grew wrathful and cruel, and powerful storms began to lash the island. At the height of a great typhoon, one of Thanaclan's leaders woke from his fugue and realized what evil had come to Thanaclan. He came to the chamber of the Great One, where the *shadow pearl* was kept on display, and smashed it to fragments to break its curse forever. Yet this act only sealed the empire's doom. As the pearl cracked, it unleashed the first and greatest savage tide. Not only did the tide transform many of Thanaclan's citizens, it also tore holes in reality between the isle and the Abyss. Legions of fiendish dinosaurs, demons, and worse assaulted the empire. The land itself rebelled. Earthquakes shook the isle, volcanoes exploded, and under the streets of Thanaclan burst massive geysers that brought scalding death. Many perished in that first night, and in a matter of months the Kingdom of Thanaclan had all but vanished from the world, replaced by a prehistoric land destined to become the Isle of Dread.

For the next thousand years, the koprus were content with their conquest, yet a few years ago their demonic patron came to their leaders in a vision. He required more *shadow pearls* for an even greater cause, and the koprus would need to craft dozens, if not hundreds, to realize it. Demogorgon went so far as to send an aspect of his blasphemous visage, a monster crafted partially in the kopru image yet mostly in his own, to become their leader. Khala the Two-Headed has dwelt at the heart of the Great Temple of Thanaclan for years now. The creation of a *shadow pearl* begins with his vile touch, after which it is sent below to Golismorga to absorb the madness of the Elder Evils before finally being delivered to the pirates of the Crimson Fleet for distribution throughout the world.

Adventure Synopsis

To stop the production of *shadow pearls*, the PCs travel to the Isle of Dread's central plateau and face the powerful creatures that inhabit it, including a host of demons in the service of Demogorgon. During their exploration, they meet the brave followers of a missing missionary named Noltus Innersol. Unknown to these followers, Noltus has been killed and replaced by a shapechanging maurezhi demon who soon springs a deadly ambush on the PCs .

On the shores of the central lake of the plateau, the PCs explore an abandoned village, whose population has been exterminated to supply human sacrifices to Khala's ever-increasing hunger. From the ruins of this village and the mourning couatls that now dwell there, the PCs learn what they need to know about Khala. From there, they invade the main base of the cult of Demogorgon on the Isle of Dread and defeat Khala the Two-Headed, an aspect of the Prince of Demons himself.

Adventure Hooks

If you're running "City of Broken Idols" as a stand-alone adventure or as part of your own campaign, you might need another introduction aside from the one presented in Part One. One classic method is to have the PCs discover an ancient treasure map that points to the Great Temple of Thanaclan and promises a a black pearl the size of a man's head. The PCs could be hired to secure this treasure by a collector on the mainland before a second group hired by a rival collector gets there first.

Alternately, the PCs could be hired by the church of Pelor to track down a missing missionary. Noltus Innersol was sent to the Isle of Dread months ago, yet no word has been heard from him. The church asks the PCs to start their search at Farshore, where they can meet with Jakara and gain Noltus' letter as detailed below.

PART ONE: THE MISSING MISSIONARY

Early in "The Lightless Depths," the PCs likely rescued two prisoners from the troglodyte lepers of Laogroat. One of these remained with them, a troglodyte guide named Irgzid. The other was a diseased and feebleminded Olman named Jakara. Upon his rescue, he thanked the PCs but informed them he had to leave them to continue on to Farshore at the bidding of a man named Noltus Innersol. Before he left, he invited the PCs to seek him out in Farshore once their business below had been concluded. If the PCs failed to rescue

Jakara, you'll need to modify the following text by having the man who delivers Noltus's letter to Vesserin be a different acolyte of the missing missionary.

When the PCs return to Farshore, they're greeted by Lavinia Vanderboren. Eager to hear tales of their adventures below the Isle of Dread, she tells them that there's been a new development as well. The man they rescued from Laogroat brought with him a message from Noltus Innersol, a missionary who visited Farshore several months before Lavinia and the PCs arrived and who's been missing ever since he left to bring the word of Pelor to the secluded tribes dwelling deep in the isle's interior. Jakara, the Olman they rescued, waits to speak to them at the Farshore Chapel. The PCs find him still recovering from his ordeals, seated in a large chair and clutching an ivory scrolltube in his hands. If none of the PCs speak Olman, they may need a translator, for Jakara knows only a few words of Common.

"Ah, my saviors! Thank you again for delivering me from that cursed cavern. As I promised you then, I have a tale to tell you. I have spoken with your resident priest here, and with your lovely patron as well, and they have highly recommended you for the task my master has set me upon.

"My name is Jakara. I am of the Tiger Clan, yet my people are not those of the Seven Villages. My tribe dwelt in a narrow valley in the mountains west of the central plateau—at least, until recently. We have long known that there was a darkness atop that taboo place, that our ancestors once dwelt there, and that they angered the gods and made this place what it is today. We do not go there. It is not safe. And for some time, what dwelt there remained there as well.

"Yet of late, things have changed. The demons who dwell in the City of Broken Idols have turned their attentions outward, and earlier this year, my tribe was slaughtered by men wearing the skins of demon tigers. I alone survived, and long were the nights I contemplated a suicide trek to the taboo heights to avenge my kin. Yet before I fell to such a lure, I met a man from your world. This was Noltus Innersol.

"He had already gathered a flock from the island's other tribes. Lizardfolk and phanaton and Olman alike followed him, and his words were captivating. I found much wisdom in his words, for he too had long fought against the demon host. He seemed particularly taken with my totems, and my focus in opposing the demons. For a time, I traveled with him, and helped him to gather more followers. Noltus had learned of the lost village of Mantru, and his goal was to travel there, atop the central plateau, and rescue the villagers from whatever peril kept them isolated from their kin.

"Yet he was also taken with my skills. He decided he would lead his followers to bring the word of his god to the heights, yet asked me to carry a message to your tribe of Farshore. He also asked me to spread the lore of totems to the people of the Seven Villages—it has been the wisdom of my tribe to keep such knowledge to ourselves, but I see now that it can serve no purpose if I am the last.

"Before I made it to Farshore, alas, my trail was discovered by the skin-wearing fiends. I hid Noltus's message in the stump of a tree and turned to face my tormentors, but they proved too much even for me. I defeated them, but not before they stole my mind. It was not long until the troglodytes captured me, and thus my state when you discovered me wretched in their cage. After you freed me, I returned to the site of my failure to find Noltus's message safe. I have brought it here, and your priest and patron have read its contents. They wish you to read as well."

At this point, Jakara hands them the scroll tube. Crafted of ivory and inlaid with gold depicting holy symbols of Pelor, the tube is worth 200 gp. The letter within is far more valuable—its contents appear as a handout on the next page.

If the PCs ask for more information about Noltus, both Vesserin and Jakara can tell them he is a Pelorian cleric from Sasserine. Charged by Kera Gosalar of that city's temple of Pelor to bring the word of the Sun Father to the far corners of the world, Noltus eventually came to the Isle of Dread. He visited Farshore several times, and had several engaging debates with Vesserin, but his true calling lay in bringing the word of Pelor to the remote tribes of the Isle of Dread—tribes even more remote than the Olmans themselves. He left on his mission, hoping to contact lizardfolk, phanatons, and certain reclusive Olman tribes, several months before the PCs arrived in Farshore, and has not been heard of until now. If they ask about Bulgan, Vesserin says that this is Noltus' loyal pet dog.

Vesserin also shows the PCs a stone disc that he keeps in a chest in his quarters. This stone was recovered by Noltus from a ruined shrine several years ago, and was the genesis of his interest in the Isle of Dread. The particular style of carvings matches the style of carvings found on the Olman ruins here on the isle, so it stands to reason it originated here. How it came to be located in the jungle ruin Noltus found it in remains a mystery, but with the use of magical divination, the missionary had been able to determine three points of interest about it that he shared with Vesserin on his last visit to Farshore.

- The disc originated in the ruins of Thanaclan, as evidenced by the distinctive representation of Quetzalcoatl, god of the air, as a serpent coiled through the firmament.
- The three humanoid figures depicted represent Tezcatlipoca (the god of the moon), Tonatiuh (the god of the sun), and Quetzalcoatl in human form holding court over the others.
- The fact that the three deities are depicted as working together (strange, since Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl

To Vesserin Catherly—
My friend, I write you this letter to inform you of a most terrible discovery. Know first that the man who carries this letter is also a friend, and that his skills and techniques for standing against the demonic host may well serve you and the people of the Seven Villages well in the months to come. Learn from him, for what he has to teach is of great value.

But to the news at hand. I had decided to follow up on the Olman tales of the village of Mantru, that isolated tribe dwelling in Thanaclan's shadow atop the plateau. I had hoped to contact this village, to bring the Sun Father's hope to them, for as you will recall, I believe I can use their worship of violent Tonatuh to my favor. Pelor and this savage deity have more in common than my brethren might admit. The Stone of the Sun and the Moon all but proves it. By showing the villagers of Mantru Pelor's wisdom, I had hoped to civilize them.

Yet from all appearances, Mantru may be lost. You are well aware of the rumors that something dire has taken up residence in the City of Broken Idols. The Seven Villages call the central plateau taboo for strong and true reasons. Yet what dwells on high is no longer content with the ruins of Thanaclan. The man who brings you this letter is proof of this fear, for his tribe was slaughtered by savage heathens from the central plateau. Men who wear the skins of demons, and who kept those they capture alive for unknowable reasons before they return to their lair in the City of Broken Idols.

I have seen evidence of these heathens at work elsewhere, and have even encountered some of their dead. Yet I do not fear them, for no demon can withstand the purity of my convictions. I shall lead my new followers atop the central plateau. We shall deliver the children of Mantru from their oppressors and defeat the fiends. Yet should clouds or the fall of night keep Pelor from my side, and should I fall, know that the evil that broods in the City of Broken Idols does not rest. If you should seek to follow in my footsteps, bring with you the Stone of the Sun and the Moon. I have come to believe that it may hold the key to what destroyed Thanaclan low so long ago.

I do not fear for my own life. Pelor has set me upon this course for a reason. With Bulgan's constant companionship, I am never alone on my quest. But I do fear what these fiends might try if none beyond me take up arms against them. If I do not return, I ask only that you fight as you can, and that this missive be sent on to Lady Gosalar of the Sasserine Dawnhouse as my final testament.

Your Friend,
Noltus Innersol

are enemies), their attentions focused on what appears to be a bow, had long vexed Noltus. He eventually came to believe that the disc was in fact an illustration of a weapon the three deities came together to create, yet he had been unable to discover any legends of such a bow. He suspected that the carving was somehow a map to the location of this ancient weapon.

Both Lavinia and Vesserin encourage the PCs to travel to the central plateau. Vesserin hopes they can find Noltus and perhaps aid him in his quest, while Lavinia suspects that whatever has laid claim to the City of Broken Idols is at the heart of the matter, and that whatever dwells there is the source of the raw materials the koprus were using to create the *shadow pearls*. In any event, if a new source of evil is spreading from the central plateau, it's only a matter of time before these fiend-wearing monsters turn their eyes south.

Although Jakara is willing to teach his secrets to the PCs (possibly allowing some of them to take levels in the totemic demonslayer prestige class, detailed in issue #354 of DRAGON), his interest in taking the battle to the central plateau is much less. If you feel that the PCs could use the extra help, Jakara might agree to accompany them on a journey to this taboo realm, but otherwise his superstitions about the mysterious and forbidden plateau prevent him from offering his aid—he'd rather remain in the vicinity of the Seven Villages to spread the teachings of his tribe.

PART TWO: THE CENTRAL PLATEAU

The central plateau of the Isle of Dread is in many ways entirely different from the surrounding lands. These ghostly, often fog-shrouded heights stand separated from the surrounding landscape by 3,000-foot-high cliffs. Apart from a few forested areas, most of the plateau is covered by rolling grasslands. The ancient city of Thanaclan is no more, although evidence of it can be seen in several places where the remains of ruined stone buildings protrude from under the vines, grass and leaves. The

Central Plateau Encounters

Jungle	Savanah	Ruins	Cliffs	Aquatic	Monster	Avg. EL	Source
—	01–05	—	—	—	2d4 indricotheres	14	*Fiend Folio* 100
01–02	06–07	01–05	—	—	1d4 hezrous	13	*Monster Manual* 44
03–04	08–09	06–10	—	—	1 glabrezu	13	*Monster Manual* 43
05–09	—	—	—	—	1 red sundew	13	*Monster Manual II* 179
—	—	—	—	01–05	2d6 chuuls	13	*Monster Manual* 35
10–14	10–19	11–20	—	—	2d6 skinwalkers	12	Page 84
15–19	20–24	31–35	01–10	06–10	1d6 vrocks	12	*Monster Manual* 48
20–25	—	—	—	—	1d8 treants	12	*Monster Manual* 244
26–27	25–26	36–37	—	—	1 julajimus	12	Page 63
—	27–36	—	—	—	2d4 dire elk	12	*Monster Manual II* 75
28–37	—	38–42	—	—	2d6 bar-lguras	11	*Fiendish Codex I* 29
38–39	37–38	43–44	—	—	1 retriever	11	*Monster Manual* 46
—	39–48	45–55	11–25	11–30	2d4 wyverns	11	*Monster Manual* 259
—	—	56–70	26–40	—	1d4 blackfang rhagodessas	11	DUNGEON #144
40–49	49–53	71–74	—	—	1d4 megatheriums	10	*Fiend Folio* 124
50–51	54–55	75–76	41–42	—	1 bebelith	10	*Monster Manual* 42
—	—	—	—	31–45	1 kopru behemoth	10	Page 77
52–61	56–65	77–81	—	—	1d6 spectres	10	*Monster Manual* 232
62–63	66–67	—	43–44	—	1 couatl	10	*Monster Manual* 37
64–73	—	—	—	46–55	1 emerald anaconda	10	DUNGEON #143
74–83	—	—	—	—	2d4 dire boars	9	*Monster Manual* 63
—	68–72	82–86	45–64	56–60	1d2 rocs	9	*Monster Manual* 215
—	—	—	—	61–75	1d12 giant crocodiles	9	*Monster Manual* 271
84–85	73–74	87–90	—	—	1d6 babaus	9	*Monster Manual* 40
86–90	75–80	—	—	—	1d2 dire tigers	8	*Monster Manual* 65
91–95	—	—	65–84	—	1 treeleg spider	8	*Monster Manual* 289 (Gargantuan Spider)
—	—	—	—	76–85	1d4 piranha swarms	7	*Stormwrack* 162
—	81–90	91–95	85–00	86–95	2d4 pteranodons	6	DUNGEON #143
96–00	91–00	96–00	—	96–00	2d6 Peloran lizardfolk	6	*Monster Manual* 169

ruins are concentrated in a 5-mile-radius around the center of the plateau, extending out along a surviving stretch of the old road that once connected Thanaclan to a great stone causeway that afforded easy access from the plateau to the lowlands beyond.

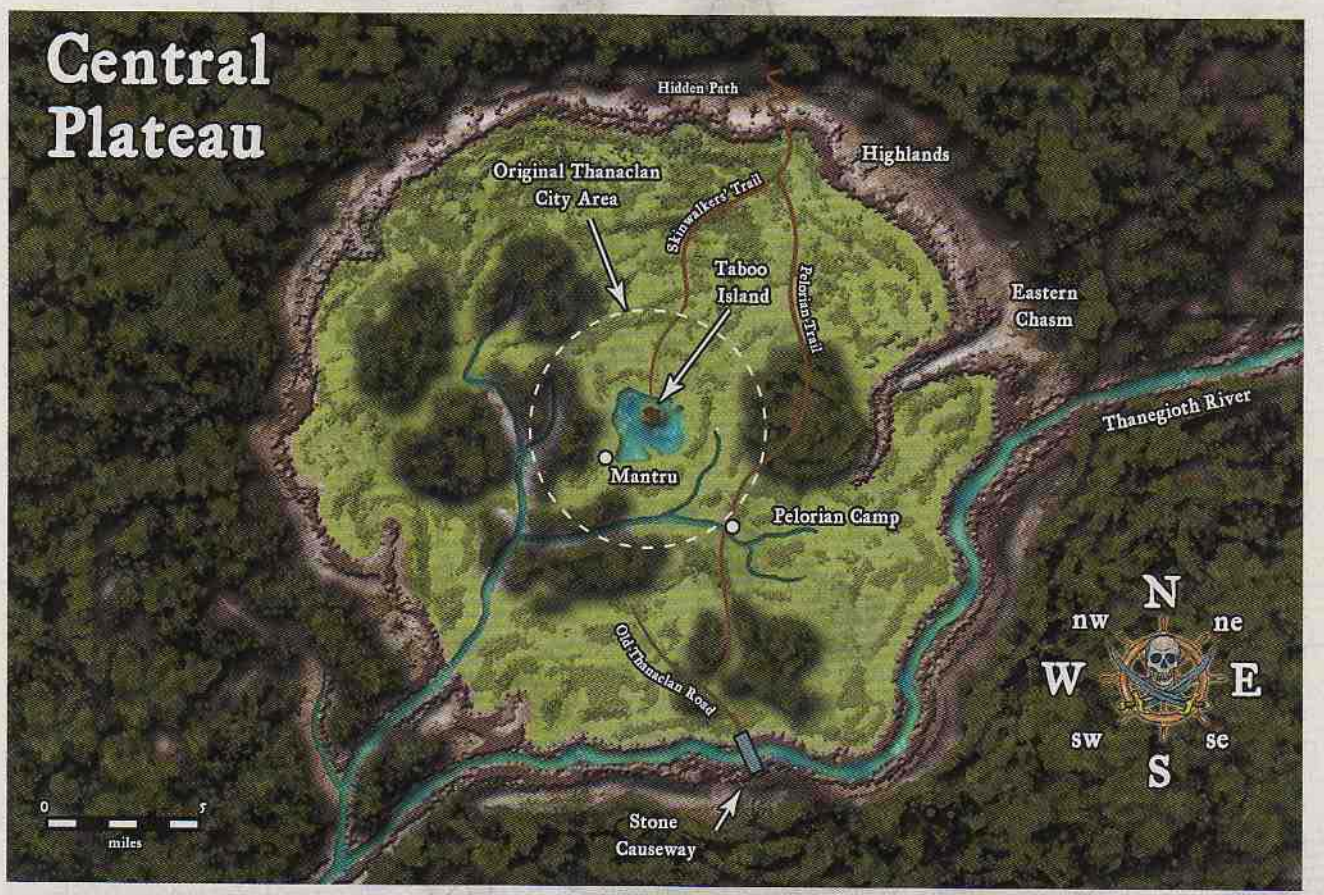
Magic presents the easiest method of reaching the heights of the central plateau, although a few options remain for parties that lack flight or teleportation capabilities. Exploration of the northern cliffs (along with a DC 15 Survival check made in the right area) uncovers a hidden path that leads up the cliffside. Almost directly south of this hidden path, on the other side of the plateau, are the remains of the vast stone causeway that once bridged the gulf that separates the upper ridge of southern mountains from the plateau. This causeway has collapsed in three places, leaving hundred-foot-wide gaps that must be navigated by flight.

The climate is cooler and dryer here, and the isolation afforded by the cliffs has allowed many of the island's indigenous, pre-savage tide megafauna to survive. Yet the recent increased presence of demonic creatures on Taboo Island at the center of the plateau may soon impact these denizens. Check for random encounters four times a day by rolling d%; once at dawn, once at noon, once at dusk, and once at midnight. There's a 10% chance of an encounter occurring. If you roll an encounter with a monster whose stat block is unavailable, simply re-roll your result.

Exploring the Central Plateau

The majority of this adventure takes place in the dungeons below the Great Temple of Thanaclan, now located on the western shore of Taboo Island, yet the PCs may want to explore other locations on the central plateau. Feel free to expand upon this portion of the adventure, incorporating additional ancient ruins or monster lairs as you wish.

Two locations in particular hold important clues or information for the PCs—the hidden Pelorian camp of Noltus Innersol's lizardfolk followers, and the ruined village of Mantru. Locating the ruins of Mantru is a simple task; the village sits on the southwest shore of Broken Lake in the plateau's center. Locating the hidden Pelorian camp is more difficult. The lizardfolk use a faint trail to



come and go, but are careful to keep the trail disguised. At the point where their trail connects to the much more obvious trail left by the skinwalker raiders or to the old Thanaclan road, a DC 30 Survival check is enough to notice the slight pathway leading to the southeast. Once discovered, this trail can be followed with hourly DC 25 Survival checks—eventually it leads to the Pelorian Camp. The PCs can also encounter lizardfolk in the wild—if they befriend them, they can be led back to the camp. Finally, spells like *find the path* work wonders in leading the way to the site, as long as the PCs know what to look for in the first place.

The Pelorian Camp

The lizardfolk followers of Noltus Innersol established a camp near one of the rivers of the plateau, just outside of the ruins of Thanaclan. From there, they've been keeping a close watch on skinwalker activity, and have done what they can to disrupt raiding bands returning to the plateau with droves of captives from the lowlands for sacrifice. Currently led by a lizardfolk chieftain named Rissashtak, the lizardfolk's actual leader is the Peloran missionary Noltus Innersol. The Pelorian camp itself is located on the shore of a shallow bog that feeds into the nearby river. The lizardfolk have constructed nine low mounds that, to the untrained eye, look like nothing more than hummocks rising from a dry patch of land in the bog. A DC 25 Survival check is enough to notice that these hummocks are actually huts camouflaged with mud and peat from the bog.

Led by Rissashtak (who acts as commander in Noltus's absence), the Pelorian lizardfolk now number only 11, down from the initial group of 36 Noltus led up to the central plateau. Conflicts with skinwalker raiders and demons have taken their toll on the zealous but overwhelmed converts. All that keeps them here is the hope that some day soon, they'll be reunited with their beloved leader.

Two lizardfolk remain on watch at all times, nearly submerged in the nearby waters of the bog (+10 circumstance bonus to Hide checks). If they notice the PCs approaching, they sound a conch shell to raise the alarm, at which point Rissashtak and the rest of the band arm themselves and prepare to receive the intruders, while the guards fall back to join their comrades.

When Rissashtak meets the PCs (provided that they do not behave in a hostile manner), he greets them politely in the name of Pelor, and offers them hospitality in the band's hideout. Rissashtak feeds the PCs roasted fish and fresh fruit and asks them several questions about the current conditions of the lowland tribes (Olman, Farshore, and lizardfolk alike). He's particularly interested in any news about skinwalker raids on the lowland.

If the PCs inquire about Noltus Innersol, Rissashtak grows solemn and admits that they haven't heard from Noltus for several days. Their leader left with six lizardfolk scouts and his loyal dog Bulgan on a mission to scout out the ruins of Mantru, but as far as Rissashtak knows, the group never arrived. They've been missing now for nearly five days, and Rissashtak has started to grow anxious.

In any event, Rissashtak invites the PCs to stay at his camp for as long as they wish. At some point before they leave, run the event "Noltus Returns."

Creatures: Rissashtak and his fellow lizardfolk gladly cooperate with the PCs, although they are quite outclassed by the perils the PCs are destined to face during this adventure. The lizardfolk dress and are armed like civilized members of their race, but each wears a wooden holy symbol of Pelor carved in white wood by Noltus himself. Rissashtak (whose name means "rock hard" in Draconic) is a hardy and wise lizardfolk ranger who has been trained by Noltus in the ways of Pelor. Rissashtak's animal companion is a Medium viper named Khuba-Shink

RISSASHTAK **CR 10**
Male lizardfolk ranger 5/cleric 4 (Pelor)
NG Medium humanoid (reptilian)
Monster Manual 169
Init –1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Common, Draconic, Olman

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19
hp 97 (11 HD)
Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *morningstar* +11/+6 (1d8+2) and claw +8 (1d4) and bite +8 (1d4)
Ranged +1 *seeking longbow* +9/+4 (1d8+1/×3) or +1 *seeking longbow* +7/+7/+2 (1d8+1/×3)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10
Atk Options favored enemy (evil outsiders +4, animals +2)
Special Actions feat of stength 1/day (+4 Str for 1 round), greater turning 1/day, turn undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+5)
Combat Gear scroll of *bless* (2), scroll of *aid* (2)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th)
2nd—*heat metal*[D] (DC 14), *lesser restoration*, *remove paralysis*, *silence* (DC 14)
1st—*command* (DC 13), *endure elements*, *enlarge person*[D], *entropic shield*, *shield of faith*
0—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*, *purify food and drink*
D domain spell; **Domains** strength, sun
Ranger Spell Prepared (CL 2nd)
1st—*magic fang*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 8, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12
SQ hold breath, spontaneous casting (cure spells), wild empathy +6
Feats Athletic, Combat Casting, Endurance, Multiattack, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Survival), Track
Skills Balance +3, Climb +8, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +3, Hide +4, Jump +10, Knowledge (religion) +4, Move Silently +4, Search +5, Swim +12, Survival +10
Possessions combat gear, +2 *studded leather armor*, +1 *morningstar*, +1 *seeking longbow* with 40 arrows, wooden holy symbol of Pelor

Khuba-Shink, Medium viper animal companion: hp 9; *Monster Manual* 280.

Lizardfolk (11): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 169.

Noltus Returns (EL 16)

Not long after the PCs reach the Peloran camp, one of the lizardfolk guards rushes into the lair with news—Noltus has returned! The missing missionary and his six scouts (and even his dog!) are on the way up the path to the Pelorian camp—although they look wounded and ragged, they seem to be intact.

The news brings a round of cheers from the Pelorians, and they rush to greet their triumphant leader as he staggers into the camp from the northern trail. What the lizardfolk do not know, however, is that Noltus Innersol was killed only a day ago as he attempted to escape imprisonment on Taboo Island. His body was then consumed by a horrific, shapchanging maurezhi demon named Onailati. Capable of assuming the form and calling upon the memories of his consumed foes, Onailati quickly gained the knowledge of the Pelorian camp's location, something that the previous day of torture at the hands of skinwalker interrogators had failed to procure. Onailati then gathered a group of skinwalkers and his monstrous ally, a simian menace known as a julajimus, to return to the Peloran Camp to finish off the remnants of Noltus' band.

The false Noltus greets Rissashtak warmly as he arrives in the camp, but demands to know who the PCs are. He accepts any story quickly and with grace, but does his best to determine what the PCs' strengths and weaknesses are before springing his trap. He disguises this by attempting to play to their egos, feigning excitement at tales of their previous exploits on the isle. During this scene, there's a chance that the PCs might notice something off about Noltus and his allies, or sense something strange in his words. Make a Sense Motive in secret for each PC, opposed by Onailanti's Bluff check. Also, make a Spot check in secret for each PC, opposed by Disguise checks for Onailanti, the julajimus, and the skinwalker acolyte. PCs who succeed at either roll should notice something strange about the band, perhaps not enough to encourage an immediate attack, but enough to arouse suspicion. They may notice that none of the lizardfolk openly wear their symbols of Pelor, or realize that "Noltus's dog" seems unnaturally keen on following the conversation.

Creatures: The disguised monsters didn't expect to find the PCs in the camp, but they don't abandon their plan to wipe the place out. Instead, Onailanti uses telepathy to coordinate attacks, informing his allies that the PCs are the unknown force here and that they should be the primary targets during the battle to come. The monsters attempt to spread out in the camp so that when they spring their assault, they force the defenders to split their attentions among several different areas.

Onailati is a demonic spy and assassin who has served Khala the Two-Headed for many years. In his true form, he appears as a muscular ghoul with taloned hands, sunken eyes, and a mouthful of sharp teeth.

A julajimus is a hulking monster, 18 feet tall and akin to a massive baboon in appearance. Its arms are long and muscular, possessing additional joints along their length, and its maw is oversized and filled with immense teeth. A julajimus can hide its monstrous form by transforming into a Small or smaller animal, and while most julajimuses are paralyzed by sunlight, this particular one wears a *ring of freedom of movement* supplied by his maurhezi ally.

The five skinwalkers are led by a skinwalker acolyte, a sorcerer who has

discovered vile methods of enhancing his connections to his demonic skin by becoming an acolyte of the skin. The skinwalker acolyte has disguised himself and his five allies as lizardfolk by using a scroll of *seeming*. Skinwalkers are detailed in full in the Appendix.

ONAILATI **CR 12**

Male advanced elite maurezhi demon
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extrapanar, shapechanger, tanar'ri)
Fiend Folio 50

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., deathwatch; Listen +20, Spot +20
Languages all; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 25
hp 142 (15 HD); **DR** 10/good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fir 10; **SR** 22
Fort +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

Spd 40 ft.
Melee* +1 *disruption heavy mace* +19/+14/+9 (1d8+14) and
claw +16 (1d6+9 plus paralysis) and
bite +16 (1d4+9 plus paralysis)
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +23
Atk Options Power Attack, pounce
Special Actions consume, *summon creatures*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)
At will—*animate dead*, *blur*, *cause fear* (DC 16), *chill touch*, *death knell* (DC 17), *hold person* (DC 17), *invisibility*
3/day—quickened *death knell* (DC 17), *fear* (DC 19)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 27, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 19, Wis 10, Cha 21
SQ assume shape
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*death knell*), Skill Focus (Bluff)
Skills Bluff +23, Craft (sculpture) +10, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +22 (+34 in alternate form), Hide +21, Intimidate +13, Jump +41, Knowledge (religion) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +20, Move Silently +19, Spot +20
Possessions +1 *disruption heavy mace*, clerical vestments, wooden holy symbol of Pelor

Assume Shape (Su) Onailati can take on the appearance of any humanoid creature whose corpse he has consumed. This ability otherwise functions as *alter self*, except that he may remain in the chosen form indefinitely. He may assume a new form or return to his own as a standard action.

Deathwatch (Sp) Onailati gains the benefits of a constant *deathwatch* spell (CL 20th). It can be dispelled, but automatically activates again on his next turn.

Consume (Su) Onailati gains power by consuming the body of a sentient living creature. He must begin eating the corpse within 10 minutes of its death and requires 30 minutes to complete the consumption. A creature consumed in this way cannot be restored to life except via *wish*, *miracle*, or *true resurrection*, and even then there's a 50% chance that each attempt fails. If he devours the corpse of a humanoid creature whose Hit Dice or class levels are at least half of his current Hit Dice, Onailati advances in power, gaining one Hit Die, a +1 natural armor bonus, and a +1 bonus to his Strength and Intelligence. More details on maurezhi advancement can be found on page 51 of the *Fiend Folio* if they become necessary for play.

Paralysis (Ex) Any creature hit by Onailati's bite or claw attack must make a DC 22 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d6+4 minutes.

Pounce (Ex) If Onailati charges, he can make a full attack even though he has moved.

Summon Creatures (Sp) Once per day, Onailati can summon 1d4 ghouls with a 100% chance of success or 2d4 dretches with a 60% chance of success. Summoned creatures remain for 1 hour before vanishing.

JULAJIMUS **CR 12**

NE Huge aberration (shapechanger)

Monster Manual II 133

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10

Aura fear (20 feet, Will DC 20)

Languages Olman

AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 20

hp 152 (16 HD); **DR** 10/magic

Immune enchantment magic

Resist fire 10

Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10

Weakness sunlight vulnerability

Spd 50 ft.

Melee* bite +17 (3d10+12) and 2 claws +15 (3d8+7)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +29

Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, stunning

Special Actions alternate form, roar

*3-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 28, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 15

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite, claw)

Skills Climb +18, Disguise +12 (+22 when in alternate form), Intimidate +10, Jump +27, Listen +10, Spot +10

Possessions *ring of freedom of movement*

Alternate Form (Su) At will, a julajimus can assume the form of a Small or smaller animal. It often chooses the form of a creature like a kitten or rabbit to lure its enemies into a false sense of security. It can reassume its true form as a free action.

Fear Aura (Su) Any living creature within 20 feet of a julajimus in its true form must make a DC 20 Will save or become frightened. A creature that saves successfully against this effect is immune to it for 24 hours. Each round, a frightened creature gains a new saving throw at the same DC to resist the effect. This is a mind-affecting fear affect.

Roar (Su) Three times a day a julajimus can loose an ear-splitting roar that can be heard for miles. Every creature within 60 feet must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or become deafened for 3d6 hours and take 6d6 points of nonlethal sonic damage.

Stunning (Su) If a julajimus scores a critical hit with a claw, its opponent must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Sunlight Vulnerabiilty (Ex) A julajimus becomes paralyzed when exposed to sunlight; each round, it can resist paralysis with a DC 20 Fortitude save, but once it fails its save it becomes paralyzed until 1d4 rounds after the exposure to sunlight ends. Note that with its *ring of freedom of movement*, this julajimus is able to move about in sunlight with ease.

SKINWALKER ACOLYTE **CR 13**

Male skinwalker sorcerer 9/acolyte of the skin 2

CE Medium outsider (native)

Complete Arcane 19
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +17, Spot +14
Languages Abyssal, Olman

AC 27, touch 18, flat-footed 21
hp 200 (19 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Immune fear, poison
Resist fire 10; **SR** 15
Fort +19, **Ref** +15, **Will** +18

Spd 40 ft.
Melee +1 *dagger* +20/+15/+10 (1d4+3/19–20 plus poison) and
2 claws +17 (1d6+1 plus poison) and
bite +17 (1d8+1 plus poison)
Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+2/×3 plus poison)
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +15
Atk Options pounce
Combat Gear *lesser rod of empower metamagic*, violet fungus venom (10 doses)
Spells Known (CL 10th, +18 ranged touch)
5th (4/day)—*feeblemind* (DC 21)
4th (6/day)—*charm monster* (DC 20), *lesser geas* (DC 20)
3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 19), *fly*
2nd (8/day)—*invisibility*, *scorching ray*, *resist energy*, *whispering wind*
1st (8/day)—*alarm*, *disguise self* (DC 17), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 16), *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 12), *read magic*, *resistance*
Spell-Like Ability (CL 8th)
1/day—*poison* (DC 20)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 22, Con 24, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 22
SQ summon familiar (bat), telepathic link, wear fiend
Feats Combat Casting, Craft Rod, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Multiattack, Track, Weapon Finesse
Skills Concentration +20, Craft (poisonmaking) +11, Disguise +6 (+16 with *seeming* scroll), Jump +25, Hide +25, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Listen +17, Move Silently +25, Spot +14, Survival +14
Possessions combat gear, +1 *dagger*, +1 *composite longbow* (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, *ring of protection +2*, *cloak of Charisma +2*

Wear Fiend (Ex) The skinwalker acolyte's bond with his jarilith skin is stronger than those of typical skinwalkers. His natural armor bonus increases by +1 and he gains a +2 inherent bonus to his Dexterity.

Skinwalkers (5): hp 76 each; see Appendix.

Tactics: When Onailati gives the telepathic order to attack, he and his allies attempt to follow the tactics outlined here. Before giving the order, he telepathically orders his julajimus minion (still in bloodhound form) to approach one of the PCs and begin affectionately licking him. Onailati then makes sure he's at least 25 feet away, so he won't be affected by the monster's fear aura when it reverts to its true from.

Round 1: The julajimus reverts to its true form as a free action and takes a full attack on the PC it was licking. Its fear aura activates, but remember that any skinwalkers in the area are immune to fear. The skinwalkers move to attack the nearest lizardfolk, initially leaving the PCs to their more powerful allies. The skinwalker acolyte casts *feeblemind* on a spellcaster. Onailati cries out in distress, attempting to carry on his charade a bit longer. He then casts *invisibility* on himself.

Round 2: The julajimus continues to attack its target. Skinwalkers move on to the PCs, focusing their attacks on anyone not directly engaged with the julajimus. The acolyte casts *fly* and retreats into the air. Noltus takes a standard action to assume his true form and then moves to stand over a dying lizardfolk.

Round 3: The julajimus continues its attack. Skinwalkers move to focus their attacks on one PC, and the acolyte casts an empowered *fireball* down at the others. Onailati casts a quickened *death knell* followed by *animate dead* on the lizardfolk to create a zombie and moves to the next closet dead or dying body.

Additional Rounds: The enemies continue these tactics until the acolyte is slain or Onailati is exposed. If the acolyte is slain, the skinwalkers focus their attacks on whoever dealt the killing blow. If onailati is exposed, he summons 1d4 ghouls and engages the PCs in melee.

Retreat: The skinwalkers are fanatic, and fight to the death. The julajimus has been ordered not to roar unless Onailati gives it leave to do so (which he does as soon as it looks like the PCs are going to win the battle), but if reduced to 40 or fewer hit points it roars anyway. It attempts to flee if reduced to less than 20 hit points. Onailati *teleports* back to Taboo Island to report his failure to Khala if both the julajimus and the acolyte are slain, or if he's reduced to less than 30 hit points.

Development: If Onailati reports to Khala the Two-Headed, the aspect prepares the island for the PCs—this adventure assumes that this occurs, so if the PCs manage to defeat Onailati before he can escape, you should make the appropriate adjustments to the encounters within the Great Temple.

If the PCs head straight to the Great Temple, you should consider having Onailati's disguised band encounter the PCs just before they attempt to enter the dungeon or cross Broken Lake—strive to have this encounter be the first major event that occurs in the adventure.

Mantru (EL 14)

The small village of Mantru is located on the southwestern shore of Broken Lake, near the heart of ruined Thanaclan. Mantru was inhabited by about 50 Olman fishermen and farmers, and had long been under the indirect contol of the kopru. Yet only a few months ago, when the skinwalkers began their push into the outlying areas, the village was overtaken as the cult needed more sacrifices to create more *shadow pearls*. The kopru rankled at this move, which they viewed as shortsighted, yet they knew better than to openly oppose the dictates of their demonic lord.

Those of Mantru's inhabitants who weren't killed were dragged to the Great Temple to meet an even more terrible fate at Khala's hand. Both Fano, the village chief, and Umlat, the tribal cleric, lost their lives when they attempted to lead a defense against the skinwalker invasion. Yet Umlat was a priest of Quetzalcoatl, and his death has attracted the attention of several of the deity's legendary servants, a troop of four couatls. These outsiders have flown to Mantru to honor Umlat and defend his body from profanation and beasts, yet realize that they lack the power to directly oppose Khala. Their lord, the god of the air, has granted these four couatls a vision, and they now know that heroes will come to Mantru soon.

Mantru is located on the shore of the lake, and consists of eight thatched lodges of various sizes, two of which are built on stilted platforms out in the lake. The village is now abandoned, but shows no signs of struggle or destruction, for the couatls have taken the time to cleanse the village of the remains of battle.

Umlat tried to defend himself with his spells, but was overpowered and killed by Onailati. Strangely enough, while all of the other bodies (both living and dead) were taken back to the Great Temple, Umlat's corpse was forgotten by his killers. The couatls have placed his body in his lodge, and have staved off corruption through the use of *gentle repose* spells. They now wait for someone to visit it before carrying it to a sacred graveyard in the afterlife.

Creatures: When the party enters Mantru, the couatls notice them quickly. Two of the four become visible and address the party using telepathy. The couatls explain that they have come to Mantru to pay homage to the mortal remains of Umlat, the last priest of Mantru and child of Quetzalcoatl, father of the firmament and the giver of Law. They further explain that while Umlat was recently killed by a demon, his killer left the body untouched. Now, the couatls must keep watch on him "until worthy heroes come to bid Umlat the farewell he deserves." If the PCs ask about the village, the couatls say that everyone in Mantru has disappeared, and only the priest corpse was left behind by whatever wiped out everyone else in one night. If the PCs ask to see the corpse, the couatls say that the Umlat's body is taboo for them as well, unless they can demonstrate that they are worthy enough to bid the priest the last farewell. The couatls have been told they shall know these heroes, for they will have the answer to one of the Law Giver's favorite riddles. The couatls are eager to give the riddle to the PCs, as they hope they are the heroes they await.

I came back from the land of the lodestone's scorn.

I came back with the sun when the sky was new born,

I came back in the shadow as the day met its end,

What one place in four have I never been?

The answer is "the north" (the first line referencing the south, the second being the east, and the third being the west). The couatls are gracious enough to allow each PC to guess, but no more than once per PC. If the PCs solve the riddle, they are taken to where Umlat's corpse lies on a bed of fresh flowers picked by the couatls. The corpse bears deep claw marks on the neck (inflicted by Onailati). A few moments after the PCs reach the priest's body, with the four couatls looking on, a ghostly form rises from the corpse. Umlat's spirit has returned to thank the PCs and to warn them of what lies ahead, yet he does not volunter information. The spirit speaks only in Olman, and only to answer questions. He answers one question per PC before fading away forever. Information that Umlat can share includes the following facts.

- In death, Umlat finally understood that the whole village, including himself, had been under the subtle influence of the koprus of Taboo Island, who kept the inhabitants of Mantru in an unaware state of servitude. Every once in a while, the koprus picked up Mantru's best warriors with their domination ability and used them as guards of the western entrance to Taboo Temple.
- The village was attacked by a band of fiendish savages who wore demonic lion skins. Umlat recognized several of the savages as former young warriors of Mantru who rebelled against the elders and escaped to Taboo Island under the influence of the koprus.
- The leader of the attackers was a horrible watery demon with bulbous yellow-orange eyes. The demon observed the attack from the lake and killed Fano with a lethal rune. A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the demon as a wastrilith, and a DC 25 Spellcraft check identifies the rune as a *symbol of death*.
- Umlat was killed by a powerful demon-ghoul, which paralyzed him and broke his neck. The PCs might have already seen Onailati, or they can identify a maurezhi with a DC 25 Knowledge check.

After the PCs have bid farewell to Umlat, the couatls bear up his body and thank the PCs. They agree to cast any spells upon the party to heal their wounds or otherwise aid them, but when they are done, they *plane shift* away to Quetzalcoatl's realm.

Couatls (4): hp 58 each; *Monster Manual* 37.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs answer the riddle and learn what they can from Umlat, give them a CR 14 experience award.

PART TWO: TABOO TEMPLE

The center of the plateau, once the heart of Thanaclan theocracy, is now taboo to the Olmans. The lake that surrounded the Great Temple expanded over the centuries to slowly swallow and flood much of the ruins. Known to those few who have seen it as Broken Lake, it blocks easy access to the ruins of the Great Temple, an underground complex built into the bedrock of the lake's only distinguishing feature—Taboo Island.

The first thing visitors approaching Taboo Island notice are the sharp, 200-foot-high ridges of blackish rock that block access to much of the island's western shores. The island itself slopes down to the southwest, creating a triangular profile dotted with ancient ziggurats and half-crumbled statues. It is these once-proud but now broken idols of ancient kings and deities that give the ruins their common name.

Approaching Taboo Island (EL 15)

Enough outrigger canoes remain tethered to the low piers at the ruins of Mantru for the PCs to paddle to the island. Strong swimmers may even wish to swim out to it. The safest route to reach Taboo Island, though, is via flight or teleportation, for the waters of Broken Lake hide a particularly dangerous threat.

Creatures: Giant crocodiles are common along the outer shores of Broken Lake, but even they avoid the central depths. It is here that Broken Lake's undisputed king lives, an immense crocodile known as a

deinosuchus. At just over sixty feet in length, the immense predator is viewed as a boon by Khala and his skinwalkers, and regular applications of *charm monster* by skinwalker acolytes have made the beast their staunch ally.

If the PCs attempt to swim or boat out to Taboo Island, they are spotted and attacked by the titanic monster before they reach the island. The deinosuchus emerges suddenly from below, gaining a +10 cover bonus to its Hide check against foes above the water's surface as it approaches, for a total of +21 Hide. If the PCs avoid this peril via flight or teleporation, you can have them encounter the deinosuchus any time they stray too close to the water's edge as they explore the island. If they defeat the guardian at area **1**, they may even find the deinosuchus has moved into this area if they return at a later date.

DEINOSUCHUS **CR 15**
Titanic elite crocodile
N Gargantuan animal
Monster Manual 271, *Monster Manual II* 217
Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +18
AC 26, touch 6, flat-footed 26
hp 412 (25 HD)
Fort +28, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16
Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.
Melee* bite +23 (6d6+29/19–20) or tail slap +23 (8d6+29/19–20)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +49
Atk Options improved grab (bite)
Special Action trample 3d8+28 (DC 41)
*10-point Power Attack
Abilities Str 49, Dex 11, Con 34, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 2
SQ hold breath
Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite, tail slap), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite, tail slap), Power Attack, Skill Focus (Hide), Stealthy
Skills Hide +7 (+11 in water), Listen +4, Move Silently +2, Spot +18, Swim +27

Taboo Island

The ruins of ancient Thanaclan are still evident on Taboo Island, with the vine-covered remnants of terraced buildings stubbornly resisting the jungle's reclamation. Once the houses of Olman nobility, they now serve as lairs for several tribes of skinwalkers. Among the broken idols and houses stand four ziggurats, the only structures to rise completely above the tree level. These four pyramids are identical 70-foot-tall structures of granite whose tops are accessible via steep flights of stairs. Elsewhere on the island stand four relatively new statues of Demogorgon. Built by the skinwalkers, these life-sized, crude renderings are kept clear of vegetation by the cultists that hold them sacred.

Exploration of Taboo Island should reveal to the PCs that there is little to challenge them here. Any wandering encounters on the island are with a band of 2d4 skinwalkers 50% of the time; otherwise, you can determine what is encountered by rolling on the Ruins column of the table on page 59.

Each of the skinwalker tribes consists of a cluster of huts and small caves dug at the feet of large trees. Hidden paths, navigable with DC 25 Survival checks, allow easier access to these thorps than hacking through the overgrown ruins. Each thorp is home to a dozen skinwalkers led by a skinwalker acolyte.

Taboo Temple

Whether the PCs learn of its import from captured skinwalkers or Umlat's spirt, are guided there by divination magic, or simply discover it on their own, the most significant region of Taboo Island is the ruins of the Great Temple of Thanaclan. Known once as Taboo Temple to the villagers of Mantru, the skinwalkers and kopru that now control its lower reaches have taken a liking to the name.

Several entrances into the temple are possible. From the west, the most obvious is area **1**, while from the east, this honor falls to area **17**. Area **21** is unlikely to be discovered from outside, but can serve well as an escape route. The most obscure entrance is via the underground shaft from Golismorga, deep below the Isle of Dread. This entrance (area **25**) might serve PCs who discovered the shaft in "The Lightless Depths" as an excellent back door into the temple.

Unless noted otherwise, the rooms in the temple have 10-foot-high ceilings and are dark—most of the temple's denizens can see perfectly well in the blackness. The air in the dungeon, while breathable, is uncomfortably damp and foul-smelling. The regular eruption of the geysers in area **40** can be felt throughout the complex as a low rumble and a faint trembling in the stone floor. From time to time, these subtle tremors are accompanied by a faint smell of brimstone and ammonia. Wood rots quickly in these environs, and as a result many doorways stand empty. In the section of the dungeon inhabited by the skinwalkers, wooden doors are replaced and maintained regularly, but are still swollen with moisture and prone to sticking. These doors (found in areas 3–8) can be opened with a DC 15 Strength check. Elsewhere in the dungeon, stone doors remain stout and functional.

1. Xerkamat's Lair (EL 15)

A great entrance opens on the west side of the cliff, ninety feet wide and just as tall. The red marble walls within are lined with carvings depicting strange gods and ferocious animals. A pair of crude wooden piers extends over the waters of the lake from the entrance, where three canoes are tethered. A net stretched over a half-dozen thick pilings protects the approach, forming a semicircle around the stone landing.

The nets rigged around the approach are regularly warded with *alarm* spells cast by skinwalker acolytes. Only by speaking the passphrase ("Khala rules now where man ruled once") can the alarm be bypassed; otherwise, any attempt to tamper with or move through the netting triggers a shrill howling. This howling can be heard clearly as far as area **3**.

A submerged entrance to area **28** opens into the waters of the lake to the south of these piers.

Creature: Although to casual observation this entrance may appear abandoned, it is in fact under the constant watchful eye of a powerful aquatic demon sent here by Demogorgon to serve his aspect, Khala, and to ensure that the lakeward route to the temple is amply protected.

This demon is Xerkamat, an eel-like monster known as a wastrilith. The wastrilith is bound to Khala the Two-Headed by a powerful and unholy pact that allows the aspect to observe the world through his eyes and use him as a focus for his spell-like abilities, making the demon even more dangerous than normal.

XERKAMAT **CR 15**

Advanced elite wastrilith demon
CE Huge outsider (aquatic, chaotic, evil extraplanar)
Fiend Folio 55
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +24, Spot +24
Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 21; Dodge, Mobility
hp 230 (20 HD)
Immune cold, water-based attacks
SR 20
Fort +19, **Ref** +19, **Will** +15
Weakness vulnerable to fire

Spd 30 ft., swim 80 ft.
Melee bite +29 (2d6+11) and 2 claws +24 (2d4+5)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +20; **Grp** +39
Atk Options Spring Attack
Special Actions breath weapon, *symbol*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th)
At will—*blasphemy*, *control water*, *deeper darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *fear* (DC 20), *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *read magic*, *suggestion* (DC 19), *telekinesis* (DC 21), *tongues* (self only), *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 20), *wall of ice*
3/day—*unholy aura* (DC 24)

Abilities Str 32, Dex 20, Con 24, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 22
SQ break summoning, water mastery
Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack
Skills Bluff +29, Concentration +30, Hide +20, Intimidate +39, Knowledge (the planes) +24, Listen +24, Move Silently +28, Spot +24, Swim +42

Break Summoning (Ex) A wastrilith can be summoned using a *summon monster IX* spell, but it can make an opposed Wisdom check to break free of the summoning.
Breath Weapon (Su) Cone of boiling water, 3d10 points of fire damage, 60 foot cone, once every 1d4 rounds; Reflex DC 27 half.
Symbol (Sp) Up to three times a day, a wastrilith can create any *symbol* as a spell-like ability (CL 15th).
Water Mastery (Ex) A wastrilith gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls against opponents who are touching water.

Tactics: When Xerkamat notices the PCs, he immediately informs Khala via the telepathic link he shares with the demon lord's aspect. Khala activates the link between them to observe through Xerkamat's senses while the wastrilith takes the time to cast *unholy aura* on himself, while Khala casts *fly* on him through the link. One round later, Khala uses *project image* to create an illusion of the wastrilith that confronts the intruding PCs. Xerkamat may use his spell-like abilities through this image, but Khala cannot (his link is with Xerkamat, not the image). Xerkamat remains 20 feet underwater until the image is dispelled

or the PCs attempt to flee toward area **2**, at which point he surges up to attack them in melee.

Xerkamat fights until reduced to less than 30 hit points, at which time he teleports to the depths of Broken Lake to recover—Khala wants to keep the wastrilith alive if he can, for as long as it lives the aspect has a handy escape route if things turn grim when the PCs finally encounter him.

2. Temple Entrance (EL 9)

A monumental stairway climbs to a wide landing with an archway set in the east wall. Pillars decorated with abstract and intricate carvings support the ceiling of the chamber. In the middle of the cave, two square pedestals to either side of the center steps of the stairway support the feet and ankles of a collapsed statue that once straddled the stairs. Some of the statue's features are still recognizable in the heaps of rubble scattered on the stairway, most noticeably the feathered texture of a huge pair of wings. To either side of the passageway to the east leer two bas-reliefs of men with feathered headdresses. The one to the north shows a man with a brilliant sun over his head, while to the south is a man beneath a smoking moon.

A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the collapsed statue as Quetzalcoatl and the bas-relief figures as Tezcatlipoca (moon) and Tonatiuh (sun). A DC 30 Search of the bas-relief of Tonatiuh reveals a cleverly-hidden peephole in the carving's left eye that, if peered through, reveals a hallway beyond the carving. A lone skinwalker typically stands guard here, watching area **2** for intruders that manage to bypass the *alarm* net and the wastrilith.

Trap: The wastrilith has placed a *symbol of death* on the floor just before the entrance to the passageway leading to area **3**. The skinwalkers are attuned to the symbol, and when they bring prisoners they're careful to cover their heads with hoods to prevent premature sacrifices. The symbol activates as soon as any nonevil creature reads it; it does not activate if it's simply walked over.

***Symbol of Death*:** CR 9; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*symbol of death*, 15th-level sorcerer, DC 24); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33.

3. Main Chamber (EL 13–17)

A blazing fire burns under a rectangular hole in the sixty-foot-tall ceiling of this large chamber. Just north and south of the entrance, flights of stairs lead up to balconies that run along the room's sides at a height of fifteen feet. Wooden doors are set into the far walls of both balconies. A man-sized stone visage, its mouth agape, serves as the entrance to a passage beyond. The face has been badly cut and defaced.

While most of the skinwalkers of the central plateau are nomads and sleep in different camps each night, the primary tribe dwells here. They use this chamber as a main living area, cooking fish-based meals on the fire when living human flesh is not available to satiate their demonic appetites. Unless the PCs have been particularly stealthy, they'll be confronted by the main force of the skinwalkers here in a battle that may well take multiple assaults to win.

The hole above the central fire pit emerges from the rocky ridge overhead, where its periodic smoke appears no different from any of the other numerous volcanic vents along Taboo Island's western ridge. The shaft itself extends 180 feet before reaching its exit, and can be scaled with a DC 25 Climb check.

The fifteen-foot-tall face over the east passage is hollow, containing enough space above the passageway for a single creature to hide and observe area **3**. Openings in the face's eyes are visible with a DC 20 Spot check.

The two secret doors on the balconies are of stone, and can be discovered with a DC 25 Search check.

Creatures: The skinwalker tribe that dwells here numbers 15 in all, including two skinwalker acolytes and Chief Achcauhtli. If the PCs battle them all at once, the resulting EL 17 encounter may be too much for them to handle. Fortunately, the Chief expects his warriors to handle any invasions on their own and does not immediately join battle here.

If the PCs arrive without alerting the complex, they find 2d4 skinwalkers relaxing in this chamber. One more remains on guard in area **6**, and most of the others are found sleeping in areas **4A** and **4B**. Both acolytes are in area **5**, while one last skinwalker (the Chieftain's consort) is with Achcauhtli in area **7**.

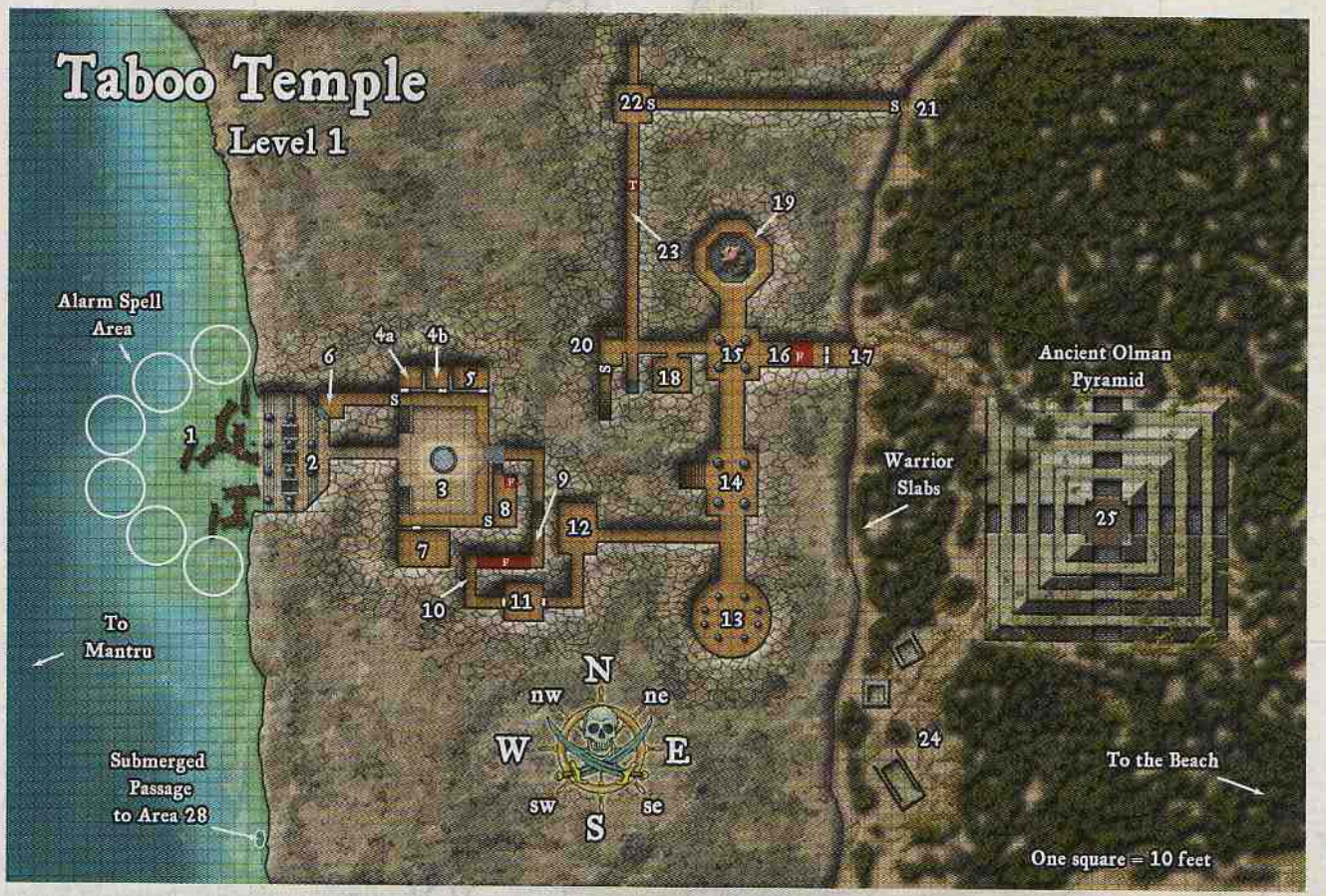
If the skinwalkers are expecting the PCs, all 12 wait in here. Four of them wait in the lower area betwen the entrance and the fire pit, while four more stand on each of the two balconies, armed with longbows. One of the acolytes hides inside of the stone head, while the second remains at the Chieftain's side in area **7**.

Chief Achcauhtli **CR 15**
Male skinwalker ranger 9
CE Medium outsider (native)
Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +18, Spot +18
Languages Abyssal, Olman

AC 27, touch 14, flat-footed 23
hp 229 (17 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Immune fear, poison
SR 15
Fort +20, **Ref** +16, **Will** +10; evasion

Spd 40 ft.
Melee *+2 flaming burst macuahuitl* +23/+18/+13/+8 (1d8+7/17–20 plus 1d6 fire) and
+2 bashing light wooden shield +21/+16 (1d8+3) and
2 claws +19 (1d6+2 plus poison) and bite +19 (1d8+2 plus poison)
Ranged *+1 composite longbow* +22/+17/+12/+7 (1d8+6/×3 plus poison)
Base Atk +17; **Grp** +22
Atk Options favored enemy (humans +4, animals +2), pounce
Combat Gear violet fungus venom (10 doses)
Spells Prepared (CL 4th)
1st—*longstrider, resist energy*

Abilities Str 21, Dex 18, Con 26, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16
SQ animal companion, swift tracker, telepathic link, wild empathy +12, woodland stride
Feats Endurance, Improved Critical (macuahuitl), Improved Initiative, Improved Shield Bash, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Multiattack, Track,



Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (macuahuitl)

Skills Concentration +19, Craft (poisonmaking) +11, Hide +29, Jump +34, Listen +18, Move Silently +29, Spot +18, Survival +18

Possessions *+2 bashing light wooden shield, +2 flaming burst macuahuitl, +1 composite longbow* (+5 Str) with 20 arrows, *belt of giant strength +4, bracers of armor +4, amulet of natural armor +2*

Eztli, ape animal companion: hp 29; *Monster Manual* 268.

Skinwalker Acolytes (2): hp 200 each; see page 64.

Skinwalkers (12): hp 76 each; see Appendix.

Tactics: The four skinwalkers on the floor do their best to prevent intruders from pressing far into the room while the archers on the balconies provide covering fire. As melee fighters below drop, archers leap down from the balconies to olster their ranks.

The acolyte hiding within the stone head receives the benefits of near total cover (+8 AC, +4 Reflex), and supports his kin by casting his ranged spells through the peepholes at targets below.

Once four skinwalkers are slain, the surviviors howl in rage—this din is enough to call the Chieftain, his ape animal companion, and the second acolyte into the battle. The second acolyte remains on the balcony to cast spells while Chief Achcauhtli leaps off the balcony to engage the most wounded of the PCs.

Development: As long as Chief Achcauhtli lives, the skinwalkers do not abandon this post. If the Chief is slain, the remaining skinwalkers fight until reduced to less than 20 hit points, at which point they try to flee.

4. Barracks

This room is lined with mats and furnished with fur beds and crocodile skin rugs. Ornaments of bones, feathers, and fish scales hang on the walls. Unfinished bows, arrows, and spears rest on the floor. A clay brazier in the middle sheds a soft light. The air reeks of grease, smoke, brimstone, and sweat.

Treasure: Although areas 4A and 4B are very similar, and share the same general contents, one bedding in area 4A hides a pouch containing some of the demonfolk tribe's treasure. This pouch can be found with a DC 20 Search check, and contains 55 shards of black obsidian worth 10 gp each and 5 amethysts worth 100 gp each.

5. Acolyte's Shrine

The walls of this grim room are decorated with stretched skins, most of which seem to have been harvested from men and women. The gruesome trophies are painted with twisting, coiling runes. A bloodstained stone block sits in the center of the room, a half-dozen obsidian knives glittering atop it. Mounds of furs line the west section of the room, and sitting amid them is a battered stone coffer.

This room serves the skinwalker acolytes as a shrine, barracks, and workshop. The runes on the wall skins are prayers to Demogorgon, written in Abyssal.

Treasure: A trunk in room **4B** contains five colorful feathered cloaks with large ivory clasps worth 50 gp each, six golden bowls worth 200 gp each, and four golden chalices shaped like skulls with black opal eyes and obsidian teeth worth 500 gp each.

6. Secret Viewing Chamber (EL 6)

A stool sits before an array of stone levers near a peephole in the southwest corner.

This room was once used to observe the main west entrance to the temple.

Creature: A skinwalker is constantly stationed here to keep watch on the west entrance, although he quickly abandons this post to join his kin in area **3** once it becomes apparent that the temple has been invaded.

Skinwalker: hp 76; see Appendix.

7. Chief's Quarters

A single, luxurious bedding of tiger furs sits against the middle of the west wall. A wooden trunk rests at the foot of the bed, while a dozen colorful wooden shields decorated with large and brilliant feathers hang from or lean against the west walls. A large clay jug emanating a spicy, alcoholic smell sits in the northeast corner.

The skinwalker chief is unlikely to be encountered here in his quarters, but if the PCs manage to reach this far without raising the alarm, they may find him and one of his skinwalker consorts here.

Treasure: The trunk near the chief's bed contains nine 1-foot-tall ivory statuettes of ancient Olman spirits worth 70 gp each, an ancient Olman priest's bronze mask encrusted with lapis lazuli and malachite worth 1,100 gp, a golden ritual scepter with a moon-shaped sapphire at the head worth 1,450 gp, two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, and *pipes of pain* carved in the shape of a feathered snake.

8. Priest's Chamber

This room is bare of furniture with the exception of a few stone benches along the wall, and a heavy layer of dust and fine sand covers the floor. A steep flight of steps in the northwest corner leads up to a narrow platform, and a trail of footprints winds through the dust between the steps and the southwest corner.

Ancient Olman priests used this room to meditate and observe worshippers in area **3**. The dust and sand on the floor covers a stone trapdoor in the northeast corner of the room that has remained undiscovered by the skinwalkers. A DC 30 Search check reveals its location (DC 20 if the sand is cleared away). The trap door hasn't been opened in ages, and requires a DC 25 Strength check to reveal a 20-foot drop into area **33** below.

9. Breached Wall

A flight of steps descends to a man-sized breach in a makeshift wall.

This passage was walled up by surviving Olman priests in a desperate attempt to contain invading kopru during the first savage tide. The wall was breached many years ago when a skinwalker tribe took to dwelling here.

10. Weakened Floor (EL 1)

The section of the corridor marked on the map has been badly afflicted by age and tremors. Although the walls and ceiling remain sound, the floor has been weakened to the point of collapsing if more than 250 pounds are placed on it. The skinwalkers know of the hazard and take care to pass over the floor one at a time. The weakened floor can be noticed with a DC 20 Spot check by characters with the stonecunning ability. When

Skinwalker

the weakened floor section collapses, all characters standing on it plunge down 20 feet into area **31**, suffering 2d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 20 half).

11. Private Altar

This dusty room contains only a three-foot-tall ornate pedestal set against the north wall. Several objects are neatly arranged on the flat, marble surface of the pedestal, around a stone statuette of a hideous, two-headed monster.

This room was once used by the ancient Olman priest for private rites, but now serves the skinwalkers as a shrine to Khala.

Treasure: Sitting next to the statuette of Khala are five ivory rhythm sticks worth 10 gp each, three inlaid and bejeweled bowls worth 500 gp each, a crumbling bamboo flute and the remains of a feather fan. The statuette of Khala is cursed—whoever removes it from the tabernacle is afflicted by *bestow curse* unless he makes a DC 20 Will save. The cursed character loses 6 points of Wisdom as long as the curse lasts.

12. Burial Chamber (EL 14)

A dozen man-sized niches shrouded with thick cobwebs occupy the north wall of this chamber. Ten of the twelve contain mummified corpses propped up in a standing position. The shriveled bodies wear the rotting garb of ancient Olman warriors, their feathered, painted shields blasted by decay and obscured by centuries-old dust. Most of them are also draped with golden masks, earrings, bracelets, pectorals, and other gem-encrusted pieces of glittering treasure. The west and east wall are dominated by ten-foot-tall bas-relief carvings of Olman imperial warriors with ritual masks and feathered cloaks.

This room was a burial chamber for Olman princes who died before becoming emperors. The treasure interred with the bodies here is significant, but there is a reason the skinwalkers have left it untouched.

Creatures: As long as the treasure on the bodies here is left undisturbed, the spirits of the dead remain calm. As soon as anyone attempts to claim any of the treasure, though, these spirits rise up with bloodchilling howls in the form of eight wraiths led by a pair of dread wraiths. The wraiths pursue foes as long as they still carry any treasure stolen from here. The wraiths resemble large Olman warriors adorned with feathered cloaks. As they attack, the wraiths whisper horrible oaths in their ancient language.

Wraiths (8): 104 hp each; *Monster Manual* 258.

Dread Wraiths (2): 104 hp each; *Monster Manual* 258.

Treasure: The trappings on the mummified bodies of the crown-princes are very rich, and consist of an assortment of golden masks, earrings, bracelets, and pectorals encrusted with lapis lazuli and other semi-precious stones. As a whole, this treasure weighs 50 pounds and is worth 11,000 gp.

13. Vault of the Sun and Moon

The domed, seventy-foot-high ceiling of this chamber is supported by a ring of pillars carved in the likeness of tree trunks embraced by coiling feathered serpents. A cycle of bas-reliefs on the wall represents battles between Olman warriors and flightless dragons. The Olman warriors are led by a heroic archer who wields a bow that seems to be made of lightning. He is crowned emperor after his victory in a carving on the southern wall. A design of three rings of circles is engraved in the floor. Three seven-foot-tall stone statues on circular bases have been placed around the circle, one to the west, one to the east, and one to the south. All three statues represent similar-looking men dressed in imperious robes and wielding scepters. The western statue's scepter ends in a sun, the eastern's a moon, and the southern's a star. Engraved on the floor between these three figures are three rings of circular depressions. Three stone spheres sit in three of these depressions. A sphere bearing a carving of a moon sits in the inner ring at the westernmost depression, while a sphere bearing a star carving sits at the southernmost depression of the outer ring. The third ball bears a carving of the sun and sits in the easternmost depression of the middle ring.

A DC 30 Knowledge (history) check is enough to identify the heroic archer in the carvings as an ancient Olman hero named Macutotnal, who is said to have fought all maner of dragons and beasts with a bow given to him by the gods.

This room is, in fact, a complex vault built to house that weapon, the ancient and potent *Nimbus Bow*. The key to opening the vault is the stone disc Noltus recovered and left with Vesserin.

Engraved on the tiled floor of this shrine are three rings of sixteen circles. Each stone sphere radiates moderate conjuration magic, and if destroyed or brought from this room, the sphere (or its remnants) vanish and a new sphere appears in the appropriate starting position in the ring.

The layout of this room is not only symbolized on Noltus's stone disc, but the correct combination to open the vault is hidden in the carving. In order to open the vault, the stone balls must be placed in the proper depressions, one per ring. The correct combination is also indicated on the illustration.

If the PCs pick up on the thematic similarities between this room and Noltus's stone disc, feel free to give them a copy of the accompanying detailed image of Noltus's stone to aid them in puzzling out the proper combination. A character with ranks in Decipher Script, Knowledge (history), or bardic knowledge can gain a few additional clues, as determined by the result of his check.

DC 15: The bow at the center of the disc is likely the same one depicted on the walls of the room.

DC 20: The disc resembles a map of this chamber, with the eight circles corresponding to the pillars, the room's entrance at the bottom, and the three figures corresponding to the statues in the room.

DC 25: The three figures represent Quetzalcoatl (star), Tezcatlipoca (moon), and Tonatiuh (sun).

DC 30: The serpent coiling around the pillars also represents Quetzalcoatl, and

the direction indicates a rotation from the left to the right (clockwise).

DC 35: The star, sun, and moon symbols on the outer circle of the disc, being arrayed at the disc's edge, represent the most important part of the disc. There are 11 moons, 13 stars, and 12 suns

The correct solution to the puzzle is to move the moon sphere 11 positions clockwise, the star sphere 13 positions clockwise, and the sun sphere 12 positions clockwise. Doing so places the three spheres in the correct depressions, at which point blasts of wind blow through the chamber as the presence of the three ancient gods manifest as a spray of stars (Quetzalcoatl), a ray of sunlight (Tonatiuh) and a ray of moonlight (Tezcatlipoca) around each of the appropriate statues. Every creature in the room recieves a series of telepathic messages from these gods; as each message is delivered, the corresponding manifestation grows brighter.

Quetzalcoatl: "Our worshippers are few, and soon we will move on from this world. None of our children survive to free our ancient home from evil and rebuild our glorious civilization. Still, we can help you, strangers, in a fight that is both revenge for the past and hope for the future. Heed our words."

Tonatiuh: "In time of need, call the hawk to hunt your enemies."

Tezcatlipoca: "In time of need, call the wood to bend hostile weapons."

Quetzalcoatl: "In time of need, call the wind to down the wings of evil."

All: "Take the bow of Macutotnal, hero of the Olman people and first ruler of Thanaclan, and use it well in your battle against evil."

After the final message, the lights stream into the center of the room and condense into the shape of a bow. This is the *Nimbus Bow*, and it floats in the air until a creature grasps it. The ancient gods of Thanaclan have granted the PCs a boon, and they would do well to accept it.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs earn the *Nimbus Bow*, grant them a CR 14 experience award.

14. Southern Square Chamber

This square chamber is bare of furniture, but its walls are almost entirely covered by friezes depicting processions of ancient Olman priests along pyramid-lined city streets. The floor is cluttered with hundreds of flat copper rings, each about two inches in diameter.

Each of the rings is carved with mystical Olman symbols used for divinations. A large stairway on the west wall leads down a level to the Chamber of the Great One (area **30**).

Treasure: There are 350 copper rings, but each is only worth 1 sp; in all, the collection is worth 35 gp.

15. Northern Square Chamber

The stone walls of this chamber are barren of carvings or decorations. A horrible stench of decay hangs heavy in the air, although a fresh breeze can be felt coming from the east.

The stench in this room comes from the horrific creature that dwells in area **19** to the north.

16. Trapped Corridor (EL 11)

The northern and southern walls of this corridor are decorated with abstract designs made with brown, red, and deep green ceramic tiles.

Trap: The area indicated on the map is trapped—when a Medium creature walks into the trapped area, his weight triggers this pressure plate, causing a fusillade of poisoned spears to launch from the walls.

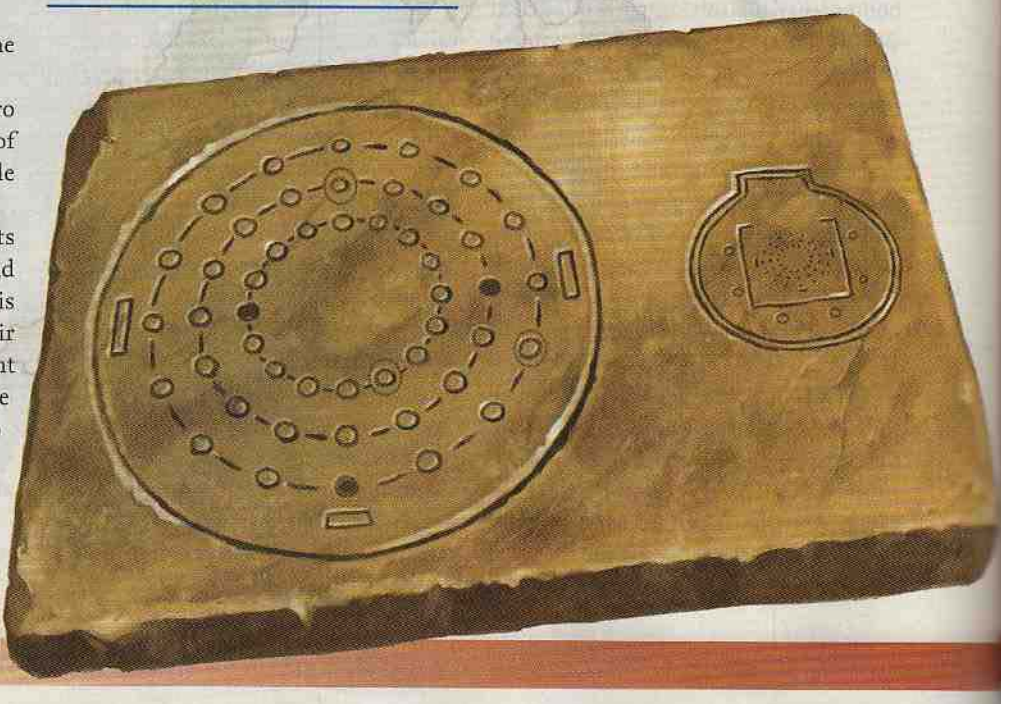
Fusillade of Poisoned Spears: CR 11; mechanical; proximity trigger; manual reset; Atk +21 ranged (1d8+4 plus poison, spear); poison (wyvern poison, DC 17 Fortitude save resists, 2d6 Con/2d6 Con); multiple targets (1d6 spears per target in hallway); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

17. Abandoned Entrance

A monumental entrance is set in the rocky wall between two rows of seven-foot-tall stone slabs. The slabs are carved in the likeness of ceremonial Olman guards. A pair of fifteen-foot-tall stone doors blocks the entrance. The figure of a ten-foot-tall Olman warrior with a feathered cloak and a ferocious grin is carved on both doors.

This stone door has been disabled to prevent its use. A DC 30 Disable Device check repairs the damage—otherwise the doors must be broken down in order to pass.

A DC 25 Survival check of the undergrowth directly north of the door reveals a faint trail. This trail leads north to area **21**, and was left by Throgiff (see area **24**) who, on the rare occasions he has to venture into the temple, uses this secret entrance.



Ancient Stone Door: 8 in. thick; Hardness 8; 120 hp; Break DC 34.

18. Vestition Chamber

A series of stone benches lines the walls of this chamber, which is otherwise bare of furniture. The remains of rotten and broken cabinets lie under the benches.

This room, once used to store religious vestments and to dress for ceremonies, is now unused.

19. The Horrid Pit (EL 14)

This chamber reeks horribly of blood and rotting flesh. Under a domed, fifty-foot-high ceiling, an enormous octagonal pit occupies most of the floor, leaving a five-foot-wide ledge around the rim.

Creature: The pit is the den of a terrifying ooze called a flesh jelly, a ravenous and immense mass of stinking fleshy tissue surrounded by a filthy membrane of skin, hair, and fur. As it moves, a few of the loose bones inside it press against the outer membrane, causing its disgusting body to bulge in places. The skinwalkers lured the monster into this pit years ago, and have taken pains to keep it fed so that it doesn't attempt to escape. The monster serves them well as a place to dispose of the bodies of sacrificial victims and animal carcasses. The flesh jelly is content with the offerings it receives, and stays in the pit unless someone provokes it. Note that the jelly's horrid stench affects any creature that comes within ten feet of the pit's edge.

The flesh jelly grows excited once it senses anything approaching. If, after 4 rounds, a Medium or larger creature is not thrown into the pit, the jelly grows agitated and attempts to climb out of the pit to reach any living creatures it can sense. It's a DC 20 Climb check to exit the pit. The flesh jelly's CR has been reduced to account for its unfavorable positioning.

FLESH JELLY **CR 14**

N Gargantuan ooze

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Init –2; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Listen –5, Spot –5

Aura horrid stench (50 ft., Fort DC 25)

AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4

hp 207 (18 HD)

Immune ooze traits

Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

Spd 20 ft.

Melee 4 slams +20 (2d8+11 plus disease)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +36

Special Actions absorb, engulf

Abilities Str 32, Dex 6, Con 23, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Skills Climb +11

Absorb (Ex) Any creature engulfed by a flesh jelly must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or be absorbed into its mass and die. Each absorbed creature heals a flesh jelly of 2d6 points of damage. A flesh jelly expels the absorbed creature's personal belongings from its body in 1d3 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Disease (Ex) A creature hit by a flesh jelly's slam attack or engulfed must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or contract filth fever. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Engulf (Ex) A flesh jelly can engulf creatures no larger than one size category smaller than itself as a standard action. It has merely to move over its opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents may make attacks of opportunity against the jelly, but if they do they are not entitled to a DC 30 Reflex save to avoid being engulfed. If this save is successful, the opponent is pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the jelly moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the jelly's absorb special attack, and are considered to be grappled and trapped within its body. The save DC is Strength-based.

Horrid Stench (Ex) Any corporeal creature with 10 or fewer Hit Dice that comes within 50 feet of a flesh jelly must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 2d6 rounds. Another save is required at the end of that time if the creature is still in range. A successful save makes a creature immune to the jelly's stench for 24 hours.

Nimbus Bow (Minor Artifact)

The *Nimbus Bow* was the preferred weapon of Macutotnal, an Olman hero who became an emperor after defeating a clan of flightless dragons known as Iinnorms. Macutotnal excelled in archery and falconry, and the gods of the sun, moon, and sky were so impressed with him that they each decided to award him a magical bow. When they realized they had all worked independently to create the weapons, Quetzalcoatl decreed that all three should become one.

The *Nimbus Bow* is a beautiful weapon, made of fine wood carved with spiraling motifs and encrusted with diminutive turquoises. The string sparkles and shimmers with electricity. It functions as a *+2 shocking burst longbow* that allows its wielder to add his Strength bonus to attacks made with it as if it were an appropriately modeled composite bow. Against reptilian monsters (including all dragons) and creatures with the Earth subtype, the bow is a *+4 shocking burst longbow* that inflicts an additional 1d6 points of damage on a hit..

As a standard action, the wielder of the *Nimbus Bow* can produce the following magical effects as long as he is outdoors.:

- *control winds* 1/day (by waving the bow overhead)
- *summon nature's ally V* 1/day (by firing an arrow into the air—the arrow transforms into a Medium arrowhawk as it is fired)
- *warp wood* 3/day (by aiming the bow at the object to be affected)

Strong transmutation and conjuration; CL 15th; Weight 2 lb.

20. Sacrifice Room

This chamber contains a single hunk of raw wood placed as a crude altar near the north wall. The altar and the floor near it are sticky with swaths of mostly dried blood. A trail of blood leads from the altar to the southwest corner of the room.

When the skinwalkers capture victims from raids against the lowlands, they are examined by the acolytes for their suitability for Khala. Those found suitible for their master (Charisma 15 or higher) are lead below and handed over to the kopru. Those who fail to pass this test are taken here to be sacrificed, a barbaric process involving the tearing of still-beating hearts from living chests before beheading. Heart and head are tossed down the stairs to the south (accounting for the bloodstains in that area), and the rest is given over to the flesh jelly in area **19**.

The bloodstains make the secret door easier to find—a DC 15 Search check uncovers it.

21. Secret Entrance

Although this is the primary land entrance for the skinwalkers, they take care to move without leaving much of a trail that would give it away. The secret entrance is built into one of the carved warrior slabs, and can be located with a DC 20 Search check.

22. Urn Room

A four-foot-tall clay pedestal fashioned in the shape of a miniature ziggurat stands in the middle of this otherwise bare room. A shallow indentation at the ziggurat's peak connects to narrow gutters that run down its four sides to a trough around the base. An inscription in ancient Olman ciphers runs around the uppermost tier of the ziggurat.

The Olman inscription on the urn reads, "May the blood keep safe the flesh." This ziggurat is actually a trap bypass lock that prevents the boulder trap (see area **23**) from activating. The ziggurat radiates faint transmutation magic. In order to lock the trap, a living creature must make a blood offering, allowing enough blood to drip into the shallow reservoir atop the ziggurat to run down the gutters and fill the trough at the base. This blood offering requires a fair amount of blood—the one giving the offering must donate enough so that he takes 1d6 points of damage and then bleeds long enough to take 1d6 points of Constitution damage.

A DC 25 Search check of the center section of the northern wall is enough to determine that the wall is hollow, although there doesn't appear to be any way to pass through the wall. If the Search check exceeds this DC 25 check by 10 or more, the character realizes that the wall can be lowered remotely. A DC 30 Disable Device can either prevent the wall from lowering or cause it to lower. Lowering the wall in this manner does not trigger the trap. The passageway beyond this wall slopes up to a point where a large round boulder awaits an opportunity to be unleashed.

23. Boulder Trap (EL 10)

This passageway slopes downward at a slight angle to the south. At the southern dead-end of the corridor, the wall is cracked and dented, as if an immense object had struck it.

Trap: At the point indicated, magical sensors in the floor, walls, and ceiling can detect the passage of any creature of Tiny or larger size. Unless the trap has been bypassed in area **21**, this sensor triggers the trap, causing the false wall and the ziggurat in area **21** to sink silently into the ground. One round later, an 8-foot-wide spherical boulder is released down the ramp north of area **21**. When the boulder is released, it rolls at a speed of 40 feet at initiative count 10 (covering a distance of 80 feet per round) down the hall to the south.

As the boulder rolls through any square containing a creature, that creature can make a DC 25 Reflex save if Small or smaller to press against a wall and avoid being hit. A Medium creature must make a DC 35 Reflex save, and a Large or larger creature gets no save at all. The boulder deals 14d6 points of damage to anything it strikes.

Boulder Trap: CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; boulder overrun (14d6, crush, Reflex negates); multiple targets (all creatures in the boulder's path); onset delay 1 round; Search DC 35; Disable Device DC 30.

24. Prison Camp (EL 13)

A group of three ruined buildings with flat wooden roofs covered with palm leaves sits at the edge of a clearing here.

These buildings have been partially repaired by the skinwalkers, who use them now as a staging area for sacrifices. Whenever a raiding band returns, the prisoners are locked in the southern building, where they stay until a skinwalker acolyte can inspect them to determine who is fit for the true sacrifice to Khala.

Creatures: A small band of four skinwalkers lives in the northernmost building, guards whose sole duty is to watch over the prisoners kept in the southernmost building. At the time the PCs reach this area, there are no prisoners kept here. At any one time, one of these skinwalkers is patrolling the area; if he notices intruders here or at Tlaloc's Crown, he raises the alarm.

The central building belongs to a tiefling named Throgiff, a sort of ambassador from the Crimson Fleet. Throgiff is an unexceptional-looking tiefling with small, stumpy horns, sun-baked skin, and a lean physique, who volunteered several months ago for this duty when given the choice between it and execution for insubordination. Initially annoyed at the post, Throgiff has since grown quite dissatisfied with his lot in life—it won't take much to woo him away from his loyalties to the Crimson Fleet.

Throgiff is, in theory, here to represent the interests of the Crimson Fleet to the skinwalkers, the koprus, and Khala, while at the same point making sure that these allies continue to be allies and that the production of *shadow pearls* doesn't waver. In many ways, it's a needless post since Khala has no intention of ceasing production of the pearls until enough have been made, yet neither Throgiff nor the Crimson Fleet know this. They view the Lords of Dread as a necessary element in the preparation for the savage tide, and mistakenly think of themselves as Demogorgon's favored when, in fact, they are merely the distributors for his plot.

If the alarm is raised by the skinwalkers, Throgiff initially puts on a good show of being a helpful ally, and joins in the defense of the area.

THROGIFF **CR 12**

Male tiefling rogue 12
CE Medium outsider (native)
Monster Manual 209
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +16, Spot +16
Languages Abyssal, Common

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 16; improved uncanny dodge
hp 68 (12 HD)
Resist acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5
Fort +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +5; improved evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk shortsword +11/+6 (1d6+1/19–20)
Ranged +2 *composite shortbow* +16/+11 (1d6+3/×3) or
Rapid Shot +2 *composite shortbow* +14/+14/+9 (1d6+3/×3)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10
Atk Options Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, sneak attack +6d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *potion of fly*, *potion of gaseous form*, scroll of *dimension door*, scroll of *sending*, *wand of cat's grace* (44 charges)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)
1/day—*darkness*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +3
Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device)
Skills Balance +22, Bluff +17, Hide +22, Listen +16, Move Silently +20, Spot +16, Tumble +20, Use Magic Device +18
Possessions combat gear, +2 *studded leather armor*, masterwork short sword, +2 *composite shortbow* (+1 Str) with 10 +1 *anarchic arrows*, 10 cold iron arrows, and 20 standard arrows, *ring of protection +1*

Skinwalkers (4): hp 76 each; see Appendix.

Tactics: The skinwalkers initiate combat with arrows, switching to melee attacks only as the PCs close with them. Throgiff spends the first few rounds of combat drinking his *potion of fly* and using his *wand of cat's grace* before flying into the air to provide air support with his bow. He attempts to flee if all the skinwalkers are slain or if he's reduced to less than 20 hit points, using his scroll of *dimension door* or *potion of gaseous form* if possible.

Nimbus Bow

Treasure: Although Throgiff carries most of his valuables on his person, one thing of value remains in his hut—a ledger. Although the moisture and environment have damaged it slightly, the book remains legible (although written in Abyssal), and contains an accounting of the number of victims who have been sacrificed since Throgriff's arrival here a year ago (160 sacrifices have been made to date, with 23 indicated as "special" sacrifices). The ledger also tracks how many *shadow pearls* have been "sent below" for completion (since Throgriff's arrival, he's seen 44 pearls sent below). He's placed

checkmarks next to several of these shipments, indicating that all but nine of these have arrived at Scuttlecove.

Development: If Throgiff escapes, he decides to abandon the Crimson Fleet. He knows about Farshore, and makes his way south, intending to stow away on a ship bound for civilization.

If the PCs capture Throgiff alive, his initial attitude is unfriendly. If made friendly, he's willing to tell the PCs everything he knows about the Crimson Fleet and their plans for the *shadow pearls*, as detailed at the start of the next adventure.

25. Tlaloc's Crown

This pyramid rises majesticly from the surrounding undergrowth to a height of seventy feet. The sides are decorated with countless carvings of a bulging-eyed reptilian head adorned with a feathered headdress.

A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the reptilian heads as Tlaloc, the Olman god of rain. Once a sacred temple to this god, it was here that the ancient Olmans of Thanaclan created *Tlaloc's Tear* and launched their final attack on Golismoraga (see "The Lightless Depths" in DUNGEON #144). At the peak of this pyramid, a massive circular stone disk, its eight-foot-diameter face caked with blood, covers a six-foot-wide shaft that bores down through the ziggurat's heart and into the earth below. This shaft eventually leads to a point above Holashner's Ziggurat in the ruined aboleth city. If the PCs took this route to the central plateau, they'll need to destroy or otherwise move the stone disk to escape. The block of stone weighs 15,000 pounds—likly too heavy for most PCs to lift, but not heavy enough to prevent a dozen skinwalkers from dragging the disk aside when fresh *shadow pearls* are ready to be delivered to the kopru of Golismorga.

Stone Disk: 2 ft. thick; Hardness 8; 360 hp; Break DC 48.

Development: This adventure assumes that the PCs have already disrupted the *shadow pearl* operation in Golismorga. If they haven't, and if they decide to ambush a delivery here, they'll face an army of nearly 100 skinwalkers, a dozen skinwalker acolytes, and Chief Achcauhtli, all of whom take part in the 2-hour-long ritual involving the delivery of *shadow pearls* to the kopru. The actual delivery is handled by flying skinwalker acolytes.

26. Landing

Life-sized clay statues of ancient Olman warriors armed with spears stand at the four corners of this landing. The warriors wear high helmets and feathered shields. The tips of the spears, the feathers, and other details of the statues have crumbled to dust and fallen off.

The warrior statues are harmless and brittle due to their antiquity. A stench of rotten fish issues from the west stairway.

27. Harvesting Supplies

Sitting near the walls of this square room are eighteen three-foot-tall urns. Leaning on the south wall are two long-handled fishing nets, harpoons, and prying bars.

The urns contain food and supplies for nurturing the giant oysters in area **28**. The majority of these supplies are mundane, but a few of them contain particularly foul smelling fluid, shuddering red mud, or twitching headless insects with too many legs. A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies these strange contents as Abyssal in nature. They smell and taste horrible.

The other tools are used to gather pearls from giant oysters.

28. Giant Oyster Pond

The floor of this cave is hidden by shallow water. Hundreds of oysters of various sizes cling to the rock formations near the cave walls. Six of these oysters have grown enormous, nearly five feet across with black and red striped shells covered with curved hooks and twisted horns.

This cave is flooded to a depth of 2 feet. There are hundreds of freshwater oysters growing here, and although the smaller pearls are periodically harvested by the koprus, the six larger oysters have grown enormous on foul substances harvested from the Abyss. Prying one of these immense oysters open requires a DC 26 Strength check—using the tools from area **27** grants a +6 circumstance bonus to this check. Unfortunately, any attempt to pry open one of these oysters results in a bloodcurdling shrieking from the oyster, a sound that alerts the koprus in area **29**, who immediately come to investigate.

Giant Fiendish Oyster: Hardness 12; hp 120; Break DC 34.

Treasure: Each of the large oysters contains a partially formed black pearl the size of a grapefruit. These are the raw materials used to create *shadow pearls*, and while they are not yet magical, each of these pearls is worth 1,000 gp.

29. Oyster Guardian Cave (EL 15)

The limestone formations in this flooded cave have been shaped into bizarre furniture, including a semi-submerged table. On the table are dozens of elongated flasks and vials filled with transparent, colored liquids.

This room is flooded to a depth of 4 feet. On the table sit several alchemical containers that contain various chemicals used to stimulate pearl growth in oysters. A crystal box on the table contains pulverized gems. An underwater entrance in the northwest part of this cave can be spotted from above the water level with a DC 20 Spot check; this passageway leads down to area **43**.

Creatures: The koprus of Taboo Temple are immense monsters, eel-like creatures with tentacled faces, tails that split into three hooked flukes, and bulging, fishlike eyes. The PCs have likely fought similar koprus in Golismorga, although the ones encountered here are tougher specimens. Fanatical servitors of Khala the Two-Headed, they are among the oldest and biggest specimens of their race. Besides having the maximum possible advancement for their race, their long exposure to Khala, the hideous chemicals he uses to craft *shadow pearls*, and the foul concoctions used to nurture the oysters in area **28** have made them fiendish creatures as well.

Three Taboo Temple koprus dwell in this chamber. Tasked with guarding the oysters in area **28**, they fight intruders to the death.

Taboo Temple Kopru (3) **CR 11**
Advanced elite fiendish kopru
CE Large monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual II 134
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Aquan, Olman

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 20
hp 102 (12 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 17
Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10

Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee* tail slap +15 (1d8+14) and 2 claws +13 (1d6+9) and bite +13 (1d6+9)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +32
Atk Options constrict 3d8+13, improved grab (tail slap), smite good 1/day (+12 damage)
Special Actions dominate person
Combat Gear *potion of fly* (3)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 28, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12
SQ amphibious
Feats Ability Focus (dominate person), Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack
Skills Escape Artist +17, Move Silently +17, Swim +17
Possessions combat gear, *+3 studded leather armor*, coral holy symbol of Demogorgon worth 50 gp

Dominate Person (Su) A kopru can attempt to *dominate person* once per day, as the spell (CL 10th), save that the range is 180 feet and the duration is eight days. A DC 17 Will save resists the domination. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) If a kopru hits a target its own size or smaller with a tail slap, it can attempt to start a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it can constrict. A kopru has a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks.

30. Chamber of the Great One (EL 14)

The bas-relief figure of a feathered serpent is carved as a single frieze that runs on the walls of this chamber near the ceiling. The chamber is flooded with murky, rancid-smelling water.

This chamber is flooded to a depth of 8 feet, its floor being 4 feet lower than those in nearby flooded areas. Characters entering this room can make a DC 20 Spot check to notice the drop-off, otherwise the character falls prone into the water upon stepping into the room. This chamber was once a place to worship Quetzalcoatl, but now it has become the den of three demons in Khala's service.

The secret door to the north can be discovered with a DC 25 Search check. The stairway beyond leads up to area **20**.

Creatures: The three hezrous who dwell here regard the koprus as temporary allies at best. They view their part in the sacrifice rituals with great pride, and never fail to promptly deliver any heads and hearts tossed down the stairs from area **20** above to Khala. They hide in the murky water and emerge suddenly to attack advancing PCs, fighting to the death.

Hezrous (3): hp 138 each; *Monster Manual* 44.

31. Old Torture Chamber

This partially flooded chamber seems to be an ancient interrogation chamber, complete with bronze chains and shackles and a stone table with a gutter. The fifteen-foot-high ceiling is badly cracked and glistens with moisture.

The water here is 4 feet deep. Several small, harmless cave fish dwell in the waters of this room, occasionally bumping against PCs' legs.

The ceiling here is particularly rotted and weak; characters who fall through from area **10** above land in the section indicated on the map.

32. Cells

This partially flooded area contains six cells, three per side and closed by bronze gates.

The water here is 4 feet deep. The bronze gates are stuck, although very little force is required to unhinge or open them after centuries of erosion. The cells are empty and haven't been used in ages.

33. Statuary Room (EL 14)

This room is tiled with blue ceramic of various hues. Small puddles of water dot the floor, and the walls are lined with ancient Olman statuary, lithe human figures and fiendish beasts with snakelike bodies and multiple arms. The statues are badly deteriorated, in some cases scarcely recognizable beyond a vague body shape. There are twelve statues in all, each standing nearly ten feet in height. A stone trapdoor is set in the middle of the ceiling, although any means of reaching it has long since rotted away.

The trapdoor above leads to area **8**. The contents of this chamber once commemorated the greatest leaders of Thanaclan, but time and erosion have not been kind to their countenances.

The section of floor just inside the northern entrance of the room is in fact a trigger; as soon as a Small or larger creature steps on it, a bronze portcullis drops down to seal the northern entrance to the room. A pressure plate next to the north archway causes a portcullis to fall and block the passage.

Bronze Portcullis: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; 60 hp; Lift DC 25; Break DC 28.

Creatures: Four of the poorly-formed statues lurch to life as soon as the portcullis drops. The golems do not pursue foes from this room.

Clay Golems (4): hp 90 each; *Monster Manual* 134.

34. Slime Pool (EL 6)

This section of the corridor is separated from the rest of the passage by a raised area covered with pale fungus.

The water to the south of the platform is 4 feet deep, while to the north it's only 2 feet deep. While the pale fungus that grows on the platform is harmless, the green slime that grows on the submerged floor between area **35** and the platform is not. Any character wading through the water is automatically exposed to the slime—a character with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (dungeoneering) can make a DC 20 Spot check to notice and realize the peril before entering the danger zone. Green slime is detailed on page 76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

35. Ancient Archive

A stone desk carved in the likeness of an ancient Olman head with a flattened top sits against the northern wall of the room. The walls are fitted with stone shelving, with many stacks of clay tablets piled on it.

The door to this chamber is tenaciously stuck, and requires a DC 30 Strength check to force open. Doing so allows the water to spill into the room; any character in the water must make a DC 15 Strength check to resist being knocked prone (and possibly into more green slime).

Treasure: This chamber was an important archive to Thanaclan. The information contained in the dozens of tablets here isn't particularly helpful to the PCs, but could be of great value to scholars. The archive weighs 500 pounds in all, and if transported to civilization is worth 2,000 gp.

The head-shaped desk hides a secret compartment in the left eye that can be discovered with a DC 25 Search check. Within is a +2 *human bane dagger*, 500 gp, and two coral statuettes of fish with ruby eyes worth 1,500 gp each.

36. Boiling Well

A five-foot-wide circular well opens in the floor here. Waves of heat, hot vapor, and a loud bubbling sound emanate from within.

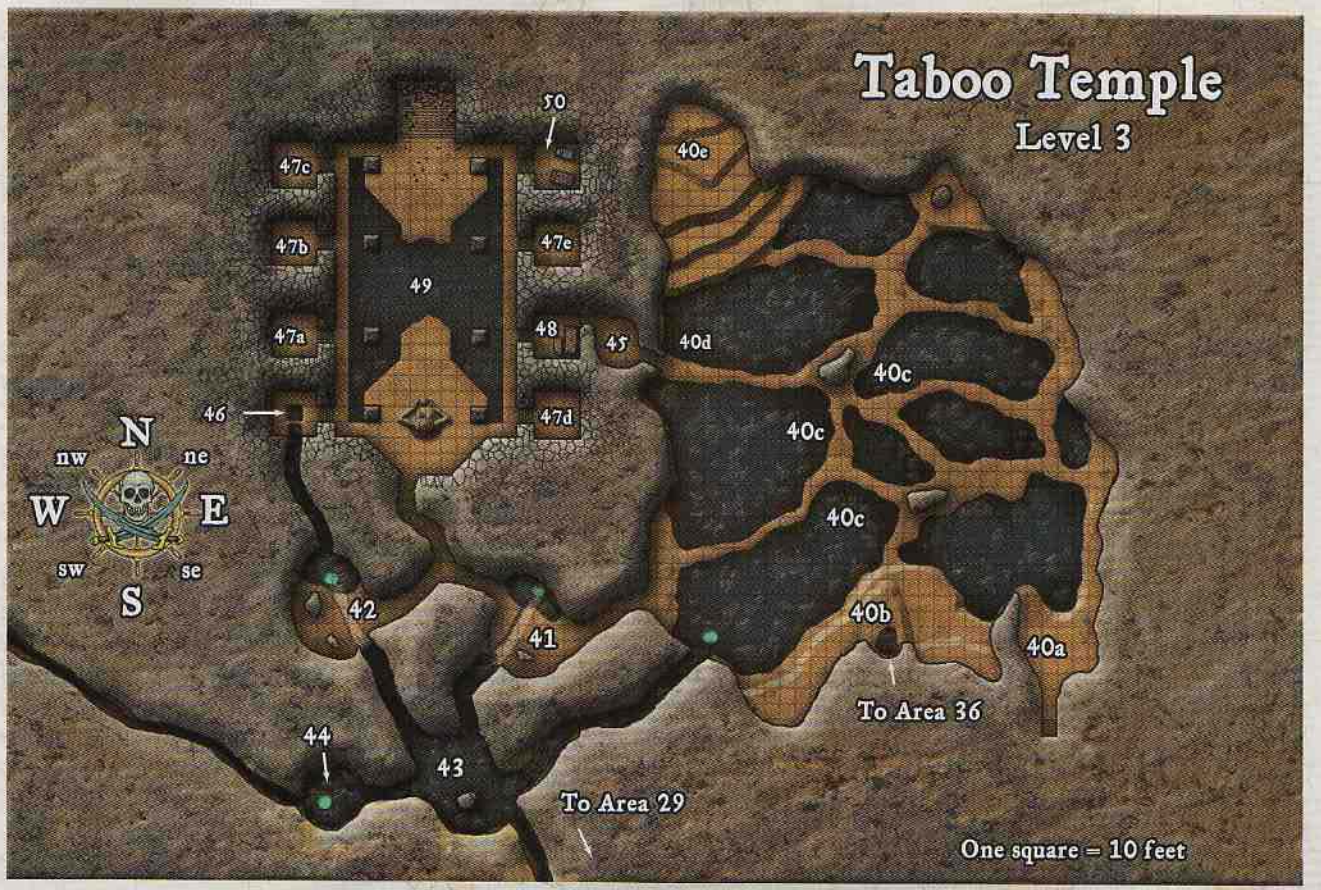
The narrow ledge around the well is quite slippery; moving along it requires a DC 12 Balance check. This well shaft drops 65 feet to a pool of boiling water. Beyond this point, the shaft curves upward to the northwest in a U shape that emerges at area **40B**, covering a distance of 80 feet. Swimming through the boiling water requries a DC 20 Swim check, and immersion inflicts 10d6 points of fire damage per round.

37. Enormous Ooze (EL 10)

Several two-foot-wide tunnels open along the walls of this flooded corridor, some just over water level, and others near the ten-foot-high ceiling. A powerful bitter stench of emanates from the tunnels.

The water in the corridor is 4 feet deep.

Creatures: The 2-foot-wide tunnels in the walls were originally created by a colony of rats, but they have long since been eaten by the immense ochre jelly that has moved into these tunnels. The



creature surges out, a horizontal geyser of thick yellowish slime, as soon as anything passes by these holes. Note that although the jelly is Huge, its amorphous nature allows it to squeeze into these tunnels and fight while spread out along the wall and ceiling of the main hallway without penalty.

Huge Ochre Jelly **CR 10**
N Huge ooze
Monster Manual 202
Init –5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Listen –5, Spot –5
AC 3, touch 3, flat-footed 3
hp 261 (18 HD)
Immune ooze traits
Fort +15, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1
Spd 10 ft., climb 10 ft.
Melee slam +18 (2d6+10 plus 1d6 acid)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +27
Atk Options acid, constrict 2d6+10 plus 1d6 acid, improved grab
Abilities Str 24, Dex 1, Con 28, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1
SQ split

38. Chamber of the Mosaics

The walls of this chamber are decorated with mosaics representing various fantastic and horrid creatures from the ocean depths.

The water in this room is 4 feet deep. A deadly trap once protected this room, but the oil sprayer and firestarter were triggered several years ago and never reset. The water presents an altogether new hazard, though.

The northern door is stuck shut, requiring a DC 30 Strength check to open. It can also be battered down. Once open, all of the water in the flooded sections of this level (areas **30–32** and this room) immediately flows north and down the stairs. The flow carries along any creature in area **38** that fails a DC 15 Strength check to resist the current; swimming creatures can instead make a DC 15 Swim check to avoid being swept down the stairs. A creature swept down the stairs takes 2d6 damage, and must make a DC 15 Reflex save upon reaching area **40A** to avoid being swept into the nearest pool of hot mud.

39. Stairs

This flight of stairs leads to area **40A**.

40. Volcanic Grotto (EL 14)

The air in this enormous volcanic grotto is steamy and foul with noxious vapor. The floor is a field of bubbling mud pots, geysers, hot springs and mineral crusts. Rich reds, browns, and yellows, combined with blacks and grays, vie for dominance in the churning, bubbling morass. Terraces crusted with deposits from mineral springs extend from the sides of the cavern at several points, and here and there form stable-looking walkways and bridges over the sputtering mud. Stalactites hang from the ceiling, merging with stalagmites in two places near the center of the grotto to form pillars.

The geysers and boiling mud in this room have left the place at a sweltering temperature. This severe heat forces characters to make a Fortitude save once every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) to avoid taking 1d4 points of nonlethal damage—further rules for

severe heat can be found on page 303 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The bubbling mud in the pools is 2 feet deep within 10 feet of a mineral walkway, but drops away to 10 feet deep near the center.

Furthermore, as the PCs move about the grotto, there is a 20% chance per round that a mudpot busts, a geyser sprays, or a vent of steam blasts one character (selected randomly). That character takes 1d10 points of fire damage, with a DC 15 Reflex save reducing the damage by half.

Characters who move along the twisting walkways find them quite slippery, necessitating a DC 10 Balance check to move at all. Failure by 5 or more indicates the character falls prone, in which case that character has a 50% chance of sliding into a nearby mud pit. The bubbling mud isn't nearly as hot as boiling water, but is still hot enough that immersion in the mud inflicts 1d10 points of fire damage per round. The mud restricts movement—it costs 3 squares of movement to move through the stuff (or 2 squares, if a creature uses a swim speed).

At location **40B** is a spring of boiling water that connects to the bottom of the shaft in area **36**.

Creatures: The koprus of Taboo Temple find this chamber to be a relaxing place to rest, and at the time the PCs reach the room three are doing just that at the locations marked **40C**. The three koprus have enough fire resistance that total immersion in the mud cannot hurt them, and they often rest with just the top half of their heads above the mudline. In this position, they gain +10 circumstance bonuses on their Hide checks.

Taboo Temple Koprus (3): hp 102 each; see page 77.

Tactics: When the koprus notice the PCs (likely hearing them well before they spot them due to the steam in the air), two move into position so that they can try to grab PCs off the walkways with their tails, hoping to constrict them while holding them in the bubbling mud. The third swims as quietly as it can to the watery exit in the southwest corner of the room, hoping to alert the other koprus in area **43**. If successful, those koprus return to this chamber in 2d4 rounds to join the battle (or ambush anyone remaining in this room).

Trap: At location **40D**, the mineral terrace has grown weak. The weight of any Small or larger creature causes the crust to break open into a pool of boiling water.

Collapsing Path: CR 12; mechanical, location trigger; no reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; boiling water (10d6 fire damage per round of immersion, 30 feet deep); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 35.

Treasure: A tin coffer is hidden near the brink of the terrace near area **40B** under a layer of dust and mineral deposits—it can be discovered with a DC 25 Search check. Inside the coffer are three emeralds worth 1,000 gp each.

At area **40E** sits an ancient Olman throne. Transported here in the distant past at the bequest of an eccentric Olman priest, the same Olman's mineral-encrusted skeleton still sits on the throne, bone and stone fossilized together. Sitting across the skeleton's lap, equally encrusted by minerals, is a large bastard sword. The sword within remains intact, as it is in fact a *sun blade*. The weapon's aura of good repels the koprus, and as such they have not discovered the magic ring on one of the skeleton's digits. This emerald ring is in fact a *ring of telekinesis*—it can be discovered with a DC 20 Search check.

41. Eastern Kopru Cave

The northern part of this cave features a pool of warm, steaming water.

The koprus use the submerged passage at the bottom of the pool to move to and from area **43** without having to crawl out of the water. They can use the submerged tunnels that connect these caves to escape and harry PCs.

42. Western Kopru Cave

The roughly hewn walls of this cave are almost completely covered with spiraling carvings, which create a crude and disturbing depiction of an amorphous, demonic monster of colossal proportions over a pool at the north.

This cave is similar to area **41**, although the koprus have taken the time to decorate the walls here. The submerged passage here also leads to a vertical pit in area **46**. One kopru from area **43** takes a few rounds to slither over here to warn Khala of any intrusions on this level before joining his kin in battle.

43. Kopru Main Cave (EL 14)

This completely submerged cave is full of bizarre furniture carved from volcanic rock, limestone, and coral. It is obviously a living area for aquatic creatures, with algae beddings and fluorescent fungus lamps.

Creatures: A total of nine fiendish koprus dwell in Taboo Temple. Three are encountered in area **29**, while another three are in area **40**. The remaining three can be encountered here. Of course, exactly how many koprus are encountered here depends on how many escaped from those other areas to seek backup.

Taboo Temple Koprus (3): hp 102 each; see page 77.

Treasure: The koprus keep a sizable treasure here, including 700 pp in a two-foot-tall blue ceramic vase encrusted with turquoises worth 3,500 gp, a collection of a dozen statuettes of aquatic monsters and creatures worth 5,000 gp as a set, 13 large red coral platters shaped like clam shells worth 300 gp each, and a mother-of-pearl box worth 200 gp that contains 13 black peals worth 500 gp each and 27 jaspers worth 50 gp each. Hanging from a fishing net draped on one of the cave walls is a collection of exotic fishing hooks (25 pieces of ivory worth 10 gp each) and a *trident of fish command*. A sealed and waterproof crystal flask near the bottom of the cave contains four *potions of cure moderate wounds*.

44. Route Below

A bed of algae dotted with violet and orange fresh-water anemones writhe along the walls of this room.

A passage at the bottom of the cave leads deeper under the Isle of Dread;

characters who explore this passageway eventually reach one of several kopru fortresses scattered throughout the Isle of Dread's Underdark.

45. Skull Depository

The rough walls of this circular cave are marked by large cracks and covered by patches of fluorescent fungus, whose greenish light dimly illuminate a carpet of human skulls on the floor.

This chamber is where the koprus store the skulls of victims sacrificed to Khala—all that remains after he uses their severed heads and hearts to craft *shadow pearls*.

46. Pit Room

A ten-foot-wide square pit opens in the middle of this room. Twenty feet down, water fills the pit. The remains of shattered clay urns are piled in the room corners.

The pit is connected to area **42** via a submerged tunnel.

47. Shrine Offerings Rooms

This square room is lined with three-foot-tall clay urns. Most urns are open, broken, and toppled to the floor.

These areas were once used to store food and offerings to the gods. Now they are empty, dusty, and unused.

48. Alchemical Laboratory

This square room has been furnished with two large wooden tables and a smaller, lower stone table. Alchemical alembics and tools clutter the tops of the two large tables, while an ancient Olman urn has been lifted on the small one in the southwest corner. Another urn sits beside one of the large tables near the north wall. Three rows of stone shelves have been carved in the middle of the south wall. On the shelves are dozens of clay vases and glass vials of various sizes and shapes.

This alchemical laboratory is used by Khala to prepare the necessary alchemical components to create *shadow pearls*. The urn on the stone table has been fitted with a bronze tap at the bottom and a bronze funnel near the top. The urn is almost empty, and contains just half a gallon of a foul-smelling mixture composed of human blood, an alchemical liquefier, and Khala's gastric juices. Khala uses this urn to dissolve the hearts, flesh, and brains from his sacrifice victims. In the ritual that creates the *shadow pearls*, the tormented spirits of the victims are bound to generate chaotic and insane thoughts in those affected by a *shadow pearl's* savage tide. The urn sitting on the floor contains tar. Most of the containers on the shelves also contain unfinished substances that only Khala knows how to use, thanks to his exceptional alchemical ability. Any PC making a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check understands that the laboratory is dedicated to the creation of some kind of "mind-affecting explosive" (the one that unleashes the madness of a savage tide). Given several days, an alchemist could determine the exact properties of a *shadow pearl* by studying these tools, although the process of creating them requires a spiritual connection to Demogorgon shared only by his various aspects.

Treasure: On the two large tables is the equivalent of a masterwork alchemist's lab.

49. Shrine of the Shadow Pearls (EL 17)

The forty-foot-high ceiling arches of this enormous shrine are supported by eight massive square pillars, which also separate the central part of the hall from two balconies. Four passages open on each of the balconies, which run fifteen feet above floor level on the long sides of the hall, and can be accessed by flights of stairs at the north and south ends. The main entrance to the hall, a monumental arch at the base of a great stairway up on the north wall, is completely obstructed by rubble. The patron deity of the shrine is represented by a twenty-foot-tall statue which stands by the south wall near a smaller entrance. The statue has been damaged by age and moisture, and a large crack has split its face. The statue stands before a platform that extends over a pool full of foul water and floating algae. On the platform is a four-foot-tall dais of black stone, with a melon-sized black pearl on the top. As the pearl appears to throb with eldritch power, waves of magical ectoplasm seem to reach from the pool to envelop the dais.

This shrine, once dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, is where Khala has spent the last several years creating *shadow pearls*. Once a pearl reaches a suitable size in area **29**, Khala kills its giant oyster and places the pearl on the dais here. He then uses his alchemical skills to prepare a mixture of human blood and special ingredients. Each pearl requires the death of six living sacrifices, five to provide heads and hearts and one live sacrifice of a creature with a Charisma score of at least 15. The living sacrifices are performed by Khala, who consumes their bodies and then regurgitates the slurry over the pearl. The skulls of the other victims are stripped of flesh and mixed with liquefied heart tissue in an urn in area **48**, creating a special elixir used to continually anoint the *shadow pearl* during a four-week-long cycle of meditations and prayers. At this point, the *shadow pearl* is capable of creating a savage tide with a radius of 120 feet; in order to enhance this radius to a mile, it must be delivered down to Golismorga, where it is allowed to steep in the black bile of the world for several more weeks until the dangerous device is finally ready.

The dais and the pool emanate strong conjuration and transmutation magic, as well as overwhelming chaos and evil.

Creatures: Khala the Two-Headed, an aspect of Demogorgon, is a horrible hybrid between demon and kopru. Khala appears as a vaguely humanoid beast, with broad shoulders and saurian legs. His flesh is mottled black and dark green, with a light green and yellow belly. Froglike skin with patches of bristly black hair adorn his shoulders and hips. His arms are boneless and tentacular, but end in three-fingered hands with large black talons. His tail is long and powerful, splitting into three flukes like that of a kopru. Although Khala has two heads, his two fanged faces run together in one oversized and horrific maw, although in the middle between the two sets of fanged jaws his gullet is gaping

Affiliation Awards

If your PCs belong to any of the affiliations detailed in *Dragon* #348's "Savage Tidings," goals exist in "City of Broken Idols" that can increase their affiliation score. Each of the following criterions grants an affiliation score modifier of +1.

Church of the Whirling Fury: Slay Onailati, Chief Achcauhtli, Xerkamat, the hezrous, all six skulvyns, and Khala.

The Dawn Council: Discover the fate of Noltus Innersol and report to the Dawnhouse of Pelor in Sasserine.

The Scarlet Brotherhood: Recruit Throgiff into the Brotherhood—his knowledge of the Crimson Fleet is invaluable.

The Seekers: Recover the archives from area **35** and donate them to a Seeker Chapterhouse.

The Witchwardens: Donate the contents of the alchemical lab in area **48** to the appropriate authorities.

Zelkarune's Horns: Capture the deinosuchus alive and transport it to Sasserine as a monster for an arena fight.

and toothless. It is from this central gullet that a long, tentacle-like, triply-forked tongue writhes.

Khala is not alone. He has six "pets" with him in the waters of this room—crocodilian demons known as skulvyns.

KHALA **CR 16**

Male aspect of Demogorgon
CE Large outsider (aquatic, chaotic, evil, native, tanar'ri)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, see invisibility; Listen +27, Spot +27
Aura gaze (30 feet, Will DC 27)
Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common, Olman; telepathy 300 ft.

AC 33, touch 16, flat-footed 26 (–1 size, +7 Dex, +17 natural); Dodge, Mobility
hp 250 (20 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 15/cold iron and good
Immune charm, confusion, electricity, flanking, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 28
Fort +20, **Ref** +19, **Will** +20

Spd 50 ft., swim 50 ft.
Melee* 2 tentacles +25 (1d6+16 plus rot) and 2 bites +23 (1d10+10) and tail slap +23 (2d6+10)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +20; **Grp** +35
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack, constrict 2d6+16, improved grab
Special Actions demonic spittle (+26 ranged touch), *summon tanar'ri*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)
At will—*detect good*, *detect law*, *fly*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *telekinesis* (DC 22), *unholy blight* (DC 21)
3/day—*project image*
1/day—*feeblemind* (DC 22)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 32, Dex 25, Con 26, Int 22, Wis 18, Cha 24
SQ alchemic genius, amphibious, two brains, wastrilith pact
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Multiattack, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack
Skills Bluff +30, Concentration +31, Craft (alchemy) +35, Intimidate +32, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (history) +29, Knowledge (the planes) +29, Listen +27, Move Silently +30, Search +29, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +31, Spot +27, Swim +42

Alchemic Genius (Ex) Khala has a +6 racial bonus on Craft (alchemy) checks. He gains the Brew Potion feat as a bonus feat, and can create potions as if he had access to the cleric and the wizard spell lists.

Demonic Spittle (Su) Khala can spit a glob of demonic spittle at a target within 90 feet as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. He must succeed on a ranged touch attack. The spittle inflicts 6d6 acid damage and one negative level. It's a DC 28 Fortitude save to remove this negative level.

Gaze (Su) Each of Khala's heads has its own gaze attack. Any creature within 30 feet of the demonic aspect must make two successful DC 27 Will saving throws each round at the beginning of its turn, the first save against Khala's fear gaze and the second against his confusion gaze. The gaze attack of Khala's left head causes a target to become frightened for 1d4 rounds. The gaze attack of Khala's right head confuses those who fail to resist its effect for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rot (Su) A creature touched by Khala's tentacles must make a DC 28 Fortitude save, or its flesh and bones begin to rot, suffering 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

See Invisibility (Ex) Khala benefits from a constant *see invisibility* effect that cannot be dispelled.

Summon Tanar'ri **(Sp)** Khala can summon 1 retriever once per day with a 50% chance of success, or 1d4 hezrous with a 20% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

Two Brains (Ex) Khala's two heads share the same personality and thoughts, but thanks to his two brains, he gains a +4 racial bonus on Will saves and is immune to charm and confusion effects. Khala cannot be flanked.

Wastrilith Pact (Su) Khala has an unholy pact with the wastrilith Xerkamat (see area **1**). He is in constant telepathic contact with the wastrilith, and by concentrating can observe the world through Xerkamat's senses. While concentrating in this manner, he may use any of his spell-like abilities, causing them to manifest as if Xerkamat had utilized them. Once per day as an immediate action, Khala can cause himself and Xerkamat to swap locations via *greater teleport*. Khala can activate this ability instantaneously, swapping locations the moment before an attack or effect would otherwise target him so that the effect instead targets the wastrilith (although he must choose to activate the ability before the attack's saving throw or damage resolves). If the wastrilith is slain, Khala loses these abilities and immediately suffers 6 negative levels for 24 hours; these negative levels fade automatically once the time passes.

KHALA'S PETS (6) **CR 9**

Advanced elite skulvyn demons
CE Large outsider (aquatic, chaotic, evil, extraplanar)
Fiend Folio 54
Init +5 ; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +14, Spot +14
Aura slow (30 ft., Will DC 19)
Languages Abyssal

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 15

hp 114 (12 HD); **DR** 5/good
SR 12
Fort +13, **Ref** +15, **Will** +7

Spd 10 ft., swim 50 ft.
Melee bite +17 (2d6+6) and
2 claws +15 (1d6+3) or
4 tail lashes +17 (1d4+6 plus wounding)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +22

Abilities Str 22, Dex 20, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 8, Cha 12
Feats Ability Focus (slow aura), Combat Reflexes, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack
Skills Hide +1 (+9 in water), Listen +14, Move Silently +20, Spot +14, Swim +29

Slow Aura (Su) Living creatures within 30 feet of a skulvyn must make a DC 19 Will save or become slowed for 4 rounds. Skulvyns are immune to this aura. A creature that makes a successful saving throw is immune to that particular skulvyn's aura for one day.
Wounding (Ex) Wounds resulting from a skulvyn's tail lash bleed for an additional 1 point of damage per round thereafter. Multiple wounds result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped only by a DC 15 Heal check or the application of magical healing.

Tactics: Khala has little to say to the PCs, but if they wish to speak, he answers their questions long enough for his skulvyns to move into positions where they can quickly strike at them, keeping in touch with them via telepathy. The aspect himself stays near the black pearl on the dais once combat begins, using his offensive spell-like abilities, demonic spittle, and gaze attacks as the skulvyns emerge from the pool to engage the PCs in melee. Khala attempts to summon a retriever once the skulvyns are dead or he is reduced to 150 or fewer hit points.

Once reduced to 40 hit points or less, Khala realizes that his cause is lost. Enough *shadow pearls* have already been sent to Scuttlecove to serve Demogorgon's needs, although the shortage caused by the PCs here means that the final ritual to conjoin the Demon Prince's personalities will take quite a bit longer—long enough that, if the PCs do well in the weeks to come, it might have a chance of being disrupted by a coordinated assault on Gaping Maw.

In any event, Khala uses his wastrilith pact at this point to swap places with Xerkamat as soon as any attack that would otherwise slay him is about to strike home once he is below 40 hit points. If Xerkamat is dead, Khala instead teleports to a distant location. Once his fast healing has cured his damage, he teleports back here to attempt to finish the PCs off. He repeats these tactics until he or the party is dead.

Treasure: The giant black pearl on the dais has not yet been transformed into anything dangerous, and is worth 20,000 gp.

50. Onalati's Room

This room contains a nice bed and a writing desk, although the moisture in the air and the stink in the stone have left their mark.

If Onailati escaped from his earlier battle with the PCs, he is found here, and joins Khala in defending area **49**.

Treasure: Some of Noltus Innersol's gear lies in a discarded heap at the foot of the bed here, including a suit of *celestial armor*, a *rod of splendor*, a *periapt of Wisdom +4*, a *strand of prayer beads* with a *bead of healing* and a *bead of karma*, and a bloodstained holy symbol of Pelor. Onailati ate the rest.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Khala's defeat, a pair of boneshaking roars echo through the Great Temple. The aspect of Demogorgon thrashes and writhes as, bit by bit, its unholy body peels apart into writhing blots of corruption that dissolve into noxious smoke before vanishing. In only a few moments, the body bursts apart in an immense wash

Khala and Pet

Scaling the Adventure

"City of Broken Idols" is designed for a group of four 13th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 14th–15th level characters. Simply adjust up all NPC character levels by a number equal to the increase in average party level from 13. Don't forget to adjust treasure accordingly.

Advance Onailati and the julajimus by 2–4 Hit Dice, and give all skinwalkers 1 or 2 levels of fighter. Advance Xerkamat by 2–4 Hit Dice. Raise the Search and Disable Device DCs for all traps by 2. Replace one or two of the wraiths in area 12 with dread wraiths. Consider making the koprus half-fiends instead of fiendish, and advance each of the hezrou demons by 2–4 Hit Dice. Advance Khala by 2–4 Hit Dice.

of black smoke, and the horrific twin roars shake through the room again. The PCs have finally attracted Demogorgon's attention, and for a brief moment, the Prince of Demons appears in the boiling smoke of his aspect's failing body. His twin glares fall upon the PCs just before his countenance vanishes.

The PCs may have put a stop to the production of further *shadow pearls*, but the world is far from safe. If they recovered Throgiff's ledgers or managed to capture the tiefling, they can learn that enough *shadow pearls* have been transported to Scuttlecove and the Crimson Fleet to cause incredible damage.

In any event, the Isle of Dread is now a different place. Demogorgon's influlence over the realm has been broken, perhaps for good. The planar fogs that brought new demons to the isle never return, and over the course of several months, any demons (including skinwalkers) remaining seek to flee the isle. The koprus have been dealt a powerful blow, especially if the PCs returned stewardship of Golismorga to the aboleths in "The Lightless Depths." The jungles of the isle remain dangerous for generations to come, but now, these dangers are of a wholly Material Plane variety—the taint of the Abyss upon the Isle of Dread has been vanquished.

Yet back at Farshore, there has been a singularly sinister development. As the PCs fought against the forces of the Prince of Demons in ancient Thanaclan, other minions of the demon lord have come to Farshore. Lavinia has been taken to Scuttlecove by demons allied with the Crimson Fleet, and the Jade Ravens have commandeered her ship, the *Blue Nixie*, to save her. Yet they sail the ship into a dreadful trap, one that could well claim their lives. The Isle of Dread may have been conquered, but the need for heroes remains as great as ever.

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTER

Skinwalker

The humanoid figure is armed with a sword fitted with jagged ridges of obsidian and a shield that bears an image of a two-headed tentacled beast, yet he is no man. He wears what appears to be the hide of a demonic lion. The underside of this skin is raw muscle, fusing to the man's skin and becoming one with him. The beast's head rears up around the man's head, while its arms, hanging down from the man's shoulders, writhe like snakes ready to strike.

SKINWALKER **CR 6**

CE Medium outsider (native)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +15, Spot +15

Languages Abyssal, Olman

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +1 shield)

hp 76 (8 HD); **DR** 10/magic

Immune fear, poison

SR 15

Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

Spd 40 ft.

Melee mwk macuahuitl +12/+7 (1d8+3/19–20 plus poison) and 2 claws +9 (1d6+1 plus poison) and bite +9 (1d8+1 plus poison)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +12/+7 (1d8+3/×3 plus poison)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11

Atk Options pounce

Combat Gear violet fungus venom (10 doses)

Abilities Str 17, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 15

SQ telepathic link

Feats Alertness, Multiattack, Track

Skills Concentration +16, Craft (poisonmaking) +11, Jump +26, Hide +22, Listen +15, Move Silently +22, Spot +15, Survival +13

Possessions combat gear, masterwork light wooden shield, masterwork macuahuitl, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows

Empathic Link (Su) Skinwalkers share a communal consciousness, allowing them to sense the location and emotional state of other nearby skinwalkers. Any skinwalkers within 60 feet of each other are in constant contact. If one is aware of a particular danger, they all are. If one in the group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No skinwalker in the group is considered flanked unless they all are.

Poison (Ex) Skinwalkers use poison regularly to augment their weapons, coating their arrows, macuahuitls, claws, and bite attacks with poison. The skinwalkers of Taboo Island prefer to use violet fungus venom (Fortitude DC 14, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Str and 1d4 Con).

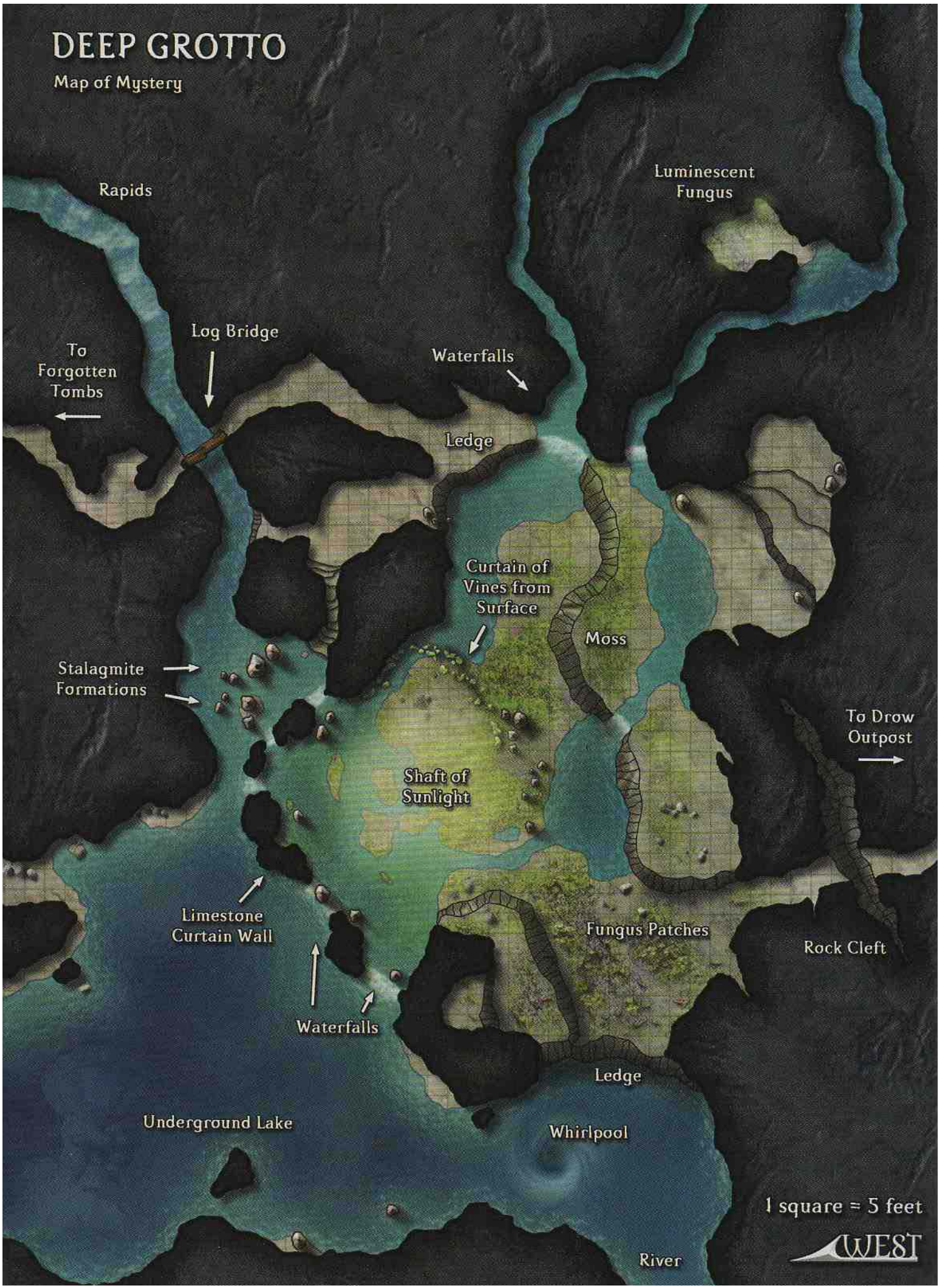
Pounce (Ex) If a skinwalker charges, it can make a full attack.

Skills Skinwalkers gain a +8 racial bonus on Jump, Hide, and Move Silently checks.

Skinwalkers are born to serve Demogorgon through a foul ritual similar to that undertaken by those who tread the path of the Acolyte of the Skin. During this ritual, a priest of Demogorgon flays the skin of a living man using a lash prepared from the claws and intestines of a demonic lion known as a jarilith. At the end of the process, the victim is burned alive on a pyre. Just before he perishes, the skin of a jarilith is thrown into the fire, at which point the two merge and become one.

Skinwalkers serve Demogorgon, and use ancient Olman weaponry such as spears, shields, and the traditional macuahuitl, a wooden club fitted with razor-sharp obsidian edges. This weapon is otherwise identical to a longsword.

Tito writes, "More than 20 years ago, I first got my hands on module X1: The Isle of Dread *at the geeky age of 15. I remember reading it one day while I was in bed with the flu and out of school, using an English/Italian dictionary every three or four words. I think I owe much of my 'vast, weird, and dire' English vocabulary to that experience."*


DEEP GROTTO
Map of Mystery
Rapids
Luminescent Fungus
Log Bridge
To Forgotten Tombs
Waterfalls
Ledge
Curtain of Vines from Surface
Moss
Stalagmite Formations
To Drow Outpost
Shaft of Sunlight
Limestone Curtain Wall
Fungus Patches
Rock Cleft
Waterfalls
Ledge
Underground Lake
Whirlpool
1 square = 5 feet
River
WEST

Savage Tide

Serpents of Scuttlecove

The vile city of Scuttlecove is the home of murderers, thieves, demon worshipers, peddlers of vice, and monsters. Here, anyone can find a place to hide, provided they can survive the terrors and dangers that infest the city streets. Scuttlecove is also the home port of the Crimson Fleet, a notorious band of pirates who have long held the Vohoun Ocean as their private looting grounds. The time has come to take the fight to these legendary pirates, to confront them in their own depraved lair.

"Serpents of Scuttlecove" is the eighth chapter in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #355 of *Dragon* magazine features several additional locations the PCs might wish to visit during their stay in the city of Scuttlecove.

The PCs should be 15th level when they begin "Serpents of Scuttlecove." They should gain enough experience to advance to 16th level halfway through the adventure, and 17th by the end.

BY RICHARD PETT
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | HIGH LEVEL (13TH–20TH) | URBAN

Adventure Background

Growing up, Vanthus Vanderboren and his sister Lavinia were quite close. With their parents rarely around, the pair got into a fair amount of trouble. After one particularly complex prank involving several *elixirs of love* emptied into the nearby water tower, both of their childhoods came to a sudden end. Lavinia was sent to a prestigious finishing school in an attempt to teach her decorum and grace, while Vanthus was sent south to work on a plantation owned by his Uncle Kallum, a life-long bachelor who subscribed to the notion that strong character was forged in the crucible of hard and honest work.

With each day of unrewarding toil and unfair (from his point of view) punishment, Vanthus's resentment toward his uncle grew. He tried several times to run away, but Kallum's servants were too quick and always caught him. It was on one of these attempts to escape that Vanthus discovered a secret door in the plantation house and blundered into his uncle's secret study. As it happened, Kallum was also a retired adventurer and member of the secret society of treasure hunters known as the Seekers. Vanthus spent an hour exploring the large study, and became particularly obsessed with a reproduction of a large woodcut depicting a four-armed demon tearing apart an old man. The reproduction was of a page from the *Demonomicon of Iggwilv*, and had been framed and hung on the wall above a small plaque that read, "General Ghorvash Honors His Prisoner." Yet Kallum's greatest treasure was, without a doubt, a beautiful *book of infinite spells*, its white leather cover festooned with gems and its pages edged with gold. Vanthus was drawn to the book as if entranced. He opened it, and as the knowledge of the spell on the front page bloomed in his mind, Vanthus knew true power for the first time. Heedless of his actions, he greedily began flipping pages through the book, marveling at spell after spell until he reached the book's final page and the *gate* spell inscribed therein. Amazed by the spell's power, he immediately set about using the *book of infinite spells* to call upon the powerful monster named Ghorvash from the picture on the wall.

The greatest error in Vanthus' life was his foolish assumption that the spell would allow him to control the demon.

As Vanthus cast the spell, the page turned on its own. The demon appeared in a flash of noxious smoke and immediately realized that the one who had called him was ignorant. He menaced the horrified youth for a moment, then adopted a pose of subservience and informed the boy that he would grant him one wish. Vanthus quickly regained his composure and wished for wealth, power, and eternal life in one breath. It was at that point that Uncle Kallum, drawn by the sound of the demon's laughter, entered the study. Ghorvash stunned the shocked man into senselessness, then turned to Vanthus and told him that, in order for his wish to be granted, blood had to be spilled. Vanthus didn't hesitate. With sick glee, he slit his uncle's throat and threw the body to the glabrezu for his enjoyment. Ghorvash roared in appreciation and vanished, the seeds of his work sewn.

Yet Vanthus felt betrayed—the demon had not granted the youth's wish. Enraged at the demon and horrified that the murder of his uncle would be discovered, Vanthus set fire to the plantation and watched from the nearby fields as the building burned to the ground.

After the fire, Vanthus returned to live at the family manor in Sasserine, but he told no one of his bargain with Ghorvash. A year later, when he suddenly became rich, he assumed it was because his plan to carry out the murder of his parents and then rob the family vault went off without a hitch. He had no way of knowing that Ghorvash's agents lurked in the shadows to ensure that Vanthus's parents and their crew would fail in their attempts to put out the fire. When Vanthus gained great power by becoming a lemorian captain in the Crimson Fleet, he told himself it was his glib tongue and charming personality that won him over. He never guessed that Ghorvash had already arranged for his swift ascencion through the fleet's ranks. It wasn't until after Vanthus died at the hands of his sister's guardians that he realized that Ghorvash had made good on his wish. He had become rich after robbing his dead parents' vault, powerful after becoming a lemorian captain in the Crimson Fleet, and now, as Ghorvash dragged Vanthus's squirming soul before his master, the Prince of Demons, Vanthus had eternal life. Of a sort.

Demogorgon knew of Vanthus, and more importantly knew of his ties to his enemies. He realized that here was a soul who would certainly stand against those who were even then disrupting his aspect's work on the Isle of Dread. And so Demogorgon consumed Vanthus's soul, transforming it and then returning it to the Material Plane. Vanthus rose from his grave as a death knight, and with the transformation realized how the final part of his wish to Ghorvash had been fulfilled. What's more, as a death knight, Vanthus finally had the strength and power to take his sister and bend her to his unholy desires.

Adventure Synopsis

After defeating the koprus of Golismorga and the City of Broken Idols, the PCs discover that a disturbing number of *shadow pearls* have already been shipped to Scuttlecove. Worse, upon returning to Farshore, they find Lavinia abducted, stolen away to the same city by her brother Vanthus, now an undead menace. The PCs travel to Scuttlecove, and on the way are contacted by an old acquaintance—Harliss Javell, whom they last saw in the smuggler's caves of Kraken's Cove. She asks them to meet her at a place called Red Foam Whaling in Scuttlecove, whereupon she'll do what she can to aid them

When the PCs reach Red Foam Whaling, they are ambushed by yuan-ti. The party discovers that Harliss has been captured by the Seventh Coil, and in order to find out what happened to Lavinia, they'll need to first rescue Harliss. Their search takes them through the streets of the depraved city, and forces them to make allies to survive. From their new allies, they learn that Harliss is being kept in a notorious local building called the Birdcage. After they rescue her, the party learns that the headquarters of the Crimson Fleet is hidden, but that the secret to its location may be kept in a yuan-ti safehouse.

After discovering the location of the Fleet's base, the PCs travel there and learn that Lavinia has been transported to a prison on Gaping Maw, Demogorgon's Abyssal realm. They also discover the true extent of the dozens of *shadow pearls* the pirates have already distributed to the cities of the world, and that Demogorgon intends to trigger a simultaneous detonation of the *shadow pearls*, plunging these cities into madness for unknown reasons. There's no time to travel to the dozens of cities and remove the *shadow pearls*—the only way to stop this demonic plan is to disrupt the ceremony itself on the Abyss.

Adventure Hooks

If you're running "Serpents of Scuttlecove" as its own adventure, you can simply have "Lavinia" be any one of the PCs' already-established allies. In this case, they travel to the city only to rescue their old friend, who has been abducted by her estranged brother, Captain Wyther. In this variant, Lavinia should be hidden somewhere in the Wreck, perhaps in area I5 under the Seventh's watchful eyes.

Alternately, you could begin this adventure with the PCs arriving at Scuttlecove on a mission to cripple or destroy the Crimson Fleet. Their contact remains Harliss, who has information on how to find the Crimson Fleet base. In this variant, the PCs must locate the Wreck and slay Cold Captain Wyther in order to achieve victory.

PART ONE: A BROTHER'S REVENGE

At some point during the PCs' adventures in "City of Broken Idols," something monstrous occurs just outside of the walls of Farshore. In a lonely grave at the edge of the Farshore Cemetery, evil wakes in the decaying flesh of a dead man. When Demogorgon transforms Vanthus into a death knight, his corrupted soul returns to the Material Plane, a thing of fiendish hatred that animates his decaying body. Vanthus claws his way up through the soggy earth and finally realizes what has happened. Enraged, horrified, and intrigued at his new unlife, Vanthus is unsure of his powers, without his gear, and nervous that the PCs (who have killed him once before) are still nearby. As such, he wastes no time fleeing Farshore by calling upon a nightmare mount to carry him to the nearby abandoned pirate outpost of Rat's End. He then uses the nightmare's *astral projection* ability to enter the astral plane and emerge back on the Material Plane at the Crimson Fleet fortress near Scuttlecove.

Now deadlier than even Cold Captain Wyther, Vanthus has little problem commandeering the Crimson Fleet's resources. The death knight gathers a group of bar-lgura recruiters (see page 79), gives them a reliable description of the abandoned village, and as they teleport there he has his nightmare end the *astral projection*. It only takes a few hours for the death knight and his bar-lgura minions to return to Farshore, storm Lavinia's manor, abduct her, and teleport back to Scuttlecove. Once there, Vanthus takes Cold Captain Wyther's ship, the *Crimson Scar*, and sails with it, Lavinia, and a drafted crew to the Abyssal realm of Gaping Maw by using the *Crimson Scar's wakeportal*.

These events occur before the PCs return to Farshore after defeating Khala the Two-Headed in the previous adventure. Without a way to easily contact the PCs, the people of Farshore are forced to wait for them to return to relate the tragic news.

Return to Farshore

Upon their return to Farshore, the PCs immediately notice that Vanderboren Manor has been damaged by a fire. The manor still stands, but the roof on the northern face (just above Lavinia's bedchamber) has burned away, leaving a large hole that laborers are repairing. It shouldn't take long for the citizens of the colony to bombard the PCs with tales of Vanthus's attack on the manor. The frightened citizens tell of his burning steed, his demonic ape minions, and most of all of the fact that he looked dead yet was still horrifically alive. Some of the colonists even caught a glimpse of the demon apes carrying Lavinia from her burning manor, and they claim that the monsters were branded with the mark of the Crimson Fleet. Many more heard Vanthus's greeting to Lavinia just before he, the demons, and Lavinia vanished from sight: "It is time for you to love me again, sister. The Lord of the Crimson Fleet can awaken it in you when I bring you before him. Your time here is over."

The colony is in a state of quiet panic, unsure if the undead Vanthus plans on returning to burn more buildings, or if his appearance heralds the imminent arrival of more Crimson Fleet pirates. Some colonists have taken to boarding themselves in their homes, others talk about moving into the surrounding jungle to hide out, and still others talk of abandoning the colony entirely. Lord Manthalay Meravanchi is sponsoring this latest tactic, and has been rallying his supporters to lay claim to the boats in the Farshore harbor to mount a return to Sasserine. The amount of help your PCs wish to provide in calming the citizens down is up to them, but if they wish to convince the colonists to remain in Farshore, perhaps promising that they'll go rescue Lavinia and ensuring them that the Crimson Fleet has no interest in the colony, they'll need to make a DC 30 Diplomacy check to assuage their worries. If Lord Meravanchi gets involved in arguing against them, the PCs must also oppose his +10 Diplomacy check with their own check.

Investigation of Vanderboren Manor turns up no additional clues, although none of Lavinia's gear (including a suit of *+1 leather armor*, a *+1 rapier*, a *ring of protection +1*, *gloves of Dexterity +2*, and a *cloak of resistance +1*, in addition to any other items the PCs may have given her over the past few adventures) was taken when she was. An investigation of Vanthus's grave reveals a hole in the earth, left empty from when Vanthus clawed his way out. The grave radiates lingering evil, but there are no real clues here. If the PCs wish to learn more of Lavinia's fate, they'll either need to resort to divination magic or seek out the Crimson Fleet. It's no secret that the Crimson Fleet is based in Scuttlecove, and if the PCs captured Throgiff the tiefling in the last adventure, he can not only confirm this fact, but can even be made to serve as a guide if properly intimidated, bribed (with at

Farewell to the Jade Ravens

If the Jade Ravens have played a strong role in your Savage Tide campaign, "Serpents of Scuttlecove" gives you a great place to wrap up their storyline. When Vanthus abducts Lavinia, Tolun Kientai convinces his adventuring companions that this is their big chance to show up "those other heroes." The Jade Ravens commander the *Blue Nixie*, gather a crew of other outraged sailors, and set sail to Scuttlecove to rescue Lavinia soon after Vanthus abducts her. As long as the Jade Ravens leave for Scuttlecove a few days before the PCs do, they get to the city before them and have plenty of time to meet their own dire fates. Details on these fates appear later in the adventure. This variant works best if the PCs end up taking the *Sea Wyvern* to Scuttlecove; if they utilize spells to travel there faster, they'll reach the city well in advance of the Jade Ravens, at which point you'll need to make adjustments as necessary. In any event, the final four installments of the Savage Tide Adventure Path assume that the Jade Ravens have left the stage.

least 1,000 gp), or convinced (with a DC 30 Diplomacy check).

Finding Out More

By interrogating Throgiff or any Crimson Fleet pirates captured at the end of "Tides of Dread," the PCs can learn a bit more about what the Crimson Fleet is up to in Scuttlecove. Throgiff's ledger (found in area 24 in "City of Broken Idols") also reveals that the Crimson Fleet has already stockpiled 35 *shadow pearls* at their base of operations near Scuttlecove, but where that base is located and what they intend to do with the *shadow pearls* is unclear.

Divination magic can reveal more. As a general rule, you should use the results of any such magic employed by the PCs to guide them toward the next section of the adventure, depending on when they utilize the spells. At the start, results should lead them to Scuttlecove. Once they've survived the ambush at Red Foam Whaling and start looking for Harliss, results should lead them to the Birdcage, and so on. There are certain things to keep in mind, though, when revealing information to the PCs via divination spells.

Discern Location: The PCs might use this spell to determine Vanthus's or Lavinia's location. The result depends on when during the adventure the spell is cast. At the start, Lavinia and Vanthus are in the Crimson Fleet's stronghold on the island of Sekorvia in the Vohoun Ocean on the Material Plane. A DC 30 Knoweldge (geography) check reveals Sekorvia to be the largest island in the Pirate Isles; if the PCs have interrogated Throgiff or looked though his ledger, this becomes a DC 10 Knowledge (geography) check. By the time the PCs actually reach Scuttlecove, though, Vanthus has commandeered the *Crimson Scar* and traveled to Gaping Maw on the Abyss, and not long thereafter reaches the prison isle of Divided's Ire, a place where Demogorgon himself blocks *discern location* spells.

Scrying: *Scrying* attempts on Vanthus or Lavinia at the start of the adventure fail automatically, as the Crimson Fleet stonghold is warded by a permanent *Mordenkainen's private sanctum*. Once the Vanderborens relocate to Gaping Maw, they gain a +5 bonus on their Will save to resist *scrying* (since they're on another plane), but if successful, *scrying* reveals a rag-draped and badly beaten Lavinia in an iron cage dangling over a bubbling pool of lava. If Vanthus is scried upon, he is revealed to be brooding in an iron-walled room and surrounded by several disembodied demonic shadows. Further information on their fates is revealed in "Into the Maw" in DUNGEON #147.

Getting to Scuttlecove

Scuttlecove lies about 1,200 miles northeast of the Isle of Dread, a 16-day journey by sea if the PCs take the *Sea Wyvern*. The voyage to Scuttlecove should be relatively uneventful—most of the encounters with sea monsters, bad weather, and other perils should be relatively minor to a party of 15th-level PCs.

Of course, a party of 15th-level characters has a lot more options available to them for travel. Spells like *wind walk, shadow walk, greater teleport*, and *transport via plant* can all serve to greatly speed the journey. Yet the remainder of this adventure (as well as the final four adventures in the Savage Tide Adventure Path) assume that the PCs do not abandon the *Sea Wyvern*. So, how do you convince your players to take the long way to Scuttlecove?

As the PCs prepare to travel to Scuttlecove, you should determine their method of approaching the city. As detailed in Part Two of this adventure and in the accompanying backdrop, Scuttlecove is a dangerous place, especially for visitors. Although the PCs are high-level, they can't simply walk into a place like Scuttlecove—they need a cover or stealth. Disguising the *Sea Wyvern* as a Crimson Fleet ship is certainly an option. By bringing the *Sea Wyvern*, they also gain an entire ship's cargo to store gear, equipment, and treasure. They should think about where they'll be staying in Scuttlecove; the city's hardly a safe place to sleep, even if you pay for a room at an inn. The *Sea Wyvern* can easily serve as a portable stronghold for the PCs to retreat to, especially if they moor her in a secluded cove elsewhere on Sekorvia or a nearby island. Finally, you can stress the fact that if the PCs elect to leave the *Sea Wyvern* at Farshore, someone like Lord Manthalay Meravanchi is likely to steal the ship to flee back to Sasserine.

If the PCs use divination magic, you should take the opportunity to attempt to convey to them that, while Lavinia's abduction is tragic, there's not a particularly pressing need to rescue her immediately.

Harliss Javell's Message

In "The Bullywug Gambit," the PCs encountered a foul-mouthed pirate captain named Harliss Javell. At the end of that encounter, the PCs should have made a Diplomacy check to determine how she reacted to them. If the PCs made a favorable impression on her by adjusting her attitude to friendly or helpful, they'll have one additional resource to draw upon in this adventure. "Serpents of Scuttlecove" assumes that the PCs left her with such a favorable impression.

After leaving Kraken's Cove, Harliss was filled with rage at the Crimson Fleet. They had not fully divulged to her the dangers of transporting *shadow pearls*,

and she blamed them for the death of her crew and her friends at Kraken's Cove. As she traveled on foot along the Amedio Coast away from Sasserine, the need for revenge against the Crimson Fleet grew into an obsession. Eventually, she came to the secluded beach that Vanthus had used to stage his arrival in the region. He left behind several skiffs (he'd lost some of his men in the chaos at Kraken's Cove and didn't have enough left to return all of the skiffs to his ship after he fled the area), one of which Harliss claimed. She eventually made her way to a Scarlet Brotherhood fort and managed to fast talk her way onto a larger ship bound for civilization. Yet her true goal remained Scuttlecove—after witnessing what one *shadow pearl* was capable of, and knowing that the Crimson Fleet had more of them, she was curious to find out what they were up to.

It took several months, but eventually Harliss arrived in the depraved city. She began investigating the Crimson Fleet, and after several close calls with Dire Hunger monks and bar-lgura press gangs, she attracted the attention of a group of rebels who called themselves the Protectorate.

With the Protectorate's support, Harliss learned much about the fleet, and came close to discovering the location of their secret hideout. While spying on a band of Crimson Fleet pirates on a ship visiting Scuttlecove, she overheard the news that Vanthus Vanderboren had returned from the dead and brought his captured sister to the base. The news shocked Harliss, who had thought she'd seen the last of the Vanderborens, and also made her recall the adventurers she'd met back in Kraken's Cove. If they were still allied with Lavinia, perhaps they would assist in realizing her revenge.

Harliss' decision to contact the PCs sent her in search of someone capable of such magic. Her contacts at the Protectorate couldn't help her directly, but they did point her to one of their more sinister allies, a half-fiend nymph named Tyralandi. With her aid and the use of a scroll of *dream*, Harliss seeks to contact the PCs..

Harliss Javell

This *dream* message can arrive at any time you wish, and should be sent to one of the PCs who was present when they encountered Harliss back in "The Bullywug Gambit." Harliss' dream initially manifests in the mind of the sleeping PC as a memory of the events in Kraken's Cove. As the PC and his allies hew their way through throngs of savage pirates, they suddenly encounter Harliss again. Yet this time, she is not holding out against her own siege. Instead, she greets the PCs with a smile and an offer of allegiance. She explains that she has come to Scuttlecove for realize vengeance against the Crimson Fleet, and that she recently discovered that a mutual acquaintance has returned to them. Her reports of Vanthus as an undead monster with Lavinia as a prisoner should provide the PCs with the last bit of urging they need to journey to Scuttlecove. In any event, Harliss promises them her aid and the aid of the Protectorate in rescuing Lavinia, as long as she's able to help lay the Crimson Fleet low as part of the process. If they have a ship, she recommends leaving it in any one of several secluded harbors on a nearby island so that it can serve as a safe place to stage their infiltration. Alternately, if they're feeling deceptive, they can pose as Crimson Fleet pirates come to the city to unload cargo. She bids them meet her at a place in Scuttlecove called "Red Foam Whaling."

After the dream ends, the PCs can certainly attempt to contact Harliss with their own magic to gain further information, but as they near Scuttlecove, attempts to contact her fail as she is captured by agents of the Crimson Fleet and imprisoned in the Birdcage. By the time the PCs reach Red Foam Whaling, it is no longer a Protectorate safe house—it has become a deadly yuan-ti ambush.

Sailing to Scuttlecove

If the PCs sail the *Sea Wyvern* to Scuttlecove, there are countless small coves on the tiny islands that fill the region that can serve as excellent places to hide their ship. They can then use skiffs, magic, or other means to come

and go from Scuttlecove with relative safety. The city's landward gates are imposing but unmanned—no one opposes (or even notices) a small group entering the city by these routes.

If the PCs wish to pose as a Crimson Fleet mercenary ship come to the city to unload a cargo of loot, they need only fly a crimson flag as they approach the harbor. Navigating the maze of sunken ships is a difficult task without accurate charts (see apge 82). If the PCs think ahead, they can secure such charts from any Crimson Fleet ships they captured at the end of "Tides of Dread."

Once a ship reaches a pier and docks, its crew is expected to handle unloading and bartering stolen goods on their own—there's no organized port authority or harbormaster to aid in this matter. It's unlikely that anyone notices if a ship with a crimson flag docks at a pier and never bothers to unload cargo, but if the PCs don't leave guards behind on deck, there's a cumulative 10% chance per hour that the *Sea Wyvern* is stolen by a band of 1d6+6 Scuttlecove thugs.

PART TWO: CITY OF CHAOS

War. No one mentions the word, but everyone who lives in Scuttlecove knows. The city is locked in civil war.

Details on the city of Scuttlecove and the six factions currently involved in the war can be found in the backdrop article that begins on page 76 of this issue. High-level characters have a wealth of options available to them, so rather than having a pre-scripted set of encounters to walk them through the adventure, you should be prepared to allow them to explore the city as they will. "Serpents of Scuttlecove" assumes the PCs have three goals in the city: rescue Lavinia, discover the plans for the *shadow pearls*, and destroy the Crimson Fleet. The route they take to accomplishing these tasks is left to each particular party. This section provides specific guidelines on what the PCs have to do to get by in Scuttlecove, and the best ways to realize these goals, but you should be ready to think on your feet if the PCs come up with something unpredictable.

A Fish Out of Water

Scuttlecove is not a place for kindness or weakness. As detailed in the Scuttlecove backdrop, visitors to the city can expect to be assaulted by thugs, bar-lgura press gangs, monks of Dire Hunger, and other menaces if they don't carry themselves with confidence. Characters who openly walk the streets of Scuttlecove can use Intimidate or Disguise checks to prevent these attacks. Magic can be an incredible boon for the stealthy infiltration of the city—invisible parties, for example, are unlikely to attract much attention.

It's quite likely that the PCs can gain the favor of one or more of the factions during the course of this adventure. As detailed, they are most likely to gain the support of Porphyry House, although they could also ally with the Dealer's Consortium or even the Monastery of Dire Hunger once the factions hear rumors of the PCs' opposition of the Seventh Coil or the Crimson Fleet (automatic 1d4 days after they defeat the yuan-ti at Red Foam Whaling or rescue Harliss from the Birdcage). Once the party has allied with one of these three factions, they no longer need to worry about the idle dangers of Scuttlecove, as word spreads quickly.

Asking Around

As soon as the PCs begin asking about Lavinia, the Crimson Fleet, or the Seventh Coil, agents of the latter two take notice. Unless the PCs beat a DC by 10 or more when they use Gather Information in the city, it's only a matter of 3d6 hours before the Crimson Fleet or the Seventh Coil finds out. Once this occurs, these two factions use divination magic and their own contacts to quickly determine who's been asking questions. Unless the PCs have taken extraordinary means to conceal their presence, their activities become the object of scrutiny. Groups of 1d4+2 Scuttlecove thugs (page 78) paid off by the Crimson Fleet trail the PCs at times. A Sister of Lamentation (page 56) might follow their travels through the city along the rooftops. Cold Captain Wyther is certain to attempt to scry on the PCs, their cohorts, or even their animal companions using the *crystal ball* in area **H4**. Allow the PCs standard chances to notice this unwanted attention, but even if they confront their stalkers and defeat them, there's always another group of thugs or a harpy ready to take up the slack.

Open Warfare

A 15th-level group wields incredible power, so it's not unlikely that some parties might approach Scuttlecove with a less-than-subtle attitude. Certainly the rank-and-file thugs and criminals who populate the city can't withstand a group capable of teleporting, raising the dead, creating earthquakes, and summoning armies of elementals and outsiders. Yet while the PCs may have power, an open assault on Scuttlecove will actually make their task in town more difficult, since the leaders of the various factions rise up to defend their city. At the very least, soon after the PCs attack Scuttlecove, they'll find themselves facing Tyralandi and six stone golems made of porphyry, Kedward Bone and his four barbed devil guardians, a flock of six Sisters of Lamentation, the Leech, and several waves of Crimson recruiters, Dire Hunger monks, and yuan-ti assassins and slavers. At minimum, this is an EL 22 encounter, and likely one that the PCs can't hope to win. Furthermore, once they adopt such an aggressive tactic, they find Scuttlecove uncharacteristically focused in their defense—eventually the Seventh and Cold Captain Wyther become involved in the defense of the city as well. It's possible that the PCs could stage several assaults on Scuttlecove and eventually whittle down the city's defenses, at which point they may be able to find out enough information to progress, but further details on such an inefficient and unnecessary attack are beyond the scope of this adventure.

Safe Places to Rest

Scuttlecove's a dangerous place to visit, and an even more dangerous place to relax. If the PCs brought the *Sea Wyvern*, it represents their best choice as a place to retreat to when they need to rest and recover. If they hide their ship in a nearby cove, the only thing they have

to worry about is assassination attempts (see below). If their ship is moored in the Scuttlecove harbor, they'll also have to deal with curious thugs and perhaps opportunistic bar-lgura press gangs.

Once the PCs rescue Harliss, she'll be able to lead them to one of two Protectorate safe houses (one in Eralakni's Emporium and another at the Rusty Shunt); these locations are safe from all forms of interruption save assassination attempts.

If the characters decide to sleep in an abandoned building or risk paying for a room in one of Scuttlecove's flophouses or "inns," you should check three times a night to determine if someone or something interrupts their rest. There's a 15% chance of an encounter with a group of 1d6+6 Scuttlecove thugs, a band of 2d4 Crimson recruiters, 1d6+4 Dire Hunger monks, or one of the many monstrous predators that dwell in Scuttlecove's shadows (such as vampires, rakshasas, evil outsiders, night hags, and doppelgangers).

Assassination Attempts

As the PCs attract the attention of the Crimson Fleet and the Seventh Coil, they become increasingly concerned with the party's actions. It won't take long for the groups to send out assassins in an attempt to quiet the PCs once and for all. Listed below are two brief encounters you can use against the PCs whenever the action seems to be lagging or you feel that they're taking too long to progress.

Minting House Murderers (EL 13): Underestimating the PCs' strength, two yuan-ti asssassins from the Minting House attempt to impress the Seventh by killing them. The yuan-ti assassins attack at night, in an uncrowded place where they can observe the PCs for three rounds before opening combat with death attacks. Ideally, they seek to catch the PCs as they sleep. If this is not possible, they stalk the PCs through the streets and attack soon after they stop to shop or interrogate a local. These yuan-ti are not here to get killed, and in the face of strong opposition flee via the rooftops back to the Minting House

Seventh Coil Assassins (2) **CR 11**

Yuan-ti halfblood rogue 2/assassin 7
CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 264

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect poison*, scent; Listen +18, Spot +18

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Yuan-ti

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 19; improved uncanny dodge

hp 95 (107 with *false life*, 16 HD)

SR 16

Fort +7 (+10 against poison), **Ref** +16, **Will** +10; evasion

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 *keen dagger* +19/+14/+9 (1d4+5/17–20) and bite +13 (1d6+2 plus poison)

Ranged +2 *composite longbow* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+6/×3) or spit venom +18 touch (DC 15, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con)

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +17

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, sneak attack +5d6

Special Actions death attack (DC 22)

Combat Gear *bead of force*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of fly*

Spells Known (CL 7th)

4th (1/day)—*dimension door*, *modify memory* (DC 19)

3rd (3/day)—*deeper darkness*, *false life*, *misdirection*

2nd (4/day)—*cat's grace*, *invisibility*, *pass without trace*, *spider climb*

1st (5/day)—*feather fall*, *jump*, *obscuring mist*, *true strike*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

At will—*alternate form*, *chameleon power*, *detect poison*, *produce acid*

3/day—*animal trance* (DC 14), *cause fear* (DC 13), *entangle* (DC 13)

1/day—*deeper darkness*, *neutralize poison* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 15)

Abilities Str 18, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 21, Wis 18, Cha 14

SQ poison use, trapfinding

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Feint, Mobility, Spit Venom, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +21, Concentration +12, Craft (poisonmaking) +15, Disguise +19, Hide +24 (+34 when using *chameleon power*, +42 when also in Tiny viper form), Knowledge (local) +17, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +15, Listen +18, Move Silently +24, Spot +15, Tumble +24

Possessions combat gear, +1 *mithral shirt*, +1 *keen dagger*, +2 *composite longbow* (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +3*

Poison (Ex) Injury and contact, Fortitude DC 15, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con.

Spit Venom This feat (*Serpent Kingdoms* 147) allows the Seventh Coil assassin to spit its venom up to 30 feet as a ranged touch attack. The poison functions as a contact poison in addition to its usual delivery method. This requires a standard action.

The Gloves Come Off (EL 16): The second time the yuan-ti attempt to assassinate the PCs, they come prepared, recruiting the aid of an intimidated local cutpurse called Borwill. Borwill's task is to approach the heroes and keep them occupied with his offers of cheap magical trinkets for sale (rings and wands with *Nystul's magic aura*) while the yuan-ti move silently into position around them and ready the attack. The assassins have organized a group of 6 bar-lgura recruiters for additional aid—these demons use *disguise self* to appear humanoid and constitute the six closest "pedestrians" when the assault begins. Borwill has +8 Bluff and may attempt to secretly deliver a warning if he feels the party can take the yuan-ti. If two yuan-ti assassins are slain, the others flee into the city in different directions.

Seventh Coil Assassins (4): hp 107 each; see page 49.

Crimson Recruiters (6): hp 88 each; see page 79.

Exploring the City

As the PCs wander through Scuttlecove, consult the backdrop article as needed. Certain locations in Scuttlecove contain additional information and encounters pertinent to this adventure, as detailed below.

The Waterfront: Anyone who spends much time here soon hears tales of the numerous horrible fish that have been found washed up on shore or caught by fishermen lately. The locals have taken to calling these fish "sackfish." The sackfish are bloated bags of vaguely luminescent flesh, studded here and there with fins and featuring horrific double fish heads.

Sackfish have a disturbing penchant for bursting if handled roughly, poisoning anyone nearby (treat as yellow mold—*Dungeon Master's Guide* 76). Securing a sackfish for study is a relatively easy task. A DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) made while studying a sackfish reveals that these fish are fiendish creatures common on the 88th layer of the Abyss, a place known as Gaping Maw. These fish have become common in these waters due to the frequent voyages Crimson Fleet ships make to Gaping Maw using *wakeportals*.

Plaza of Hanging Ruin: If you're using the Jade Ravens subplot, a DC 25 Spot check made by any PC who visits the Plaza of Hanging Ruin is enough to notice a familiar face—poor **Kaskus Kiel** (LN male dwarf druid 9) hangs rotting from the plaza's hooks, his flesh alive with flies and maggots. He has obviously been dead for some time. If he's resurrected, he tells how he and his fellow Ravens came to Scuttlecove with ideas of rescuing Lavinia, only to run afoul of a band of yuan-ti assassins not long after they started asking questions. Kaskus was with Zan Oldavin when he was jumped by assassins; Tolin and Liamae were following up on a different lead at the time and he has no idea what happened to them. Zan, he fears, is dead; he was taken away to someplace called "The Minting House" for "recruitment." The yuan-ti didn't seem to have an interest in Kaskus, and left him here to die.

Porphyry House: If the PCs visit Scuttlecove's most infamous brothel, they are greeted by an overly pleasant and attractive staff eager to please. Attempts to arrange meetings with the house's owner Tyralandi require a DC 40 Diplomacy check (or a bribe of at least 5,000 gp in jewelry or 10,000 gp in magic). Tyralandi has no love for the Crimson Fleet, and provided the PCs can present themselves in a properly deferential manner (requiring a second DC 40 Diplomacy check or a DC 40 Perform [any] check to entertain her), she may be willing to aid them in their actions against the Crimson Fleet if they promise to stand aside when she moves to fill the vacuum left by the Fleet's defeat. If the PCs present Harliss' note (recovered from the Leech's lair in Part Three), they gain a +20 bonus on their checks to secure Tyralandi's aid. If they ask about Harliss, she admits that the woman came to her several days ago with a request to have a *dream* spell cast upon her. The money was good, and Tyralandi admits to having a soft spot in her heart for female swashbucklers. She used one of Porphyry Houses' many scrolls of *dream* (used often to grant unusual requests by paying customers) on Harliss, but doesn't know what message she sent with the spell. As an aside, Tyralandi adds that she knows where Harliss is now. For payment for this information, she asks only for a lock of hair from the PC with the highest Charisma (Tyralandi intends to use a scroll of *simulacrum* to create a minion based on the character for her own personal amusement—this development could come back later in the adventure to cause all manner of amusing plot developments). If paid, she admits that she's heard through her extensive network of contacts that Harliss has recently been taken to the Birdcage, no doubt by enemies eager to learn something she knows. Tyralandi's fondness for female swashbucklers isn't enough for her to risk upsetting the tenuous allegiance Porphyry House shares with the Birdcage, but if the PCs indicate that they intend a rescue, she opens a nearby drawer and gives the PCs a leather pouch containing three *oils of silence*. If the PCs ask what they're for, she smiles coyly and feigns ignorance that she gave them the oils at all, musing only that some of the denizens of the Birdcage have particularly enthralling singing voices. Tyralandi wouldn't mind seeing the harpies of the Birdcage dealt a blow that would allow her to step in and

Tyralandi

help repair in return for further debt to Porphyry House.

If the PCs secure Tyralandi's aid, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 17 creature in combat.

The Rusty Shunt: If the PCs learn about the Protectorate, a DC 40 Gather Information check is enough to send them to the Rusty Shunt to contact Lars Landicaster about the Protectorate. Lars denies knowing anything about the group, but if the PCs can make a DC 30 Diplomacy check to set him at ease, he mysteriously and quietly invites the PCs to follow him downstairs into the building's basement. After the Seventh Coil slaughtered half their number at Red Foam Whaling and captured Harliss, the remaining members of the Protectorate went into hiding here; their numbers are few, and they can't help the PCs much aside from giving them a safe place to hide and rest. If you're using the Jade Ravens subplot, a new member is among the Protectorate here—**Tolin Kientai** (LN male human ranger 3/fighter 6) hides here with the others, wracked with guilt about the unknown fates of his companions.

PART THREE: RED FOAM WHALING

Assuming the PCs received Harliss Javel's *dream* message, Red Foam Whaling is likely to be one of their first stops in Scuttlecove. It's a simple matter of a DC 10 Gather Information check to determine the location's address ("The run-down building at the far west end of the boardwalk."), although most of the locals are quick to warn them that the place is haunted. If the PCs aren't looking to meet Harliss, they could be directed to Red Foam Whaling as the result of a DC 35 Gather Information check made to find out if there are any "rebels" or non-evil folk operating in the city. In this case, the informant knows that Red Foam's a Protectorate safehouse, but not that it's recently been compromised by the Leech and his assassins.

During Scuttlecove's formative years, an enterprising (but foolish) band of pirates noted that their competitors were sacking merchant ships but not whaling ships. Knowing that whale oil and ambergris are "big business," these pirates took the name of the Red Foam Boys. They converted these buildings into a whaling factory, then set out to murder the crews of whaling vessels, steal their catches, then return to Scuttlecove with the stolen whales to process them and sell the harvest. What the Red Foam Boys didn't account for was the fact that it's much harder to process whales than to steal gold. The pirate band lasted for only three forays before internal strife tore them apart. Today, all that remains of their foolish plan is this slowly rotting whaling factory at the city's edge. The building has served as the home for numerous creatures and organizations over the years, most recently as a safe house for members of the Protectorate who used magic and trickery to give the house a reputation for being haunted. They used the building as a place to smuggle people into (and out of) the city.

Only a few days before the PCs arrive in Scuttlecove, Seventh Coil spies tracked Harliss Javel to this building. In a brutal raid, they murdered all ten Protectorate members who were staying here and captured Harliss. A dangerous member of the Seventh Coil known as the Leech has claimed the building as his own, and thanks to the information provided him by the Sisters of Lamentation at the Birdcage, he knows that Harliss called for help with Tyralandi's *dream* spell. He expects the help to arrive any day, and has turned the building into a devious ambush.

Red Foam Whaling is an unassuming structure cobbled together from two buildings connected by a rickety extension. The piers are partially enclosed by sagging wooden walls and protected from the elements by a long sloping roof, although one chamber (area **A8**) no longer has a ceiling. Unless the PCs take care to hide their approach, they are spotted by the yuan-ti assassins hidden atop the building well before they reach the structure.

Although Red Foam Whaling consists of several areas, the entire building is effectively one encounter with the Leech and his yuan-ti minions, since even if they aren't ready to ambush the PCs, the monsters respond quickly to any attack. The sidebar on page 52 gives a brief description of most of the rooms in the building. The yuan-ti don't attack until the time is right, as detailed below.

The Ambush (EL 17)

Massive iron hooks attached to ropes as thick as arms hang from beams above, which in turn are attached to huge rust-covered pulleys that once enabled workers to maneuver whales into one of the narrow bays between the rickety-looking walkways. Rotting tools—rusting iron-spiked boots, wicked curved knives on long poles, and heavy saws lean against walls to the north and east, while to the west and south there are no walls at all blocking the depressing view of the city's harbor.

Although the butchery has been exposed to the elements for years, a DC 15 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check reveals that the piers have been recently repaired and serviced in a cunning way that makes them stable without looking safe.

Some of the piers were never used by the Protectorate, including the one south of area **A8** and the upraised walkway. These piers are unstable, and if a Medium or larger creature walks on them, the pier collapses. A DC 20 Reflex save allows the creature to leap to safety, with failure indicating a fall into the sloshing 10-foot-deep water below.

Creatures: The Leech and three yuan-ti assassins have prepared an ambush in this area. The Leech himself spends his time in area **A3**, relaxing and waiting for the assassins to raise the alarm when they see the PCs approach. The assassins fear the Leech enough that they've been watching in shifts for several days, using *potions of lesser restoration* to fight back fatigue. Each of them has 1 potion left when the PCs arrive.

The yuan-ti assassins spend their time in the form of Tiny vipers on the building roofs, one above area **A6**, one above area **A1**, and one above area **A3**. From these positions they can keep an eye on creatures approaching from all directions. They've been given basic descriptions of the PCs, but raise the alarm if they notice anyone approaching the building with the apparent intent of entering. The snake above **A3**

Red Foam Whaling

A1. Entrance: Both sets of double doors in this room are stuck (Strength DC 20). The room itself is empty, save for a rotting desk and a few broken chairs.

A2. Meeting Room: A round table surrounded by four chairs sits in this room; the Protectorate once used this area to meet and plan smugglings.

A3. The Leech's Lair: Once the bunkhouse for nearly a dozen members of the Protectorate, the Leech has made this place his home, as detailed in "The Leech's Lair."

A4. Storage: This room is used to store lanterns, costumes, bullhorns, rolls of thin wire, and other supplies the Protectorate used to maintain the illusion that the building was haunted. A DC 25 Bluff check made while investigating the supplies here is enough for a character to realize what they were likely used for.

A5–A6. Barracks: These chambers were used by Protectorate members to rest. Each room contains six hammocks, one slung above the other in groups of three.

A7. The Butchery: This large area is detailed in "The Ambush."

A8. Unstable Room: Once used as an observation room for the butchery, this roofless chamber is now quite unstable. If anything more than one Medium creature enters this room, the floor collapses (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 66).

slithers through a crack in the roof to warn the Leech, then all three move into area **A7** to take up positions. One lurks under the upraised walkway on the central pier, one in the rafters up above the door just south of area **A6**, and one in the rafters just south of the southern door to area **A3**. The Leech takes up a hidden position under the walkway and stairs just to the southwest of area **A8** and summons one of his favorite playthings, a succubus named Alersia, to take up position at the area marked **A7** on the map. Alersia assumes Harliss' form and pretends to be unconscious, waiting for the PCs to enter the area and rush to her side.

The name "abomination" is well suited to the grotesque yuan-ti known to his kin as the Leech. His flesh is a sickened yellow-green hue, with a face pulled back in a ghastly rictus grin, as if horrifically scarred by acid. The Leech is an uncontrolled menace even within the Seventh Coil; he views himself as the chosen of Demogorgon.

THE LEECH **CR 16**

Male yuan-ti abomination blackguard 3/thrall of Demogorgon 6

CE Large monstrous humanoid

Monster Manual 264, *Book of Vile Darkness* 67

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +7, Spot +25

Aura despair (–2 on enemy's saves, 10 ft.)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Yuan-ti

AC 33, touch 13, flat-footed 31

hp 192 (18 HD)

SR 18

Fort +22, **Ref** +16, **Will** +19

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +26/+21/16/+11 (1d8+8/18–20) and bite +20 (2d6+4 plus poison, DC 20)

Ranged *+3 composite longbow* +24/+19/+14/+9 (2d6+12/×3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +30

Atk Options Cleave, Improved Sunder, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, constrict 1d6+8, improved grab (bite), smite good 1/day (+5 on attack roll, +3 damage)

Special Actions hypnosis, rebuke undead (+7, 2d6+6), rotting touch, *summon demon*, touch of fear

Combat Gear *potion of fly*

Blackguard Spells Prepared (CL 3rd)
2nd—*eagle's splendor*
1st—*corrupt weapon*, *cure light wounds* (2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)
At will—*alternate form* (CL 19th), *animal trance* (DC 17), *aversion* (DC 23, CL 16th), *chameleon power*, *detect good* (CL 3rd), *detect poison* (CL 6), *entangle* (DC 16), *produce acid*
3/day—*deeper darkness*, *neutralize poison* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 18)
1/day—*baleful polymorph* (DC 20, into snake form only), *fear* (DC 19)

Abilities Str 27, Dex 15, Con 22, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 20
SQ dark blessing, poison use, reaching touch, scaly flesh +2
Feats Abyss-Bound Soul (Demogorgon), Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Evil Brand, Improved Sunder, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Thrall to Demon (Demogorgon), Willing Deformity
Skills Concentrate +27, Hide +20 (+30 when using *chameleon power*), Intimidate +25 (+27 against evil), Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (local) +22, Knowledge (religion) +25, Move Silently +17, Swim +16, Spot +25
Possessions combat gear, *+3 breastplate*, *+3 composite longbow* (+8 Str) with 20 cold iron arrows and 20 arrows, masterwork scimitar, *greater bracers of archery*, *ring of protection +2*, *belt of giant strength +4*

Dual Actions (Su) Twice per day, the Leech can take two full rounds' worth of actions in the same round.
Hypnosis (Su) Once per day, the Leech can produce an effect identical to that of the *hypnotism* spell, except it functions as a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet. A DC 16 Will save negates this effect; the save DC is Charisma-based.
Reaching Touch (Su) Three times a day, as a free action, the Leech can cause his arms to stretch unnaturally, increasing his reach by 5 feet for 1 round.
Rotting Touch (Su) Three times per day, the Leech can deal 1d6 points of Constitution damage as a touch attack.
Scaly Flesh (Ex) The Leech's natural armor bonus gains a +2 bonus.
***Summon Demon* (Sp)** The Leech can summon a demon of 5 HD or less once a day, as if using a *summon monster* spell (CL 15th). He can also summon any single tanar'ri with a CR of 8 or lower once a day; a demon summoned in this manner remains at his side for up to 1 hour and follows his commands.
Touch of Fear (Su) Three times per day, the Leech can cause a creature he strikes with a touch attack to become frightened for 1d4 rounds. A DC 16 Will save means the creature touched is merely shaken for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based.
Feats Abyss-Bound Soul grants the Leech a +2 bonus on saves made against spells with the good descriptor, and allows him to summon a CR 8 demon as detailed above. Evil Brand grants him a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made against evil creatures. Thrall to Demon allows him to gain a +1 luck bonus on any one attack roll, saving htrow, ability check, skill check, or level check once per day. Willing Deformity grants him a +2 deformity bonus on Intimidate checks.

Seventh Coil Assassins (3): hp 107 each; see page 49.

Alersia, succubus: hp 33; *Monster Manual* 47.

Tactics: The ambush setup is unlikely to trick adventurers for long, but the yuan-ti merely want to delay the PCs for a few rounds, long enough for them to study the PCs and start combat with death attacks. Alersia, as Harliss, feigns unconsciousness with her Bluff check, and as the PCs approach moans as if in great pain. On the third round, she opens her eyes and embraces the nearest PC, using her energy drain as she kisses that PC in feigned relief. The yuan-ti use this moment to attempt death attacks on any other PCs in range. The Leech takes advantage of these three rounds to cast *corrupt weapon* on his scimitar, followed by *eagle's splendor*.

When combat begins, the yuan-ti assassins move in to engage the PCs in melee while the Leech fires at any obvious clerics or paladins with his bow. Alersia continues using her energy drain as long as she can, but if attacked she teleports to the Leech's side to continue the fight using her spell-like abilities.

As long as the Leech lives, the assassins do not retreat—the Leech has no intention of surrendering his new lair, and continues to attack until reduced to 40 hit points or less. At this point, he uses *deeper darkness* to cover his retreat, assuming the form of a Tiny viper the next round as he tries to retreat to area **A3** to recover and defend his lair. The Leech fights to the death if confronted there.

Once the Leech is slain, the assassins attempt to flee as well, scattering separately into the city. Alersia teleports away as well at this time, not wishing to continue a battle against obviously superior foes.

The Leech's Lair

Originally used as a barracks for the Red Foam Boys and later by the Protectorate, this large room is now the Leech's lair. The horrific yuan-ti has transformed the chamber into a testimony to his bizarre cruelty and self-obsession. He has collected its own shed skins over the past several decades and uses them to decorate the walls of this chamber like tapestries. The skins waft in the breeze and are layered like curtains so that every 5 feet there is a fresh wall of skins—either the Leech's own, or those removed from his victims.

The Leech has created a horrific work of "art" in the southwest corner of the room using parts of animals and people stitched together by thick black yarn to create a foully distorted, double-headed form of great size with twin tentacles and a double-ended tail. Anyone viewing the horrible creation and making a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the creation as a crude likeness of Demogorgon.

Treasure: Among the stitched flesh and body parts of the Leech's statue of Demogorgon are two gold bracelets with stylized whales worth 150 gp each and a single large jet stone worth 200 gp. The Leech was also an admirer of scrimshaw art, and several works lean against the walls here. Of the ten, nine are mundane and worth 10 gp each. The tenth, though, is carved on an immense tooth and depicts the rarest of events—a Hateful Compulsion, the breeding ritual of krakens. This scrimshaw is both beautiful and monstrous, and is worth 700 gp.

Zan Oldavin

The Leech has placed **Zan Oldavin** (N male half-elf rogue 9) in the Butchery, at approximately the location of "A7" on the map, hoping the PCs flock to his side and inadvertantly place themselves in at the perfect spot for an ambush.

Zan is in a terrible state, his body festering with filth fever and many infected wounds. Effectively stable at –6 hp, he is willing and able to assist the heroes if cured. He knows that Kaskus Kiel was captured as well, and that the Minting House is a yuan-ti safe house, but isn't sure what's happened to Liamae or Tolin.

Liamae Teslikiria

When the Jade Ravens reached Scuttlecove, **Liamae Teslikaria** (CG female human sorcerer 4/favored soul 4/mystic theurge 1) attempted to infiltrate the Birdcage to find out what they knew about Lavinia and Vanthus. Charmed several times by the harpies and currently under a *lesser geas* to never attempt escape, her spirit is broken. If the spells affecting her can be removed, she gladly joins the PCs in their efforts as long as those efforts include the slaughter of every harpy in the building.

The Leech's nest is in the northeast corner of the room, a foul-smelling mound of rags, torn skins, poorly-preserved animal pelts, and stained sheets. A DC 20 Search of the nest reveals a stained burlap sack near the north wall—this sack contains Harliss Javell's gear, stolen from her by the Leech. The Leech has not yet had time to have the magic items identified or pawn the jewelry. A full list of this gear appears in Harliss' stat block on page 58.

Characters who met Harliss back in Kraken's Cove can recognize the distinctive earrings and necklace with a DC 20 Wisdom check. Also among her gear is a belt pouch containing miscellaneous supplies (a comb, some stale bread, a flask of grog, etc.) and a folded note on which is written a brief message (reproduced as Handout 1). This note was Harliss' letter of introduction to Tyralandi from her (now dead) Protectorate contact. A DC 25 Knowledge (local) check reveals who Tyralandi is and where she can be found. Alternately, a DC 12 Gather Information check can do the same. A DC 30 Knowledge (local) or Gather Information check reveals that Zimon Alenveer was recently executed by the monks of Dire Hunger at the paid request of the Crimson Fleet. Zimon's body is gone, but if the PCs exceed the DC by 10 or more, they also discover that he was a member of the Protectorate and once led that group's operations at Red Foam Whaling.

Esteemed Tyralandi,

The bearer of this note is a friend and associate of mine. If you could aid her, I would be once again in your debt. Please extend to her every courtesy.

Zimon Alenveer

Handout 1

PART FOUR: THE BIRDCAGE

Located in the heart of the city, this small gray tower is decorated with luridly colored flags and numerous bas-relief carvings of stylized harpies armed with whips and daggers. The Birdcage, also known as the Crooked Spire, is a stone townhouse topped by a spire built of cheap timber. It has developed a singular twist over the years but has so far avoided total collapse. Inside the building, the walls and doors are garishly painted with alarmingly instructional erotic imagery, whilst lanterns hang from hooks in the ceiling every 10 feet. Braziers of sandalwood burn all day long.

After Tyralandi claimed Porphyry House as her own, she lifted the previous owner's ban on competing brothels—somewhat. All new brothels had to be licensed by Porphyry House, and the licensing fees were steep. A group of harpies known as the Sisters of Lamentation had the money, though, and they founded this relatively new building as one of Scuttlecove's "other" bordellos. They quickly learned that they couldn't compete with Porphyry House, and today their services have changed to a sort of "information retrieval" rather than pleasure. For the right price (minimum 100 gp per day), the Sisters of Lamentation claim that they can extract any secret, no matter how deeply hidden or guarded, from any living creature. If they can't extract it from the living, they can guarantee answers from the dead. Not quite torturers for hire, the harpies of the Birdcage have done brisk business extracting information from subjects other torturers have been unable to break. For if less invasive methods fail, the shaved harpies of the Birdcage can always animate the dead bodies of their clients and order them to divulge what their rotting brains remember.

The Birdcage is run by a cabal of several harpies, all of whom shave their bodies bald and festoon their flesh with tattoos and horrific piercings (often little more than nails driven into hands, feet, and scalps) to increase their fearsome appearance. At any one time, three of these harpies are on-site, with the other half-dozen scouring the city for information and customers. The harpies are assisted by six terrified and charmed slaves, all of whom are forced to wear humiliating and embarrassing outfits made of leather and peacock feathers.

The Birdcage's most recent commission is Harliss Javell, left here by the Seventh Coil. The harpies worked on her for a few days and managed to extract a few tantalizing bits of information, including the fact that she's joined the Protectorate and recently contacted "allies" to aid her in some plan she has involving the Crimson Fleet. Descriptions of these allies (the PCs) were sent on to the Leech, but so far the harpies haven't managed to get much more from the

strong-willed woman. The Seventh Coil is particularly keen to find out more details on her plans for the Crimson Fleet, hoping to use the information to leverage a stronger position with their pirate allies. A miscommunication with funds (the yuan-ti courier was ambushed and murdered by several desperate drug dealers before he could deliver the latest payment) resulted in the harpies not being paid on time, and they've held off further interrogations until the debt is settled. For now, Harliss remains in bad shape in the central cage within the Crooked Spire.

The most likely way the PCs learn that Harliss is being kept here is by asking Tyralandi about the note they found in the Leech's lair. Alternately, spells like *discern location* and *locate creature* can lead the PCs to this building. Even *scrying* might work, since *scrying* on Harliss reveals her to be unconscious in a large, dangling birdcage. A DC 30 Gather Information or Knowledge (local) check suggests that, logically speaking, the Birdcage is the most likely place for her location.

B1. Recieving

The walls of this garishly painted chamber depict scenes that would make even the most brazen streetwalker blush. A fine oak cabinet stands to the left of the entrance door, and a low table with a bottle of port and several crystal glasses stands next to a few padded chairs near a door to the south.

The entrance to the Birdcage remains open at all hours of the day or night, but the southern door is quite sturdy and kept locked (Open Lock DC 40) at all times. This room is staffed by a single charmed human slave (NE warrior 1) who takes the names of anyone who wishes to set up an appointment. This human slave doesn't have a key to the door; he merely records names and makes appointments in a large ledger on the desk, meekly inviting visitors to have a sip of wine before they leave. If the PCs schedule an appointment, they can return the next day only to be told that the sisters have denied the appointment (unless they made the appointment in disguise). The slave makes no attempt to stop anyone who tries to bash down the southern door or pick its lock.

Treasure: The bottle of port is an import from the city of Alhaster, and bears a label depicting a drunken nymph. Currently unopened, the bottle is worth 50 gp; each of the four crystal glasses are worth 20 gp.

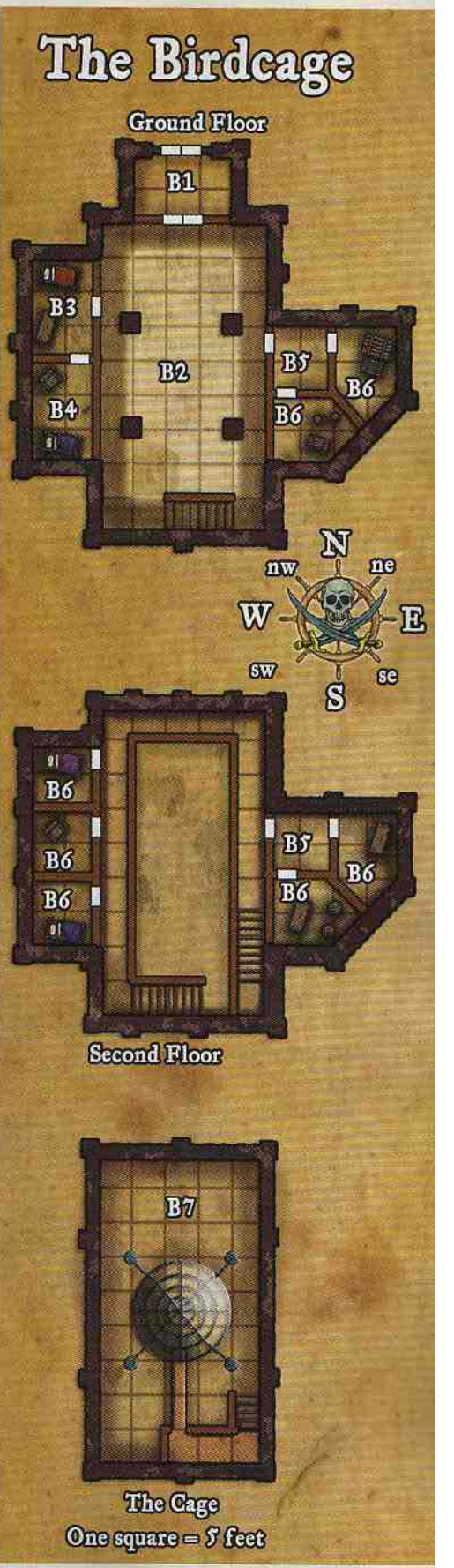
B2. The Spectacle and Tantalizing Audibility (EL 16)

This room is a vast space, a garishly painted chamber of great height that seems to consist of the entire central mass of the building. The walls are decorated to a height of thirty feet with paintings of an erotic nature that leave nothing to the imagination. The interior of the spire above is a tangled network of beams and supports. Four huge oak beams extend upward into the cathedral-like space, rising around a huge birdcage made of metal and crystal that dangles from the rafters by several iron chains and creaking ropes. The chamber's floor is thickly carpeted, and a balcony runs around the edge of the room at a height of fifteen feet, granting access to several narrow doorways.

A handful of enthralled slaves mill about this room as they move back and forth from the chambers to the east and west or go about cleaning the carpet and walls. Listless and quiet, these slaves scurry for cover if combat breaks out in the room.

The network of beams far above serve the harpies as perches and roosts to sleep upon. Clambering around on them is possible with a DC 10 Climb check or a DC 12 Balance check.

Creatures: When the PCs enter this chamber, 1d3 Sisters of Lamentation are present, either perched on one of the rafters above or idly tormenting Harliss (who's imprisoned in area **B7**). The sisters are named Vivisectia, Chasten, and Scourge. Sisters not present are in one of the side rooms attending to other prisoners (areas **B6**). The harpies have no interest in interacting with the PCs, whom



they likely recognize as Harliss' allies. If, on the other hand, the PCs are disguised as customers, the harpies flap down to interview them and determine what they need. Payment for interrogations is required up front, especially after the Seventh Coil failed to provide payment for their latest project. The harpies use *detect thoughts* as part of their interview process, and are adept at seeing through bluffs, but if the PCs pull off their deception they can use the opportunity to scout out the room or spring a surprise attack.

If combat breaks out in here, a disturbing sound not unlike a wailing baby or wounded cat echoes down from the cage above—this caterwauling is from the Young Master, the guardian of the cage (area **B7**).

Vivisectia, Chasten, and Scourge; Sisters of Lamentation (3) **CR 13**

Female harpy bard 7/diresinger 5
CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 151, *Libris Mortis* 43
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 16; Dodge, Mobility
hp 108 (19 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)
Melee *dagger of venom* +16/+11/+6 (1d4+1/19–20) and 2 claws +10 (1d3)
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +15
Atk Options Flyby Attack
Special Actions bardic music/dirgesong 12/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1, song of awakening, song of bolstering, song of grief, song of horror, song of sorrow, *suggestion*), captivating song (DC 21)
Spells Known (CL 7th)
3rd (1/day)—*lesser geas* (DC 19), *major image* (DC 19)
2nd (4/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 18), *enthrall* (DC 18), *invisibility*, *suggestion* (DC 18)
1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 17), *cure light wounds*, *grease* (DC 17), *silent image* (DC 17)
0 (3/day)—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 22
SQ bardic knowledge +7
Feats Ability Focus (captivating song), Dodge, Flyby Attack, Mobility, Persuasive, Requiem, Willing Deformity
Skills Bluff +20, Concentration +12, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (religion) +7, Perform (oratory) +23, Sense Motive +14
Possessions *dagger of venom*, *ring of protection +3*, *ring of force shield*, keys for all locks in the Birdcage

Dirgesong (Su) Dirgesong follows the same rules as bardic music. The five effects a Sister of Lamentation can create with dirgesong follow.

Song of Awakening: The sister can animate a corpse of a creature within 30 feet if she can make a Perform check (DC 10 + target creature's HD). The slain creature can have no more Hit Dice than the harpy's effective character level (15 HD). The corpse must have been dead for no more than 1 hour. The awakened creature's type becomes undead, and it retains any subtypes, class features, and supernatural or spell-like abilities; it loses all extraordinary abilities it possessed in life. The undead is loyal to the harpy and obeys any commands given it (or attacks her foes if no commands are given). The creature remains animated as long as the harpy continues to perform. A harpy can have no more than one awakened corpse at a time.

Song of Bolstering: All undead within 30 feet gain a +5 bonus to their turn resistance. This lasts for as long as the harpy performs and for 10 rounds thereafter.

Song of Grief: A single creature within 60 feet that can hear the harpy must make a DC 27 Will save or become confused as long as the harpy performs and for 5 rounds thereafter. This is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting ability.

Song of Horror: Any enemy within 60 feet of the harpy who can hear her must make a DC 27 Will save or take 1d6 Strength damage and 1d6 Dexterity damage. A creature affected by this song (or a creature that saves against this effect) cannot be affected by the same dirgesinger's song of horror for 24 hours.

Song of Sorrow: All enemies who can hear the dirgesinger perform take a –2 penalty on Will saving throws and a –2 penalty on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls. A DC 27 Will save negates the effect and makes the character immune to that dirgesinger's song of sorrow for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting ability.

Feats Willing Deformity grants a +2 deformity bonus on Intimidate checks. Requiem allows mind-affecting bardic music abilities to influence the undead, although they have half their normal duration on undead creatures.

Tactics: If the PCs barge into this chamber, any harpies in the room immediately start to shriek and curse, attracting harpies in nearby rooms in 1d3 rounds. The harpies demand the PCs leave immediately; if the party doesn't comply, the harpies attack at once.

In a fight, one harpy lands on the birdcage (area **B7**) and uses her captivating song while the others work to prevent unaffected PCs from disrupting her. On the first round of combat, one harpy activates a song of grief while another uses a song of horror. On the second round, the first harpy uses a song of horror while the second one employs a song of sorrow. The harpies use flight to stay out of melee at this point, and on round three the harpies focus their spells and make flyby attacks on anyone who's getting close to the cage. If they face a bard or a character with a *silence* effect, all three focus their attention on that character and attempt to bring them down as soon as possible. If the harpies manage to kill any PCs, one immediately uses a song of awakening to recruit a new ally into the fight. The Sisters of Lamentation fight to the death.

Treasure: These three harpies each wear an item of jewelry—Vivisectia wears an emerald necklace with silver butterflies worth 900 gp, Chasten a pearl necklace with a central pearl of great size worth 500 gp, and Scourge a gold broach designed like a gliding dove with small diamonds for eyes worth 800 gp.

B3–B4. The Kept Beyond Gratitude

The harpies only allow their slaves to sleep a few hours a day, and never more than four at a time—the slaves use the bunks here when they're granted nap time. Papers on the table in area **B3** are agreements with hundreds of prominent locals. A DC 20 Search of the stack turns up a past-due bill for the Seventh Coil for interrogations of "a feisty and foul-mouthed wench."

Treasure: A locked chest (Open Lock DC 30) under the table in area **B3** contains ten bottles of Tipsy Nymph port; each bottle is worth 50 gp.

B5. Waiting Parlors

Not all of the projects that come to the Birdcage are multi-day ones like Harliss; most of them take only a few hours. Customers are welcome to wait in either of these parlors while the sisters work; each of these chambers features a few chairs and a low table with glasses for wine.

Treasure: The two glasses on each table are worth 20 gp each.

B6. Interrogation Rooms

While the exact furnishings of each of these rooms varies, they all serve the same purpose—information extraction. Some rooms look like classic torture chambers, complete with racks, iron maidens, or collections of brands and whips. Two look more like the bedchambers of nobility, where the horrific harpies use other, more sinister methods to torture prisoners.

B7. The Cage of Ecstatic and Infinitely Joyful Lamentation (EL 8)

This hanging birdcage is huge, some thirty feet high and fifteen in girth. The iron bars are covered with dozens of ragged barbs, and manacles hang from several places. Whips, hooked chains, knives, leather cords, and other devices for torture sit on metal shelves here and there. The cage floor is a filthy tangle of reeking rags and bones. Near the top of the cage sits a smaller cage, only five feet across and just as tall. In this smaller cage is a pile of rags arranged in what looks to be a nest.

The door to this cage can be reached by a 3-foot-wide walkway that attaches to a balcony 30 feet above the floor below. The door itself is kept locked (Open Lock DC 40). This cage is where the Sisters of Lamentation keep their highest profile "guests," which gives them the satisfaction of performing their craft before an audience in the chamber below.

If the sounds of combat haven't riled up the occupant of the smaller cage above, a DC 20 Listen check is enough to hear the Young Master's phlegmatic gurgles as he giggles at his latest creations.

Creatures: The cage's current occupant is a near-death Harliss Javell. Stable at –8 hit points, the harpies take care to check on her hourly to make sure she doesn't die.

The smaller cage near the top is the home of a freakish little abomination the harpies keep as a pet and a guardian, a pitiful creature they call the Little Goule. The horrible undead creature resembles a human child with slug-white skin, tiny claws, black, empty eyes, and a mouth filled with needle-sharp teeth. Vivisectia found the wretched thing washed up on the eastern shores of Sekorvia many years ago, and despite months of research she's been unable to determine more about its source other than that it's fantastically old and likely originated in the Abyss.

The Little Goule is a vile thing—a distended mass of sweaty flesh with a lolling head fixed with a permanent leering grin. The Young Master, as the harpies sometimes refer to him,

constantly yowls, screeches, and acts up, desperate for the attention of the harpies, their servants, or anyone in the vicinity. The creature enjoys writing lurid stories that make little sense to anything but itself. The harpies keep it well-supplied with sticks of charcoal and pieces of parchment or paper, and dozens of fragmentary stories written in Abyssal lie scattered around the cage floor. Originally kept as a guardian for the cage (its small size hides a terrific and dangerous ferocity), the harpies have come to adore the thing and regard it as the most precious, delicate, and talented wonder in their lives. Little Goule adores all this attention, and plays on it constantly.

The Little Goule remains in its cage as long as no one tries to enter the larger cage below. As soon as any one other than one of the harpies attempts to enter the cage or interact with its prisoner, the undead creature shrieks in rage, tears open the door to its cage, and flops down to attack the intruders.

THE LITTLE GOULE **CR 8**

Advanced evolved slaymate
CE Small undead
Libris Mortis 99, 122
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14
Aura pale aura (10 ft.)
Languages Abyssal

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 20
hp 60 (8 HD); fast healing 3
Immune undead traits
Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Spd 20 ft.
Melee bite +11 (1d3+9 plus pale wasting)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +1
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
1/day—*confusion* (DC 22), *greater invisibility*, *haste*

Abilities Str 22, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 26
Feats Alertness, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Lightning Reflexes
Skills Hide +16, Listen +14, Move Silently +12, Spot +14

Pale Aura (Su) Any creature within 10 feet of a slaymate that uses a metamagic feat on a necromancy spell can prepare or use the spell as if it took up one slot lower than what the metamagic necromancy spell would normally require.
Pale Wasting (Su) Supernatural disease—bite; Fortitude DC 22; incubation period 1 day; damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Str.

Development: Harliss wants nothing more than to escape the Birdcage and reach somewhere safe. If revived, she's grateful for the PCs' intervention, but until she puts some distance between herself and this horrific building, she remains silent. Even after she reaches safety, she never speaks of the torments the harpies put her through.

When she finally feels safe and ready to talk, she can be a remarkable source of information about Scuttlecove. Further, she's come quite close to determining where the Crimson Fleet's hidden base is located; before she was captured by the Seventh Coil, she discovered that the yuan-ti operate a safe house at a place called the Minting House. She's certain that they've met with the Crimson Fleet there and forged an alliance. If anywhere in Scuttlecove holds the secret of the Crimson Fleet base's location, it's the Minting House. More to the point, if the PCs are itching for vengeance against the yuan-ti (as Harliss certainly is), a trip to the Minting House might scratch that itch.

The following statistics present Harliss Javell in her fully healed state and equipped with her gear; if the PCs don't heal her or return her gear (which is hidden in area **A3**), adjust her stats as appropriate. Harliss' role in the rest of this adventure is left to you to determine. She certainly still seethes with a need to avenge her crew, and now wants revenge against the Seventh Coil as well. If the PCs seem to be struggling with the adventure, or if you simply want to interject a colorful NPC into the mix, you can have her accompany them on their further adventures in Scuttlecove. Harliss is a bold beauty with raven-black hair and deeply tanned skin, although when the PCs find her, she's in bad need of a bath. Her voice has a hard, crisp edge to it, and her skill at profanity is legendary.

CAPTAIN HARLISS JAVELL **CR 15**

Female human swashbuckler 3/rogue 3/scarlet corsair 9
CN Medium humanoid
Stormwrack 65
Init +4; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Aquan, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 18
hp 87 (15 HD)
Fort +10, **Ref** +17, **Will** +8; evasion

Spd 40 ft.
Melee +2 *anarchic rapier* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+2/15–20) or
+2 *anarchic rapier* +18/+13/+8 (1d6+2/15–20) and
mwk dagger +17 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +19 (1d4/19–20)
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +14
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Flick of the Wrist, Improved Feint, corsair's feint, frightening lunge, sneak attack +4d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ sailor's step, trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Expertise, Flick of the Wrist, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Feint, Iron Will, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +19, Bluff +16, Climb +6, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +21, Jump +19, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (sailor) +15, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +12, Swim +14, Tumble +17, Use Rope +13
Possessions +3 *leather armor*, +2 *anarchic rapier*, 4 masterwork daggers, *ring of protection +2*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *rope of climbing*, *boots of striding and springing*, a pair of marilith-shaped earrings worth 1,200 gp for the pair, a jade necklace with a shark's tooth at its center worth 600 gp

Corsair's Feint (Ex) Harliss may make a feint as a free action once every 1d4 rounds.
Flick of the Wrist (Ex) If Harliss draws a light weapon and makes a melee attack with it in the same round, she catches her opponent flat-footed (for the purpose of this attack only). She may use this feat only once per round and once per opponent during any single combat encounter. This feat is from *Complete Warrior*.

Frightening Lunge (Ex) Harliss can sacrifice 2d6 points of damage from a successful sneak attack to render a foe shaken for 1 round.

Grace (Ex) Harliss gains a +1 competence bonus on Reflex saves as long as she does not wear medium or heavy armor and is not carrying a medium or heavy load.

Insightful Strike (Ex) Harliss applies her Intelligence bonus to damage rolls with any light weapon, as well as any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse. Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to this additional damage. Harliss loses this ability if she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.

Sailor's Step (Ex) When aboard a ship and wearing nothing more than light armor, Harliss gains a +4 dodge bonus to her Armor Class.

Scourge of the Seas (Ex) When Harliss uses Intimidate to demoralize foes, the attempt affects all enemies within 30 feet who can see and hear her, and the effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to her Charisma modifier. This is a mind-affecting ability, and multiple uses of the ability don't stack.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs rescue Harliss, award them experience as if they'd defeated a CR 16 creature.

PART FIVE: THE MINTING HOUSE

The Seventh Coil maintains several hideouts in Scuttlecove; the Minting House is but one example. The hideout is presented here in detail as an example Seventh Coil base; you can use the location in many ways. If the PCs are captured by the Seventh Coil, they might end up in the cells below this building. If they're struggling to uncover the location of the Crimson Fleet stronghold, you can guide them here (perhaps at Harliss' suggestion) to give them an opportunity to learn more. And if your players are simply looking for a fight (or if they need a bit more XP before they try to take on the Wreck in Part Six), the encounters here should do nicely.

The Minting House is a narrow brick building sandwiched between a fortified warehouse and a blackened alchemy shop. The place has three stories under a steeply gabled roof, anda towering chimney of great size thrusts upward from its peak. Once used by a gang of thieves to operate a counterfeiting operation, the yuan-ti here have idly taken steps to revitalize the building's old purpose to augment their income from the slave market.

The chambers within the Minting House are detailed only briefly in the sidebar. Five yuan-ti slavers and eight charmed Scuttlecove thug "pets" are inside the Minting House when the PCs visit; as soon as combat begins with one of them, they all mobilize to fight the PCs. As a result, combat in the Minting House can quickly develop into a multi-floor melee.

If you're using this encounter as a way to give the PCs a chance to discover the Crimson Fleet's headquarters, the location can be learned from any yuan-ti slaver made helpful (likely through the result of magic); alternately, one of them could be carrying a map of Sekorvia that shows the approximate location of the site.

Seventh Coil Slavers (5) **CR 11**

Male yuan-ti pureblood sorcerer 10
CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 263

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 18

hp 69 (83 with *false life*, 14 HD)

SR 24

Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +12

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 *shock dagger* +9/+4 (1d4 plus 1d6 electrical)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +8

Combat Gear scroll of *Mordenkainen's private sanctum* (2), scroll of *sending*, scroll of *teleport*

Spells Known (CL 10th, +12 ranged touch)

5th (4/day)—*dominate person* (DC 21)

4th (6/day)—*charm monster* (DC 20), *enervation*

3rd (7/day)—*fly*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19)

2nd (7/day)—*bull's strength*, *false life* (already cast), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*animate rope*, *charm person* (DC 17), *identify*, *mage armor* (already cast), *shield*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)

At will—*alternate form*, *detect poison*

1/day—*animal trance* (DC 18), *cause fear* (DC 17), *darkness*, *entangle* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 22

SQ summon familiar (Tiny viper)

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Construct, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Bluff +17, Concentration +19, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +3, Spellcraft +13, Spot +10

Possessions combat gear, +1 *shock dagger*, *cloak of Charisma* +4, *ring of protection* +3

Scuttlecove Thugs (8): hp 70 each; see page 78.

PART SIX: AGAINST THE CRIMSON FLEET

The headquarters of the Crimson Fleet is hidden in a secret cove about 11 miles northwest of Scuttlecove. The Crimson Fleet's hidden stronghold is a unique and tangled collection of ships, piers, buildings, and a towering structure perched in the branches of several massive, twisted trees built with the aid of engineering marvels and magic. This is the lair of the Crimson Fleet's leaders, and is known as The Wreck.

The Crimson Fleet was a notorious scourge even before it drew Demogorgon's eye. The pirates of the fleet, based in the city of Scuttlecove, had long plied the tropics, and sight of their blood-red sails was enough to send any merchant or explorer into a panic. Their reach was vast, extending from the ends of the world up into the civilized lands of the north. They had bases in dozens of cities, and contacts in dozens more. They already paid lip-service to the Prince of Demons, although to this point merely used his image and name as a tool to strike fear into the hearts of their enemies. And perhaps more to the point, they were based in close proximity to the Isle of Dread.

This combination of facts made the Crimson Fleet the best choice for Demogorgon's agents on the Material Plane—here was a group that not only already had a vast network of resources,

The Minting House

C1. Empty Room: The yuan-ti keep this room empty to help maintain the illusion that the building is abandoned to anyone who peers through the shuttered windows from the street.

C2. Pantry: Food, water, and other supplies are kept here.

C3. Thug Barracks: The eight charmed thugs sleep here on straw pallets when they're not taking care of tasks for the yuan-ti. 1d8 of them are encountered here. The remaining thugs are toiling in area **C5**.

C4. Serpent Barracks: The slavers use this room as their own barracks and as a place to plan their slave-gathering raids. 1d4 of the yuan-ti slavers are encountered here; the remainder are in area **C8**.

C5. Minting Room: The remaining thugs toil in this room, melting down coins and recasting them in slightly smaller molds. Worked properly, this scam can let an industrious group increase their wealth by 1/3; these thugs haven't quite mastered the art yet and are wasting as many coins as they counterfeit. A search of this room reveals 240 gp and 690 counterfeit gp.

C6. The Furnace: A churning furnace in this room is used to melt down coins; smoke from the furnace is vented through the building's large chimney.

C7. Cells: Currently empty, these cells can be used to hold any PC prisoners the yuan-ti catch during the course of the adventure.

C8. Shrine to Demogorgon: A stone statue of Demogorgon dominates this otherwise empty room. Any yuan-ti encountered here are deep in meditation, and suffer a –4 penalty on Spot and Listen checks as a result. The secret door (Search DC 20) leads to a narrow escape tunnel that winds 200 feet to the south and opens into the basement of an abandoned butcher's shop.

but one that was based in relatively close proximity to one of the Prince of Demons's greatest Material Plane strongholds, and perhaps the only place where the *shadow pearls* could be created.

And so Demogorgon sent one of his minions, an undead demon named Gromsfed the Drowned, to the Material Plane to recruit the leader of the Crimson Fleet, a man called Cold Captain Wyther. Taken to the Abyss by Gomsfed, Cold Captian Wyther was brought before Demogorgon. Kneeling before the Prince of Demons, Cold Captain Wyther knew fear for the first and last time in his life. Demogogon issued an ultimatum—serve him on the world of flesh and be rewarded with great power, or suffer the agony of eternal death at the hands of Karizmodus the Carver on blood-stained Harrowrend. For Wyther, the choice was simple.

After his return to the Material Plane, Cold Captain Wyther was a different man. Spiritually, he now venerated Demogorgon with all his black heart. Physically, he was a lemorian, a half-fiend crafted from his mortal body in the fleshforges of Lemoriax. He offered his captains the same deal that had been offered to him. Those who quailed were publicly executed, while those who remained loyal were taken to Lemoriax on Wyther's ship, which had been outfitted with an artifact called a *wakeportal* that allowed a ship to sail from the Material Plane to the Abyss. Once there, these loyal men were transformed into lemorians as well, given the gift of demonic strength and magic so as to better serve their new lord.

The demonic taint that spread through the commanders of the Crimson Fleet not only increased crew loyalty (mostly out of fear), but greatly increased their

notoriety as well. Captain Wyther ordered a change to the fleet's flag, adding a pair of horns to the jolly roger's skull, and today, they have become one of the great terrors of the sea.

Vanthus's recent and unexpected return caught the Crimson Fleet off guard. Intimidated by his monstrous new appearance and deadly new powers, Captain Wyther had no choice but to cede control of the fleet to the death knight when he arrived, demanded several bar-lgrua, and then returned with his captured sister. When Vanthus finally revealed that he intended to sail to Gaping Maw on Wyther's ship, the leader of the Crimson Fleet saw it as a chance to be done with the menace and gladly gave him the wheel. Since Vanthus's recent departure from the Material Plane, Cold Captain Wyther has had his hands full rebuilding his reputation as a fearless and dangerous leader. A fair amount of Crimson Fleet captains have mutinied, and Cold Captain Wyther has sent most of his remaining loyalists out to chase the mutineers down and force them to return to the fleet or die. As a result, the fleet's resources are spread thin. Few pirates remain to protect their base. The time has never been better to strike a blow against the most notorious pirates in the Vohoun Ocean.

Finding the Base

The Crimson Fleet base is well hidden. Few of Scuttlecove's citizens know where it's located, and fewer still care to share this knowledge. And although high-level PCs have plenty of magical resources, so does the Crimson Fleet.

Two magical effects shield the cove from observation. The first of these is a complex set of permanent illusions that effectively duplicates the effects of a single massive *screen* spell. This effect masks the cove, making it appear to be nothing more than a desolate and barren stretch of saltmarsh. A creature that blunders into the area can make a DC 22 Will save to disbelieve the illusion. This effect functions at CL 20th.

The second magical shield is a permanent *Mordenkainen's private sanctum*. This effect functions at CL 20th. If an observer uses *true seeing* to penetrate the *screen* effect, this spell prevents observation of the cove from beyond its borders. Further, it prevents attempts to scry within the area, and all creatures in the area are immune to *detect thoughts*.

When the PCs manage to get a good look at the area, read them the following:

The stronghold of the Crimson Fleet matches perfectly the pirates' vile nature, a sodden mass of boats and piers squatting over a filthy, reeking saltmarsh. What at first looked like a layer of mist over the water is in fact a layer of seething insects, gnats and mosquitoes and flies that choke the air. The wooden piers dip perilously in places, and the boats moored to them are often lashed together. Totems and effigies hang everywhere—carved whalebones depicting evil, twisting things that surely the gods would not let draw breath, moldy corn dolls representing deformed men, and bundles of feathers and poorly preserved animal carcasses and bones. Gibbets hang from masts by thick hairy ropes, and these hold emaciated figures that move fitfully now and then. Several wooden shacks perch on thick stilts around the maze of piers and ships, and a two-story stone tower rises at the center on a rocky islet, but the most impressive sight stands at the eastern edge of the complex.

Here, a towering mass rises from the swamp, dragging itself from the choked waters in dizzy mockery of healthy architecture, based around a pair of gigantic trees. A schizophrenic ships' graveyard, the melded corpses of half a dozen boats and caravels have been lashed and bolted together at differing heights among the trees, balanced precariously above the waters below. Ropes, ladders, and narrow walkways tangle through the structure, which towers to a height of a hundred feet. It looks almost as if some immense spider that spins ropes and rusted chain as webs has claimed these trees as its lair, and the six ships are its desiccated and partially eaten victims. The entire structure creaks and moans, as if it were ready to collapse yet somehow cannot.

Base Features

Although many of the specific locations in the Crimson Fleet base are detailed below, certain areas share features in common.

Water: The open water in the base is generally 10 feet deep with a layer of mud and silt that's a further 2 feet deep. It's a DC 10 Swim check to navigate these placid waters.

Boardwalks: The boardwalks and piers that allow easy movement through the area are generally 5 feet above sea level. While most of the boardwalks are solid, they creak alarmingly when walked upon, and Move Silently checks suffer a –2 penalty.

Ships: Most of the ships moored along the boardwalks and piers are seaworthy but abandoned at this time. They serve as barracks for the pirates who are currently at sea.

Rotten Wood: In several places, the boardwalks and ships have grown rotten. The denizens of the base know what sections are rotten, but to others it takes a DC 20 Spot check to notice an unsafe section. A Small or larger creature that steps onto a rotten square has a 30% chance of crashing through to the water or ground below (check once per square moved through). Rotten wood on the map is indicated by a greenish tinge.

Traps: The pirates have rigged traps in several locations so that a careless passerby has a 50% chance of stepping on the rigged plank. Doing so causes a poisoned spear to launch up from below or out of a nearby patch of bushes. Traps are indicated on the map with a red tinge.

Poison Spear Trap: CR 8; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 melee (1d8+4/×3 plus poison, spear); poison (Huge spider venom, DC 16 Fortitude save resists, 1d8/1d8 Str); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 30.

Fen Rot: This hazardous slime grows in patches throughout the saltmarshes of Scuttlecove. Resembling a thick mat of greenish-brown algae that floats on the surface of shallow water, fen rot is similar in some regards to green slime, save that it can only consume animal matter—it has no effect on vegetable matter like wood or cloth. Against flesh and bone, though, the sludge quickly consumes and destroys. A character that enters a square with fen rot must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid contacting the stuff with exposed flesh. Characters wearing

medium armor gain a +2 bonus on this save, and those wearing heavy armor gain a +4 bonus. Characters who fall prone in the square suffer a –4 penalty to the save. Fen rot deals 2d4 points of Constitution damage per round while it devours flesh. On the first round of contact, it can be scraped off, but after that it must be frozen, burned, or cut away. Sunlight has no effect on the stuff, but anything that deals cold or fire damage or a *remove disease* spell destroys a patch.

Gibbets: In several places, gibbets hang from rusting iron posts rising from the waters. Each is locked with a masterwork padlock on a 1-inch-thick iron chain. Within each is a mad, emaciated prisoner, given only a few rags to wear and a few bones and moldy strips of cloth to sleep on. Each prisoner has been told that if they spot intruders and raise an alarm, they will be freed. Thus, despite their weariness and near starvation, they are desperate to spot something. The occupants have +2 Spot and Listen checks, and are all 1st-level human warriors. If silenced before they can raise an alarm, a DC 40 Diplomacy check is required to convince them that the PCs are here to help, at which point a prisoner begs for freedom. They know little about the base, but can give the PCs estimates about the number of enemies they'll be facing.

Inhabitants

The base is under-populated right now, as most of the Crimson Fleet is at sea, yet there still remains a large number of enemies who quickly rise up to oppose any intrusion. While the numerous areas of interest are detailed below, the Crimson Fleet base is a dynamic location. Once the alarm is raised or a fight starts, the denizens quickly react and move to defend the base.

The denizens of the base (areas **D1–D11**) react as a separate group from those who dwell in the Wreck itself (areas **E1–I5**); Cold Captain Wyther wants the guardians of the Wreck to remain there to defend it if the defenses of the outlying areas fail.

D1. The Thorngate

A tangled mass of thorny vines, rusting iron bars, and a wooden framework has been erected across a thirty-foot-wide channel leading from the open sea into the boggy estuary beyond. The barricade rises to a height of ten feet and extends into the water below; to either side, soggy wooden walkways overlook the plants.

This barricade was built to bar entry into the estuary via boat or skiff. When a boat or skiff desires passage through this area, the death slaad posted in area **D2** emerges to use *animate objects* to cause the Huge barricade to clatter noisily up onto a bank, allowing passage through the channel.

Barricade: Hardness 5; hp 120; Break DC 34.

D2. Thorngate Guardpost (EL 13)

The corners of this macabre chamber are littered with bones and bits of rancid meat. Several chains ending in hooks dangle from the sagging roof, and the badly mutilated body of a man hangs from them in a partially dismembered state.

Creature: A death slaad named Velzigarus dwells in this ignominious hovel, a bitter and surly creature conjured into and imprisoned in this shack via a *binding* spell cast by a man named **Zaliax Carvanxi** (CE male lemorian wizard 15, currently at sea commanding the roundup of the Crimson Fleet mutineers) at Cold Captain Wyther's request. The binding has an escape clause built into it; Velzigarus can go free once he kills 101 good-aligned humanoids. The partially dismembered corpse hanging in here is merely his 54th victim—until he tortures 47 more to death, he's stuck performing the duties of a gate guard for the Crimson Fleet. His main job is to use *animate objects* to open the thorngate at area **D1**, using the spell-like ability from his open north door since he cannot physically leave the building. In return for his humiliating service, Wyther periodically sends good-aligned prisoners to this shack for the slaad to murder, slowly doling out the means for Velziagarus' release.

If Velzigarus notices non-members of the Fleet attempting to bypass the Thorngate or hears combat erupt nearby, he does what he can with his ranged spell-like abilities to attempt to slay any PCs who look like they might be good-aligned.

Velzigarus, death slaad: hp 142; *Monster Manual* 231.

D3. Shrine Entrance

This building seems to be in relatively good repair compared to the sodden state of the others that squat upon the estuary shores. A strange and unpleasant scent, like mud dredged from the bed of a polluted lake mixed with the tang of wet fur, fills the air here. The walls are decorated with mauve tapestries depicting a horrific two-headed, tentacled monster standing atop a rock protruding from a surging ocean.

A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the creature depicted in the tapestries as Demogorgon.

D4. Altar of Demons (EL 13)

The ceiling of this square room rises to a height of twenty feet, yet the top half of the room is a network of crossbeams and joists. The smell of rancid mud and wet fur is nearly overwhelming here. The entire southwestern wall is decorated with a single thirty-foot-wide and ten-foot-tall tapestry that depicts an ocean's storm-tossed surface alive with hundreds of drowning human bodies. Tentacles and sharklike predators rise from the waters to feast on these souls in some locations, while in others reptilian monsters perched on wave-tossed rocks fish victims from the sea with long arms. At the center stands a roaring two-headed and tentacled monster, poised in a position of lordship over a court of demons. A wooden altar, its top and sides stained dark with crusted blood, squats before the blood-spattered tapestry.

The pirates of the Crimson Fleet pay lip service to Demogorgon, and as such rarely have the time or interest in visiting this shrine. Ziovayne, the orlath demon (see area **H1**) is perhaps this shrine's most common visitor, yet Cold Captain Wyther and a few others sometimes pay their demonic patron their respects here as well.

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F1
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F2
rotten
E1
E2
E3
The Anger
(40 feet)
G3A
G3B
G1
F
G2
E3
The Baeldictum
(100 feet)
H1
I1
I2
I3
H1
I4
The Black Sprite
The Glad
(80 feet)
I5
Below Decks
The
Two-Faced
Wretch
(60 feet)
H1
F2
F
G2
I4
F4
C
F3
E4
E5
The Fortitude
G7
G6
G5
C
G4
The Anger
The
Two-Faced
Wretch
H4
H2
C
H3
One square = 10 feet

Creature: Five bar-lgura Crimson Recruiters hunker on the rafters in the ceiling above, posted here as guardians by the clerics while they are at sea. The demons wait a few rounds after intruders enter this room to drop down and attack (unless the intruders begin defacing the shrine, in which case the demons attack at once). Each bar-lgura tries to abduct a single PC to a distant, dangerous location (such as the Wormcrawl Fissure, the Underdark, or even the Isle of Dread), leaving the PC there before teleporting back here to aid their kin against any PCs who resist the abduction.

Crimson Recruiters (5): hp 88 each; see page 79.

D5. Clerical Quarters

Four beds, their sheets wet with mildew and their mattresses stained and lumpy, sit on either side of this room. Between them stands a low table covered with black candles.

This chamber is home to four clerics of Demogorgon charged with maintaining this shrine. All four are currently at sea.

Treasure: Two of the black candles on the table are chaotic evil *candles of invocation.*

D6. Guardpost (EL 12)

This room features a rickety circular table with four equally rickety chairs placed around it.

Creatures: Not all of the Crimson Fleet is at sea, nor have all of Cold Captain Wyther's men all turned against him. A few loyalists remained behind when the rest set out to hunt down the mutineers. Four Crimson Fleet thugs are posted here, although they've been spending most of their time playing cards, drinking, and arguing with each other. Every 30 minutes, one of them takes a brief, five-minute patrol around the nearby piers. These thugs are quick to raise an alarm or join any fights.

Crimson Fleet Thugs (4): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

D7. Storage Shed

This large chamber is filled with barrels, crates, coils of rope, lumber, and large sheets of canvas. Narrow aisles wind aimlessly among the supplies.

The supplies consist of food, drinking water, repair materials, and other necessities. Nothing of real value is kept here.

D8. Guardpost (EL 12)

Apart from a single large sea chest against the south wall, this room's only furnishings are twelve bunk beds, stacked three high.

Creatures: A total of twelve Crimson Fleet thugs serve the area as guards. When they're not taking time off in Scuttlecove or on duty, they rest here. When the PCs arrive, four of them are resting here; they respond to a raised alarm in 1d4 rounds.

Crimson Fleet Thugs (4): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

D9. Watchtower (EL 14)

A circular stone tower broods on a stony islet in the middle of the estuary here. The tower itself is thirty feet tall, with a wooden roof and an open-air guard post atop it.

Creatures: With the exception of the Wreck itself, this tower is the tallest structure in the area. Normally staffed by four Crimson Fleet thugs, a fifth member of the fleet has taken up duty here, a bitter Crimson Fleet captain named Longshanks Le'shiv. Captain Le'shiv's ship was one of those absconded with by mutineers, and Cold Captain Wyther ordered him to remain behind and see to the defense of the base while the others set to sea. Captain Le'shiv hates the duty, but is too much of a coward to stand up to Cold Captian Wyther.

Captain Longshanks Le'shiv **CR 12**
Male lemorian rogue 8/fighter 2
CE Medium outsider (native)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +12
Languages Abyssal, Common
AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 18; improved uncanny dodge
hp 83 (10 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 20
Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +3; evasion
Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)
Melee *+1 rapier* +12/+7 (1d6+5/15–20 plus poison) and
+1 dagger +12/+7 (1d4+3/19–20) and
sting +7 (1d6+2 plus poison)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +14 (1d8/19–20 plus poison)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +12
Atk Options sneak attack +4d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds, potion of water breathing* (2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
3/day—*charm monster* (DC 16), *command* (DC 13)
1/day—*dominate person* (DC 17), *fear* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 15)
Abilities Str 18, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +2
Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Focus (dagger)
Skills Balance +18, Bluff +13, Climb +17, Craft (carpentry) +9, Intimidate +15, Jump +17, Profession (sailor) +12, Spot +12, Swim +11, Tumble +18
Possessions combat gear, *+2 studded leather armor, +1 rapier, +1 dagger,* masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *ring of protection +2, ring of swimming*
Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Wis. Le'shiv can poison a weapon with this venom as a standard action. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (4): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

D10. Guest House (EL 16)

Although the walls of this building remain soggy and filthy, an attempt has been made to transform this large room into something approaching comfort. Thick canvas sheets hang from the ceiling rafters to par-

tition the room into several smaller areas, each containing a single bed, a nightstand, and a chair.

Creatures: With the recent alliance forged with the Seventh Coil, Cold Captain Wyther had his men fix up this abandoned building into a guest house for several yuan-ti guests. The yuan-ti are amused by the havoc Vanthus wreaked on their pirate allies, but have nonetheless pledged their support, and if the alarm is raised these assassins and slavers quickly mobilize.

Seventh Coil Assassins (4): hp 95 each; see page 49.

Seventh Coil Slavers (2): hp 69 each; see page 59.

D11. Condemned Shack (EL 15)

The ceiling of this shack has collapsed, leaving the floor strewn with moldy debris and shattered timber. Clouds of gnats hum in the air, and slumped against the rubble at the far end of the room is what appears to be a dead man wearing a suit of gleaming red chainmail and clutching an exotic-looking sword.

The floor of this building is actually collapsed, leaving a large hole that drops 5 feet into a pool of deep water. The creature that dwells here created an illusion of a rubble-choked floor (complete with a dead body to lure in the curious). Anyone who steps into the room falls into the water if they fail a DC 20 Reflex save.

A 1-foot-wide ledge remains along the edge of the building, all that actually remains of its floor. Moving along the slippery edge of the remaining floor near the building's walls is possible with a DC 15 Balance check. It's only a 5-foot-fall to the muddy, rubble-choked water below. The water itself is 5 feet deep in the western half of the room but drops into a 15-foot-deep bowl in the eastern half of the area.

Creature: Cold Captain Wyther's frequent travels to the Abyss via the wakeportal have had their affect on the ecosystem, since every time he crosses over, a wash of horrific fiendish life floods into the sea from the Abyss. The sackfish (see page 50) that have been plaguing the waters recently are merely the least of these aquatic invaders. On one of these return trips, a strange hateful menace came back with him. This was Vzorthys, an aquatic variant of the dreaded beholder known as an eye of the deep. It was intrigued by the strange creatures it found living here and followed Wyther's ship into the base. The monster ate several pirates before Cold Captain Wyther managed to defeat it. Wyther was, in turn, intrigued by the monster, and found its alien countenance so amusing that he spared its life and extended to it an offer to dwell here. Vzorthys accepted, and for the last year has dwelt in the waters below this shed. The other pirates avoid this section of the base now, and the buildings have fallen into ruin. Only Cold Captain Wyther visits the eye of the deep regularly, often simply to share stories of the wonders of the deep with it.

The eye of the deep is a 15-foot-diameter sphere of cartilage and leathery flesh. One large eye glares from its center above a mouth filled with sharklike teeth. Above the eye writhe two long eyestalks, while below the eye dangle a pair of long, powerful arms tipped with crablike claws. Vzorthys has developed a strange fondness for the pirates, and despite the fact that now and then it catches a drunk one and eats him, it views them as its pets. It's not quite fond enough of them to aid them in a fight, however, unless Cold Captain Wyther calls for his aid.

VZORTHYS **CR 16**

Advanced elite fiendish eye of the deep
CE Huge aberration (aquatic, extraplanar)
Lords of Madness 138, *Monster Manual* 108
Init +5; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +31, Spot +31
Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Beholder

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20
hp 348 (24 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 25
Fort +19, **Ref** +7, **Will** +16

Spd 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (good), swim 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +25 (3d6+11/19–20) and bite +25 (3d6+5/19–20)
Ranged eye rays +16 touch
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +37
Atk Options constrict 2d6+5, improved grab (claw), smite good 1/day (+20 damage)
Special Actions baleful flash
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)
At will—*persistent image* (DC 18)

Abilities Str 32, Dex 10, Con 30, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 17
Feats Ability Focus (baleful flash, eye rays), Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite, claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claw), Multiattack
Skills Listen +31, Spot +31

Baleful Flash (Su) As a free action, Vzorthys can generate a flash of light from its central eye once per round. All creatures in a 60-foot cone are blinded for 2d6 rounds and stunned for half that duration. A DC 34 Fortitude save negates the stunning and reduces the blindness effect to dazzled. Sightless creatures are immune to this attack.

Eye Rays (Su) Each of an eye of the deep's two eyestalks can produce a magical ray once per round as a free action. Each ray has a range of 150 feet and a save DC of 27 (caster level 12th). The eye effects include:

Hold Monster: Target must make a Will save or be affected as though by the spell.

Cone of Cold: This works like the spell, but affects only the creature touched by the ray (Reflex save for half).

Treasure: The eye of the deep has gathered a stash of treasure since its arrival here. Scattered along the pool bottom in the eastern half of this area are 4,960 gp, a rotten wooden cask containing 13 pink pearls worth 100 gp each, a *+4 defending cold iron dagger*, a *mask of the skull*, and a red crystal *staff of evocation* (31 charges).

The Wreck

Even a cursory glance at the strange and imposing structure that looms over the Crimson Fleet base should be enough to cause the observer to doubt its structural integrity. The ropes and chains that fix the suspended ships in place hardly look to be sufficient, and in some places the hulls hang over prodigious empty gulfs. A DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check is enough to confirm this observation—the Wreck, by all calculations, is an impossible structure.

What holds it together is a cunning combination of architectural genius and

Lemorians

The leaders of the Crimson Fleet are outsiders known as lemorians, humanoids transformed by a secret process in the city of Lemoriax into half-demons. Lemorians have large patches of black scaly skin (in some cases covering their entire bodies), claws, pointed ears, horns, red eyes, batlike wings, small fangs, and long tails tipped with poisonous stingers.

Lemorians use the rules for half-fiends as detailed in the *Monster Manual*, but with the following modifications:

- Instead of a bite attack, they gain a poison sting attack (damage remains unchanged from bite attack). The DC to resist the poison is equal to 10 + half the lemorian's Hit Dice + his Constitution modifier. Its initial and secondary damage are the same: 1d6 Wisdom damage. A lemorian often poisons his melee weapons with this venom.
- Ability score increases become Str +4, Dex +4, Con +2, Int +2, Cha +4
- Spell-like abilities change as follows:

HD	Abilities
1–2	*command* 3/day
3–4	*suggestion*
5–6	*fear*
7–8	*charm monster* 3/day
9–10	*dominate person*
11–12	*mass suggestion*
13–14	*unholy aura* 3/day, *unhallow*
15–16	*mass charm monster*
17–18	*summon monster IX* (demons only)
19–20	*dominate monster*

magical support. The placement of the anchoring ropes, chains, beams, and even the trees themselves do much of the work, while the weight of the suspended ships is alleviated by the application of magical "anchor points" that function similarly to *immovable rods*. These anchor points exist along the underside of each ship, and help to fix the structure in space. Bringing the Wreck down would require the dispelling of the majority of these anchor points; since they're effectively magic items, a *dispel magic* only negates one for 1d4 rounds.

The numerous rope bridges that connect the ships are 3 feet wide, and can be traversed with a DC 12 Balance check. Ladders are somewhat narrow and have slippery rungs, but can be climbed with a DC 10 Climb check. The wood that comprises the Wreck itself is not only damp, but has been alchemically treated to resist burning, effectively gaining fire resistance 5. Each deck is fitted with several alarm bells that, when rung, can be heard throughout the complex.

Cold Captain Wyther rules the Wreck with calculating cruelty, yet his fearsome reputation was nothing compared to Vanthus as a death knight. His leadership took a hit when Vanthus stormed in and took control of the Fleet's resources several days ago, and Wyther seethes with bitter rage as a result.

The following encounter areas assume the Wreck is not on alert. Where appropriate, an encounter's Development section details what changes occur to the area when the Wreck is on alert.

E1. The Fortitude (EL 9)

The deck of this old merchant caravel is pitted with deep scratches and gouges. The ship's mainmast remains in place, rising nearly to the lower hull of the ship above. Tattered sails hang limply from the mast.

The deck of this ship is kept relatively clear. The scratches on its surface are from the monster that dwells up on the foc's'le.

Trap: The door to the southeast just below the foc's'le is kept locked (Open Lock DC 30) and warded with a *symbol of insanity* inscribed on its surface. All of the denizens of the Wreck and the surrounding base have been attuned to the symbol.

Symbol of Insanity. CR 9; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*symbol of insanity*, 15th-level wizard, DC 25 Will resists); multiple targets (all creatures within 60 feet); Search DC 33; Disable Device 33.

E2. Fortitude Foc's'le (EL 11)

A ruined ballista lies in a heap against the bow of the ship.

Creature: An elephantine retriever, called up from the Abyss by the orlath demon Ziovayne (area **H1**), dwells on this deck, a tireless guardian that watches the southern saltmarsh for anything that attempts to reach the Wreck from that direction. It roars into life to attack any creature that comes within 100 feet, remaining on deck but using its eye rays to blast foes.

Retriever: hp 135; *Monster Manual* 46.

E3. Southern Bridgeway

This 4-foot-wide, 60-foot tall wooden piling leans at a slight angle. A pair of rope bridges connects to it, allowing movement from the *Fortitude's* foc's'le (area **E2**) up to the *Anger's* deck (area **G1**).

E4. Prison

Iron-barred doors close off four cells in this area. Each cell is a filthy, damp area furnished with a single bucket, a heap of moldy straw and rags, and a wooden trough near the door to hold food.

If any PCs are captured by Crimson Recruiters, they may end up in one of these cells, naked except for a few rags with their gear stacked haphazardly in area **H4**.

Creature: One prisoner languishes in one of the cells here, a badly beaten lemorian named Ratline Sid. Until recently a captain in the Crimson Fleet, Ratline had always felt himself a better choice as leader for the fleet than Captain Wyther. When Vanthus left the base in chaos, Ratline was one of five captians who rose up in mutiny. The other four have escaped to sea, but Ratline grossly overestimated his own skills in combat and Wyther beat him within an inch of his life. The captain had Ratline thrown into a cell here, where he's languished ever since. The other pirates frequently forget to feed him, and when they do they take the time to beat him unconscious as a way to prove their loyalty to Captain Wyther, who's kept Ratline alive only because he hasn't yet thought up a cruel and painful enough method of executing him.

Ratline is near death by the time the PCs arrive. He feebly struggles to catch their attention, but his broken legs and crushed jaw transform every motion into agony. If he's healed, he can't thank the PCs enough and promises to help them any way he can, if only to

get revenge on Wyther. He can provide the PCs with a rough estimate of the Wreck's defenses, but hasn't been below decks in the *Two-Faced Wretch*. He can confirm that the fleet's just finished delivering dozens of black pearls, but he's not sure why they were giving the things away when they could have sold them again and stolen them back and sold them a dozen times over. He knows that the pearls were stored belowdecks on the *Anger*, but points out that they're all gone now. If asked about Vanthus or Lavinia, he can relate the story of the death knight's arrival in detail, adding that the woman he brought back was a mighty fine catch but that Vanthus kept her at his side the whole time. They finally left on Captain Wyther's ship, the *Crimson Scar*, several days ago. Ratline's not sure where Vanthus went, but he does know that he activated the *wakeportal* on Wyther's ship to travel to Gaping Maw. If the PCs express an interest in following them to Gaping Maw, he scoffs openly at their stupidity. Under further threat, he quickly adds that there is one more *wakeportal* in the Wreck treasury, belowdecks on the *Two-Faced Wretch*, "if you fools is really set on suicide."

You can use Ratline to answer any other questions the PCs might have. He's been a member of the fleet for some time, and has even been to Lemoriax on Gaping Maw twice since his initial transformation into a lemorian. If asked for more details on Gaping Maw, Lemoriax, Demogorgon, or the process by which he was transformed into a half-fiend, Ratline grows silent. He may hate Captain Wyther and think him a coward, but Demogorgon's a different matter entirely. He has little to say on the subject other than that he's started to think that letting those fancy bat-winged ladies in Lemoriax put him in that big pool of sludge that turned him fiendish may not have been a great idea.

As helpful as Ratline may be, he's still a vile, despicable creature. He's also a coward. At the first opportunity he attempts to flee. If the PCs manage to keep him around until they confront Captain Wyther, Ratline tries to betray the PCs by attacking them in hopes of impressing Wyther. Wyther's had enough of him, though, and at best his betrayal buys the PCs a round while the Cold Captain finishes Ratline off.

Captain Ratline Sid: hp 83 (currently 0); page 64 (Captain Longshanks Le'shiv).

E5. Forward Hold

This large area is packed tight with crates, ropes, lumber, and other supplies. Most of it looks damaged by the moisture.

There's nothing of much interest stored here, although there are plenty of places to hide.

F1. The Black Sprite (EL 10)

The upper deck of this ship is strewn with ropes, crates, and stacks of lumber, but the main deck is free of clutter. The mainmast remains intact and her tattered sail, depicting a wicked-looking black devil, still flutters in the wind.

Once the ship of a half-fey pirate named Avlash Redlegs, the *Black Sprite* was Cold Captain Wyther's first conquest.

Creatures: Two Crimson Fleet pirates patrol this deck at all times.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (2): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

Development: If the Wreck is on alert, the ten pirates found in the chambers below take stations here. They do not disembark to attack PCs in the surrounding estuary, but if they come within range of their crossbows, the pirates won't hesitate to take a few shots.

F2. Northern Bridgeway

A rope bridge leads from the deck of the *Black Sprite* (area **F1**) to this piling, and a 50-foot high ladder leads up from the bridge to the deck of the *Two-Faced Wretch* above (area **H1**).

F3. Galley (EL 13)

A long table sits in the center of this room. To the north, an iron ladder leads up to a trap door. A rusty stove sits in a nook to the southwest, and the entire southern wall consists of the side of the immense tree the structure hangs from.

Creatures: When the Wreck's not on alert, several Crimson Fleet pirates spend the hours here, gambling, eating, and drinking in this galley. Despite their relaxed attitude, they react quickly and cruelly to intrusions or alarms.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (6): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

F4. Barracks (EL 12)

Six cramped bunkbeds line the walls of this barracks.

Creatures: An additional four pirates sleep in the bunks here. If the alarm is raised, it'll take them 1d4+2 rounds to wake, gather their gear, and move out to aid their fellows.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (4): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

G1. The Anger

The deck of this old keelboat is cluttered with crates, lumber, barrels of ballista bolts, coils of rope, and other supplies. A thick tangle of rigging extends from the tree's trunk to the ship's railings and forward mast.

The *Anger* serves as living quarters for any Crimson Fleet captains who, for whatever reason, don't currently command a ship.

The deck of the *Anger* is difficult terrain due to the clutter.

Development: If the alarm is raised, the four Crimson Fleet captains from area **G4** quickly clamber up to this deck. Two go to each of the ballistas (areas **G3A** and **G3B**) to use them against anyone they can see. If they see invaders board the Wreck, they move to intercept.

G2. Anger's Foc's'le

An iron-and-wood ladder leads 10 feet up this short mast to a crow's nest. A rope ladder affixed to this nest leads up to area **H1**.

G3. Ballista Decks

A ballista sits on a swiveling turret atop each of these decks. Both ballistas can fire down onto the deck of the *Black Sprite* (area **F1**). The ballista at area **G3A** can fire in an arc from area **D6** to **D10**, while the one at **G3B** can fire in an arc from **D8** to **E3**. A barrel of 20 ballista bolts sits near to each weapon. Rules for firing ballistas appear on page 100 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

G4. Guard Room (EL 16)

A round table surrounded by a half-dozen chairs sits in the center of this room; a dented lantern rests atop it. Hanging from the walls are six hammocks.

Creatures: This room serves as both a guard post and barracks for shipless captains. Currently, there are four such men here; Two-Stubs Vexir, Casketbreath Gaven, Gashgape Neften, and Rumbelly Wade. The four lemorians are particularly angry that they didn't get to accompany the others to sea to gather the mutineers, but unlike Longshanks Le'shiv (area **D9**) they're resigned to their fate. They view any alarm as an opportunity for much-needed mayhem.

Crimson Fleet Captains (4): hp 83; page 64 (Captain Longshanks Le'shiv).

G5. Wyther's Shrine

A grotesque scrimshaw statue of a towering two-headed monster dominates the chamber. The statue is composed of numerous huge whalebones that have been filed and fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle—the entire thing has an unsettling quality about it, almost as if the two skull-like faces could see. An iron brazier filled with ashes sits between the statue's feet, and clutched in its tentacles is a single curious metal orb.

This statue depicts Demogorgon, but this chamber is much more than a shrine to the Prince of Demons. As one of Demogorgon's primary Material Plane agents, this statue was delivered to Cold Captain Wyther as a means for the pirate to contact the Prince of Demons to receive advice.

The metal globe clutched by the statue is a puzzle orb made up of interlocking slats and panels. Twisted and folded in the proper manner, the orb opens like a metal rose and establishes a link to Gaping Maw. A DC 25 Intelligence check or Disable Device check is required to correctly unlock this puzzle orb. On a failed check, serrated blades lance out of the orb to slash at the user's hands and wrists, severing tendons with a disturbing accuracy, inflicting 1d6 points of Dexterity damage (DC 15 Reflex save negates).

If someone successfully opens the puzzle orb, the device floats into the air as a mauve haze seeps from the brazier below. The haze quickly fills the room with a sickening stink of rotting fish and seaweed—any creatures in the room who are not immune to poison must make a DC 20 Fortitude save to avoid becoming nauseated for 1d6 rounds. The puzzle orb can be activated in this manner once per day.

As the foul mist fills the room, the statue of Demogorgon suddenly seems

to slither to awful life. Its surface fills in with rancid greens and blues and sickly yellows as it takes on the fearful countenance of the Prince of Demons. His two simian heads scowl, writhing above his serpentine body on long snaky necks that make an obscene sucking noise. Two tentacle arms come into view, dripping, and he moves suddenly in long strides as though his body is dislocated. The two heads look around the room, then settle their gazes upon the one who activated the statue, watching expectantly. At this time, the user instantaneously realizes how he can use the statue—he may either ask up to ten yes/no questions (as if he were using *commune* to contact Demogorgon), or he may ask a single question and receive a short answer.

With each yes/no question answered, there's a cumulative 10% chance that Demogorgon notices the fact that the statue is being used. This chance rises to 100% if a short answer question is asked. If this occurs, the statue answers the question but then immediately roars in rage, loudly enough to alert the entire Wreck. The statue's tentacles crash against the walls of the room, and then its gaze turns back down and it speaks in a horrifically sibilant voice, one head speaking one sentence while the other speaks the next. "I know you. You seek to oppose me. But you are mortal. I shall be with you soon. You shall know my wrath!"

With that, the statue howls again, just before it explodes in a blast of fire and acid. All creatures in this room immediately take 10d6 fire damage and 10d6 acid damage—a DC 20 Reflex save halves the damage. The explosion also tears a hole in the *Anger's* hull. All creatures in the room must make a DC 15 Reflex save or fall through the hole, plummeting 60 feet to the deck of the *Fortitude* below (area **E1**).

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs use this shrine to learn something about Demogorgon's plans, grant them a CR 16 experience award.

G6. War Room

A U-shaped table sits in this room, surrounded by wooden chairs. Dozens of scrolls, lie heaped on the table, weighed down by several gold paperweights that resemble ships at sea. On the far wall hangs a map of the known seas and civilized lands.

This room is where the Crimson Fleet worked out its raids, including shipments of *shadow pearls* to various large cities of the northern world. An investigation of the numerous notes, logs, and ledgers on the table reveals the fact that they've sent *shadow pearls* to no less than 35 different cities, but aside from the fact that each of these deliveries was accepted by an unnamed but powerful ally, the exact locations are nowhere to be found. Further investigation of the notes here turns up several references to an event called the "savage tide," and while some of these notes seem to indicate that the savage tide will be occurring soon, an exact date is missing.

Treasure: The seven paperweights are made of solid gold and worth 700 gp apiece.

G7. Ziovayne's Chambers (EL 15)

This long room is split into two sections. To the starboard, near the door, stands an oak bookcase, its shelves heaped with tomes of all shapes and sizes. A large padded chair sits nearby. To port, an oversized bed is flanked by an ivory washtub and an elegant writing desk.

Creature: Captain Wyther's favored guardian, an orlath demon bonded to him as a gift by Demogorgon himself, prowls this deck when the Wreck is on alert. Named Ziovayne, the demon enjoys the physical sensations afforded by his humanoid form almost as much as he enjoys reading about the great wars of the Material Plane. If the Wreck's not on alert, he can be found here, either reading or frolicking violently with his latest plaything, a heavily tattooed Crimson Fleet captain named Bilgerut Norah (50% chance of either). In either case, Ziovayne orders his lover to attack the party first while he watches, a command the woman takes to with glee. Once she's brought below 40 hit points, Ziovayne sighs heavily and joins her, assuming his true form once he's already in melee so he can take a full attack with all of his scimitars as a surprise.

Ziovayne, orlath: hp 184; See Appendix.

Captain Bilgerut Norah: hp 83; page 64 (Captain Longshanks Le'shiv).

Treasure: The collection of history books includes seven rare tomes worth 300 gp apiece.

H1. The Two-Faced Wretch

The deck of this ship is cluttered with coils of rope, crates, and other nautical supplies. A horrendous figurehead of a demonic two-faced abomination hangs from the ship's bow, which has been extended into a square platform that provides an unobstructed view of the surrounding saltmarsh.

The *Two-Faced Wretch* was Captain Wyther's first ship, and serves him now on the Wreck as his home. Treat the cluttered deck as difficult terrain.

Development: If the alarm is raised, Ziovayne waits on this deck in the form of a lemorian pirate. He hopes to lure the PCs into melee reach so he can assume his true form and make a full attack before they realize what they're up against. Until then, he observes the battle on the Wreck as best he can, using his spell-like abilities on any PCs in range and keeping Wyther appraised of developments via telepathy.

H2. Ready Room

This room contains a single round table and several chairs.

Cold Captain Wyther uses this room to meet with his captains in small groups, or when he needs to speak privately with a guest.

H3. Captain's Quarters (EL 19)

A huge canopied bed, complete with diaphanous silk curtains hanging from its sides, dominates this sumptuous chamber. To the stern, a locked cupboard sits in a nook near the door.

Creature: Captain Wyther, the legendary commander of the Crimson Fleet, resides here. He often strolls about the decks of the *Two-Faced Wretch* overseeing the activities of the occupants and barking out obscenities to his crew. The captain is a barrel-chested man with ruddy skin. Vain to the point of eschewing heavier armor entirely, his demonic features accent his handsome appearance with a cruel edge. Until recently supremely confident in his abilities, the ease with which Vanthus usurped his control has left him deeply shaken. As a result, when the alarm is raised, he does not immediately join his men in battle, instead relying on telepathic updates from Ziovayne and offering the excuse that he needs to stay belowdecks to guard the treasury.

COLD CAPTAIN WYTHER **CR 19**

Male lemorian rogue 2/fighter 4/scarlet corsair 4/dread pirate 6

CE Medium outsider (augmented humanoid, native)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen –1, Spot –1

Languages Abyssal, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 29, touch 19, flat-footed 24

hp 172 (16 HD); **DR** 10/magic

Immune poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 26

Fort +17, **Ref** +20, **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)

Melee* *+3 icy burst cold iron bastard sword* +24/+19/+14 (1d10+18/17–20 [+3d6 plus 1d10 cold on crit] plus 1d6 cold plus poison) and

+1 frost cold iron dagger +21 (1d4+7/19–20 [+3d6 on crit] plus 1d6 cold plus poison) and

sting +15 (1d6+4 [+3d6 on crit] plus poison)

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +23

Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Improved Feint, Power Attack, acrobatic charge, corsair's feint, smite good 1/day (+16 damage), sneak attack +3d6

Special Actions scourge of the seas

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *potion of lesser restoration* (2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 19), *command* (DC 16), *unholy aura* (DC 23)

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 20), *fear* (DC 19), *mass charm monster* (DC 22), *mass suggestion* (DC 21), *suggestion* (DC 18), *unhallow*

*3-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 26, Dex 16, Con 22, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 20

SQ fearsome reputation, sailor's step, seamanship, steady stance, trapfinding

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Feint, Melee Weapon Mastery (slashing), Power Attack, Quick Draw, Telling Blow, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

Skills Appraise +9, Balance +22, Bluff +24, Climb +16, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (local) +6, Profession (sailor) +22, Swim +17, Tumble +22, Use Rope +7

Possessions combat gear, *+4 leather armor, +3 icy burst cold iron bastard sword, +1 frost cold iron dagger, gauntlets of ogre power +6, bracers of health +6* (as *amulet of health +6*), *amulet of natural armor +3, cloak of protection +4, boots of speed, ring of protection +4*, gold earrings worth 2,500 gp, keys to all locks on the Wreck

Acrobatic Charge (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther can charge over difficult terrain.

Corsair's Feint (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther may make a feint as a free action once every 2d4 rounds.

Fearsome Reputation (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther is a dishonorable pirate, and gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 21, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Wis. Cold Captain Wyther can poison a weapon with this venom as a standard action. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Sailor's Step (Ex) When aboard a ship and wearing nothing more than light armor, Cold Captain Wyther gains a +2 dodge bonus to his Armor Class. This bonus is included in his stats above.

Scourge of the Seas (Ex) When Cold Captain Wyther uses Intimidate to demoralize foes, the attempt affects all enemies within 30 feet who can see and hear him; the effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to his Charisma modifier (5 rounds). This is a mind-affecting ability.

Seamanship (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther adds his dread pirate class level to his Profession (sailor) checks; allies within sight or hearing gain half this number on their Profession (sailor) checks.

Steady Stance (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther is not flat-footed while balancing or climbing, and gains a +6 bonus on Balance and Climb checks to avoid being knocked prone when he takes damage.

Feats Melee Weapon Mastery (*Player's Handbook II* 81) grants a +2 bonus on attack rolls and a +2 bonus on damage rolls with all slashing melee weapons. Telling Blow lets Cold Captian Wyther deal his sneak attack damage whenever he scores a critical hit on a target, in addition to damage from his critical hit.

Tactics: Captain Wyther joins combat once it appears his men have the PCs on the ropes, emerging onto the deck of the *Two-Faced Wretch* to issue challenges before swooping down to assault fleeing PCs. Alternately, once the PCs reach the deck of the *Black Sprite*, he gathers enough courage to confront them 1d4 rounds after they begin fighting Ziovayne.

Once he's in combat, though, Captain Wyther's bravado quickly returns. In the heat of battle, he barks threats and profanities and fights with style and grace. He's fond of charging over difficult terrain, using Bull Rush against non-flying opponents and Power Attack against anyone, increasing his Power Attack by 2 points each successive round until he starts missing. Wyther very much prefers melee combat, and resorts to his spell-like abilities only against foes he can't reach with his sword.

Already shamed once by Vanthus, Wyther views this battle with the PCs as a chance to redeem his lost honor. As a result, he doesn't even consider surrender or escape, and fights to the bitter end.

Treasure: A pair of *+1 daggers* coated with lemorian venom are concealed in a hidden panel of the bed's headboard. A DC 25 Search check reveals the panel, which can be opened with a flick of the wrist as a free action. Also kept in here is a neatly folded paper that lists the following spells, in order: *fear, rage, crushing despair, crushing despair, rage, fear,* and *Tasha's hideous laughter.* Wyther uses this list as a code to help him remember the combination to the *Iron Chest of Hathruman* (see area **H4**).

The locked cabinet (Open Locks DC 40) contains several different specimens of fine clothing—seven in all, each worth 200 gp. A shelf above the clothes contains Wyther's private collection of rare wines, ales, mead, and grog. There are a dozen bottles here, each worth 500 gp.

H4. Treasury (EL 18)

The doorway to this room is both locked (Open Locks DC 40) and trapped (see Trap, below).

The walls of this area are plated in what appears to be lead that shimmers with sparkling energy. A single long table sits against the wall immediately to the door's left. A few chairs sit nearby, and a spherical object the size of a human head sits atop the table, covered by a deep purple cloth. The contents of the rest of this room leave little doubt as to its purpose. Sacks of coins, sea chests too full to be properly closed, heaps of silks, suits of partially assembled armor, tapestries, mounds of fine furs and clothing, jewlery boxes, metal coffers, and racks of weapons line the port and starboard walls of the chamber, leaving an open area in the center were one might stand and admire the collection. This is, without a doubt, the treasury of the Crimson Fleet.

This chamber is perhaps the most well-protected chamber in the Wreck. The lead-lined walls prevent many divination spells seeing into the room. Furthermore, the chamber is protected by a chaotic evil *forbiddance* spell (CL 16th), and the lead-lined walls are also lined with permanent *walls of force* with the exception of the doorway. If the Wreck is burned to the ground, this chamber remains intact.

Creature: Just as he had the death slaad Velzigarus bound to area **D2** as a guardian, Wyther has placed a powerful outsider here to serve as the treasury's defender. This menace is Ghourgos, a powerful yagnoloth. Standing nearly 16 feet tall, this hulking yugoloth has red, scaly hide and a small skull-like head framed by large ears that almost resemble bat wings. His right arm is small and atrophied, the size of a human's arm, while his left is enormous and grossly overdeveloped. In Hades, Ghourgos was the lord of a necropolis, and his anger at being turned into a mere treasure guardian fuels his wrath when intruders visit him. Wyther has made vague promises to free Ghourgos one day, and the monster's hope that the captain wasn't lying is the only reason he allows the Captain in here and respects his wishes to leave the treasure undamaged.

GHOURGOS **CR 18**

Male advanced yagnoloth
NE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, yugoloth)
Monster Manual II 203
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +31, Spot +1
Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 30, touch 16, flat-footed 28
hp 299 (26 HD); **DR** 15/good
Immune acid, poison
Resist cold 10, fire 10, electricity 10; **SR** 25
Fort +21, **Ref** +17, **Will** +17

Spd 50 ft.
Melee *+1 keen lonsword* +26/+21/+16/+11 (2d6+21/17–20) and claw +26 (1d8+20 plus stunning blow)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +26; **Grp** +40
Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, stunning blow
Special Actions breath weapon, energy drain
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)
3/day—*shocking grasp*
*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 30, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 16
SQ muscular arm
Feats Cleave, Improved Natural Armor (4), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Bluff +32, Climb +39, Concentration +35, Diplomacy +34, Intimidate +34, Jump +47, Knowledge (the planes) +31, Listen +31, Sense Motive +31, Spot +31
Possessions *+1 keen longsword, ring of protection +5*

Breath Weapon (Su) A yagnoloth can exhale a cloud of acid as a standard action once every 1d4 rounds. This cloud fills any adjacent five-foot square for 1 round. Any character in that square (including anyone who moves through it) must make a DC 29 Reflex save or take 2d6 points of acid damage and become stunned for an equal number of rounds.

Energy Drain (Su) A yagnoloth can bestow 1d4 negative levels on any helpless or stunned target as a full-round action by pressing its face to the victim's body. It's a DC 29 Fortitude save to remove each negative level.

Muscular Arm (Ex) Although technically the yagnoloth's secondary attack, the monster retains its full Strength bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls made with its claw.

Stunning Blow (Ex) A character struck by a yagnoloth's claw must make a DC 29 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d8 rounds.

Trap: The door to this room is protected by a chaining energy drain trap; anyone who attempts to open the door without the proper key (carried by Captain Wyther) is struck by a black beam that inflicts 2d4 negative levels. Every other creature within 30 feet is also struck by the ray, but those struck only take 1d4 negative levels.

Chain *Energy Drain* Trap: CR 12; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged touch; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17th-level wizard, 2d4 or 1d4 negative levels for 24 hours, DC 23 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

In addition, one of the chests within the room is trapped. This is a curious iron chest sitting near the bow. Decorated by seven gargoyle faces that stare out in all directions interspersed with dancing angels, this is a legendary chest indeed. A DC 25 Knowledge (history) check reveals it as the legendary *Iron Chest of Hathruman*, a chest so wicked it was considered to have a will of its own. Hathruman was a notorious arcane trickster held as a legend in trapmaking circles. Dozens of boxes, coffers, cases, arks, and other vessels bear his name, but he only created one chest.

The chest is in fact a complex trap. Each of the seven gargoyle faces can be manipulated to change their expression from anger to horror to sorrow to laughter. By setting the faces to the proper combination of expressions in the proper order, the chest can be opened. The correct combination, working clockwise from

the front, is horror, anger, sorrow, sorrow, anger, horror, and laughter. Once all expressions are set to the proper combination, the lid can be lifted with ease.

An attempt to lift the lid when the proper combination is not set triggers the traps and causes the faces to all reset to surprise. Each improperly set face creates a different magical effect that targets the person who tried to open the chest, as detailed below:

Anger: Magic missile (5 missiles).

Sorrow: Bestow curse (DC 16, –6 decrease to a random ability score).

Laughter: Confusion (DC 16)

Horror: Phantasmal killer (DC 16)

The spell effects all function at caster level 15th. When the trap activates, faces whose expressions are set correctly do not activate their trap, so that observant PCs can, by process of elimination, eventually work out the correct combination to the lock, provided they can survive triggering the traps that often.

Use of Disable Device to bypass this trap requires a DC 35 check for each face, followed by a DC 40 Open Lock check for each face. Failure to open a lock automatically resets the trap.

***Iron Chest of Hathruman*:** CR 16; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; multiple effects (see above); Search DC 35; Disable Device DC 35.

Treasure: The spherical object on the table is a *crystal ball with telepathy* that Captain Wyther uses to communicate with his captains while they are at sea.

The rest of the treasure in this chamber represents one of the largest hordes the PCs are likely to discover in the Savage Tide Adventure Path. The exact details of what treasures lie heaped and forgotten in this chamber should be tailored to your campaign, but in a nutshell consists of 300,000 cp, 110,000 sp, 28,000 gp, 1,300 pp, 10,000 gp in gems and jewelry, 8,000 gp in masterwork weapons and armor, 4,200 gp in rare silks and furs, 5,600 gp in fine clothing and tapestries, 6,000 gp in rare and exotic alchohol, and 16,000 gp in gold and silver bars. The total value of this incredible treasure is 104,800 gp. In addition, the gear of any captured PCs have been placed here for storage.

The *Iron Chest of Hathruman* contains even more treasure. Neatly organized in its multiple compartments are half a dozen black pearls of great size worth 250 gp each, a gold crown set with four rough emeralds worth 1,200 gp, a dozen bags of gold coins containing 500 gp each, and a legendary gemstone—the Athrinoord Stone, a ruby of almost impossible size and beauty. The Athrinoord Stone has the blood of two dozen owners staining its long history, and legend holds that those who try to claim it as their own are destined for quick deaths. A DC 30 Knowledge (history) check reveals this information. The Athrinoord Stone is worth 25,000 gp.

Also kept within the *Iron Chest of Hathruman* is a spare *wakeportal*, one that Wyther keeps on hand should the one aboard the *Crimson Scar* be lost. A *wakeportal* is a magical gemstone that affixes to a ship's prow or figurehead. Once affixed, it grants the ship the ability to sail from the Material Plane to the Abyssian Ocean. Details on this magic item are presented in the next adventure, "Into the Maw."

I1. The Baeldictum

The deck of this ship is merely that—a deck. The underlying hull and lower decks are gone, the ship's rotting and wet ribs hanging down like the dangling legs of some enormous insect. It appears as if a fight recently took place here, as the deck is sticky with dried blood and bits of rotting flesh.

Captain Wyther uses the deck of this ex-slave galley to address all of his captains and key crewmembers. The majority of the initial fighting of the mutiny took place here, and the pirates haven't bothered to clean the mess yet.

I2. The Crow's Walk (EL 16)

A rope bridge hangs between the mainmast of the ship below and this circular platform that surrounds the central tree of the strange structure.

This platform is the highest point in the Wreck, at a height of 120 feet.

Creatures: Three Sisters of Lamentation, late of the Birdcage but having now thrown their lot in with the Crimson Fleet, nest in this area. Unsatisfied with the money to be had at the Birdcage, these three sought out Captain Wyther and hired on as guardians. So far, they've not seen nearly as much money as they'd hoped, and as a result are slow to step in to aid in the Wreck's defense. They don't attack until intruders make it all the way up to the Baeldictum, or until Captain Wyther orders them to do so.

Sisters of Lamentation (3): hp 108 each; see page 56.

Treasure: The harpies' pay so far consists of a single large bag of 1,200 gp.

I3. Lookout

This platform is supported by a single thick piling and holds a ballista. A barrel of ammunition for the weapon sits nearby.

This ballista's firing arc covers a zone from area **E3** clockwise to **D8**.

Development: If the alarm is raised, Bilgerut Norah (see area **G7**) moves up here to use the ballista against any enemies that come into her sights.

I4. Vanthus's Lair

This small building seems to have once served as a combination study, kitchen, and bedroom, although most of the personal touches are missing, as if taken away. All that remains are a bed, a table, a few chairs, a stove, and an empty bookshelf.

Originally the home of Zaliax Carvanxi, Captain Wyther's wizardly ally, Vanthus kicked the wizard out when he returned as a death knight and spent several days here laying his plans. There's little remaining here now, save for one well-hidden clue.

Lavinia was kept here for some time after Vanthus returned with her as his prisoner. Although he kept her under watch most of the time, there were a few moments where she was left alone. During one of these, she managed to wriggle partially free of her bonds, snatched a piece of paper, and wrote a quick message using her own blood as ink. She had hoped to try to get the message to someone who could deliver it to her allies, but Vanthus returned too quickly and she was forced to hide the unfinished note in this room. She was then taken to Gaping Maw before she had a chance to hand the note off.

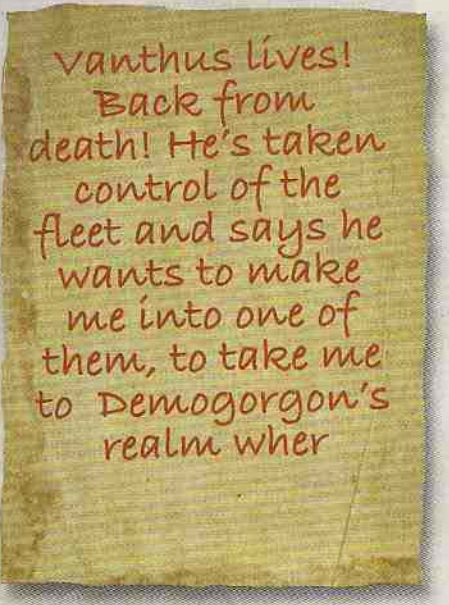
If the PCs make a DC 30 Search check of the room, her hastily scribed note will not have been in vain. The note is wedged under a floorboard in the southern corner of the room. Its contents are reproduced as Handout 2.

I5. The Glad (EL 19)

This is a hollow shell of a ship, its upper decks stripped bare and its lower decks removed to create a single large space within. This area is horrifically decorated with large hanging snake skins, several of which also appear to have humanoid features like arms or legs. The skins waft in the wet breeze, layered like curtains so that it's difficult to make out the details of the area beyond. An acrid stink fills the air here.

Creatures: The leader of the Seventh Coil, an immense yuan-ti anathema known as the Seventh, has taken up residence here. Originally intended to be a temporary home until the Seventh Coil reclaims Porphyry House or finds another suitable base of operations, the Seventh has come to enjoy this place and is considering mounting an attack on the Crimson Fleet to take the entire complex as her own.

A group of six Seventh Coil assassins stay here with their leader, honored to have been chosen for the esteemed duty of guarding her lair. They remain hidden among the curtains of the room. The Seventh herself is a huge, bloated snakelike creature with six writhing snake heads and two powerful humanoid arms. She clambers up and down the tree that supports this ship when she needs to leave her lair, an event that occurs with increasing rarity.



Handout 2

THE SEVENTH **CR 18**

Female yuan-ti anathema
CE Huge aberration
Fiend Folio 193

Init +5; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +32, Spot +36
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Yuan-ti

AC 29, touch 9, flat-footed 28
hp 297 (22 HD); regeneration 5; **DR** 15/good and magic
Immune acid, poison
Resist electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 26
Fort +16, **Ref** +10, **Will** +20

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.
Melee +1 *unholy wounding falchion* +23/+18/+13 (2d8+13/18–20) and 6 bites +20 (1d8+4 plus poison)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +16; **Grp** +32
Atk Options Cleave, Combat Expertise, Power Attack, constrict 1d8+8, improved grab (bite)
Special Actions psionics
Combat Gear *serpent symbol*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)

Serpent Symbol

This silver disc represents the world with a snake coiled around it, mouth gaping wide as if to consume it. This is a holy symbol used by anathema cults, symbolizing their devotion to destruction. Once per day, a *serpent symbol* can generate either a *disintegrate* (DC 20) or a *destruction* (DC 20) spell, according to the user's command. This device functions only for yuan-ti, although Use Magic Device can suffice to trick this requirement. The magic of this device functions at CL 13th. A *serpent symbol* is worth 50,000 gp.

3/day—*animal trance* (DC 18), *baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *cause fear* (DC 17), *deeper darkness*, *entangle* (DC 17), *haste*, *neutralize poison* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 19), *unholy blight* (DC 20)
1/day—*blasphemy*, *unholy aura* (DC 24)

Abilities Str 27, Dex 13, Con 29, Int 24, Wis 24, Cha 22
SQ attach grafts
Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Dodge, Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack
Skills Climb +33, Concentration +34, Hide +18 (+28 when using *chameleon power*), Knowledge (local) +32, Knowledge (the planes) +32, Listen +32, Move Silently +26, Search +36, Spot +36, Swim +16
Possessions combat gear, +1 *unholy wounding falchion*

All-Around Vision (Ex) An anathema has a +4 racial bonus on Search and Spot checks, and cannot be flanked.
Attach Grafts (Su) An anathema can attach grafts to creatures with shocking speed. This ability is not implemented in "Serpents of Scuttlecove" but if you want to add grafts to your campaign, consult the *Fiend Folio* for further details.
Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 30, 1d4 Constitution/1d4 Constitution.
***Psionics* (Sp)** An anathema has the *alternate form*, *chameleon power*, and *detect poison psionic* abilities shared by most yuan-ti. It also has two additional powers, as detailed here:
Dissolving Touch: An anathema can exude acid from its body, dealing 7d6 acid damage to anything it touches. If it uses this power when grappling or constricting a foe, the acid deals 10d6 points of damage instead. The acid is effective only on the round when this power is used.
Mass Aversion: An anathema can create a compulsion effect in all enemies within 30 feet. Targets must make a DC 27 Will save or gain an aversion to snakes for 10 minutes. Affected creatures must stay at least 20 feet from all snake or yuan-ti, whether alive or dead. This ability functions at caster level 16th. This ability otherwise functions as a yuan-ti abomination's *aversion* ability (*Monster Manual* 265).
Regeneration (Ex) Force effects and adamantine weapons deal lethal damage to an anathema.

Seventh Coil Assassins (3): hp 107 each; see page 49.

Tactics: The Seventh is not prepared to sacrifice her life for the Crimson Fleet. If brought down to 50 hp or less, she attempts to escape into the surrounding saltmarsh while any remaining assassins sacrifice themselves, if necessary, to cover her retreat. She's hidden the wealth of the Seventh Coil's treasury away in a secret cave further inland, and it is to these caverns she hopes to retreat.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The defeat of the Crimson Fleet signals the end of this adventure. Once Cold Captain Wyther and the majority of his remaining crew and captains are slain, the chance of the Crimson Fleet recovering from the recent mutiny vanishes. The ships at sea turn on each other, deteriorating into a disorganized mass of pirates more interested, for the time being, in fighting among themselves than anything else. The safety of the seas increases dramatically as navies and merchants from the north ponder the cause of this sudden turn of events, but the PCs have doubtless discovered that this calm is an illusion at best. Demogorgon has seeded dozens of cities with madness. Discovering which cities have been seeded with *shadow pearls* and then traveling to each to discover the pearl's location and defeat the powerful minions of evil who guard them is an impossible task, yet all may not be lost if the PCs opt instead to tackle the problem at its two bickering heads deep in the Abyss.

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTER

Orlath (Demon)

This horrific serpentine demon shares two humanoid torsos atop a single coiling body. Each torso waves a set of six humanoid arms, all clutching cruel scimitars. The monster's two baboonlike heads glower menacingly, their eyes beady and bright with hate.

ORLATH **CR 15**
Always CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, shapechanger)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing, x-ray vision; Listen +21, Spot +21
Aura vile gaze (30 ft.)
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 250 ft.

AC 26, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (–1 size, +7 Dex, +10 natural)
hp 184 (16 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron and good
Immune disease, mind affecting, poison
Resist fire 10; **SR** 26
Fort +17, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16

Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 30 ft.
Melee +1 *scimitar* +22/+17/+12/+7 (1d8+5/15–20 plus 1 vile) and
11 +1 *scimitars* +22 (1d8+2/15–20 plus 1 vile) and
2 bites +17 (2d6+2)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +16; **Grp** +24
Atk Options Combat Expertise
Special Actions call retriever
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)
At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 16), *discern lies* (DC 18), *dispel magic*, *fly*, *locate object*, *locate creature*, *sending*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy blight* (DC 18)
3/day—*glibness*, *move earth*, *prying eyes*, *stone shape*
1/day—*demand* (DC 21), *greater scrying* (DC 21)

Abilities Str 19, Dex 24, Con 25, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 18
SQ change shape, slashing blades, two brains
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (scimitar), Multiweapon Fighting, Vile

Martial Strike (scimitar), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Bluff +23, Concentration +26, Diplomacy +29, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +22, Knowledge (any two) +22, Listen +22, Search +22, Sense Motive +21, Spot +21

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure standard plus 12 *+1 scimitars*

Advancement 17–24 HD (Large), 25–40 HD (Huge), 41–48 HD (Gargantuan)

Call Retriever (Su) Once per day, an orlath can call a retriever to its location. This takes the orlath a full minute of concentration, but once the retriever arrives, it is under the orlath's complete control and remains until it is either killed or dismissed by the orlath (a free action). An orlath may only maintain one called retriever at a time with this ability.

Change Shape (Su) An orlath can assume the form of any Medium humanoid. Assuming a humanoid form requires a standard action, but it can assume its true form as a free action.

Slashing Blades (Ex) An orlath treats the scimitar as a light weapon for all purposes, including fighting with two weapons.

True Seeing (Su) The orlath's left head continuously uses this ability, as the spell (caster level 16th).

Two Brains (Ex) An orlath's two heads share the same personality and thoughts, but thanks to its two brains, it gains a +4 racial bonus on Will saves. An orlath cannot be flanked.

Vile Gaze (Su) Any nonevil creature within 30 feet of an orlath who meets the creature's gaze must make a DC 22 Will save or take 1d4 points of vile Charisma damage. A character drained to 0 Charisma by this gaze is transformed into a dretch under the orlath's control. Orlaths can suppress or activate the effects of this gaze as a free action. Vile ability damage can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell. The save DC is Charisma-based.

X-Ray Vision (Su) The orlath's right head has constant x-ray vision, as if it were wearing a *ring of x-ray vision*, except without the exhaustion effect normally associated with the ring.

Vile Feat Vile Martial Strike (scimitar) allows an orlath to do 1 additional point of vile damage each time it strikes with a scimitar. Vile damage can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.

Legend holds that Demogorgon killed a powerful marilith who herself had vied for the power of a demon lord. As he murdered her, several of the Prince of Demons' teeth dislodged and gestated inside the dead demon's carcass for a century, after which the ripe body split and gave birth to the first of the orlath demons.

Like the yochlols, orlath demons are not a member of a demonic race like the tanar'ri or the obyriths. They are more akin to their own race, a race shaped by and for Demogorgon himself. The orlath's ability to assume humanoid form, combined with its silver tongue and extensive knowledge, make it an excellent spy or double agent.

The orlath is devastating in combat, leading with a slashing array of scimitars and savage bites. Although weaker than the marilith, the orlath's increased number of arms make it a veritable cyclone of blood and steel in melee.

Richard writes: "Once again, I am indebted to the charmingly twisted Mr. Greer and the frighteningly talented Mr. Boyd for helping out with this adventure. Without your help, gentlemen, I would not have been able to concentrate as much on the adventure's shaved harpies, tainted thugs, and undead children. I'd like to point out to everyone what a pair of great blokes you are—cheers!

"Oh, and Logue – 'tis a dish that is best served cold... mwaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Savage Tide
Scuttlecove
City of Chaos

BY JAMES JACOBS
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

Sekorvia is a stinking, steaming scar of an island, the largest in the chain known as the Pirate Isles. With a skyline ruled by volcanoes and lowlands stained with festering salt marshes and dripping jungles, Sekorvia was a deadly place even before three vile and cannibalistic blasphemers seeking a refuge to pursue their studies in peace arrived. They founded a city on the southern shore of the isle, and it wasn't long before Scuttlecove grew fat and turgid. After all, even pirates need a place to rest, relax, and spend their loot.

The founders of Scuttlecove called themselves the Holy Triad, an ironic title as these blasphemers were ur-priests, divine spellcasters who stole power from the gods. The Holy Triad cultists knew that they needed a society to support their research and decadence. In only a few years, they built Scuttlecove up from nothing into a thriving, if lawless and dangerous, city. Served by a savage order of cannibalistic monks, the ur-priests used Scuttlecove to finance their debaucheries and sadistic whims. Yet in a realm where the gods are very much a reality, blasphemers such as these cannot go unpunished forever. Only six years ago, a vengeful god struck a telling blow against the Holy Triad. The ur-priests vanished from their palace during a tremendous storm that left hundreds dead. After the city recovered from the storm, its inhabitants discovered that the loss of their government may just be one of the greatest boons to ever come to Scuttlecove.

Sekorvia itself is a volcanic tropical island dominated by tangled jungles and stinking salt marshes. Barely 40 miles across at its widest point, a jagged spine of mountains (including no less than three active volcanoes) runs down its length. While a few demented hermits and feral folk dwell in lonely huts and tiny thorps, and the Crimson Fleet maintains a hidden stronghold several miles to the northwest of the city, the majority of humanoid life on the island dwells in Scuttlecove.

SCUTTLECOVE

Unlike most cities, the vast majority of Scuttlecove's inhabitants are warriors rather than commoners—it's simply too rough a place to harbor many common

folk. The city's primary exports are drugs, slaves, and stolen properties (particularly portable art objects, gems, and magical items). The city's economy is anything but stable, driven by the arrival of Crimson Fleet ships laden with loot and pirates all too eager to spend it. As a result, the majority of the city's buildings tend to be rundown and dilapidated—their owners often lack the regular income necessary to keep properties in good repair.

"Law enforcement" in Scuttlecove is handled by a sect of corrupt human monks known as the Order of Dire Hunger; these monks can be seen patrolling the streets and alleys of Scuttlecove, soliciting donations of wealth (or bits of flesh) from the citizens on a seemingly random basis to finance their depravity. A small percentage of the taxes the monks collect are returned to the city in the form of an arena, a massive public execution square, and upkeep on the docks; just enough to keep their citizens loyal.

Physically, Scuttlecove is a diseased, filthy pit of salty depression. The streets are often muddy and choked with garbage or the odd corpse yet to be claimed by a Dire Hunger monk. The buildings are almost all one-story wooden affairs, with rickety walls, sagging roofs of tarred straw or cracked wood shingles, and doorways consisting of strips of dried seaweed or cheap burlap. Those few buildings that can be construed as permanent are always the homes of powerful individuals.

Until recently, worship of the gods was the only true crime in Scuttlecove—the Holy Triad did not want divine eyes casting about their playground. Now that the ur-priests are gone, religion spreads through Scuttlecove like some new epidemic. Here and there, cultists who are little more than gangs claim abandoned structures for their doubtful deific patrons, only to be murdered by a rival cult who then claims the building as its own. Many archfiends have established cults in Scuttlecove, but the three most powerful groups today are those devoted to Graz'zt (headed by Tyralandi of the Porphyry House brothel), Mammon (headed by Kedward Bone, Scuttlecove's most powerful drug lord), and Demogorgon (patron of the Crimson Fleet and the yuan-ti of the Seventh Coil).

Scuttlecove (Large City): Nonstandard (anarchy); AL CE; 40,000 gp limit; Assets 32,900,000 gp; Population 16,450; Mixed (77% human, 5% yuan-ti, 4% half-elf, 3% halfling, 2% elf, 2% gnome, 2% half-orc, 2% tiefling, 1% dwarf, 2% other).

Idle Dangers

Obvious visitors to Scuttlecove have a chance of drawing the attention of one or more of the lowlifes and thugs that populate the place. Each day, a visitor in Scuttlecove must make a DC 20 Intimidate check to avoid attracting unwanted attention. Alternately, a DC 25 Disguise check can make a visitor appear to be a local. Failure indicates that the victim is marked by a number of Scuttlecove Thugs equal to 2 + the number of failed Intimidate checks. These thugs stalk the victim(s), striking when the advantage presents itself.

Scuttlecove Thug **CR 8**

Human rogue 4/fighter 4
CE Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +8
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; uncanny dodge
hp 70 (8 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk scimitar +11/+6 (1d6+4/18–20 plus poison)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +10/+5 (1d8/19–20 plus poison)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +9
Atk Options sneak attack +2d6
Combat Gear *elixir of fire breath*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of haste*, 2 doses of deathblade poison (Fort DC 20, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con), 10 doses of giant wasp poison (Fortitude DC 18, 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Quick Draw, Rapid Reload (light crossbow), Stealthy, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)
Skills Climb +12, Hide +10, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +8
Possessions combat gear, masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork scimitar, 500 gp in assorted jewelry

Daily Life in Scuttlecove

Not every citizen of Scuttlecove is brave enough to attack the PCs; the majority of the city's thugs are cowards at heart. Eye contact is a rarity, and merchants have learned to assume that customers are probably a lot tougher and meaner than they look. Of course, the same goes for the merchants themselves; while not every merchant is capable of defending himself in a fight, merchants don't thrive in Scuttlecove without having backup. Most pay steep protection fees to one of the city's factions—attacking or robbing a merchant is a surefire way to earn the wrath of someone important.

The people of Scuttlecove are suspicious of outsiders, and are quick to charge 150% or more for goods and services if they don't recognize a face. Once visitors gain the favor of one of the city's factions, though, suspicion quickly turns to fear, and merchants cease attempting to swindle them.

SCUTTLECOVE'S FACTIONS

With the loss of a centralized government, rule in Scuttlecove has devolved to a state close to anarchy. Only several powerful factions that have risen to prominence in the last several years keep the city from constant rioting. Each of these factions has designs on ruling Scuttlecove, yet the opposition of the other factions has thus far prevented any one faction from rising to such heights.

Crimson Fleet

Of the six factions, the Crimson Fleet may be the closest to achieving its goal of controlling Scuttlecove. These pirates certainly control the majority of Scuttlecove's trade, for a large number of citizens depend on stolen cargoes of food and supplies that only the pirates can provide with ease. The one factor that keeps the Crimson Fleet from ruling

Scuttlecove is their lack of control over the city's vice trades.

Alone among the six factions, the Crimson Fleet's stronghold is located outside the city walls in a hidden cove several miles to the northwest. It is here that the Fleet's leader, a half-demon named Cold Captain Wyther, charts and plans the rapacious activity of his fleet of murderous buccaneers.

The primary presence of the Crimson Fleet in town consists of roving packs of demonic apes known as Crimson Recruiters. These bar-lgura demons serve the Crimson Fleet as press gangs. The majority of Scuttlecove's inhabitants aren't good choices for slaves, so the demons scour the city for visitors, snatching away anyone who might make a good "recruit." Crimson Recruiters travel in bands of four; the locals have learned to ignore the grunting, slavering monsters even though their proximity can bring chills to even the most jaded criminal. When they make a catch, the demons teleport back to an empty warehouse to strip the victim of his gear before inspecting him for sickness, after which they teleport to area **E4** to imprison the victim in a cell until the Fleet decides what to do with them.

Crimson Recruiters (4) **CR 8**

Bar-lgura bloodhound 3

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extrapanar, tanar'ri)

Fiendish Codex I 29, *Complete Adventurer* 29

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +12, Spot +12

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 21

hp 88 (9 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 16

Fort +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +15 (1d6+6) and bite +10 (1d6+3)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +15

Atk Options bring 'em back alive, nonlethal force, pounce

Special Actions abduction, *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

At will—*darkness*, *cause fear* (DC 15), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport*, *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 19)

2/day—*disguise self* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *major image* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 22, Con 21, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 18

SQ mark, ready and waiting, swift tracker, tenacious pursuit

Feats Ability Focus (abduction), Endurance, Stealthy, Track

Skills Balance +8, Gather Information +8, Hide +24, Intimidate +6, Jump +34, Listen +12, Move Silently +20, Spot +12, Survival +13, Tumble +20

Possessions *bracers of armor +3*

Abduction (Su) A crimson recruiter can use *greater teleport* to transport other creatures. It can bring up to one Large or two Medium or smaller creatures with it each time it teleports. It can teleport unwilling targets as well, although an unwilling victim can attempt a DC 23 Will save to resist being transported. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Bring 'Em Back Alive (Ex) At the recruiter's option, any melee attack that would reduce a foe to –2 or fewer hit points reduces the foe to –1 hit points instead.

Mark (Ex) A crimson recruiter can mark a humanoid or monstrous humanoid foe by observing the foe for 10 minutes. The crimson recruiter gains a +3 insight bonus on Gather Information, Listen, Search, Spot, and Survival checks against the mark. A mark, once established, lasts until the crimson recruiter chooses a new mark. A mark may be chosen only once per week.

Nonlethal Force (Ex) A crimson recruiter can use a melee weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage instead without taking the –4 penalty on attack rolls.

Pounce (Ex) If a crimson recruiter charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

Ready and Waiting (Ex) A crimson recruiter can ready an action against his mark, even outside of the initiative sequence. If the mark triggers the recruiter's readied action within the next 10 minutes, the recruiter can carry out the action as if the two were engaged in combat.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a crimson recruiter can attempt to summon a bar-lgura with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell (CL 6th).

Swift Tracker (Ex) A crimson recruiter can move at normal speed while following tracks.

Tenacious Pursuit (Ex) A crimson recruiter gains a +4 bonus on Constitution checks made to resist nonlethal damage from a forced march and gains a 10-foot increase to his speed when tracking his mark.

The Dealers' Consortium

Kedward Bone is one of the most powerful and dangerous inhabitants of Scuttlecove. One of the city's original inhabitants, he quickly realized that, given the direction the city was looking to grow, the drug trade in town would be the healthiest and most profitable of them all. After all, who needs to escape reality more than a landlocked, depressed pirate?

Kedward Bone lives in a stone tower in the northeastern quarter of the city. A tall, gaunt figure, his visage is shocking to behold; his face is a terrible mess of bonespurs formed long ago by a rare disease. Unlike most wizards, Kedward does not shy away from melee combat, and enjoys wielding his dire scythe, a double-bladed weapon he invented himself. His studies of the infernal realms have rewarded him with an imp familiar. Disturbingly, Kedward has taken the notion of a "familiar" quite literally; he and the imp Matylda are quite fond of each other and spend much of their free time alone together exploring each other's capacity for perversion and lust.

Kedward Bone **CR 17**

Male human fighter 1/wizard 6/diabolist 10

LE Medium humanoid

Book of Vile Darkness 56

Init +1; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, Halfling, Infernal; *tongues*

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 19

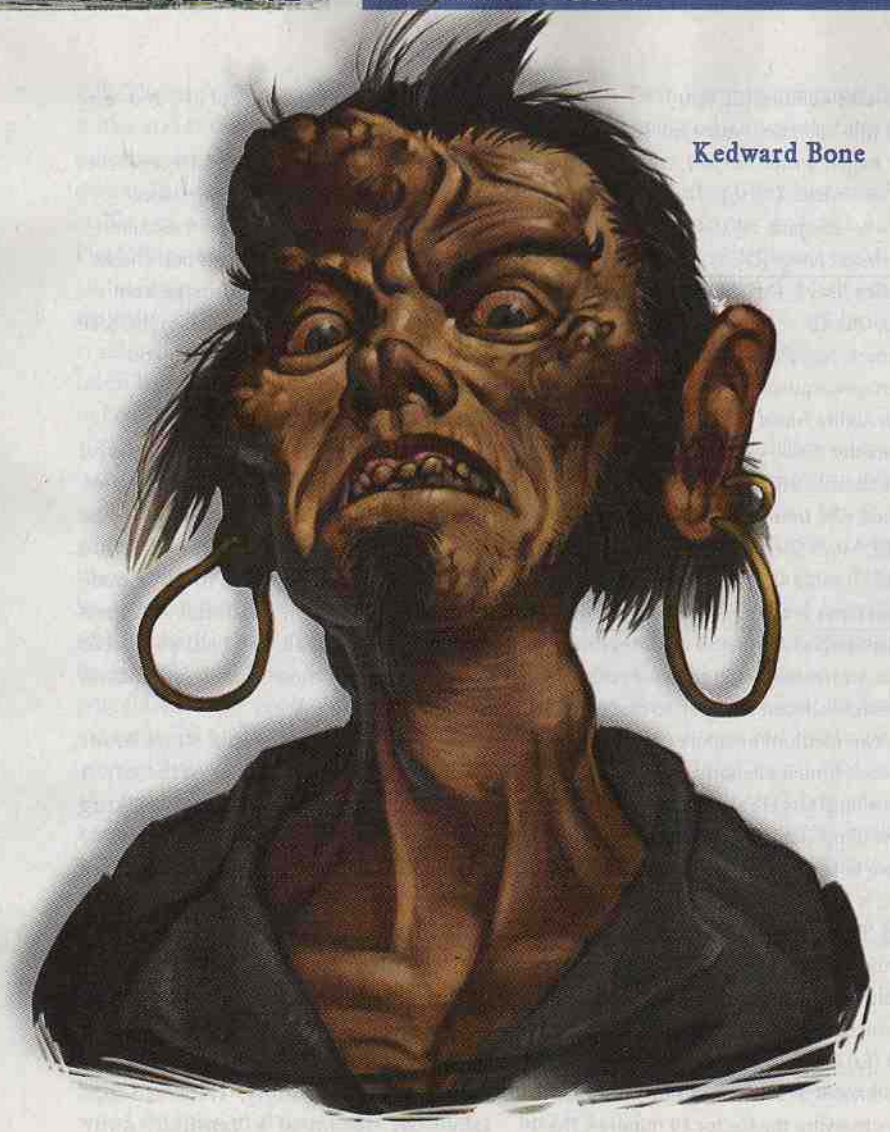
hp 70 (85 with *false life*, 17 HD)

Immune mind-affecting

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +4 *flaming burst dire scythe* +14/+9 (2d4+7/×4 plus 1d6 fire) and +4 *icy burst dire scythe* +14/+9 (2d4+5/×4 plus 1d6 ice)



Kedward Bone

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +11
Atk Options vile diabolism +3d6 4/day
Combat Gear *potion of bull's strength* (2), *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *wand of invisibility* (43 charges), *wand of haste* (11 charges), *wand of dispel magic* (27 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 16th, touch +11, ranged touch +10)
8th—*mass charm monster* (DC 26), *mind blank* (already cast)
7th—*insanity* (DC 25), *mass hold person* (DC 25), *vision, waves of exhaustion*
6th—*disintegrate* (DC 24), *greater dispel magic, Tenser's transformation, veil* (DC 24)
5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 23), *dominate person* (DC 23), *feeblemind* (DC 23), *teleport, wall of force*
4th—*charm monster* (DC 22), *dimension door, lesser geas* (DC 22), *scrying, stoneskin*
3rd—*displacement*, corrupt *fireball* (2, DC 21), *greater magic weapon* (2, both already cast), *vampiric touch*
2nd—*detect thoughts* (DC 19), *false life* (already cast), *mirror image, resist energy, scorching ray, whispering wind*
1st—*burning hands* (DC 18), *enlarge person, grease* (DC 18), *magic missile, true strike, unseen servant*
0—*light, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 25, Wis 12, Cha 5
SQ contingency, imp familiar, permanent spells
Feats Alertness (when Matylda is within arm's reach), Corrupt Spell (*fireball*), Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Evil Brand, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dire scythe), Scribe Scroll, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (dire scythe)
Skills Bluff +17, Concentration +16, Craft (alchemy) +17, Craft (weaponsmith) +11, Diplomacy +9 (+11 against evil), Intimidate +13 (+15 against evil), Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +25, Spellcraft +23
Possessions combat gear, *+1 flaming burst/+1 icy burst dire scythe, bracers of armor +5, ring of protection +1, ring of force shield, headband of intellect +6, slippers of spider climbing*, 15,000 gp in drugs, 750 gp in diamond dust for *stoneskin*

Contingency If brought below 30 hit points, a *teleport* spell activates, allowing Kedward to flee to any one of a number of secret hideouts on nearby islands.
Permanent Spells Kedward has the following permanent spell effects: *arcane sight, darkvision, see invisibility*, and *tongues*.
Vile Diabolism (Ex) Four times per day, Kedward can infuse a spell with vile, diabolic power. He may affect any spell that affects a target or area that does not include himself. The affected spell gains the evil descriptor and deals +3d6 points of unholy damage to any good-aligned creature targeted by the spell. Half of this additional damage is also vile damage. Vile damage can only be healed within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.
Kedward's Feats Corrupt Spell is a metamagic feat that adds the evil descriptor to one damaging spell selected at the time this feat is selected—half the damage this spell deals is now unholy damage. Evil Brand grants Kedward a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy or Intimidate checks made against evil creatures. Malign Spell Focus increases the save DC of any evil spell Kedward casts by +1.

Matylda, imp familiar: hp 35; *Monster Manual* 56.

Monastery of Dire Hunger

This ominous building is the stronghold of the order of Dire Hunger, a cabal of monks that long ago stumbled upon a way to make physical their basest emotions and separate them from their minds by absorbing them into the flesh. Doing so corrupted and twisted their bodies but freed their minds to focus on the pursuit of pure knowledge. Their strongest belief is that true transcension from the

physical to the spiritual can be reached only by consuming nothing but one's own species, as all other forms of sustenance are thought to be impure and alien. The cannibalistic monks encountered the three ur-priests of the Holy Triad long ago, and their twisted philosophies struck a chord with the Triad, who immediately allied with the order. Now that the ur-priests are gone, the monks desperately try to maintain their power, and have been forced to seek allegiances with other factions.

Dire Hunger Monk **CR 9**
Corrupted human monk 7
LE Medium aberration
Book of Vile Darkness 186
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16
hp 52 (7 HD); fast healing 3; **DR** 5/magic
Immune acid, nonmagical disease
Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6 (+8 against enchantment); evasion

Spd 50 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +8 (2d6+3 plus 3 vile) or flurry of blows +7/+7 (2d6+3 plus 3 vile)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Improved Trip, Stunning Fist 7/day (DC 18)
Special Actions wholeness of body (14 hp/day)
Combat Gear *potion of bear's endurance, potion of detect thoughts, elixir of truth*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6
SQ *ki* strike (magic), purity of body, slow fall 30 ft., still mind
Feats Deflect Arrows, Deformity (face), Deformity (gaunt), Improved Trip, Improved Grapple, Stunning Fist, Willing Deformity
Skills Balance +4, Escape Artist +14, Intimidate +9, Jump +28, Listen +11, Tumble +12
Possessions combat gear, *ring of protection +1, ring of jumping*

Vile Feats Willing Deformity grants a +2 deformity bonus on Intimidate checks. Deformity (face) grants the monk a +2 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks and a +2 deformity bonus on Diplomacy checks with evil creatures. Deformity (gaunt) grants a +2 deformity bonus to Dexterity, a –2 penalty to Constitution, and a +2 circumstance bonus on Escape Artist and Intimidate checks.

Porphyry House

A rose blooming in a graveyard, the beauty of Porphyry House has an undeniably sinister taint. The majestic building rises proud from the surrounding hovels and sagging shops in Scuttlecove's western quarter, and despite a great scandal several years ago, the building remains the city's most successful and powerful brothel.

Once run by yuan-ti cultists of Demogorgon allied with the Seventh Coil, a group of adventurers managed to defeat the cult five years ago and prevented the spread of a dangerous new drug called Demon's Breath. These heroes managed to accomplish this goal only with the aid of a mysterious and beautiful creature named Tyralandi, a half-fiend nymph and devotee of the demon lord Graz'zt who had been sent to destroy the rival cult.

After the yuan-ti were defeated, Tyralandi took up the reigns of the brothel. She disposed of the polymorphed monsters the yuan-ti had previously used as staff and set about hiring the most talented and exotic men and women she could find to populate her house.

Over the past five years, Tyralandi has used her resources and charms to learn secrets and sinister things that should remain hidden. She uses the bordello as her eyes and ears within the city, and few are aware of her true intention—to turn Scuttlecove into a personal paradise. She finds the Crimson Fleet to be crude and slovenly, and desires a reduction in their presence in the city. One of her favorite secrets is her deep knowledge of the Protectorate—she knows enough about this faction that a whisper in the right ear would bring the faction down. For now, however, she views the faction as a possible resource in gaining further control of Scuttlecove.

Tyralandi, Porphyry Mistress **CR 18**
Female half-fiend nymph ranger 1/thrall of Graz'zt 10
CE Medium outsider (augmented fey, native)
Monster Manual 148 & 197; *Book of Vile Darkness* 69
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +7, Spot +17
Aura blinding beauty (30 feet, DC 24)
Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Sylvan

AC 34, touch 26, flat-footed 29
hp 179 (17 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron and magic
Immune fear, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27
Fort +25, **Ref** +27, **Will** +30

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average), swim 20 ft.
Melee +3 *keen rapier* +18/+13 (1d6+4/15–20) and
claw +10 (1d6) and
bite +10 (1d4)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10
Atk Options smite good 1/day (+17 damage), spell betrayal +5d6, spellstrike +2d6
Special Actions stunning glance (30 feet, DC 24), *summon demon*
Combat Gear *barkskin +5 tattoo* (left hand), *cure moderate wounds tattoo* (face), *lesser restoration tattoo* (right hand), *resist energy tattoo* (shoulder), *tree shape* (waist), scroll of *greater teleport*, scroll of *heal*, scroll of *simulacrum* (2), *wand of magic missile* (CL 9th, 30 charges)
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 13th; +10 touch, +15 ranged touch)
7th—*heal, greater scrying* (DC 23)
6th—*antilife shell, greater dispel magic, fire seeds* (DC 22)
5th—*call lightning storm* (DC 22), violated *flame strike* (DC 21), *insect plague* (DC 22), *wall of thorns*
4th—violated *call lightning* (DC 20), *cure serious wounds, flame strike* (DC 21), *ice storm, spike stones*
3rd—*call lightning* (DC 20), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *greater magic fang* (2), *spike growth* (DC 20)
2nd—*bull's strength, flame blade, flaming sphere* (DC 19), *heat metal* (DC 19), violated *produce flame, soften earth and stone, wood shape* (DC 19)
1st—*charm animal* (DC 18), *cure light wounds* (3), *entangle, obscuring mist, produce flame*
0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, flare* (DC 17), *guidance, mending, read magic*;
Thrall of Graz'zt Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)
At will—*charm person* (DC 22)
Half-Fiend Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th)

3/day—*darkness, poison* (DC 25), *unholy aura* (DC 25)
1/day—*blasphemy, contagion* (DC 25), *desecrate, horrid wilting* (DC 29), *summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow, unholy blight* (DC 25)

Nymph Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)
1/day—*dimension door*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 22, Con 24, Int 20, Wis 24, Cha 32

SQ dark charisma, unearthly grace, wild empathy +17 (+20 against evil creatures)

Feats Abyss-Bound Soul (Graz'zt), Evil Brand, Tattoo Magic, Thrall to Demon (Graz'zt), Track, Violate Spell, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +31 (+34 against evil), Concentration +26, Craft (tattooing) +15, Diplomacy +34 (+39 against evil), Disguise +11 (+13 acting), Escape Artist +13, Heal +16, Hide +14, Intimidate +13 (+15 against evil), Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (religion) +15, Move Silently +14, Perform (dance) +31 (+34 against evil), Sense Motive +26, Spot +17, Use Magic Device +31

Possessions combat gear, *+2 glamered mithral breastplate, +3 keen rapier, amulet of health +6* (in the form of an unholy symbol of Graz'zt), *ring of Wisdom +4* (as *periapt of Wisdom +4*), *bracers of red rapture*, 18,000 in jewelry

Dark Charisma (Ex) Tyralandi gains a +3 enhancement bonus on wild empathy, Diplomacy, Bluff, Gather Information, Handle Animal, and Perform checks when dealing with evil creatures.

Demonic Gift Tyralandi used a scroll of *extract gift* (*Fiendish Codex I*) to gain a permanent +5 enhancement bonus to her Charisma. This effect functions at caster level 20th, and cannot be dispelled by a lower-caster-level effect.

Spell Betrayal (Su) When casting a damage-dealing spell on a flat-footed target, Tyralandi inflicts +5d6 points of damage.

Spellstrike (Su) If Tyralandi casts a damaging spell on a target she threatens in melee, she adds +2d6 points of damage to the damage dealt.

***Summon Demon* (Sp)** Tyralandi can summon one demon of 5 HD or less and one demon of 10 HD or less each day. This functions as a *summon monster* spell (CL 15th).

Tattoo Magic Tyralandi can craft magical tattoos using this feat (*Races of Faerûn*). A magic tattoo functions as a potion; to activate one, Tyralandi must take a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity to touch the tattoo with either hand (the hand does not need to be empty). A magic tattoo occupies a space on her body; she can not activate a tattoo if she wears a magic item in the same location.

Vile Feats Several of Tyralandi's feats are vile feats from the *Book of Vile Darkness* or *Fiendish Codex I*. Abyss-Bound Soul grants her a +2 bonus on saving throws against spells with the good descriptor and makes her immune to fear effects. Evil Brand grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy or Intimidate checks made against evil creatures. Thrall to Demon allows her to gain a +1 luck bonus once per day on any one attack roll, saving throw, ability check, skill check, or level check. Violate Spell allows Tyralandi to prepare a spell (at one level higher than the spell's actual level) and infuse it with vile energy—a violated spell has the evil descriptor and half the damage the spell inflicts is also vile damage.

The Protectorate

Alone among the six factions vying for control in Scuttlecove, the Protectorate is not a den of cruelty and hatred. Indeed, its members are as close as one might get to kind-hearted and helpful in this place. As a result, the Protectorate is also the smallest and least powerful of the six factions. Forced to live double lives, members of this hidden faction pose as pirates, drug dealers, prostitutes, merchants, or merely vagrants in Scuttlecove by day, and by night aid their kin in hidden safehouses. The goals of the Protectorate are simple—it seeks to aid those stranded in Scuttlecove, be it to escape or to accomplish any goals they may have in the city.

The Seventh Coil

The Seventh Coil is perhaps tied with the Crimson Fleet in the race for power and resources. This faction is comprised entirely of yuan-ti slavers who have preyed upon the people of Scuttlecove and the surrounding isles for years. These creatures are led by an immense monster, a six-headed yuan-ti anathema referred to as the Seventh, who affectionately refers to her followers as her "seventh head," hence the name of her organization. The Seventh Coil was actually based on another island in the Pirate Isles until five years ago, when the sudden defeat of the Porphyry House yuan-ti, coinciding with the loss of its own fortress to a volcanic eruption, left the Coil with no home and no points of contact in Scuttlecove. As distasteful as it was to the Seventh, she approached the pirates of the Crimson Fleet with an offer of allegiance. She would "donate" several of her yuan-ti slavers to aid in gathering prisoners and assist the fleet in other ways if they would allow her to relocate to Sekorvia. Cold Captain Wyther agreed, in part because the two groups both venerated the same demonic lord, and in part because he realized that he would need all the help he could get if he was to serve Demogorgon's latest needs.

ENCOUNTERS IN SCUTTLECOVE

Only the more important locations in Scuttlecove are covered here, and even then, they are presented with minimal details—just enough to spur the imagination and guide future development if the PCs seek to investigate some place not detailed further in the accompanying adventure. DMs seeking more information on Scuttlecove should consult "Porphyry House Horror" in DUNGEON #95.

Scuttlecove Harbor

The waters of the cove itself are treacherous and filled with numerous jagged reefs. In fact, the city earned its name due to the large number of scuttled ships that still rot in the cove. These ships have been left to provide cover against any large invasion; a single ship can pass through the maze of wrecks and reefs with relative ease if they have the proper charts, but a large fleet would never make it through in time to pose a threat to the city.

Anyone attempting to navigate the cove without accurate charts must make a DC 28 Profession (sailor) check

to make it safely through this maze. Possession of accurate charts of the cove grant a +10 circumstance bonus to this check. Once the piers are reached, a visitor can moor at any open spot (there are generally plenty to choose from) with little problem as long as they fly the flag of the Crimson Fleet (a red flag with a black, horned skull before two crossed scimitars).

Scuttlecove's boardwalk is where the majority of its mercantile transactions take place. The region is a tangled, chaotic mess of tents and booths, where merchants of all types hawk their wares. The boardwalk is the place to go if you're looking for something that can't be bought in more civilized areas. Slaves, stolen merchandise and magic, poisons, and rare magical components can all be found here, subject to Scuttlecove's 40,000 gp ceiling.

The Noyaro River

The Noyaro River originally bordered the eastern side of the city—the dwellings on the east shore consist of a tangled mess of temporary buildings made of wood, straw, mud, and even excrement or garbage. The Noyaro reaches a depth of 30 feet in places, and as such provides an excellent natural barrier to separate the lowest of the low from the rest of the city. The vagabonds, rogues, and hopeless who live here are mostly harmless, and spend much of their time hiding in their crude homes. This is where pirates go to die when they can't afford to be killed in a barroom brawl.

1. Scuttlecove Palace

This enormous walled complex is a mystery to the citizens of Scuttlecove. Once the home of the ur-priests of the Holy Triad, the buildings are now abandoned by the living. Those few attempts by locals hoping to claim the palace or its treasures as their own have ended in either their complete disappearance or frantic attempts to escape as the intruders are torn apart by horrific monsters and wailing spirits. After a few months, the locals learned to leave these cursed ruins well-enough alone.

2. Parts Is Parts

This grim shop is built entirely out of bones. Most of them come from monsters and large beasts, but the façade is fashioned from humanoid skulls and ribcages. This squat, two-story structure is owned by an enterprising necromancer by the name of **Rhemus Caldakar** (CE gnome male necromancer 10), a one-time adventuring companion of Kedward Bone. The two remain fairly close friends, although Rhemus is growing increasingly jealous of Kedward's successful business and his relationship with his familiar. Rhemus has lusted after Matylda for years, but is too afraid of Kedward to act on his obsession yet.

3. Skindancer Academy

This square tower of ivory houses an order of bards who call themselves Skindancers, after an exotic form of dancing coupled with stylistic torture of willing guests with needles and knives. The academy is run by an attractive halfling woman whose body is an intricate network of fine scars—this is **Peryoil Whistlecut** (CE female halfling bard 11) and although she may seem friendly, her taste in pleasure is anything but.

4. Kedward Bone's Tower

Kedward Bone's tower is made of stone, and is comprised of five stories of well-warded, well-protected floors. The first floor consists of one large room used to entertain guests and interview future business partners. It is here that Kedward Bone arranges to meet with visitors.

5. The Tall House

This two-story house towers over the shacks and shanties that are so common on the east bank of the Noyaro. Scuttlecove's most reprehensible slumlord, an obese man named **Vurch Udderwort** (NE male human rogue 5), dwells on the upper floor of this building. He often calls upon the small army of thugs who dwell on the ground floor of this building to collect on rent due him from the slum's desperate tenants.

Bracers of Red Rapture

A gift to Tyralandi from Graz'zt for defeating the previous owners of Porphyry House, these bracers of mithral and darkwood seem innocent enough until the inside surface is examined. This surface is studded with long spikes and blades—putting the bracers on inflicts intense pain, stunning the wearer for 1d4 rounds. The bracers heighten the sensations of pain and pleasure, drawing upon this energy to sustain the victim's life when pain is inflicted upon him. The victim gains a +4 bonus on all saving throws against pain-related effects, and is immune to exhaustion and fatigue. Further, whenever the wearer suffers damage from a single attack of an amount that equals or exceeds his Hit Dice, he gains a +2 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls, skill checks, and saving throws until the end of his actions in the following round. If the wearer's hit points drop to a point lower than his number of Hit Dice, he becomes *hasted* for as long as he remains this damaged (for up to 15 rounds per day). If reduced to negative hit points, the bracers immediately cure the wearer of 3d8+5 points of damage but then become inert for 24 hours. This healing occurs after the damage is suffered, and if the wearer is reduced to –10 hit points or lower, death still occurs and the healing is wasted. Finally, the bracers give the wearer the ability to cast *symbol of pain* three times a day, although the symbol must be inscribed in flesh (this takes a full-round action and inflicts 1d4 points of damage on the person).

Minor Artifact; Strong Necromancy (evil); CL 15th; Weight 1 lb.

6. Scuttlecove Orphanage

The front of this squat stone building is an open-air patio used as an auction block twice monthly to sell off excess children as slaves. The Scuttlecove Orphanage functions as a workhouse as well, a place where children harvested from loads of prisoners brought in by pirates or from the city itself toil under

the merciless command of a one-eyed taskmaster named **Sornk Ghesterwhal** (CE male human expert 3/rogue 3).

7. The Minting House

Once the base of operations of a group of thieves who specialized in coin scraping and counterfeiting, this area has become a Seventh Coil stronghold. It is detailed in full in "Serpents of Scuttlecove."

8. The Deacon's Aria

This building houses a large theater that offers several shows in the grand guignol style every week. Most of the shows offered here are little more than public torture displays, but the recent addition of a mysterious elven woman who performs a striptease ending in the removal of her own skin has drawn nightly crowds. The matron of the playhouse, a disturbingly pleasant woman named **Abetheny Rovenka** (NE female human aristocrat 12) is always on the lookout for new talent.

9. The Rattlebox

This popular tavern and public hall features all manner of dangerous games, including a pit for animal fights, a game of chance involving six metal boxes with hand-sized holes in the side (one of which contains hungry rot grubs), and high-stakes games of cards or dice. The proprietor is a violent dwarf named **Stonch Figwater** (CE male dwarf fighter 8) who proudly displays the scalped beards of those caught trying to cheat in his establishment.

10. The Birdcage

The Sisters of Lamentation are a vile collection of shaved harpies who are excellent torturers and information brokers. This building serves them as a base of operations, where they have recently been establishing stronger ties with the Crimson Fleet. This area is detailed in full in "Serpents of Scuttlecove."

11. Scuttlecove Arena

One of the few structures in Scuttlecove constructed by the Holy Triad, this modest open-air arena is a popular diversion for the people of the city. The arena is staffed by several Dire Hunger monks who are in charge of arranging weekly battles between captured monsters from elsewhere on the island and donated prisoners from pirate ships.

12. Plaza of Hanging Ruin

This terrifying structure consists of metal and wood beams arranged in a series of concentric squares. The beams are suspended 20 feet off the ground by tall stone pillars, and are festooned with coils of spiked chains. Numerous spiked manacles dangle from these beams, along with thousands of tiny chains that end in hooks, clamps, and long, thin barbed rods.

When the Holy Triad ran Scuttlecove, this plaza was a great source of income. For the low price of 100 gp, any prisoner could be mounted here for public mockery and eventual execution. Today, the Plaza has become more of a first-come, first-served public service. No one's around to enforce the payments, so anyone who can find some open space on the plaza can mount their victims here so they die slowly and painfully.

13. The Mausoleum

The dead of Scuttlecove are brought to this tall building by the monks of Dire Hunger. This building, known only as the Mausoleum, is where the monks prepare the dead for their feasts. Most of the bodies are found to be unworthy and are tossed into a deep pit in the center of the structure.

14. Porphyry House

Porphyry House is Scuttlecove's most successful brothel, and without a doubt the cleanest and most majestic building within the city walls. The structure is made of a dark purple volcanic rock called porphyry, and opens for business at sunset. At this time, the place quickly becomes crowded—entertainment here isn't cheap, but it is popular. The steep prices ensure that vagabonds and street trash stay out.

The building's façade is decorated with statues and bas-reliefs that depict handsome men and beautiful women striking lewd poses or engaged in various carnal activities. Within, the walls are decorated with red or blue tapestries or risqué paintings. Floors are deep, soft carpets over padding, and the air is pleasantly warm and thick with exotic smells. The ground floor of the building consists of guest rooms, feast halls, storerooms, and servants' quarters. The upper floor contains a large forum-like audience hall, additional rooms outfitted for handing special requests or important guests, a treasury, and personal chambers for the house's three most important members; somewhat dim-witted **Agarik** (CN male human fighter 13; the brothel's head of security), the subtly evil and manipulative **Cul** (NE female halfling bard 12; the brothel's madame), and the owner of Porphyry House, Tyralandi.

Chambers below Porphyry House once served as a hidden temple to Demogorgon. Tyralandi has since destroyed the contents of these rooms and converted them over to her own private and hedonistic retreat, a personal shrine to her demonic patron, Graz'zt.

15. The Rusty Shunt

The Rusty Shunt is a well-built, two-story wooden building, and perhaps the safest place to rest and relax in Scuttlecove. This inn is owned and run by a portly man named **Lars Landicaster** (CG human male ranger 8), a retired bounty hunter who is wanted in more nations than he can remember for various crimes short of murder. Lars has seen much in Scuttlecove, enough that he has cast aside his own cruelties. He remains in Scuttlecove out of a sense of duty to provide somewhere safe for those unfortunate enough to be born here. Lars has a strict code against harming paying customers. He asks no questions if the coins are good, and his guards are quite loyal. His prices are triple standard, but may be well worth it for a safe place to rest.

Lars' greatest secret is a small shrine dedicated to the Church of the Whirling Fury. This tiny room is located in a small complex of secret chambers in his

basement, and constitutes the second Protectorate safehouse. Lars himself isn't a member of the Protectorate, and has refused the many invitations to join. He argues that, if he's discovered, the less he knows about the faction, the better.

16. Monastery of Dire Hunger

This grim structure is built of basalt and reinforced with bands of iron. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that its architecture purposefully mocks temples devoted to St. Cuthbert. Numerous narrow windows stud the exterior walls of this one-story complex and its three-story central tower, but there is only one pair of doors. Located on the southern approach, these massive iron portals are kept locked (Open Lock DC 40) at all times.

17. Eralakni's Emporium

This large structure of green stone is owned and run by an industrious half-orc named **Eralanki** (CN female half-orc expert 8). The building is a sort of miniature marketplace, with private booths that can be rented out to merchants for the high price of 20 gp a day. This fee ensures that those merchants who set up shop here are only the cream of the crop. Eralanki herself is one of the few non-evil citizens of Scuttlecove; she has no real interest in the philosophy of good and evil, and only wants to make money. She allows the Protectorate to maintain a safehouse of sorts in the Emporium's basement, although she's considering leaking the location of the safehouse to the Dire Hunger monks as the Protectorate is late on their latest payment for her secrecy.

18. Red Foam Whaling

Once used by a band of pirates who specialized in stealing the hauls of whaling ships, this whaling factory has been deserted for years. Until recently, it served as a Protectorate safehouse, but the yuan-ti blackguard known as the Leech murdered the Protectorate members who dwelt here. This area is detailed in full in "Serpents of Scuttlecove."

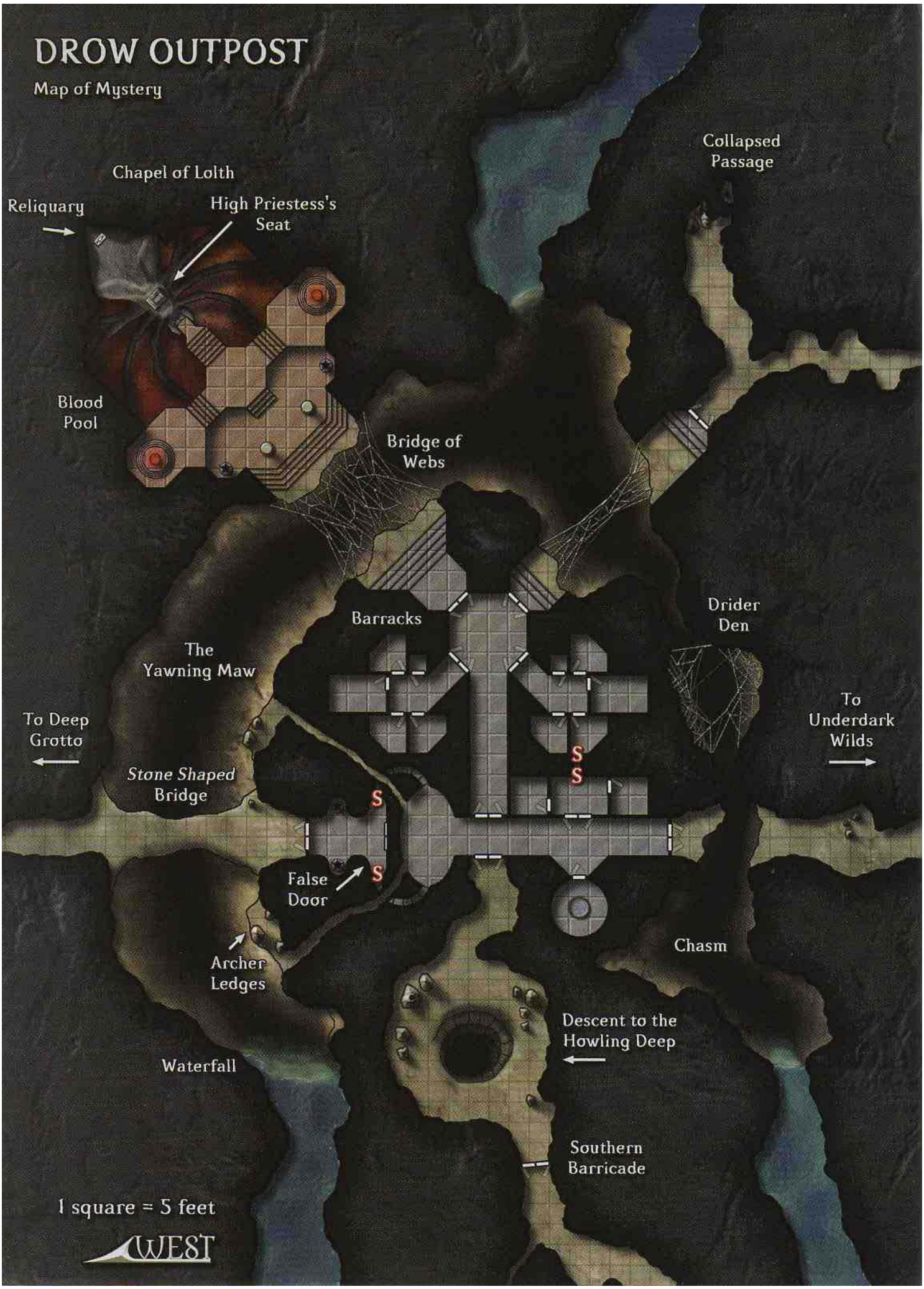
19. The Violated Ogre

The Violated Ogre is a tavern/inn that caters mostly to visiting adventurers. Naturally, the clientele of the Violated Ogre are a foul and surly lot. The place gets its name from its most popular form of entertainment, which consists of a wretched ogre mage on display on a small stage in the center of the main room. The ogre mage is stitched by thick coils of rusty wire to an iron framework of spiked bars over a large bloodstained grill in the floor. Visitors to the tavern are welcome to do what they will to the imprisoned ogre mage, either with their own equipment or using the torture instruments thoughtfully provided on a nearby tray. The ogre mage's regeneration keeps him from dying, but his mind has long since been destroyed by a *robe of powerlessness*. The ogre mage has been an attraction here for nearly ten years and has long since been driven hopelessly insane by the ordeal. The creature is now a raving masochist that takes disturbing pleasure in the ministrations of the tavern's drunken amateur surgeons.

The tavern is owned and run by a retired adventurer by the name of **Borsch Dipraft** (NE human male fighter 7), who killed the previous proprietor over a gambling debt.

20. House of the Black Rider

This grim edifice looks as if it could collapse in on itself at any moment, yet the structure is sound. The building has become a shrine to the god of disease, Incabulos, and serves as a refuge for lepers and other desperate souls. Most of the surrounding buildings are sickhouses—the southern section of the slums is generally avoided by the rest of Scuttlecove's citizens, which is how the leader of this shrine, a stooped old man in long black robes who is known to the faithful only as **Papa Crab** (NE human male cleric 6), prefers it.


DROW OUTPOST
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Collapsed Passage
Chapel of Lolth
Reliquary
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Blood Pool
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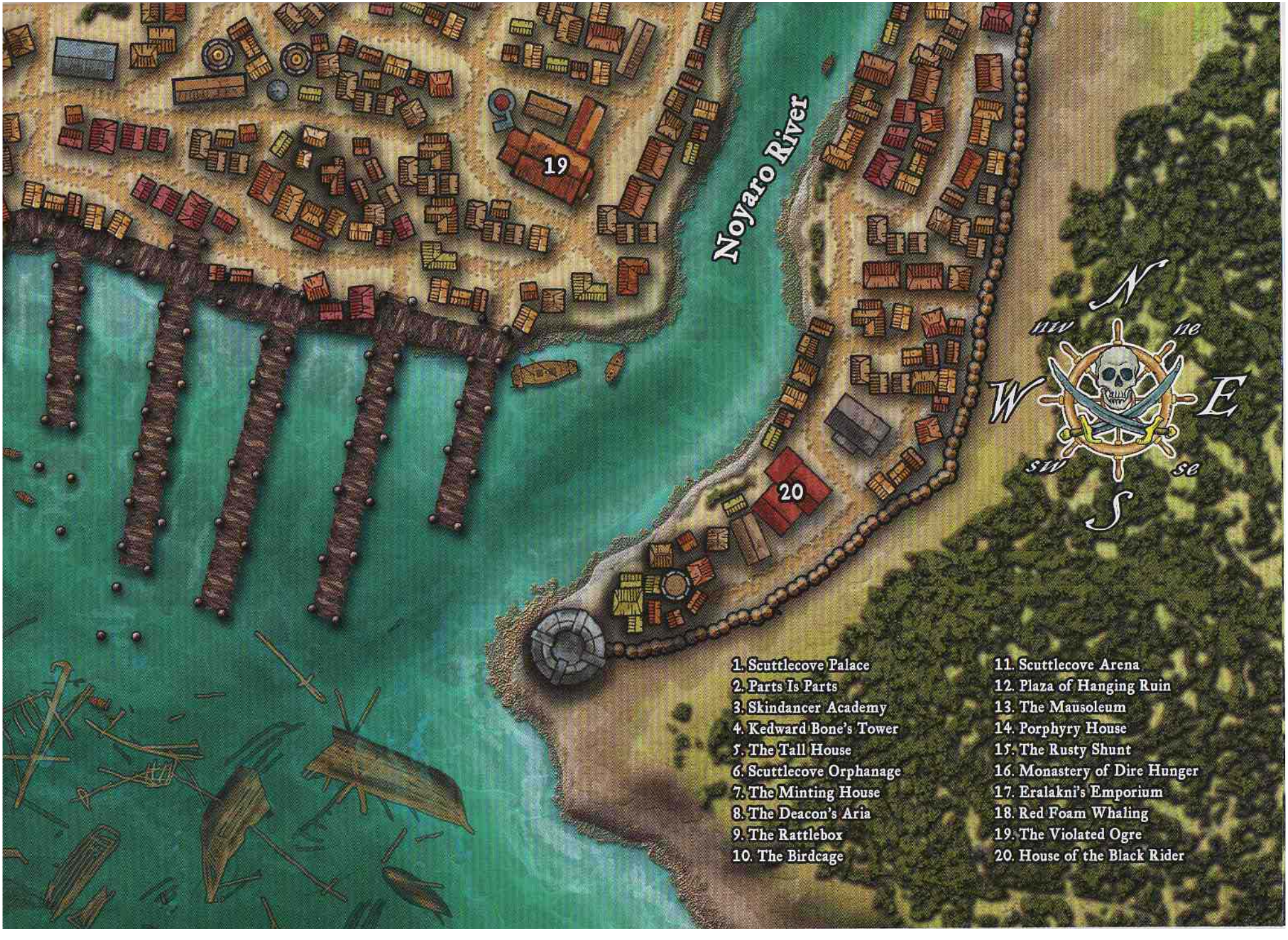
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1. Scuttlecove Palace
2. Parts Is Parts
3. Skindancer Academy
4. Kedward Bone's Tower
5. The Tall House
6. Scuttlecove Orphanage
7. The Minting House
8. The Deacon's Aria
9. The Rattlebox
10. The Birdcage
11. Scuttlecove Arena
12. Plaza of Hanging Ruin
13. The Mausoleum
14. Porphyry House
15. The Rusty Shunt
16. Monastery of Dire Hunger
17. Eralakni's Emporium
18. Red Foam Whaling
19. The Violated Ogre
20. House of the Black Rider

Savage Tide

Into the Maw

Few planes possess the raw malevolence of the Infinite Layers of the Abyss. It is a place of random violence, appalling cruelty, and pure, unadulterated wickedness. Here, unreasoning malice rules, and countless demons torture and murder for the joy of it. The Abyss is innovative in its wretchedness, with each fleeting moment birthing new and awful psychotic acts of utter evil. Those who brave its depths find no relief from its corrosive nature, nor respite from the cancerous seeds of evil blooming within all who tarry here; they find only anguish, pain, and if they're lucky, sudden, abrupt death.

"Into the Maw" is the ninth chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #356 of *Dragon* magazine features an expanded list of strange and exotic magical items that could be purchased from the mercane merchants encountered during "Into the Maw."

The PCs should be 17th level by the time they reach the prison island of Divided's Ire, and will certainly reach 18th level by the time they accomplish their goals in the prison. In fact, if the PCs take it upon themselves to defeat all six of the demonic factions in Divided's Ire in addition to rescuing Lavinia and defeating Vanthus, they may well be close to 19th level by the end of the adventure.

BY ROBERT J. SCHWALB
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | HIGH LEVEL (13TH–20TH) | PLANAR AND DUNGEON CRAWL

Adventure Background

Demogorgon's greatest liability in his mad campaign to conquer the Abyss has always been himself. His personality—his very nature—is divided, rent into two discrete, plotting individuals. His left head is Aameul and his right is Hethradiah. Each despises the other, for neither has true mastery over the body they share. Yet despite this hate, they each know that they cannot live without the other; should one half perish, the other would surely follow.

This, then, is the purpose of the *shadow pearls*, and the reason behind the dreadful savage tide that threatens civilization on the Material Plane. An idea that both his heads count as their own, one that each believes the other has not fully grasped, Demogorgon hopes to channel the rage and madness of a massive savage tide into Gaping Maw, so that he can use the wash of power to fuse his divided nature into one greater being. And through the efforts of his mortal minions, the Prince of Demons is nearly ready to begin the final stage of his plan. But before he does, he has a few loose ends to tie up. And so he gathers his minions to his side, to ensure that nothing happens to disrupt the ritual.

One such minion is Demogorgon's newest death knight, Vanthus Vanderboren. In a desperate move to claim his sister Lavinia, Vanthus and his pirate minions captured the noblewoman and commandeered the flagship of a powerful fleet of pirates, the *Crimson Scar*. Demogorgon had promised Vanthus that he would allow him access to the fleshforges of Lemoriax so that he could transform his sister into a Lemorian half-fiend. With his sister safely in hand, Vanthus activated a magical device called a *wakeportal* and sailed the *Crimson Scar* into Gaping Maw, the 88th layer of the Abyss.

Of course, the Prince of Demons has his own reasons for allowing Vanthus to bring Lavinia into Gaping Maw. He has no intention of turning his tenuous attention from his blossoming plot, nor will he transform Lavinia into a Lemorian. She and Vanthus are little more than bait, a lure that Demogorgon hopes will attract the heroes who have been a thorn in his side since they first came to the Isle of Dread. When Vanthus arrives at Lemoriax, Demogorgon orders him to take his sister to a remote prison compound called Divided's Ire, where he is to await Demogorgon's pleasure. What Vanthus doesn't know, as he completes the final leg of his journey, is that he has outlived his usefulness. Demogorgon is banking on the hatred the PCs have for Vanthus and their devotion to Lavinia, and has instructed one of his favorite murderers, a kelvezu demon named S'Sharra, to deal with the mortals once they arrive at the prison. Fortunately for the PCs, Divided's Ire holds many of Demogorgon's enemies, a number of whom would gladly aid the characters in their struggles against the Prince of Demons—for the right price.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins as the PCs activate their newly acquired *wakeportal* to travel to the Abyssian Ocean. While the characters know that Vanthus headed for Gaping Maw, they have few other leads. They must rely on their planar expertise and magic to track their prey. Failing that, Demogorgon has many enemies in the Abyss, and the PCs are bound to come across someone or something with an axe to grind. When they learn where Vanthus has taken Lavinia, they must make their way to Divided's Ire.

Inside, the characters soon learn that six different factions control the prison, each vying for dominance over the others. The death knight and his sister are somewhere inside, hidden behind scores of fiends drawn from all over the planes. To reach the death knight, the characters must deal with the other inhabitants of Divided's Ire.

While exploring the prison, the PCs have several chances to learn more about Demogorgon, his lair and layer, and ultimately his plans for the *shadow pearls*. The PCs learn enough to become convinced they must stop the demon prince, but don't learn how. The answer lies in the Wells of Darkness, where they might find someone who knows about Demogorgon's weakness—an exiled demon named Shami-Amourae.

Adventure Hooks

At heart, "Into the Maw" is a jailbreak scenario. Considering the relatively simple structure underlying the adventure, you can easily run it as a standalone adventure. You merely need to plant a compelling enough reason for the PCs to risk their lives to enter one of the nastiest planes in the multiverse, to propel them through treacherous environments, enable them to set aside their misgivings and deal with chaotic evil creatures, and finally push on through the obscene environment of Divided's Ire. Simply replace Lavinia with someone important to your campaign setting, and send the PCs in to save her.

PART ONE: INTO THE ABYSS

In "Serpents of Scuttlecove," the PCs finally had a chance to take down the Crimson Fleet. While the merchants and explorers of the Vohoun Ocean can now breathe a collective sigh of relief, the damage the fleet has done remains. The pirates have delivered nearly three dozen *shadow pearls* to different cities. While one of these has already been neutralized (whether the PCs realize it or not, the *pearl* destined for Sasserine was removed from the field during "The Bullywug Gambit"), the fact remains that 34 more are now hidden throughout the world. In each case, these *pearls* are secreted away in vaults held by agents of Demogorgon who have taken great pains to hide their treasures until the time is right to take them forth into densely populated areas. Tracking each city down, confronting their dangerous and deadly guardians, and ensuring that each *shadow pearl* is safely disposed of could easily encompass 34 separate adventures, a task that even high-level characters won't be able to accomplish before the savage tide strikes. The only way to prevent this doomsday scenario is to confront the problem at its source in the Abyss.

Before that, however, a more pressing concern faces the characters. Their

patron and friend, Lavinia Vanderboren, has been whisked away to Demogorgon's realm of Gaping Maw on the Abyss by her now-undead brother, Vanthus. Some parties may wish to rescue their ally from this horrific fate, while others may just be burning with a need to finally take down Vanthus, an enemy that has plagued their every step from the beginning of this campaign.

In any event, no one asks the PCs to travel to the Abyss for revenge, rescue, or reconnaissance into the Savage Tide—the PCs should now be among the highest-level heroes in the world, and should realize what their next task is. If they don't, feel free to guide them toward Gaping Maw via the results of divination spells. If you need a stronger hand, you can use other NPCs in the campaign to suggest a trip to the Abyss. Harliss Javell might suggest they use the *wakeportal* discovered in the Crimson Fleet's treasury to go save Lavinia. If the PCs allied with Tyralandi in "Serpents of Scuttlecove," the thrall of Graz'zt may even approach them and nudge them toward Gaping Maw. Graz'zt is aware that Demogorgon is up to something, but the Dark Prince has his six-fingered hands full with other pressing matters elsewhere on the Abyss..

Although high-level PCs have many resources, and can certainly travel to the Abyss using magic like *gate* or *plane shift*, the acquisition of a *wakeportal* at the end of "Serpents of Scuttlecove" makes sailing the *Sea Wyvern* the easiest route into the Abyss. Bringing the *Sea Wyvern* also gives the PCs a portable fortress of their own to use as a home base during these last adventures as well. The Savage Tide Adventure Path assumes that the PCs continue to use the *Sea Wyvern* as their primary mode of transportation.

The Abyssian Ocean

The Abyssian Ocean is not its own layer of the Abyss. Rather, like the River Styx, it exists on multiple layers of the plane. Its beaches are the countless oceanic shores of every layer of the Abyss, and its gulfs connect to the depths of every aquatic layer. Known to some as the Soulless Sea, this region respects no boundaries. Those with the courage to brave the deadly waters could cross the breadth of the Abyss, charting a course from the beaches of Shendilavri to the shores of Yeenoghu's Realm.

The Maw's Teeth—the location where the waters of the Gaping Maw meet the Abyssian Ocean, is only 1d4 days away under full sail, but since Gaping Maw is a legendary port, it's a DC 35 Knowledge (geography) check to set a course. If the character making the Knowledge (geography) check has at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (the planes), he gains a +5 synergy bonus on the Knowledge (geography) check. If the navigation check is failed, there's a 50% chance the PCs arrive on a random Abyssal shore, otherwise they simply don't sight land at all after sailing for 1d4 days and may attempt the check again. Parties who lack the skill to navigate to Gaping Maw can use divination magic to aid their journey, as detailed below.

Commune/Contact Other Plane: By asking the proper questions, the PCs can puzzle out which direction they should sail by eliminating directional choices that indicate "no." This grants a +15 circumstance bonus to the navigation check.

Discern Location: Demogorgon blocks this spell from functioning against creatures within Divided's Ire, which unfortunately includes both Vanthus and Lavinia—this spell is useless to aid in navigation as a result.

Wakeportal

A *wakeportal* is a mauve, teardrop-shaped mass of crystal the size of a man's fist. The crystal's tapered side has razor-sharp facets and terminates in a needle point, while the opposite side is polished smooth. The crystal flickers faintly with an inner light.

When a *wakeportal* is pressed against a ship's figurehead or prow, it slithers to life and embeds itself deep in the wood so that the smooth surface looks like an embedded gemstone. Once the *wakeportal* is embedded in a ship, the captain of that ship may activate it once per day; doing so requires 10 minutes of concentration, during which the ship must be under full sail. During this period of concentration, the ship's wake begins sparkling and flashing with mauve light. A heavy tang of salt and blood fills the air and the sky darkens. Things bubble up from the depths, bits of flesh and oily streaks oozing across the surface. The stench thickens. The waters turn foul, as if some great beast disgorged all the filth and rubbish ever thrown into the sea in one great heave. As the sky takes on a ghastly hue of red, the clouds swirl and spin with dreadful violence and mauve lightning lances across the heavens. After 10 minutes, bolts of lightning arc up from the ship's wake to strike its sails, mast, and rigging. An instant later, the *wakeportal* tears open a gateway between the ship's current location and the Abyssian Ocean, transporting the ship, its crew and cargo, and the water (and anything therein) in a 60-foot radius around the ship into the Abyss. The exact location the ship travels to on the Abyssian Ocean is random, but within 1d4 days of its intended location. Activating a *wakeportal* on a ship on the Abyssian Ocean returns it to the exact point and plane where it was when it first traveled to the Abyssian Ocean.

Strong Conjuration; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, *gate*; Price 50,000 gp; Weight 5 lbs.

The Abyss

The Infinite Layers of the Abyss is a plane of chaos and evil in its purest form, a realm of remorseless wickedness and unthinking, random violence. There is no room for mercy or compassion, leaving only unreasoning hatred and an unquenchable thirst for slaughter. Once in the Abyss, an unprepared traveler's life can be measured in minutes, for this is the home of demons.

Lawful-aligned creatures and good-aligned creatures take a –2 penalty on Charisma-based checks on the Abyss. Lawful good creatures take a –4 penalty on Charisma-based checks. Further notes on the Abyss's planar traits can be found on page 160 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Where's Lavinia?

Although the PCs know Lavinia has been taken to Gaping Maw, they have little else to go on when this adventure begins. Fortunately, the notorious nature of her prison makes narrowing down her possible locations relatively simple. It's only a DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check to know that Demogorgon maintains an island prison on Gaping Maw, a place called Divided's Ire. The use of spells like *commune*, *divination*, *sending*, and *scrying* can determine Lavinia's location as well.

If the PCs lack access to divination spells like these, you can use the encounter with the mercane merchants to aid them—the mercane are peddlers of information in addition to goods and services, and as detailed, it's a relatively simple (but expensive for the PCs) matter to learn the location of their patron from them.

Divination: Treat the answer as giving the PCs a +10 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (geography) checks to set the proper course.

Find the Path: This is perhaps the best choice. As long as the spell is cast at least once a day for the 1d4 days it takes to make the journey, *find the path* makes the navigation check used to lead the *Sea Wyvern* to Gaping Maw automatically successful.

Sending: Contacting Lavinia via *sending* while on the Abyssian Ocean has a 5% chance of failure (since until the PCs reach Gaping Maw, she's technically on another plane). Lavinia spent her voyage to Gaping Maw belowdecks, but she does know that she's currently being held in a place called Divided's Ire. In any event, in her response to the *sending*, she begs the PCs to hurry, to save her from this terrible place.

Planar Merchants (EL 19)

Not everyone the PCs encounter in the Abyss is a murderous, destructive menace. At some point after the PCs arrive on the Abyssian Ocean, they encounter a strange ship called the *Sapphire Griffon*, an interplanar merchant vessel that sails the seas of the outer planes looking for all manner of exotic trade. The *Sapphire Griffon* has sleek, transparent sails and skims across the water without leaving a wake. The ship approaches the *Sea Wyvern* quickly, but not aggressively—as soon as the ship comes within a hundred feet, the 9-foot-tall blue-skinned humanoids on board hail the PCs and ask if they wish to peruse their wares.

Creatures: The *Sapphire Griffon* is crewed by 10 tieflings and five mercanes. Nomadic creatures, mercanes travel the multiverse in constant search of new avenues of trade and opportunities to make money. This particular group has decided to scour the Abyss, and have hired a group of tiefling sailors to serve them as crew and bodyguards. The tieflings have been paid well for their tour, and are quite loyal to their employers.

So long as the PCs aren't rude or violent, the mercanes allow them onto the *Sapphire Griffon* graciously and with open arms. The ship's main deck is set up like a marketplace, allowing the PCs to shop to their hearts' content. Rather than list an exhaustive inventory of what's for sale here, assume that the PCs can find anything with a gp value of 800 gp or less (with a total inventory worth 12,000 gp). Yet, as is often the case with mercanes, what's on display is merely a fraction of what's for sale. If the PCs seek to buy or sell items in excess of what's readily available, one mercane takes an order and then *plane shifts* and *teleports* to a distant mercane warehouse, gathers up the requested items, and then *plane shifts* and *teleports* back to the *Sapphire Griffon* with the requested merchandise. A different mercane then takes the payment and delivers it immediately to a different off-plane site. The entire process rarely takes longer than 20 minutes, and gives the PCs access to items of up to 200,000 gp in value and an effectively infinite amount of inventory. As usual, you should feel free to limit what is actually available as per your campaign.

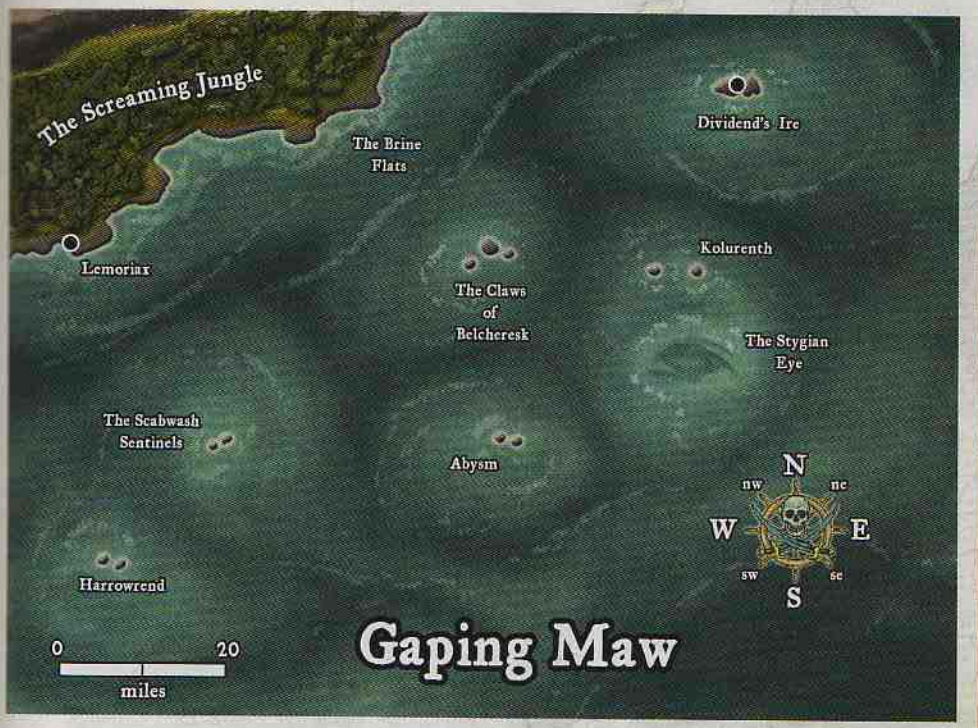
DRAGON #356 contains further details on these mercanes, as well as information on a large number of specialized and rare magic items that they may try to sell to the PCs during this encounter. The mercanes also give the PCs their names, informing them that the PCs can use *sending* spells to contact them at any time to set up a meeting for more business.

The mercanes also trade in information. If the PCs are seeking more information about the route to Gaping Maw, Lavinia's fate, or other mysteries, you can use the mercanes to supply this information. What they cannot answer with skill checks or via the casting of spells like *contact other plane* or *legend lore*, they can accomplish by traveling to an appropriate location to do the research. The mercanes generally charge 1,000 gp for information, in addition to any costs incurred by spellcasting.

Statistics for the merchants and their bodyguards are unlikely to be needed, as this is not a combat encounter. If they become necessary, the merchants are 13th-level wizards (mercanes themselves are detialed on page 204 of the *Epic Level Handbook*), and their crewmen are rogue 4/fighter 4 tieflings.

PART TWO: GAPING MAW

The primal, tropical realm of Gaping Maw reflects the bestial elements of chaos and evil, attracting feral demons and crude humanoids from throughout the Abyss. This realm's two aspects display Demogorgon's dual nature. A massive primeval continent covered in dense jungle houses those demons and mortals who serve Demogorgon as a force of strength and brutality, whereas the seemingly endless oceans and brine flats that surround the land conceal far more subtle adherents to the Prince of Demons, such as kraken and the elusive ixitxachitl. Although the PCs are destined to return to this realm in the final adventure of this campaign, for now their focus should be on rescuing Lavinia. Of course, before they can accomplish this task, they need to survive the dangerous transition between the Abyssian Ocean and the realm of the Prince of Demons.



The Maw's Teeth (EL 15)

As the PCs near the border between the Abyssian Ocean and Gaping Maw, the seas turn rough as the sky darkens to black. Through the resulting gloom, a region of the sea where hundreds of waterspouts dance and writhe marks the dangerous transition point—the Maw's Teeth.

This region is a violent stretch of sea marking the outer edge of Gaping Maw. To pass through and into Demogorgon's realm, the PCs must navigate through sheets of rain and wind and the brutal spinning columns of water whose force is easily enough to capsize even a ship the size of the *Sea Wyvern*. The ship's captain must succeed on three DC 30 Profession (sailor) checks to get through unscathed. As many PCs as wish may attempt to aid the captian's check by making DC 10 Profession (sailor) checks of their own. Alternately, they can attempt to do the same with DC 15 Knowledge (geography), Spot, Survival, or Use Rope checks to aid in navigating the journey and calling out danger zones as they are approached. Each successful aid another check grants the captain a +2 bonus on his Profession (sailor) check. At the DM's discretion, the use of certain spells, such as *control winds*, *control water*, or *summon nature's ally* (to summon air or water elementals for aid) can also grant a +2 bonus per spell cast to the Profession (sailor) checks.

Every time the captain fails a Profession (sailor) check, the situation grows worse for the *Sea Wyvern* and her crew.

First Failed Check: A swell tosses the ship. All on board must succeed on DC 10 Balance checks or fall prone. Characters lashed in place automatically succeed. Those who fail by 5 or more take 1d6 points of damage, and suffer a –2 penalty on their next skill check to aid the captain.

Second Failed Check: A glancing blow from a waterspout causes the ship to lurch violently. All on board must succeed on DC 15 Balance checks or fall prone as above. Those who fail by 5 or more take 2d6 points of damage, and those who fail by 10 or more are washed overboard. PCs lashed in place automatically succeed but take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. A character washed overboard can reboard the ship by making a DC 30 Swim check followed by a DC 30 Climb check, otherwise he is swept away from the *Sea Wyvern* by currents in a random direction at a speed of 60 feet.

Third Failed Check: A huge wave crashes over the *Sea Wyvern's* bow. All on board must succeed on DC 15 Reflex

Gaping Maw Locations

Additional details on these locations can be found in the *Fiendish Codex I* (pages 140–141).

Abysm: Two imposing serpentine towers emerge from the turbid seas here. Each ends in a minaret resembling an enormous fanged skull, and together the spires comprise the fearsome fortress Abysm, sanctuary of the Prince of Demons himself.

The Brine Flats: The low seabed surrounding Gaping Maw's mainland provides shelter from the otherwise intense tides of the layer's ocean, resulting in vast stretches of shallow, salt-rich flats.

The Claws of Belcheresk: The balor Belcheresk, honored agent of Demogorgon and perhaps the demon best positioned to inherit his widespread domain, dwells upon these rugged islands.

Divided's Ire: Once a pleasure palace, Demogorgon has transformed this island into a horrific prison.

Harrowrend: Vast colonies of seabirds, stirges, and winged demons swarm the heights of the Harrowrend Pinnacles, a wretched edifice ruled by a giggling, slobbering babau named Karizmodus the Carver.

Kolurenth: A stone fortress perched high atop this rocky pinnacle houses one of Demogorgon's most formidable champions, the death knight Saint Kargoth the Betrayer.

Lemoriax: The wide, overgrown avenues and crumbling ziggurats of the "capital" city of Lemoriax echo with the screams of tens of thousands of savage demons.

The Scabwash Sentinels: The hollowed-out interior of this pair of connected stone pinnacles contains the workshop-domains of five brilliant sibriex obyriths (*Fiendish Codex I* 53) and their numerous servitor demons.

The Screaming Jungle: This immense region is named for the constantly keening fiendish monkeys, lemurs, and apes that dwell below its leafy canopy.

The Stygian Eye: Vessels that fall victim to this persistent maelstrom are deposited at a random location on the Abyssian Ocean.

saves or be washed into the sea (see above). Those lashed to the deck get a +4 circumstance bonus to the save, and if they fail simply take 4d6 points of damage—they are only washed out to sea if the saving throw was a natural 1. In addition, 1d4 sails tear free from the rigging. Each sail lost imparts a –4 penalty on Profession (sailor) checks to continue.

Fourth Failed Check: As three failed checks, but a powerful gust of wind cracks the main mast. It falls in a random direction. Creatures in its path must succeed on DC 15 Reflex save or take 3d6 points of damage. All further Profession (sailor) checks made to navigate the Maw's Teeth suffer a –10 penalty.

Fifth Failed Check: A 50-foot-tall wave crashes over the ship, snapping the remaining masts and capsizing the ship. Without powerful magic, the *Sea Wyvern* sinks in 2d6+10 rounds.

Retreat: At any time, the ship's captain may make a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check to retreat from the Maw's Teeth instead of making a check to make further progress. On a successful check, the *Sea Wyvern* quickly moves back to safety on the Abyssian Ocean side, where repairs can be made to the ship.

Magic: *Control weather* can subdue the maelstrom around the Maw's Teeth enough so that a ship may pass through with ease, although the nature of the Abyss resists such magic. In order for this tactic to succeed, the caster must make a DC 25 caster level check. *Miracle* or *wish* can achieve the same result without needing to make a caster level check.

Development: As with sailing the Abyssian Ocean, the PCs must once more chart their course upon arriving on Gaping Maw. From the point where the PCs appear, it's 100 miles to Divided's Ire. A DC 25 Knowledge (geography) check is required to plot a course there. Once the course is plotted, it's about a day-and-a-half journey for the *Sea Wyvern* to reach the prison.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to navigate the Maw's Teeth, award them experience as if they'd defeated a CR 15 creature.

An Unlikely Guide (EL 17)

As the PCs sail through Gaping Maw, you can liven up their journey by using some of the encounters suggested on page 139 of *Fiendish Codex I*. Alternately, you can use this encounter at some point during the journey, especially if the PCs are having trouble forming a plan or need a guide to help them on their way.

As the encounter begins, all PCs on deck of the *Sea Wyvern* should make DC 20 Spot checks. Success indicates they notice a strange vessel with a very low waterline floating toward them. At the center of the strange boat flickers a bright light, like that of a bonfire. As the object draws nearer, it is revealed to be an enormous floating clot of blood and meat stretched over a bony frame. A cage of dark iron rocks about at the clot's center, inside of which howls what appears to be a twisted angel shrouded in tongues of fire. The "angel" reaches a thin hand out from between the bars of the cage, screaming for help as it spots the *Sea Wyvern*. An instant later, a pair of immense purple horrors tears free of the clot, rearing back and shrieking with rage.

Creatures: The two purple demons are four-armed undead monsters known as blood fiends, and the blood clot is their horrific and foul boat. The blood fiends are in the process of transporting a prisoner (a palrethree demon named Azael) to Thanatos. Azael was once one of Orcus's more trusted servants, an agent the Prince of Undead sent to Gaping Maw to spy on Demogorgon after hearing rumors of the Prince of Demon's latest project. Unfortunately for Azael, Demogorgon grew wise to the mole. The blood fiends, sent to shadow Azael, "rescued" the demon just before he would have been captured by a band of Lemorian bounty hunters, and now they sail on this skiff made from the remains of 1,000 slaves back to Thanatos, where they hope to turn Azael over to their lord for a ripe reward.

Blood fiends are ogre-sized humanoid demons with thick, scaly hide and four arms. Their faces are wolflike, with glowing eyes and large teeth. A palrethree demon is a tall, emaciated humanoid with blood-red skin and bony, white, vestigal wings. Its body is constantly sheathed in fire that changes color and appearance at its whim.

The cage Azael is kept in is made of adamantine (Hardness 20, hp 90, Break DC 36), and locked with a key hidden in the flesh near the bow of the boat. Azael knows the key's hidden up there, but it still takes a DC 25 Search check to find it.

AZAEL **CR 11**

Male advanced elite palrethee
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, fire, tanar'ri)
Monster Manual II 58
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +18, Spot +18
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20; Dodge, Mobility
hp 114 (12 HD); **DR** 10/good
Immune electricity, fire, poison
Resist acid 10; **SR** 18
Fort +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 slams +17 (1d8+5 plus demonic burn)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +17
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack
Special Actions *summon tanar'ri*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility*
1/day—*fear* (30-foot radius, DC 16)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 16 Cha 15
SQ *fiery shield*
Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack
Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +19, Hide +18, Knowledge (the planes) +15, Listen +18, Sense Motive +18, Search +15, Spot +18

Demonic Burn (Ex) A creature hit by Azael's slam must make a DC 21 Reflex save or catch fire. The fire burns for 1d4 rounds, inflicting 1d6 fire damage each round.
***Fiery Shield* (Sp)** When a creature attacks a palrethee with a non-reach melee weapon, the attacker takes 1d6+8 points of fire damage (spell resistance applies, CL 8th). This ability can be dispelled, but the palrethee can reactivate it on its turn as a free action.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, Azael can attempt to summon another palrethee with a 30% chance of success. Azael has already used this ability in his daily attempt to escape his cage—the blood fiends are quick to slaughter any summoned demons, and so far, this tactic hasn't worked.

Blood Fiends of Orcus (2) **CR 15**

Male advanced blood fiend
CE Large undead
Fiend Folio 47

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +32, Spot +32
Languages Abyssal

AC 32, touch 12, flat-footed 29; Dodge, Mobility
hp 120 (16 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 15/good
Immune electricity, undead traits
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 24
Fort +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +15

Spd 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect)
Melee 4 claws +15 (1d6+8 plus energy drain) and bite +10 (1d8+4 plus blood drain)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +20
Special Actions domination
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th)

At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only)
3/day—*chaos hammer* (DC 19), *darkness*, *unholy blight* (DC 19)
1/day—*blasphemy*, *desecrate*

Abilities Str 26, Dex 16, Con —, Int 17, Wis 20, Cha 21
SQ alternate form, create spawn, gaseous form, turn resistance +6
Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Lightning Reflexes, Mobility
Skills Bluff +13, Concentration +19, Hide +26, Listen +32, Move Silently +30, Search +30, Sense Motive +32, Spot +32

Alternate Form (Su) A blood fiend can assume the shape of a fiendish bat, a fiendish dire bat, a dire wolf, a howler, or a nightmare as a standard action. This functions as *polymorph* (CL 12th) except that the demon also gains the exceptional abilities of the form assumed, and can maintain the assumed form indefinitely.
Blood Drain (Su) A blood fiend deals 1d4 points of Constitution drain every time it hits with its bite attack as it drains blood.
Create Spawn (Su) An outsider with the evil subtype slain by a blood fiend's energy drain attack rises as a blood fiend 1d4 days later.
Domination (Su) As a standard action, a blood fiend can attempt to dominate any creature within 30 feet that looks into its eyes. This functions as *dominate monster* (CL 18th); a DC 23 Will save negates the effect.
Energy Drain (Su) Any living creature hit by a blood fiend's claw must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or gain one negative level. For each negative level bestowed, the blood fiend heals 5 points of damage, gaining any excess healing as temporary hit points. It's a DC 23 Fortitude save to remove the negative level.
Gaseous Form (Su) A blood fiend can assume gaseous form as a standard action at will. This ability functions as the *gaseous form* spell (CL 5th), except that the blood fiend can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet (perfect). A blood fiend reduced to 0 hit points automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. Its fast

A Note About North

Although Gaping Maw lacks a north pole, this adventure's text and maps utilize the cardinal directions as an arbitrary means for describing the locations the PCs visit.

healing begins as soon as it has rested anywhere for 1 hour. A *dismissal*, *dispel evil*, *banishment*, *dictum*, or *holy word* cast on it while its current hit points are below 1 destroys it utterly.

Tactics: When the blood fiends notice the *Sea Wyvern*, they quickly decide to add her and her crew to their haul. The first blood fiend uses *greater teleport* to move to the deck of the PCs' ship, preferably within reach of a spellcaster. It parks itself there, casting *blasphemy* or using domination to order a spellcaster overboard. Thereafter, it uses full attacks each round.

Meanwhile, its companion takes to the air and casts *unholy blight* at the densest concentration of PCs. It supports its ally with its spell-like abilities until one or more PCs fall, at which point it joins the other blood fiend.

Should the PCs reduce one or both blood fiends to 30 hit points or less, both teleport back to their ship. On their next action, one casts *desecrate*. There, they make their stand, fighting to the death.

The clot-ship measures 30 feet in diameter. Given its spongy nature, it counts as difficult terrain. Each space costs 2 squares of movement, and running or charging is impossible.

Treasure: Hidden in the coagulated blood near the stern of the clot-ship is the blood fiends' stash of treasure. The PCs can recover these items by peeling away layers of rancid material and by succeeding on a DC 25 Search check, revealing 700 pp, an emerald worth 1,200 gp, three black pearls worth 600 gp each, four pieces of amber worth 110 gp each, a *ring of improved swimming*, and a *periapt of wound closure*.

Development: Azael is in a bad spot. Demogorgon wants to imprison him and Orcus wants to destroy him for failing in his mission. The PCs' arrival presents him with an interesting opportunity. If he can somehow gain the PCs' confidence, he hopes to benefit from their protection while also learning why the characters are here.

If the characters give him time to talk, Azael thanks them for rescuing him and declares that he owes them a debt of service, and promises to help them in any way he can. He's friendly and pliable and doesn't threaten the PCs at all. In fact, he assumes a servile and flattering demeanor, answering questions to the best of his ability, shading lies with truth. Should the PCs subject him to *zone of truth* or *discern lies*, he doesn't resist and speaks truthfully. What follows are some possible questions and suitable answers.

Who are you? "My lord, I am your humble servant, Azael."

What are you? "Misunderstood, it seems. Some would disparage my character by calling me a demon. Whilst I hail from this plane, it is by no choice of mine."

Why were you in that cage? "I have angered my former master. Those blood fiends were to deliver me to Thanatos. Your rescue has spared me from an awful fate."

Who did you serve? "Orcus, Lord of Thanatos and Prince of Undeath... although I ought to add that I was an unwilling conscript in his service. He can be violently persuasive, as I'm sure you can imagine."

What did you do to anger Orcus? "I was to spy on Demogorgon and learn something of his current plots. Alas, I am a poor spy and was found out. My cover blown, I did the only thing I could do: I fled."

And what did you find out? "Not enough, given my current predicament. Why do you ask? Are you somehow involved with the *shadow pearls*?"

Shadow pearls? "Of course! Masters, you are so coy. But I can play along."

What does Demogorgon intend to do with them? "Don't you know? I know little, of course. I do believe the Prince of Demons intends to use the energies they unleash to spread madness and savagery throughout the Material Plane, though I know not why."

Where would Demogorgon send captured enemies? "That one's easy—to a place called Divided's Ire. Has he taken someone dear from you? I would advise against visiting the Ire, of course. Dangerous place, that. You'll need a guide, naturally. Perhaps I could help in some way? It's the least I can do."

How can we get to Divided's Ire? "I'll be happy to lead you, friends. If you are opposed to Demogorgon, assisting you can only help me to regain my place in Orcus's favor. Orcus despises Demogorgon, and anything that would vex the Sibilant Beast is pleasing to my former master."

The PCs should have little reason to trust Azael, and the demon knows this. True to his nature, he likely betrays them at some point, but he honestly sees helping the PCs as his only hope of escaping Orcus's wrath. There's nothing forcing the characters to take Azael along, but he does come through for them. His advice when charting a course to Divided's Ire grants a +4 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (geography) checks.

Approaching Divided's Ire

The final leg of the journey finds the *Sea Wyvern* approaching an angry smear of red that stains the skies on the horizon. As the PCs draw closer, the air becomes tainted with the stench of sulfur and ash, heavy with the toxins spewed forth from the volcano. When the islands finally come into view, the PCs see a pair of markedly different landmasses. Jungles blanket the eastern island, choking the place with fecund growth. Waterfalls created by rainwater spill down from the heights, adding to the impression of a verdant paradise filled with life. In contrast, the western island is barren, shrouded in ash spewed from the various cracks and vents crisscrossing its surface. Where the eastern island features inviting sandy beaches, the western offers nothing but jagged rocks and a river of lava that spills into the sea, throwing up clouds of caustic steam. Straddling the gap between the islands is Divided's Ire. Dark shapes (vrocks and nabassu demons) wheel in the air above the prison complex, and the sky is pregnant with violence as if the island itself was waiting for the right moment to strike.

The Paradise

The eastern island offers plenty of places for the PCs to moor their ship in the form of coves and deep water inlets perfect for dropping anchor and hiding the *Sea Wyvern* from passersby. As the characters circle the island, allow them DC 20 Spot checks. Those that succeed note a single mast rising above the trees in an isolated cove (area **A**). Investigating the cove turns up the *Crimson Scar*, the ship Vanthus stole from Cold Captain Wyther to make his journey to the Abyss. The ship flies no colors, and there's no activity on the deck. Exploring the ship reveals nothing of interest except for the fact that it has been scoured clean of both life and loot—nothing of value remains on deck.

Despite the condition of the *Crimson Scar*, the characters can leave the *Sea Wyvern* safely moored anywhere along the coast of Paradise for several hours. Still, the PCs may be reluctant to leave their only haven in the shallows of a sinister island, and with cause. Every 8 hours, there's a 20% chance that a flock of eight vrocks notices the *Sea Wyvern* and moves to investigate. Spells like *antipathy*, *forbiddance*, *Mordenkainen's private sanctum*, and *mirage arcana* can adequately protect the *Sea Wyvern*—otherwise, if the PCs leave their ship untended (or poorly guarded) they may just return to find it as picked over as the *Crimson Scar*.

Paradise is relatively small and the characters should be able to reach the prison in no time at all. Though the distance is short, the PCs do have to climb a great deal, making the going slow unless the characters use magic to close the distance. Flight cuts down on travel time but is not much safer, as the nabassus in area **13** are entitled to Spot checks to notice approaching fliers. If at least one succeeds, he alerts his fellows telepathically and all four close on the intruders.

Other monsters, like fiendish dinosaurs, fiendish dire animals, retrievers, and demons of all types dwell in these jungles. If the PCs spend too much time here, feel free to have them encounter some of these deadly denizens.

The Penance

There are far fewer places to land on the shores of the western island. The waters here are treacherous, hiding sharp rocks that can damage the *Sea Wyvern's* hull, to say nothing of the poor visibility caused by the volcanic mists. The western island is utterly barren, little more than naked rock pierced with vents that spew toxic gas and steam into the air, covering the place in a thick poisonous mist. The top of the island is a fiery wound, a caldera that hemorrhages lava that forms a river that spills down to the seas, throwing up plumes of caustic steam that greedily consume whatever flesh they touch. Nothing lives here aside from those villainous fiends that dwell in the ruins of the prison far above.

If the PCs opt to approach the Ire via this island, they receive concealment (20% miss chance) from the thick mist. While there are no monstrous threats here, the island itself serves as their adversary. Each minute the characters move on this island, they must succeed on a DC 25 Fortitude save or become poisoned (initial damage 1d6 Wisdom and secondary damage 2d6 Constitution). In addition, every 10 minutes there's an 8% chance of a random environmental effect. Roll on the table on the next page to see what hazards the PCs face. A DC 20 Survival check made every 10 minutes can reduce the chance of a hazard to 4%.

PART THREE: DIVIDED'S IRE

Straddling the peaks of Paradise and Penance is the prison known as Divided's Ire. Built around the caldera of an active volcano, the prison is on the constant verge of collapse. Had it been built on the Material Plane, it would have long ago done just that, but the unearthly nature of the Abyss itself holds it together to further the torment of those held within its walls. Yet the constant volcanic activity and earth tremors have still done their part in damaging certain portions, and the walls and floors are cracked and split in places.

Divided's Ire was not always a prison; originally, it's purpose was much closer to a "pleasure palace," where Demogorgon dallied with his consorts. His favored courtesan near the end of this time was

Penance Hazards

d%	Hazard
01–20	A vent spews steam up in a 60-foot-cone; 10d6 fire damage; Reflex DC 25 half.
21–40	An area of thin crust gives way, dropping a random character into a pool of lava for 20d6 points of fire damage. A DC 20 Reflex save reduces this damage to 4d6.
41–60	The ground trembles. All characters must succeed on DC 15 Balance checks or fall prone. Characters failing by 5 or more take 1d6 points of damage as they land on jagged rocks.
61–80	Flaming cinders rain from above, dealing 2d6 points of fire damage and 4d6 points of bludgeoning damage to all characters; DC 15 Reflex half.
81–00	The air thickens with toxins: Fortitude DC 30, initial damage 1d6 Wisdom, secondary damage 2d6 Constitution.

an ambitious succubus named Shami-Amourae. The affair came to a violent end when Demogorgon discovered that Shami-Amourae had been manipulating his conflicting personalities to advance her station. Enraged, he sealed her away in the prison realm known as the Wells of Darkness (the 73rd layer of the Abyss) and repurposed Divided's Ire, transforming it into a prison for those who wrong him.

Since the Prince of Demons never cared who or what he sealed up in his grand prison, Divided's Ire came to hold all sorts of creatures, including mortals, celestials, and agents of rival demon lords and archdevils. As the place slipped further and further from the attentions of the Prince of Demons, the inhabitants began to slip free from their cells. Some escaped, but others instead seized the opportunity to become rulers of different parts of the prison. Rather than work together, these self-created prison wardens spent most of their resources warring with one another, weeding out the weak so only the most dangerous inhabitants remain in a stalemate for the battle to control the prison.

A tenuous peace now exists between six factions in Divided's Ire, each led by a different warden. The balance of power here is delicate, though, and with Vanthus's arrival on the scene, the situation has grown increasingly unstable. One tiny misstep could plunge the entire compound into a terrible war that would ultimately destroy the prison and all within it. It is to this realm the PCs come, and this tenuous balance may be their greatest asset.

The Prison

Divided's Ire consists of three massive buildings connected by a series of bridges. The eastern structure is the largest, though in the worst shape, having suffered structural damage from a recent bout of tremors. To the west are two large structures, one built on either side of the caldera. These buildings are in great condition considering their proximity to the volcano. Between the eastern structure and the western buildings is a drop that descends almost 2,000 feet to the sea below, a gap that leaves an impossibly thin cliff face along the eastern side of the volcano. Crossing this gap are two massive bridges. A fourth and final structure stands on a small island in the middle of the lava flow.

The building exteriors are particularly macabre, decorated with bas-reliefs and friezes showing demons in profane acts of debauchery with themselves, each other, and a host of countless victims. Soot and ash stain everything here, and the air is alive with fluttering cinders that burn whatever they touch. Plumes of toxic smoke hang in the air above, choking the life out of anything and anyone who lingers here. As a result, the immediate environs on both islands are scorched earth littered with the blackened remains of old corpses, twisted trees, and indefinable lumps of burnt material.

Defenses: Since so many of the creatures Demogorgon imprisoned here can teleport or summon aid, one of the most important defenses of Divided's Ire is a magical field similar to that created by a *forbiddance* spell. This field wards the entire structure, to a height of 1,000 feet above, and prevents all forms of planar travel into or out of it. This includes all teleportation spells, *plane shifting*, astral travel, ethereal travel, and all summoning spells (including the spell-like ability of many fiends to summon allies). This effect also blocks all attempts to magically locate creatures within, such as via spells like *locate creature* and *discern location* (other divination spells, including scrying effects, are not so affected). This zone also incorporates a potent effect similar to that created by *sympathy* that targets outsiders—any outsider that enters the area becomes filled with an overwhelming urge to remain within the zone unless it makes a DC 28 Will save. Those who fail find it difficult to even contemplate leaving the prison—this is the primary reason that even though many of Divided's Ire's prisoners have escaped their cells, they have yet to move on from the prison. They interpret this compulsion differently; some believe they are destined to rule the prison, while others remain simply because they want to destroy their nearby rivals. Under extreme conditions (such as when attempting to flee certain death) an outsider can attempt to escape the prison by making a DC 28 Will save, but it may only attempt this save once per day. This *sympathy* effect is a mind-affecting compulsion.

Areas **26–28**, once the primary point of arrival to the prison, lie outside of this magical field.

The external walls are magically treated hewn stone and the internal walls, floors, and ceiling are magically treated iron. All doors are wrought from tainted green iron mined from the depths of Gehenna. These doors ooze a noisome poison, and anyone who touches them must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save to resist the effects (initial and secondary damage 1d4 Wisdom drain). Worse, this venom is highly addictive. Anyone damaged by this poison must succeed on a DC

25 Fortitude save upon suffering the secondary damage or become addicted. An addicted character must touch one of the filthy doors of Divided's Ire for his daily fix, otherwise he must make a DC 25 Fortitude save to avoid taking 1d6 points of Dexterity, Constitution, and Wisdom drain. To recover from the addiction, the character must succeed on two consecutive Fortitude saves. Addiction can be removed as if it were a disease. Creatures that are immune to poison can touch the doors without harm and run no chance of becoming addicted.

The ceilings throughout Divided's Ire rise 30 feet overhead.

External Walls: 3 ft. thick; Hardness 16; 1,080 hp; Break DC 70; Climb DC 22.

Internal Walls: 1 ft. thick; Hardness 20; 720 hp; Break DC 45; Climb DC 15.

Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; 60 hp; Break DC 28.

Lighting: Unless otherwise mentioned, the rooms within Divided's Ire have shadowy illumination from skull-shaped iron lanterns that shed faint fiery light at sporadic intervals along the wall.

Air Quality: The air outside of the prison within a mile radius of Divided's Ire is foul and toxic. Each minute the characters remain outside, they must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save against inhaled poison. Initial damage is 1d6 Wisdom damage and secondary damage is 2d6 Constitution damage. Inside the prison, the air remains foul-smelling, but the toxin levels are not dangerous.

The Factions

Over the decades, several dangerous escaped prisoners have decided to make a part of Divided's Ire their own. Many have risen and fallen, and those six who remain today are the worst of the worst, each with designs on seizing the prison for their own purposes. The faction leaders jockey for power and influence, looking for whatever advantage they can before sending their minions to destroy their enemies. There are six major power groups.

Vanthus

DUNGEON DRESSING

Throughout Divided's Ire, there are many empty rooms (once prison cells, storerooms, or guardrooms) left for you to fill in if desired or to leave empty if you don't. To spruce up some of these locations, you can roll on the following table to add a few unpleasant details to evoke the unique character of this place.

Roll	Result
01–05	1d6 severed fingers
06–10	Pool of warm blood
11–15	Hunk of quivering flesh
16–20	Pile of bloody teeth
21–25	Spray of blood
26–30	Dead bard
31–35	Squealing, mutated rat
36–40	Broken holy symbol of St. Cuthbert
41–45	Dead fish
46–50	Bloody eyeball
51–55	Pile of dung
56–60	Maggots!
61–65	Empty wand
66	Wiggling tooth formed from skin
67–70	Pail of suspicious fluid
71–75	Broken manacle
76–80	Random graffiti written in Celestial
81–85	Old sock
86–90	Bag of entrails
91–95	Rusty scalpel
96–00	Partly devoured horse

- **Belshamoth (areas 16–21):** A disgusting and depraved shator demodand who pines monstrosity S'Sharra.
- **Kululblax (areas 6–9):** A glabrezu who was once the original warden of the complex, but years of laxness and decadence have eroded his authority.
- **Lillianth (Areas 22–25):** A marilith condemned to Demogorgon's prison after being betrayed by Graz'zt's son Athux.
- **Orgosh (area 33):** A bullywug lich who once advised Demogorgon on matters necromantic, relegated now to the ignoble role of glorified butler.
- **Saureya (areas 29–31):** A fallen angel who has slipped into madness, filled with a self-destructive impulse to serve Demogorgon as he once did his former master Adimarchus.
- **S'Sharra (areas 2–5):** A ruthless kelvezu demon and the only faction leader who came to Divided's Ire of her own volition, S'Sharra hopes to murder Kululblax and take command of the compound.

Vanthus

The newest arrival in Divided's Ire is Vanthus Vanderboren. Not long after he arrived in the Abyssian Ocean, a flock of shadowy demons sought him out. Sent by a mysterious demon lord named Socothbenoth, the demons promised Vanthus all manner of wealth and power if, instead of sailing to Gaping Maw, he would only follow them to the 597th layer of the Abyss, a place called Goranthis, to meet with their patron. Vanthus drove the demons off, but upon arriving at Lemoriax discovered that Demogorgon had not the time to speak with him until after the savage tide had come and gone. He managed to secure an audience with the balor Belcheresk, one of Demogorgon's most powerful agents in Gaping Maw, and was told to take his sister to Divided's Ire and await his master's pleasure there. Vanthus agreed, realizing that the prison would likely be the best place to keep his sister while waiting for her eventual transformation into a Lemorian half-fiend—at Divided's Ire, her chances of escape would be minimal.

Yet things did not go well for Vanthus or his crew upon arriving at Divided's Ire. They found the place in chaos, no longer a prison but a madhouse ruled by escaped prisoners. His crew was quickly slaughtered when it was caught in the crossfire of a conflict between S'Sharra and Kululblax, and as he attempted to escape, another fiend stole his sister from him. Enraged, Vanthus attempted to reclaim Lavinia from the marilith Lillianth, but could not stand on his own against her forces.

So now, Vanthus has retreated to an isolated corner of Divided's Ire to brood and plot how best to reclaim his sister. The shadows of Socothbenoth have sought him out again, and while he remains loyal to Demogorgon, their corrosive whispers are working. Soon, he will shift his allegiance to Socothbenoth and, with the aid of his new master, Vanthus hopes to reduce Divided's Ire to rubble, if that's what it takes to reclaim Lavinia.

Key Locations

All of the following locations correspond with those indicated on the Divided's Ire map. The descriptions of the rooms and areas are just snapshots of the complex, reflecting a typical arrangement of the denizens when the PCs arrive. The inhabitants, in most cases, don't just wait around to be killed. They have plans and motivations of their own, and the longer the PCs wander the corridors and chambers while searching for Lavinia, the closer the various factions come to attaining their goals. Do not feel constrained by the keyed locations, but rather, use them as a guide and play the creatures intelligently as they go about their business.

1. Into the Breach

A gaping hole in the wall opens onto a massive chamber strewn with debris. The floor is riddled with cracks connecting to a great rent in the floor. On the far side of the chasm stands a hastily constructed wall of stone blocks and jagged boulders.

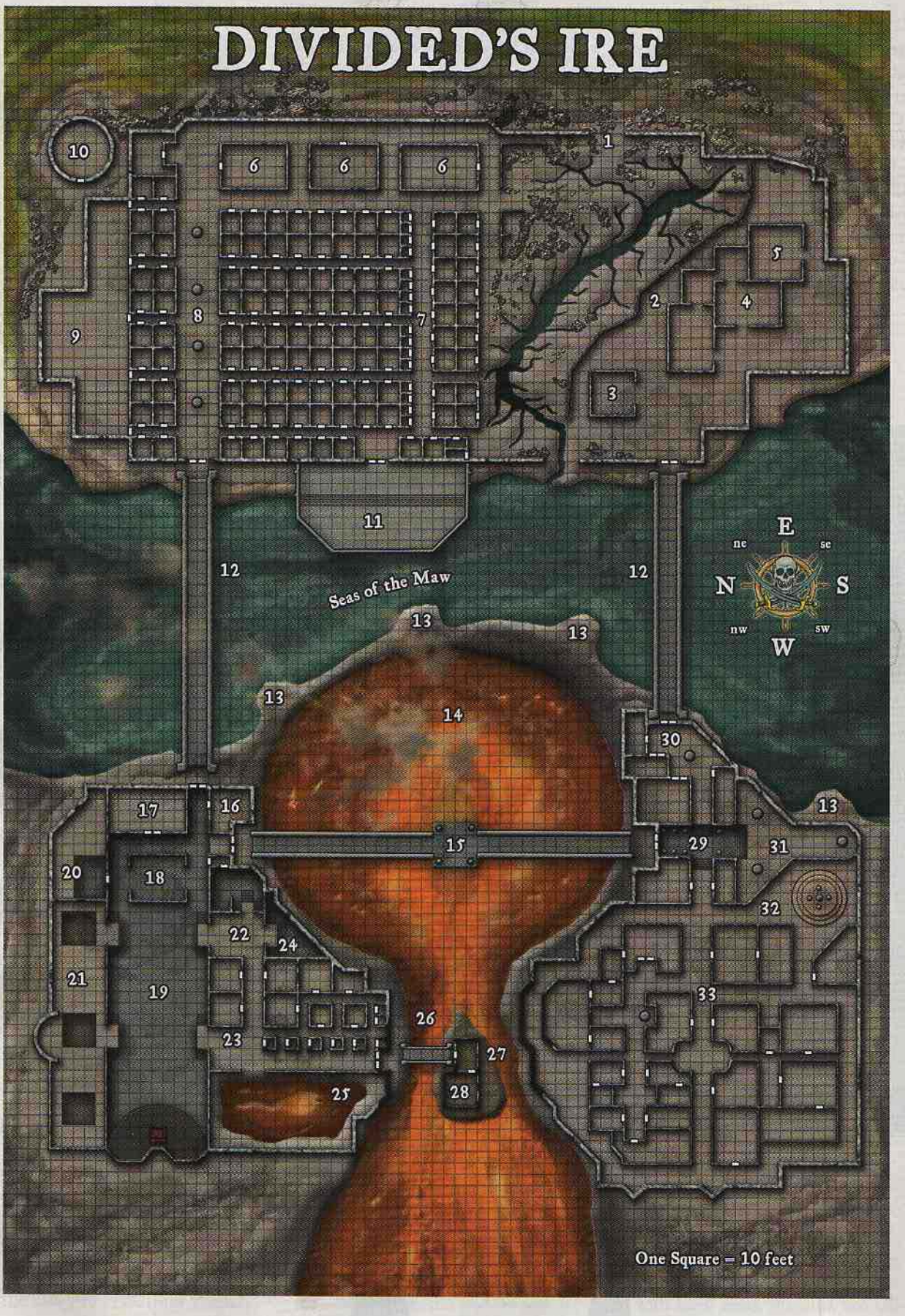
This area is one of the few no-man's lands in the prison. An invisible quasit lurks behind a wall to the south. If it notices the PCs entering this area, it flutters off to report to S'Sharra.

Quasit: hp 13; *Monster Manual* 46.

2. The Wall (EL 17)

Running across the width of the room is a crude wall of rubble, old flagstones, and rotting body parts. Faces stare out of the stones and wasted hands stick out as if in greeting. The wall rises some twenty feet before terminating in a row of much-abused heads on spikes that are alive and twitching with scuttling roaches.

There are plenty of handholds for a character to scramble up the wall (Climb DC 15) but any weight in excess of 150 pounds causes a 10-foot section of wall to collapse inward, dealing 2d6 points of damage to the climber. A successful


DIVIDED'S IRE
Seas of the Maw
E
nc
sc
N
S
nw
sw
W
One Square = 10 feet

DC 10 Knowledge (architecture) check reveals the wall's instability. The chasm that cuts across this area descends 2,000 feet to the churning waters below.

Creature: The eight vrocks that patrol this area are far from the only guardians of the zone. One of the remaining guardians from the time when Divided's Ire was a functional prison remains here: a huge golem crafted of oily gray stone in Demogorgon's image. This monster is a greater Lemorian golem—a more powerful variant of the creature encountered by the PCs in "Here There Be Monsters." The golem's patrol route carries it in a circuit around this open area; it attacks any creatures it encounters, other than vrocks or S'sharra.

GREATER LEMORIAN GOLEM **CR 17**
Advanced Lemorian Golem
CE Huge construct
DUNGEON #142 60

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +34, Spot +34
Languages Abyssal

AC 27, touch 10, flat-footed 27
hp 235 (30 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine or good
Immune construct traits
SR 18
Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10

Spd 40 ft.; climb 20 ft.
Melee* 4 tentacles +29 (3d6+13/19–20 plus rot)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +22; **Grp** +43
Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, improved grab, constrict 2d6+19 plus rot
Special Actions howl
*5-point Power Attack

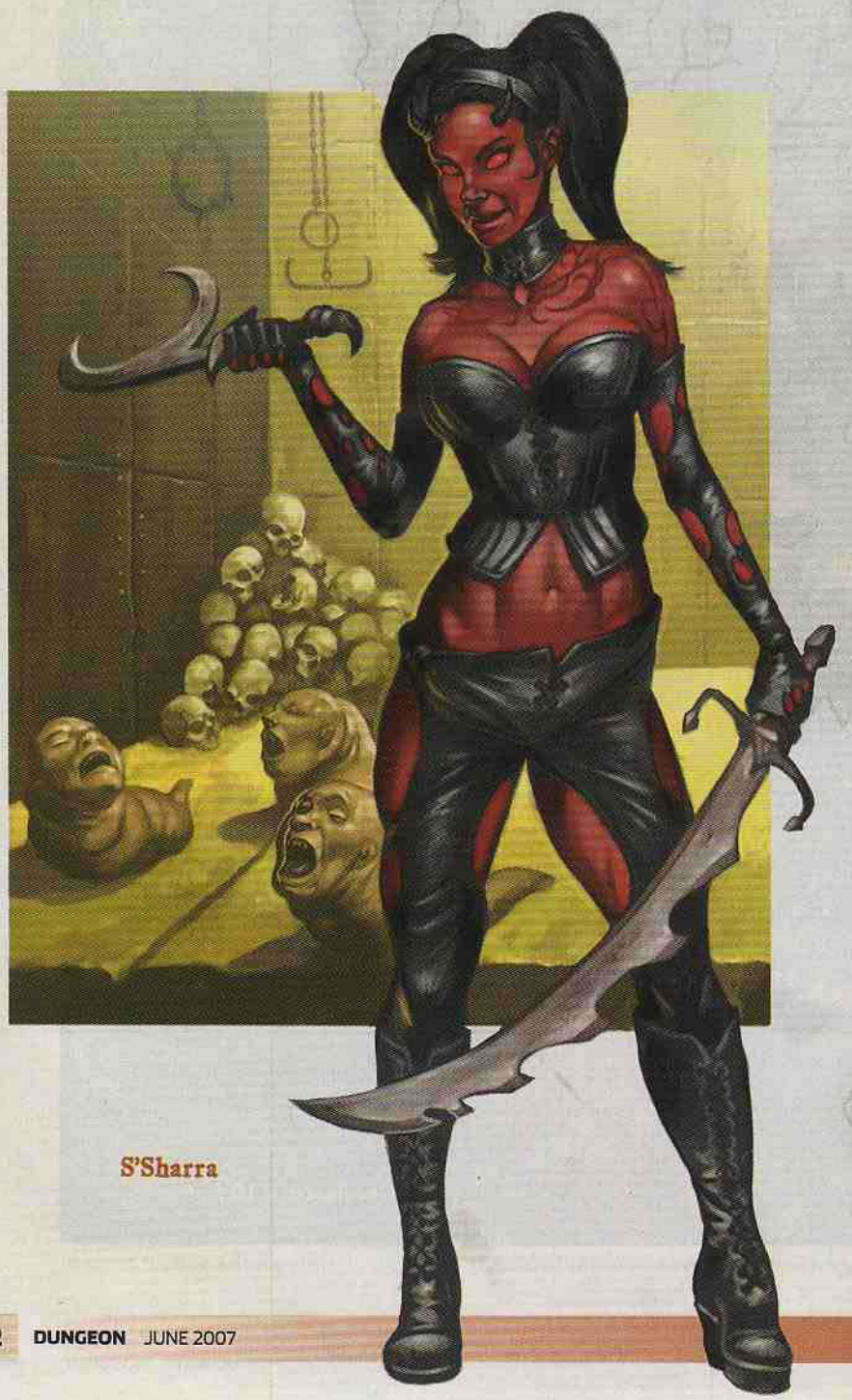
Abilities Str 36, Dex 14, Con —, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11
SQ dual nature
Feats Ability Focus (howl), Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (tentacle)
Skills Climb +21, Listen +34, Spot +34

Constrict (Ex) A Lemorian golem that establishes a hold deals 2d6+19 points of constriction damage and 1d4 points of Constitution damage as the target's flesh rots away into corruption. The Constitution damage can be resisted with a DC 25 Fortitude save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Dual Nature (Ex) A Lemorian golem has two minds. As such, it retains the ability to fight and defend itself while grappling a single foe, also retaining its Dexterity bonus to AC. If a Lemorian golem grapples two foes, it looses its ability to make attacks with its tentacles and its Dexterity bonus to AC.

Howl (Su) A Lemorian golem can howl as a standard action (or as part of a full-attack action due to its dual nature), causing all those within 50 feet to become shaken for 1d6 rounds (DC 25 Will save negates). Each head can howl once per day. A shaken creature becomes panicked for 1d6 rounds if affected by a second howl. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rot (Su) Anyone struck by a Lemorian golem must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage



S'Sharra

as their flesh rots and turns gangrenous from the unholy contact. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Vrocks (8): hp 115 each; *Monster Manual* 48.

3. Rookery (EL 15)

This forty-foot-square structure towers over the rest of the buildings in this area. The south side has a twenty-foot-wide opening that rises from the floor to the ceiling. Near the base of the structure are mounds of stinking offal mixed with feathers and bits of bone.

The chamber's interior is completely open, with the exception of a tangle of posts that jut out from the walls. Each wall bears four posts, with two set 10 feet above the floor, and the other two 10 feet above that. These roosts stretch out 8 feet and are slick with droppings.

Creatures: This is the lair of the vrocks. There are only eight here at any given time.

Vrocks (8): hp 115 each; *Monster Manual* 48.

Tactics: Two of the vrocks cast *heroism* on themselves and then drop from above to attack. Another three vrocks remain on their roosts to support their allies, using *telekinesis* to disarm and trip opponents, or to lift them into the air to hold them suspended. The final three spend 3 rounds performing a dance of ruin to destroy the intruders.

4. The Assassin's Lair (EL 18)

This square chamber rises twenty feet above the floor of the room. The entrance runs from the floor to the ceiling. Inside is a single room. In the corners stand piles of demonic skulls crawling with bloated maggots, each with a tiny wailing human head.

Creature: If the characters have not yet encountered S'Sharra, they do so here. She has long black hair held back in pigtails tied with leather cords, and wears a snug black corset with matching leather pants featuring gaps along the sides to reveal her shapely legs. She may be beautiful, but her demonic heritage is clear, manifest by the small horns piercing her brow, to say nothing of the dusky red hue of her skin.

Demogorgon has begun to worry about the PCs and their efforts to derail his plans. Knowing the characters' connection to Vanthus, the Prince of Demons sought to exploit their loyalty to Lavinia or their need for vengeance against Vanthus, and instructed him to hole up here, unknowingly as bait. S'Sharra initially arrived under the impression that the prison was still under Kulublax's control. She planned on murdering the glabrezu and taking his place as the prison's warden, so that when the PCs arrived she could pretend to send them on their way to where she had "imprisoned" Vanthus, only to strike at them once the battle with the death knight was joined. Instead, she found Divided's Ire to be in chaos, and has barely been able to manage claiming this corner of the complex as her own.

S'SHARRA **CR 18**

Female kelvezu blackguard 4

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)

Monster Manual II 60

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect magic, see invisibility; Listen +17, Spot +17

Aura despair (10 ft. –2 to enemy saving throws)

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic

AC 41, touch 26, flat-footed 29; improved uncanny dodge

hp 188 (16 HD); **DR** 15/cold iron and good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 26

Fort +24, **Ref** +26, **Will** +16; evasion

Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee *+2 keen wounding scimitar* +22/+17/+12/+7 (1d6+8/15–20 plus wounding plus poison) and *+1 wounding sickle* +21/+16 (1d6+4 plus wounding plus poison)

Base Atk +16; **Grp** +22

Atk Options Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, smite good 1/day (+5 attack, +4 damage), sneak attack +9d6

Special Actions rebuke undead 8/day (+5, 2d6+7, 2nd), *summon tanar'ri*

Spells Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd—*bull's strength, cure moderate wounds*

1st—*corrupt weapon, cure light wounds*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th)

At will—*deeper darkness, desecrate, detect good, detect law, greater dispel magic, greater invisibility* (self only), *read magic, suggestion* (DC 18), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *tongues* (self only), *unhallow*

Abilities Str 23, Dex 34, Con 24, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 20

SQ dark blessing, enhanced detection, poison use

Feats Cleave, Improved Sunder, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Bluff +20, Concentration +26, Hide +39, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (religion) +22, Knowledge (the planes) +18, Listen +17, Move Silently +35, Sense Motive +17, Spot +17, Tumble +21

Possessions *+2 keen wounding scimitar, +1 wounding sickle, ring of protection +4, amulet of health +4, gloves of Dexterity +2, boots of speed*

Enhanced Detection (Su) A kelvezu constantly has *detect magic* and *see invisibility* in effect (CL 18th); these effects cannot be dispelled.

Poison (Ex) A kelvezu continually coats its weapons with poison produced from its fingertips. It's a DC 23 Fortitude save to resist the poison, and its initial and secondary damage are the same (1d6 Constitution). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Tactics: Once she learns that the PCs have arrived in the prison, S'Sharra sets out to hunt them down and kill them, abandoning her ill-conceived plot to seize control. She knows her limitations and the danger posed by a group of well-armed PCs, so instead of a direct attack, she uses hit and run tactics, striking the PCs when they set camp or when they are committed to fighting some other monster. She uses *greater dispel magic* to remove protective spells, then uses *greater invisibility* to remain unseen and proceeds to carve up the PCs with sneak attacks.

Development: S'Sharra is the PCs' primary foil in this adventure—the one faction leader they cannot ally with (unless they resort to mind-controlling magic). However, if the PCs approach her first with open arms, she does not kill

them, at least not right away. She waits and lets the PCs negotiate. No matter how badly they botch their rolls, she smiles sweetly and offers her assistance, telling the PCs she can take them to Vanthus in exchange for their help. She starts by asking the characters to destroy Kululblax. Of course, she follows them invisibly, hoping to attack them as soon as the battle with Kululblax is over and the PCs are wounded.

5. Mouths of the Beast

The ceiling of this building rises twenty feet overhead. Inside, the floor is a carpet of worms writhing in a slurry of pink jelly. In the center of the chamber stands a small stone idol carved to resemble a demonic abomination equipped with two long slender necks topped with screaming baboon heads.

S'Sharra uses this chamber to communicate with her master, Demogorgon. By speaking into one of the mouths, she can transmit her words directly to her master, Demogorgon, as if she had cast a *sending* spell. Demogorgon's reply issues forth from the other mouth. The idol can be used just once a day, and then only if the proper command word is spoken first: "Tzzarg."

S'Sharra has already used the device this day, so there's no chance of her warning Demogorgon about the PCs' arrival. If the PCs waste a lot of time and let S'Sharra live, she could communicate developments in Divided's Ire, resulting in Demogorgon sending her reinforcements in the form of additional vrocks or perhaps even 2d4 hezrous.

The mass of worms and slime on the floor are harmless, though they are very much real.

6. Torture Chambers

The doors to these rooms are locked (Open Lock DC 35)—only Kululblax has the keys.

The stench from this chamber is staggering. Clearly, the room is a torture chamber, based on the row of iron maidens, racks, screws, and an assortment of other sinister devices. Pools of blood and fluid cover the floor. The walls and even the ceiling bear splatters of dripping gore. Most of the equipment is empty, but a few devices hold remains of past victims, bodies shuddering with the vermin feasting on the rotten flesh.

Kululblax (area 9) spent a fair amount of his time in these chambers, but with his current problems he hasn't had time to visit them recently

Treasure: Each torture chamber holds a dozen branding irons, lead ingots, nine iron maidens, four jawbreakers, a pillory, a rack, and ten sets of thumbscrews. In addition, there's 100 feet of rope, three silver daggers, three cold iron daggers, and three adamantine daggers, along with a dozen flasks of acid. One grisly trophy remains in the southernmost room—the bloodied remains of a pair of angel wings that have been cast aside in the corner and forgotten.

7. Cells (EL 17+)

Much of Kululblax's demesne is made up of these holding cells. Each cell is a twenty-foot cube suspended one foot from the floor by a thick adamantine chain that hangs from the ceiling. Each cell is chained to the adjacent cells and the floor. Doors to occupied cells are locked (Open Lock DC 40)—Kululblax holds the keys. The *forbiddance* effect prevents the prisoners from teleporting to safety or summoning aid.

Magically Treated Adamantine Cells: 2-in.-thick bars; Hardness 40, hp 320; Break DC 58.

Creatures: Fully 80% of the cells hold prisoners, creatures drawn from a myriad of planes, though most are fiends. If the nature of a prisoner becomes important, roll on the table to see what's inside. Each entry also includes the creature's starting attitude—hostile creatures attack if freed.

In addition to the creatures in the cells, a patrol of eight hezrous makes its rounds through the corridors, looking for intruders or prisoners making escape attempts.

Hezrous (8): hp 138 each; *Monster Manual* 44.

Tactics: When the demons attack, they do so with a 5-point Power Attack, charging the closest foe. Thereafter, they pair off against single opponents, dropping Power Attack when making full attacks.

Prisoners of Divided's Ire

Roll	Prisoner	Attitude	EL	Source
01–15	Hezrou	Unfriendly	11	Monster Manual 44
16–29	Succubus	Unfriendly	7	Monster Manual 47
30–37	Vrock	Hostile	9	Monster Manual 48
38–39	Astral deva	Indifferent	14	*Monster Manual* 11
40–41	Hound archon hero	Indifferent	16	Monster Manual 17
42–46	Trumpet archon	Indifferent	14	Monster Manual 18
47–55	Glabrezu	Hostile	13	Monster Manual 43
56–64	Barbed devil	Hostile	11	Monster Manual 51
66–70	Horned devil	Unfriendly	16	Monster Manual 55
71–77	Ice devil	Unfriendly	13	Monster Manual 56
78–83	Nalfeshnee	Unfriendly	18	Monster Manual 45
84	Balor	Hostile	20	Monster Manual 40
85–86	Bralani eladrin	Indifferent	6	Monster Manual 94
87–88	Leonal guardinal	Indifferent	12	Monster Manual 142
89–91	Lich	Hostile	19	Monster Manual 167
92–94	Mummy lord	Hostile	15	Monster Manual 190
95–97	Mind flayer sorcerer	Hostile	17	Monster Manual 187
98–00	Marut	Indifferent	15	Monster Manual 159

8. Corridor of Spite (EL 8)

Piercing either side of this massive forty-foot wide corridor are a number of side passages made by the gaps between the gently swaying cells hanging from the ceiling. In a row along the center of the corridor rise four twelve-foot-tall iron statues of armored demonic warriors. Braziers spewing smokeless green flames hang from the ceiling between the statues, shedding a sickly light.

The braziers hold *continual flame* spells.

Creatures: Crouching atop the central two statues are a pair of Kululblax's minions, babau demons charged with keeping an eye on the approach to the warden's lair. If they see anyone approaching area **9**, they quickly flee to Kululblax's side to warn him.

Babaus (2): hp 66 each; *Monster Manual* 40.

9. The Warden (EL 17)

This massive gallery holds heaps of excrement, rotting corpses, and broken weapons. Rent and shattered cells lie scattered about, and jagged spikes hang from the ceiling.

This is Kululblax's lair. When not torturing prisoners or commanding his hezrou minions to raid S'Sharra's realm, he's here, cracking open a cell and drawing out the prisoner from within for violent entertainment. The floor is crowded with debris, some sharp and dangerous, most wet and slippery. The conditions on the floor make for difficult terrain.

If the characters have not yet encountered the warden, they find him here.

Creatures: Demogorgon entrusted command of Divided's Ire to Kululblax. While the Prince of Demons had no illusions about this ambitious demon's competence, he expected the fiend would serve well on the grounds of his cruelty alone. Shortly after coming to power, the glabrezu abandoned his responsibilities and turned the compound into his own private den of wickedness.

Kululblax has enjoyed his time as the prison's warden immensely, but his growing fear that Demogorgon might stop by and see the sorry state which he has let the prison fall has finally penetrated his haze of excess. The arrival of one of Demogorgon's notorious agents (S'Sharra) brought home the imminence of the Prince's return, and so Kululblax has reluctantly set aside his vile distractions and rallied his guards for a new offensive against the upstarts. Kululblax doesn't fight for long-term stability of Divided's Ire; he only wants to establish himself as a dominant force until Demogorgon's attentions once again turn elsewhere.

KULULBLAX **CR 18**

Male glabrezu barbarian 3/ranger 2
CE Huge outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Monster Manual 43
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +31, Spot +31
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 35, touch 12, flat-footed 34; uncanny dodge
hp 286 (17 HD); **DR** 10/good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 21
Fort +26, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12; evasion

Spd 50 ft.
Melee +4 *cold iron battleaxe* +28/+23/+18/+13 (3d6+16/×3) and
+4 *cold iron battleaxe* +28 (3d6+10/×3) and
2 pincers +21 (2d8+6) and
bite +21 (1d8+6)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +17; **Grp** +37

Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, favored enemy +2 (good outsiders), improved grab
Special Actions rage 1/day
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)
At will—*chaos hammer* (DC 20), *confusion* (DC 20), *dispel magic*, *mirror image*, *reverse gravity* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy blight* (DC 20)
1/day—*power word stun*
1/month—*wish* (fulfilled for a mortal humanoid creature)

Abilities Str 35, Dex 13, Con 34, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 22
SQ trap sense +1, wild empathy +8
Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)
Skills Bluff +21, Craft (torture device) +8, Concentration +27, Intimidate +23, Jump +38, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +31, Move Silently +16, Search +17, Sense Motive +18, Spot +31
Possessions +4 *cold iron battleaxe* (2), weapon chains (treat as locked gauntlets), *ring of evasion*, *ring of protection +3*, *bracers of armor +4*, keys to torture rooms and cells

Rage When raging, Kulullblax's stats change as follows:
AC 33, touch 10, flat-footed 32
hp 320
Fort +28, Will +14
Melee* +4 *cold iron battleaxe* +28/+23/+18/+13 (3d6+20/×3) and +4 *cold iron battleaxe* +28 (3d6+13/×3) and 2 pincers +21 (2d8+9) and bite +21 (1d8+9)
*2-point Power Attack

Tactics: Kulullblax starts combat by using *reverse gravity* to send characters slamming up into the spikes on the ceiling (1d4 spikes, melee attack +20, damage 2d6 each). He uses *power word stun* on a spellcaster and then flies into a rage. Kulullblax fights to the death.

Development: The warden has no allies outside of his troops. Kulullblax is desperate. Demogorgon could arrive at any time and when he does, Kulullblax is done for. The warden blames S'Sharra for all of his troubles, and anything or anyone that can drive the kelvezu away (and thus turn Demogorgon's eyes away from the prison) has value. If the PCs manage to forge an alliance with this unfriendly demon, he grants them safe passage through his territory. If the PCs manage to improve his attitude to helpful, he lends them four hezrous to help them out during their stay here.

If queried about Vanthus and his hiding place, or about Lavinia's current location, Kulullblax proves evasive, regardless of his attitude. He's willing to assist the characters in finding the death knight, but they have to do something for him first. He wants them to kill S'Sharra (or some other leader if the characters have already dealt with the assassin). Once they achieve this, he swears he'll tell them where both Vanderborens can likely be found.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the party manages to secure an alliance with Kulullblax, they gain experience as if they had defeated him in combat.

10. Tower of Sighs

Rising some sixty feet into the air is a wide tower constructed entirely of skulls. As the sulfurous winds blow across its exterior, a soft and mournful sigh escapes from the bones. A single door facing west appears to be the only entrance.

This is Kulullblax's watchtower. Before the uprisings, his hezrous would stand watch and examine the skies and seas for visitors. As more and more of his minions fell to S'Sharra and others, he pulled the sentries inside to shore up his defenses, leaving the tower empty.

Though there's little of interest inside the tower, none of Kulullblax's minions come here, making it a reasonably safe place for the PCs to hole up while exploring the prison.

11. The Watch (EL 17)

Extending out over the gap between the islands is an enormous balcony. The structure has two levels, with the uppermost level connected to the eastern half of the prison and the lower level connected to the upper by a broad staircase.

Carved into the steps of the stairs bisecting the balcony are prayers to Demogorgon in Abyssal. Characters that can read this language find all sorts of sinister invocations for vengeance, power, and fulfillment of lusts. Anyone who reads the prayers for more than a few rounds immediately notices the repetition of a strange name—Shami-Amourae. A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies this name as belonging to the Lady of Delights, a one-time contender to the title of Queen of Succubi. A character who exceeds this DC by 10 or more knows that this demon lord was once a consort of Demogorgon, and was later spurned in favor of Malcanthet. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that the prayers once had the capability of summoning Shami-Amourae, but if they are spoken now, nothing happens.

Creatures: A trio of brutal fiends stand guard here, watching for traffic between the islands. These fiends are nycaloths, powerful neutral evil fiends that often hire out as mercenaries for both devils and demons. A nycaloth looks like a big gargoyle with powerful bat-wings and thick green skin. They have four powerful arms and a vaguely canine head with horns and small webbed ears. Demogorgon negotiated the service of a large number of nycaloths nearly a century ago, brokering the deal with a foul ultroloth named Rixlenask in an attempt to swell his armies for an attack against his hated rival Orcus. The attack never went through, and these three nycaloths now serve out the remaining decades of their service as guards here at Divided's Ire. With the prison's fall, they've nothing left to guard, but have remained here nonetheless, content with the location as a home until Demogorgon notices.

Nycaloth Mercenaries (3) **CR 14**
Male nycaloth fighter 4
NE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, yugoloth)
Monster Manual III 202
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +19, Spot +19

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 33, touch 12, flat-footed 30; Mobility
hp 247 (18 HD); **DR** 10/good
Immune acid, poison
Resist cold 10, fire 10, electricity 10; **SR** 24
Fort +22, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

Spd 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)
Melee* *+2 greataxe* +23/+18/+13/+8 (3d6+26/19–20/×3) and 2 claws +15 (1d6+9 plus bleeding wounds)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +30
Atk Options Flyby Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, improved grab, liftoff, 2 rakes +25 (1d6+4)
Special Actions *summon yugoloth*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)
At will—*deeper darkness, desecrate, fear* (DC 18), *invisibility, mirror image, see invisibility, greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 26, Dex 17, Con 28, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 18
Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)
Skills Bluff +21, Concentration +28, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +19, Search +17, Sense Motive +17, Spot +19
Possessions *+2 moderate fortification breastplate, +2 greataxe, amulet of natural armor +2*

Bleeding Wounds (Ex) A creature damaged by a nycaloth mercenary's claw attack takes 1 point of damage each round thereafter. Multiple wounds stack. A DC 15 Heal check or a cure spell halts this additional damage.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a nycaloth mercenary must hit an opponent of any size with two or more claw attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to either deal damage with its claws, rake the grappled target, or use its liftoff ability.

Liftoff (Ex) If the nycaloth mercenary gets a hold on a nonflying opponent of Medium or smaller size, it can ascend with the grappled creature. When carrying a medium load (267 to 532 pounds), its fly speed drops to 60 feet and it takes a –3 penalty on Hide and Move Silently checks. The penalties worsen to –6 when carrying a heavy load (533 to 800 pounds).

***Summon Yugoloth* (Sp)** 30% chance to summon another nycaloth or 1d3 mezzoloths (*Monster Manual* 3 201).

Tactics: The nycaloth mercenaries grapple the closest PCs and then use their liftoff ability to carry them over the rail and drop them to their doom. Falling characters plummet 2,000 feet into the waters below, taking 20d6 points of damage when they hit. The yugoloths then draw their *+2 greataxes* to finish off remaining PCs.

Only 1d3 rounds after this fight begins, a pair of nabassus in area **13** notice and take wing, crossing the gulf between Paradise and Penance to join in the fight. When they arrive, the gleeful demons attack both PC and nycaloth alike, as eager to get rid of the annoying yugoloths as they are the Material Plane intruders.

Development: Although the yugoloths are hostile, they do not attack right away and are amenable to conversation if intruders remain at the edge of this area and don't intrude too far into their home. Characters who successfully improve their attitudes to friendly may gain the temporary service of these fiends. The yugoloths would rather Demogorgon not turn his attention back to Divided's Ire, and are afraid that the arrival of a new death knight (Vanthus) indicates Demogorgon's renewed interest in the region. They suspect the death knight has taken up residence to the west, perhaps on the small island in the lava flow. They secretly hope that the PCs destroy the death knight, an accomplishment that should (in their estimation of things) turn Demogorgon's furious attention away from Divided's Ire and onto the PCs. If the PCs improve the nycaloths' attitude to helpful, they even agree to accompany them on a strike against the death knight, but once he's slain, they immediately become *invisible* and flee back to this location, eager to cut ties with those whom they think Demogorgon will soon smite.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the party manages to secure an alliance with the yugoloths, they gain experience as if they had defeated them in combat.

12. Bridges

Stretching across the gap between the islands is a pair of wide stone bridges. Each bridge is both old and riddled with cracks and fractures. At twenty-foot intervals on either side stand stone statues of robed women, their hands extended down to the sea as if beseeching someone for help. Their stony eyes drip blood.

The stone bridges are safe so long as the characters walk across them. Flying or using any other method of crossing attracts one or more nabassus from area **13** or possibly the nycaloths from area **11**. The statues are stone and nonmagic, and while the blood that pools and drips from their eyes is real, it serves no purpose but decor.

13. Sentinels (EL 15+)

Creatures: Extending out from the cliff face of Penance's eastern shore are four ledges. On each ledge nests a sentinel, a dreadful nabassu demon. Their duty is to make sure that no prisoners escape into the seas of the Maw. They ignore anyone crossing on the bridges at area **12**, but any suspicious activity (such as flight, dives into the ocean, or combat) quickly draws their attention. The nabassus have a particular hatred of the nycaloths in area **11**, viewing them as upstarts and fools, but aren't quite brave enough to confront them on their own (since none of the four nabassus is willing to lead the charge for fear that the other three will hang back to watch him be torn apart by the three nycaloths).

A nabassu is a lanky demon with batlike wings, a gargoyle-like head with glowing yellow eyes and a great mouth filled with fangs, and leathery black and gray skin.

Nabassus (4) **CR 15**
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Fiendish Codex I 48
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +23, Spot +23

Aura *unholy aura* (spell-like ability always in effect, DC 24), death-stealing gaze (DC 25)
Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 35, touch 19, flat-footed 30
hp 202 (15 HD); regeneration 5; **DR** 10/cold iron or good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 26
Fort +24, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20

Spd 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)
Melee bite +24 (2d8+9/19–20) and 2 claws +19 (1d8+4)
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +24
Atk Options sneak attack +6d6
Special Actions feed, *summon tanar'ri*, vampiric link
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th, +20 ranged touch)
At will—*darkness, enervation, ethereal jaunt, greater dispel magic, greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *hold monster* (DC 20), *obscuring mist, silence* (DC 18), *true seeing, unholy aura* (DC 24), *unholy blight* (DC 20)
3/day—*blasphemy* (DC 23), *energy drain* (DC 25)

Abilities Str 28, Dex 20, Con 28, Int 20, Wis 21, Cha 23
SQ camouflage
Feats Ability Focus (death-stealing gaze), Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will
Skills Balance +7, Bluff +24, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +8, Hide +23 (+31 in underground or barren environs), Intimidate +26, Jump +15, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (local) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Knowledge (the planes) +23, Listen +23, Move Silently +23, Spot +23, Tumble +25, Use Magic Device +24

Camouflage (Ex) A nabassu gains a +8 circumstance bonus on Hide checks made in underground or barren environments.
Death-Stealing Gaze (Su) 30 feet, Fortitude DC 25, bestows 1d4 negative levels. Any humanoid creature drained to 0 levels dies and is immediately transformed into a ghoul under the nabassu's permanent command. As a standard action, a nabassu can actively use its gaze to kill a single creature within range. A creature that fails the DC 25 Fortitude save is immediately slain.
Feed (Su) A nabassu who slays a creature with a coup de grace attack eats a significant portion of the victim while the remaining flesh rots away to a foul-smelling paste, thus preventing raising or resurrection that requires parts of the corpse. A nabassu gains the effects of a *death knell* spell (CL 20th) when it successfully feeds in this manner.
Regeneration (Ex) A nabassu takes normal damage from good-aligned weapons.
***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a nabassu can summon 2d4 babaus or 1d4 hezrous with a 70% chance of success, or one glabrezu with a 30% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 7th-level spell (CL 15th).
Vampiric Link (Su) As a standard action, a nabassu can establish a vampiric link between itself and a living creature within 30 feet. The target is entitled to a DC 23 Will save to negate the effect; otherwise, the link remains in place until the target moves out of range or until the nabassu selects a new target. Whenever the affected creature deals damage to the nabassu, the creature takes the same damage. If the creature targets the nabassu with a spell, the effects of that spell are duplicated and affect the caster as well, even if the spell fails to penetrate the nabassu's spell resistance. This is a necromancy effect.

Tactics: The nabassus don't wait for their kin to arrive before they attack, giving the PCs a bit of a chance to take them down one at a time before being forced to deal with all four demons at once. A nabassu softens its prey using spell-like abilities, *greater dispel magic*, and death-stealing gaze before engaging a foe in melee combat. It favors *energy drain*, *hold monster*, and *enervation*. These demons fight to the death.

14. Crucible of Fire (EL 18)

Dominating the island of Penance is this smoldering volcano. Its eastern slopes are impossibly thin, held together only by the malevolent and unknowable forces of the Abyss itself. While the volcano will never erupt (at least, not as long as Demogorgon keeps it that way), its constant trembling and smoking and periodic disgorging of lava bombs keeps Divided's Ire under constant menace.

Creatures: Lurking just beneath the surface of the lava is a fiendish magma drake, a draconic reptile that has lived within the caldera since before Divided's Ire was built. Most of the inhabitants of the Divided's Ire don't even realize the creature, named Lazruvakus, exists. A notable exception is Orgosh, who suspects a dangerous creature dwells at the volcano's heart but hasn't tried to waken it yet.

Awakening Lazruvakus requires a creature of at least Gargantuan size plumeting into the caldera, or the casting of a large-scale destructive spell like *meteor swarm, earthquake, storm of vengeance*, or *whirlwind* upon the surface of the lava below. Doing so rouses the magma drake in 1d6 rounds.

LAZRUVAKUS **CR 21**
Male fiendish advanced magma drake
CE Gargantuan dragon (earth, fire)
Draconomicon 144, *Monster Manual* 108
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +36, Spot +36
Languages Draconic, Ignan

AC 28, touch 9, flat-footed 27
hp 495 (30 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Immune fire, sleep, paralysis
Resist cold 10; **SR** 25
Fort +26, **Ref** +20, **Will** +18
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)
Melee* bite +31 (6d6+25/19–20) and 2 claws +29 (4d6+17) and tail slap +29 (4d6+32)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +30; **Grp** +57
Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack, burn, improved grab (claw)
*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 41, Dex 12, Con 28, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 11
Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claw, tail slap), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack
Skills Bluff +33, Climb +12, Hide +28, Listen +36, Search +32, Spot +36

Burn (Ex) Those grappled by a magma drake must make a DC 34 Reflex save or catch fire. The fire burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame (but not while grappled).

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a magma drake must hit a creature of its size or smaller with a claw attack. It can then attempt to grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Tactics: If awakened, Lazruvakus flies up and out of the bubbling lava and lands on the span (area **15**) to get his bearings. He attacks every living creature he finds, beginning with the PCs and then attacking the demons until he is destroyed. Should the PCs manage to reduce him to 50 hit points or less, he retreats back to the lava, using Flyby Attack as he leaves.

Development: If the PCs need a distraction or something to keep the demons of Divided's Ire busy, awakening Lazruvakus is an excellent (but dangerous) option. Orgosh might send the PCs here to do just that, hoping that the wakened monster will slaughter enough of his enemies here that he'll be able to expand into the depopulated regions of the prison with ease.

15. The Span

This wide bridge spans the caldera at a height of 1,000 feet above the lava. A creature that falls off the bridge takes 20d6 falling damage and then 20d6 fire damage per round from the lava.

16. Hall of Horrors (EL 10)

Anyone within 10 feet of the door to this room smells something terrible seeping through from the room beyond. The room is flooded to the ceiling with disgusting filth, refuse, offal, and rancid slime. When opened, a nightmare torrent of viscous, oozy effluvia spills out in a gelid flood. Any character standing in the hall outside of this area takes 10d6 points of acid damage from the caustic stuff (Reflex DC 20 for half). In addition, all characters in the area must succeed on DC 25 Fortitude saves or become nauseated for as long as they remain in the area and for 1d4 rounds thereafter. How Belshamoth managed to fill this room with so much filth (let alone why he did so) is a question best left unanswered.

Development: Opening this door alerts the two filth demon sentries in area **19**. They come to investigate in 1d4 rounds.

17. The Chamber of Delicious Treats

Over two dozen large stone cubes hang from the ceiling by thick iron chains. The blocks each hang at different heights, some dropping as low as a few inches from the floor with others being suspended near the ceiling. The chains themselves are fixed to rings set near the floor, so that one can raise or lower the blocks. Beneath each block are sets of manacles. Puddles of flesh, bone, and blood stain the floor and undersides of the suspended blocks.

Kululblax used this room to press the life out of prisoners that angered him. He would chain the victim to the floor, slowly lowering a 2,000 pound block onto the target, and leave the pressure on for hours at a time. When he returned, he'd lower it again by another link, gradually crushing the life out of his victims.

While the theory of this room intrigues Belshamoth, he has not yet had a chance to try it out on a prisoner. If he captures the PCs, he might subject them to the blocks. Characters manacled and pinned beneath a block take 1d6 points of damage from the first setting each minute the block sits on the character. Each lower setting deals the previous damage again plus 1d6 points of damage (1d6, 2d6, 3d6, 4d6, and so on) until the block deals 20d6 points of damage per minute. When the block kills the victim, it effectively pulps and smears the body, sending gobbets of greasy flesh in all directions.

18. Watch Station (EL 16)

Creatures: This watch station is where Belshamoth posted three kelubar demodand minions, immense flabby humanoid creatures covered with reeking slime. The demodands are poor guardians, however, and are currently distracted by the fragmentary corpse of a trumpet archon they recently killed. As long as they're arguing about the functions of the celestial's internal organs, they take a –4 penalty on Listen and Spot checks.

KELUBAR DEMODANDS (3) **CR 13**

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)
Fiend Folio 44
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +18, Spot +18
Aura stench (30 feet)
Languages Abyssal, Common, Demodand

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 27; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge
hp 97 (13 HD); **DR** 15/good
Immune acid, cold, fire, poison
SR 25
Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10; evasion

Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
Melee 2 claws +18 (1d4+5 plus 1d6 acid) and bite +16 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 acid)
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +18
Atk Options Spring Attack, acidic slime, sneak attack +4d6
Special Actions *summon demodand*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th, +14 ranged touch)
At will—*detect magic, clairaudience/clairvoyance, fear* (DC 18), *invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, spider climb, tongues*
3/day—*fog cloud, ray of enfeeblement*
2/day—*acid fog, dispel magic*

Abilities Str 20, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Multiattack, Spring Attack
Skills Bluff +28, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +34, Hide +9, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (the planes) +18, Listen +18, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +26, Spot +18

Acidic Slime (Ex) The slime secreted by a kelubar adds +1d6 acid damage to each of its melee attacks. On a critical hit, this burst of acid deals +1d10 acid damage.

Stench (Ex) All creatures within 30 feet of a kelubar must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or be overcome with nausea from the monster's stench of filth and decay. A victim remains nauseated as long as he remains in the area, and for 10 rounds thereafter. A successful save means the creature is immune to that particular kelubar's stench for 1 day.

***Summon Demodand* (Sp)** Once per day, a kelubar can attempt to summon 1d2 kelubars with a 40% chance of success or 1d4 farastu demodands with a 60% chance of success.

Tactics: At the start of combat, one kelubar casts *acid fog* while the other two cast *ray of enfeeblement*. Thereafter, they use Spring Attack to flank and shred their opponents, focusing their attacks on one character at a time.

Treasure: Scattered throughout this chamber are bits of treasure the demodands have scavenged from unfortunate visitors to Divided's Ire, but haven't yet figured out what to do with: 4,133 gp, 6 bloodstones worth 50 gp each, a +2 *lance*, a *potion of cat's grace*, a *potion of shield of faith +5*, and a scroll of *finger of death* in a filthy but watertight ivory scroll tube worth 300 gp.

19. The Imprisoned (EL 16)

Stretching over two hundred feet long and about half this distance across is a massive hall. Two sets of staircases ascend to landings some twenty feet above the floor. Dozens of alabaster statues of a scantily clad succubus fill the alcoves along the walls—each seems to depict the same dangerously beautiful creature in a different pose. At the far end of the hall is an enormous dais on which sits a strange, two-backed amber throne flecked with black specks. The throne is sized for a creature nearly twenty feet in height, and strewn around its base are sodden pillows, wet with scum and corruption. To either side of this throne stand additional statues of the beautiful succubus, in poses of adoration toward whoever sits in the throne. The vaulted ceiling rises fifty feet overhead, where strange shadows dance on profane symbols.

This chamber was once Demogorgon's throne room and pleasure den. It was here where he entertained his lover, Shami-Amourae. The dozens of statues in this room depict the powerful succubus, as a DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check can reveal. The throne itself seats Demogorgon comfortably, and even today retains some of the taint of his presence. Any character that sits in the throne is suddenly struck by an overwhelming sense of confusion and inner turmoil, almost as if his personality was splitting in half. Each round the creature remains seated, he must make a DC 30 Will save or be driven mad, as if affected by an *insanity* spell.

Creature: Belshamoth is by far the most repellent thing in Divided's Ire. He is unforgivably lascivious and bloated on his own corruption. He has declared himself master of the prison and flings excrement at any who even suggest otherwise. A thick film of grease covers this shuddering fiend's massive blubbery body. Branching out from the folds of his back fat are two leathery wings. His gruesome head is toadlike, and pale slime spills forth from his wide mouth.

Characters attempting negotiation rather than combat intrigue the shator. He's unfriendly, but if the characters reveal their purpose, he offers to help. Belshamoth lusts for a queen. His initial and horrific attempt to woo Lillianth failed horrifically. He's now set his eyes on S'Sharra, attracted by her vicious nature as much as by her wanton cruelty. He dreams of her and sometimes sings her praises, crooning awfully in the hopes his tuneless song will lure her into the folds of his dripping flesh. The longer she holds out, the more obsessed he grows. Until she is brought to him, he cannot bring himself to assist the PCs.

Characters that manage this task automatically improve the demodand's attitude to helpful. In exchange for their assistance, he offers them the service of two filth demons. Alternatively, if the PCs ask, he is willing to lead an attack against one of his neighboring factions, but he doesn't volunteer such aid on his own.

BELSHAMOTH **CR 18**

Male advanced shator demodand
NE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar)
Fiend Folio 45

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., scent, see invisibility; Listen +28, Spot +28
Languages Abyssal, Common, Demodand, Infernal

AC 31, touch 17, flat-footed 28
hp 170 (20 HD); **DR** 15/good
Immune acid, cold, fire, mind-affecting effects, poison
Resist electricity 20; **SR** 30
Fort +16, **Ref** +15, **Will** +15

Spd 30 ft., fly 70 ft. (poor)
Melee +4 *speed guisarme* +30/+30/+25/+20/+15 (2d6+14) or 2 claws +26 (1d6+7 plus paralysis) and bite +24 (2d6+3 plus paralysis)
Ranged slime +22 touch (paralysis)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with guisarme)
Base Atk +20; **Grp** +31
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Trip
Special Actions *summon demodand*
Sorcerer Spells Prepared (CL 8th, +22 ranged touch)
4th (4/day)—*phantasmal killer* (DC 19)
3rd (6/day)—*fireball* (DC 18), *haste*
2nd (7/day)—*bear's endurance, mirror image, scorching ray*
1st (7/day)—*expeditious retreat, grease* (DC 16), *mage armor*, magic missile, true strike*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash, arcane mark, dancing lights, ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand, mending, open/close, ray of frost*
*Already cast once today
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th, +22 ranged touch)
At will—*detect magic, clairaudience/clairvoyance, fear* (DC 19), *invisibility, spider climb, tongues*
3/day—*cloudkill, fog cloud*, quickened *ray of enfeeblement, stinking cloud* (DC 18)
2/day—*dispel magic*
1/day—*mass charm monster* (DC 23)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 21
Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Empower Spell, Improved Trip, Multiattack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*ray of enfeeblement*)
Skills Bluff +28, Concentration +27, Hide +22, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (local) +26, Knowledge (the planes) +26, Listen +28, Move Silently +26, Sense Motive +26, Spot +28
Possessions +4 *speed guisarme, ring of force shield, ring of major electricity resistance*

Paralyzing Slime (Ex) Creatures struck by a shator's claw or bite must make a DC 24 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. A shator can spit a globule of slime as a ranged touch attack with a range of 30 feet, with the same effect.

***Summon Demodand* (Sp)** Once per day, a shator can attempt to summon 1d2 shators with a 30% chance of success, or either 1d4 kelubars or 1d6 farastus with a 70% chance of success.

Tactics: In combat, Belshamoth bellows for help before he lurches forward to engage his foes. Any surviving fiends in areas **18**, **20**, and **21** quickly come to his aid. Given adequate time to prepare, he casts *bull's strength*, *shield*, and *displacement*. He casts *mass charm monster* during the first round, ordering any who succumb to move to area **20** to await his attentions, and then falls back to direct damage spells to finish the fight. If reduced to less than 30 hit points, he drops his guisarme and pitifully begs for his life. Belshamoth has had to humiliate himself in similar ways before, and won't hesitate to offer whatever it is he thinks the PCs want if it'll keep him alive. Of course, once he has a chance, he tries to escape.

20. Chamber of Delights (EL 17)

Slick sludge coats the walls and floors of this oddly-shaped chamber, and ropes of noxious slime hang from the ceiling. A slippery staircase leads up to a landing that wraps around to the adjoining room.

This chamber once served Demogorgon and Shami-Amourae as a private place where they could entertain each other. When Demogorgon discovered his lover had betrayed him, the contents of this room were the first he destroyed. Nothing remains of the once fantastic decor and furnishings.

Creatures: Once the denizens of the pits in area **21**, three noxious demons known as beliarons, or "filth demons," now dwell here. Belshamoth took an immediate liking to these foul monsters, and keeps them here for his entertainment. When the PCs enter the room, the fiends hunker down in the muck to hide, hoping to attack with surprise.

Beliarons (3): hp 199 each; see Appendix.

Treasure: Characters searching the foul mounds of sludge to the east can make a DC 40 Search check to discover an exquisite ring of braided ruby and sapphire bands. The ring is worth 10,000 gp, and was once owned by Shami-Amourae herself. Her name is inscribed in the inside band. Demogorgon missed this ring in his initial rampage, and it has gone unnoticed and forgotten here ever since. Access to this ring, one of the few surviving items once owned by Shami-Amourae, can make contacting her in "Wells of Darkness" somewhat easier.

21. The Pits (EL 17)

Two sets of staircases lead up to landings that open into a massive rectangular gallery. Three wide pits pierce the floor. The floor is slick with spilled offal and effluvia.

This chamber was once used to hold mortal prisoners and petitioners who

offended Demogorgon, even before he transformed the site into a prison. Today, the room still serves the same function, but the pits hold scores of howling damned souls instead.

Creatures: Patrolling this room are two filth demons under the watchful command of a bitter and surly nalfeshnee named Radglath, who secretly plots to overthrow Belshamoth. Lurking within each of the 60-foot-deep pits are thousands of pale, writhing maggots with human faces. These foot-long monsters are larvae, physical manifestations of mortal souls who have passed into the Abyss after the end of a wicked life. Many fiends use larvae as a form of currency; these repositories represent an Abyssal variation of a treasury, in a sense. The larvae fill each pit to within 10 feet of its upper edge, and those at the bottom 50 feet below are packed so tightly that they can hardly move. A character that falls into a pit of larvae sinks into the writhing mass at the rate of 1 foot per round, suffering 4d6 points of damage per round as the sharp-toothed creatures bite and tear at exposed flesh. Once a character sinks below the surface, he begins to smother. Swimming through the larvae is possible with a DC 30 Swim check.

Radglath hates Belshamoth, and would do just about anything to engineer his death, even though the shator offered him asylum when he defected from Lillianth's side. However, he fears the shator's power, and so bides his time until an opportunity presents itself—such as that presented by the PCs. Assuming the characters don't rush headlong into combat, they can negotiate with the demon. Radglath is unfriendly, but if the characters have managed to deal with Belshamoth already, his attitude improves to indifferent. If the PCs can improve his attitude to friendly, he offers to help them locate Vanthus. He does this with no strings attached since he generally hates everyone in the complex and believes that if Vanthus is eliminated, Demogorgon will vent his wrath on all the ambitious would-be wardens. Once his enemies are dealt with, Radglath intends to stake his own claim on the place.

If the PCs manage to improve his attitude to helpful, he warns them about Lillianth (the only fiend in Divided's Ire he hates more than Belshamoth), who controls the other half of this structure. He describes the forces that serve her and the quickest path to the small bridge (area **26**). Under no circumstances will Radglath accompany the PCs elsewhere.

Beliarons (2): hp 199 each; see Appendix.

Radglath, nalfeshnee: hp 178; *Monster Manual* 45.

Tactics: Radglath keeps the filth demons in line, so if the PCs are interested in conversation he orders these fiends to stand down. Should combat break out, Radglath uses Improved Bull Rush to knock characters into the pits, ordering the beliarons to take up flanking positions. If reduced to less than 40 hit points, Radglath attempts to escape, abandoning the prison entirely and *teleporting* away to Lemoriax if he manages to escape Divided's Ire.

22. Hall of Knives (EL 16)

Jagged chunks of metal lance out from the walls, ceiling, and floors of this chamber.

Creature: Lillianth charged her cohort and fellow prisoner Jariaxer with protecting the eastern approach into her territory. Jariaxer is a female babau rogue who once served Lillianth as a spy, and periodically serves the same function today when the marilith wishes to be updated on the status and machinations of the competition elsewhere in the prison.

JARIAXER **CR 16**

Female babau rogue 10

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)

Monster Manual 40

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +28, Spot +0

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 28; improved uncanny dodge

hp 219 (17 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 14

Fort +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +8

Spd 20 ft.

Melee* *+3 keen halberd* +20/+15/+10 (1d10+25/19–20/×3) and bite +15 (1d6+9)

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +22

Atk Options Cleave, Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Improved Trip, Power Attack, crippling strike, sneak attack +7d6

Special Actions *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

At will—*darkness, dispel magic, see invisibility, greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only)

*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 26, Dex 17, Con 28, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 18

SQ protective slime, trapfinding, trap sense +3

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Improved Trip, Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +24, Climb +22, Disable Device +22, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +18, Hide +36, Listen +28, Move Silently +26, Open Lock +23, Search +30, Sleight of Hand +10

Possessions *+4 black dragonhide improved shadow banded mail, black dragonhide gauntlets of ogre power +2, +3 keen halberd, pink rhomboid ioun stone* (+2 Constitution)

Tactics: Jariaxer remains hidden in the shadows of the southern part of the room, and if she notices anyone entering the chamber she immediately alerts her mistress via telepathy. She waits until a character comes within striking distance before attacking, and then makes a fighting retreat to area **23** or **25**, using trip and feint attacks to slow up her enemies.

23. More Cells (EL 16)

Each unmarked room is either a cell or a torture chamber, holding all sorts of ghastly equipment and likely a few maimed, dead, or dying occupants. These cells are warded with *antimagic* whenever the door is closed.

Creatures: A group of six hezrous patrol these halls, constantly on the watch for both intruders and prisoners attempting to escape.

Hezrous (6): hp 138 each; *Monster Manual* 44.

Tactics: The hezrous begin combat by casting *chaos hammer* and *blasphemy*, telepathically notifying Lillianth on the first round of combat. They fight to the death.

24. The False Gnome (EL 16)

The steps lead down into a heavily scented chamber filled with silk cushions, trays laden with wines and liqueurs, bubbling hookahs, and platters filled with figs, strawberries, and gooey chocolates.

This chamber is Lillianth's private lounge, outfitted with luxurious items stolen primarilly from the one-time guards' complex (area **33**), although much of the food and drugs were taken from the Crimson Scar, brought up here by a few dominated crewmembers who paid for their help with their lives.

Creature: Lounging in one mound of cushions is Lynnara, companion and lover to Lillianth. In truth, it is Lynnara who is the traitor that Lillianth fears still infects her group. The succubus is in fact a devoted agent of Malcanthet, sent to become Lillianth's confidante so that her true mistress can stay abreast of the missions Graz'zt set her upon. Now that Lillianth is on Gaping Maw, Malcanthet has ordered her to pay closer attention to any events involving Demogorgon. Malcanthet hasn't revealed to Lynnara that she suspects the Prince of Demons is preparing a bold move that could well restructure the very Abyss itself, but has told her that a group of Material Plane agents of hers will soon be visiting Divided's Ire, and that they are to be assisted in any way possible without revealing her allegiance to the Queen of Succubi.

If Lynnara knows the PCs are in the Ire, she assumes the form of a wizened old gnome. When they arrive in this chamber, she frantically introduces herself as Nurt Bilgeflower, claiming to have been a planar navigator pressed into service several years ago on the *Crimson Scar*. In fact, there was a real Nurt Bilgeflower, but he was doomed at the same time as the rest of the crew after demons carried them from the ship up to the Ire. As it worked out, Nurt ended up tormented by Lynnara, and when she was done with him she threw his remains into the lava. All that remains now is his name.

LYNNARA **CR 17**

Female succubus bard 8/thrall of Malcanthet 8

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)

Monster Manual 47, DRAGON #353 30

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +28, Spot +20

Aura telepathic gaze (100 ft.)

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; tongues, telepathy 100 ft.

AC 35, touch 21, flat-footed 27

hp 171 (22 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 18

Fort +13, **Ref** +16, **Will** +20

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee *sword of life stealing* +21/+16/+11/+6 (1d8+2/17–20 and energy drain) and claw +14 (1d6)

Base Atk +16; **Grp** +16

Atk Options Arcane Strike, betrayal, sneak attack +2d6

Special Actions bardic music 8/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +2, *suggestion*), energy drain

Bard Spells Known (CL 18th)

5th (4/day)—*greater dispel magic, mass suggestion* (DC 32), *mislead* (DC 30)

4th (6/day)—*cure critical wounds, dominate person* (DC 29), *freedom of movement, ruin delver's fortune*

3rd (6/day)—*cure serious wounds, displacement, glibness, love's lament* (DC 28)

2nd (6/day)—*enthrall* (DC29), *entice gift* (DC 27), *suggestion* (DC 29), *whirling blade*

1st (7/day)—*critical strike, grease* (DC 24), *silent image* (DC 24), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 26)

0 (4/day)—*detect magic, mage hand, mending, message, open/close, prestidigitation*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*charm monster* (DC 27), *detect good, detect thoughts* (DC 25), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *suggestion* (DC 26), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only)

1/day—*dominate monster* (DC 31, language-dependent)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 37

SQ bardic knowledge +12, change shape, profane beauty

Feats Arcane Strike, Improved Critical (longsword), Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Persuasive, Practiced Spellcaster (bard), Spell Focus (enchantment), Thrall to Demon (Malcanthet), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +48, Concentration +29, Diplomacy +48, Disguise +21 (+31 when using change shape), Escape Artist +12, Hide +12, Intimidate +50, Knowledge (religion) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +29, Listen +28, Perform (sing, dance) +38, Move Silently +12, Spellcraft +12, Spot +20, Tumble +19

Possessions *sword of life stealing, amulet of health +6, bracers of armor +5, ring of counterspells* (contains *greater dispel magic*), *glove of storing* (contains *sword of life stealing*)

Betrayal (Su) If Lynnara deals damage to an ally with a weapon or spell, the ally must make a DC 31 Will save or be stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Draining Kiss (Su) Three times per day, Lynnara's energy drain can inflict 2 negative levels rather than 1.

Dominating Voice (Su) Lynnara gains a +8 competence bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks and a +2 profane bonus to the save DC of any language-dependent spell she casts.

Profane Beauty (Su) Lynnara gains a deflection bonus to her Armor Class equal to her Charisma bonus (maximum bonus equal to her thrall of Malcanthet level).

Reflect Enchantment (Ex) Three times per day, when Lynnara makes her saving throw to resist any enchantment spell, she may reflexively reflect that spell back at its source, as if she had cast the spell on the target.

Telepathic Gaze (Ex) Lynnara can read the surface thoughts of any creature that meets her gaze as if she had cast *detect thoughts* and concentrated on the target for 3 rounds. The target can attempt to resist this gaze by making a DC 31 Will save. If Lynnara reads someone's thoughts, she gains a +5 circumstance

bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks made against that opponent.

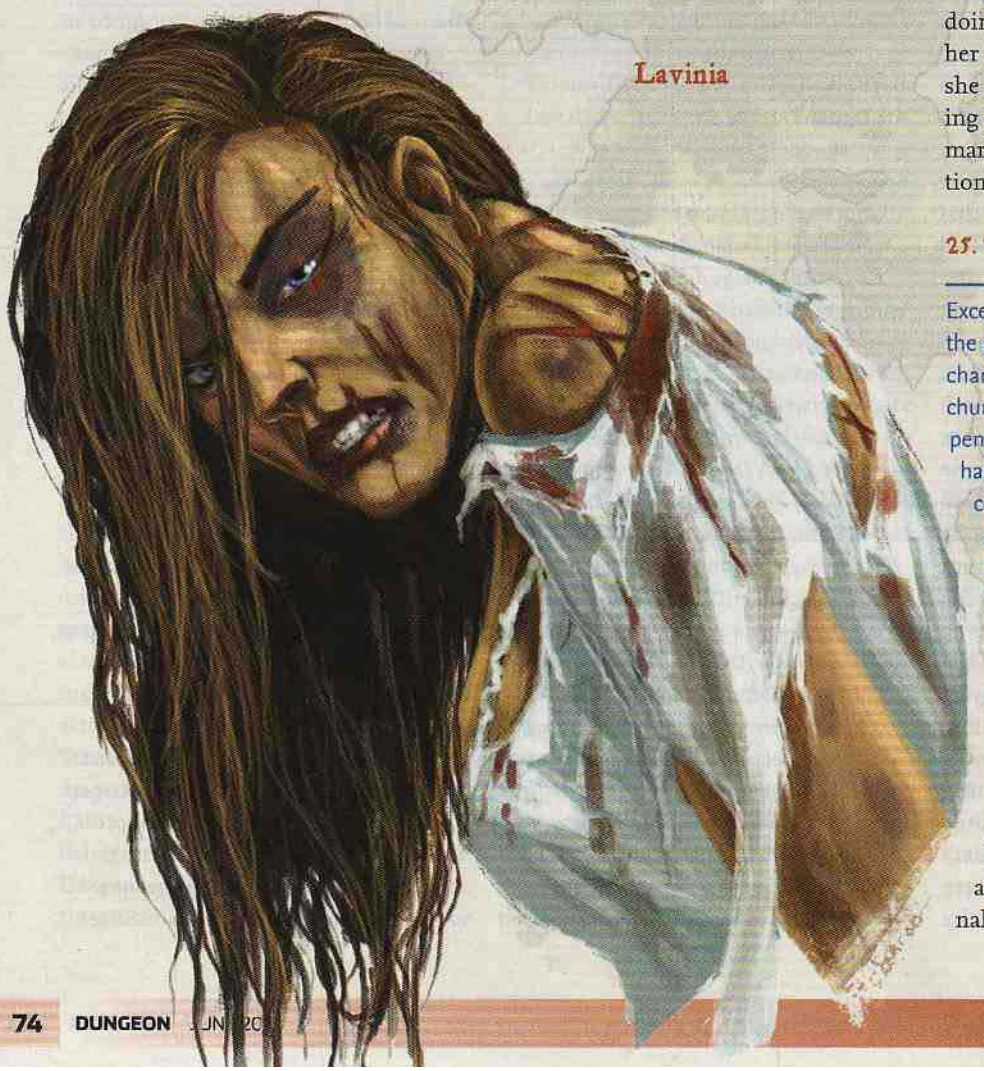
Feats Arcane Strike (*Complete Warrior* 96) allows Lynnara to sacrifice a spell as a free action to gain a bonus on her attack rolls equal to the level of the spell sacrificed and a bonus on weapon damage rolls equal to 1d4 points × the level of the spell sacrificed. Practiced Spellcaster (*Complete Divine* 82) increases her effective caster level for bard spells by +4. Thrall to Demon (*Fiendish Codex I* 87) allows her to gain a +1 luck bonus on any one roll while performing an evil act.

Spells Several of Lynnara's spells are from the *Spell Compendium*. If you don't use this book in your campaign, replace *critical strike* with *cure light wounds*, *entice gift* with *hold person*, *love's lament* with *confusion*, *ruin delver's fortune* with *modify memory*, and *whirling blade* with *cure moderate wounds*.

Tactics: Lynnara prefers to choose her fights, relying on more powerful allies she can bolster with her bardic music and spells rather than fight herself. Yet when cornered, she tries to strike before any deceived allies realize she's turned on them so she can gain the full advantage of both sneak attack and betrayal. She uses Arcane Strike to bolster her melee attacks and damage, sacrificing her highest level spells first. Given the opportunity, she enjoys using *charm monster* or *dominate person* to magically compel a creature, then attacks them to use betrayal and sneak attack. She has no intention of sacrificing herself for anyone other than Malcanthet, and if brought below 40 hit points, she attempts to flee, teleporting away if she escapes Divided's Ire.

Development: If the PCs fall for Lynnara's ruse and believe her to actually be an enslaved gnome, she's got a tricky balancing act to perform. She claims to have been enslaved by the evil marilith Lillianth, and feigns terror at even the mention of her name. She tells the PCs that, until the marilith is slain, she dares not leave this room, but if they can kill her, she (as Nurt) promises to aid them as a guide and navigator during their continued adventures on the Abyss. If the PCs do slay Lillianth and return here, she accompanies them on the rest of the adventure, remaining in the background during battles and playing the role of a non-combatant frightened gnome expert. If all goes well, she hopes to insinuate herself in the *Sea Wyvern's* crew, from where she watches the PCs and gives regular reports to Malcanthet on their progress. During the next few adventures, her advice can subtly guide the PCs toward their goal, which, in the end, syncs up nicely with Malcanthet's master plan for the Prince of Demons.

If the PCs ever see through Lynnara's disguise and trickery, she flees as quickly as possible. If she escapes, she can become a recurring foil, temptress, or trickster throughout the rest of the campaign as she tries again and again to influence the party into unknowingly doing Malcanthet's will. If they discover her trickery before they leave the area, she instead flees to Lillianth's side, hoping to lure the PCs into a fight with her marilith lover in area **25** (see the description of that area for her tactics there).



Lavinia

25. The Accursed (EL 21)

Except for a ten-foot-wide walkway around the perimeter of the room, the floor of this chamber is missing, dropping away to a churning pool of lava twenty feet below. Suspended over the fiery pit are six iron cages hanging from thick chains bolted into the ceiling thirty feet above. Both the ceiling and the surrounding walls are plated in jagged shards of razor-sharp iron blades. Figures loll about and cry in pain within three of the cages.

This chamber was used to house particularly troublesome prisoners, creatures who exhibited a special talent for escaping or who particularly annoyed Demogorgon. For some time, Lillianth and her accomplices (the babau Jariaxer, the nalfeshnee Radglath, and the succubus

Lynnara) were imprisoned here, but after she escaped, the only remaining prisoners were a mad trumpet archon named Abalarian and a seething ice devil named Baorvex. At least, until Lillianth got ahold of Lavinia Vanderboren.

Long ago, Lillianth was a rising star in the Abyss, a brilliant tactician and general who realized success after bloody success in the Blood War. Her continued triumph on the field of battle made her betters nervous, as Lillianth regularly shamed them by accomplishing things they thought impossible. Her direct commander, Athux, son of the Dark Prince Graz'zt, eventually dispatched her to the Material Plane on a special mission to assassinate the leader of a cult dedicated to Demogorgon. Of course, the mission was a setup; Athux feared that Lillianth's gift at tactics made her a threat to his own position as commander of Graz'zt's army. The Demogorgon cultists had been warned by Athux, and ambushed Lillianth and her forces. Yet the cultists did not slay her, as Athux had hoped—instead, they captured her and her three allies and handed them over to Demogorgon. The Prince of Demons was delighted to have such a famous commander of Graz'zt's army his prisoner, and placed all four demons into this room to await his attentions later—and then promptly forgot about them.

Now that Lillianth has escaped, she plots her revenge against Athux. She hopes to recruit her own army from the demons imprisoned in Divided's Ire and march them on Azzagrat to slay her former commander, but before she can accomplish this, she needs to seize control of the prison to show her power and cow the demons therein to her servitude.

With Vanthus' arrival, she sensed a distinct tactical advantage. With a death knight ally, she could count on his ability to attract undead followers to further augment her own army, and in so doing weaken Orgosh's hold. In order to secure Vanthus's allegiance, she and her followers took from him his greatest prize, Lavinia Vanderboren—a simple enough feat for such a masterful tactician. Lavinia has languished in one of the cells here ever since, tormented and tortured but kept alive so as to ensure Vanthus's continued cooperation. Once he's managed to recruit a large enough undead army and help Lillianth claim a larger foothold in the Ire, she's promised him that she'll return his sister.

Lillianth has had little success in brokering deals with mortals. As a result, she's likely to attack first and ask questions later. She's not inclined to give up her power over Vanthus by releasing Lavinia—in order to get her to do so, the PCs must give her something greater than an army of stolen undead in exchange. If the PCs can kill all five of the other faction leaders, she promises to release Lavinia, on the condition that they immediately leave Divided's Ire. The marilith may be a demon, but she's also a pragmatist—if the PCs can manage to slay the other five faction leaders, she recognizes them as an asset and does not go back on her word. In fact, she may contact the PCs at a later date after the Savage Tide Adventure Path is concluded, if only to recruit their aid in an assault on Athux's army.

The player characters may have learned something of the treachery within Lillianth's ranks and may offer to exchange this information for Lavinia. The marilith is not a fool, but she's worried about the betrayal. If the PCs can supply her with proof of Lynnara's doubledealing with Malcanthet, she sets out to destroy her lover in a fit of anger, leaving Lavinia unguarded for several minutes.

If the PCs release the insane trumpet archon Abalarian, they have one round to cure him of his insane despair with a *heal* or *greater restoration* before he throws himself into the lava below, following the same route his trumpet took not long after he was imprisoned so many years ago. If he can be cured, he vows allegiance to the PCs as long as they remain in Divided's Ire, and does what he can to aid them until they leave, at which point he returns to the upper planes to rebuild his destroyed trumpet.

If the PCs release the ice devil Baorvex, he attempts to escape Divided's Ire, furiously attacking anyone who gets in his way.

LILLIANTH **CR 21**

Female marilith fighter 2/legendary leader 4
CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Monster Manual 44, *Heroes of Battle* 108
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +31, Spot +31
Aura *unholy aura* (spell-like ability in effect)
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 40, touch 18, flat-footed 35
hp 343 (22 HD); **DR** 10/good and cold iron
Immune electricity, fear, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 25
Fort +31, **Ref** +22, **Will** +23; heroic success

Spd 40 ft.
Melee* +2 *keen halberd* +29/+24/+19/+14 (2d8+30/19–20/×3) and
+2 *unholy whip dagger* +29 (1d8+13/19–20) and
+2 *wounding heavy pick* +29 (1d8+13/×4 plus 1 Con) and
+3 *keen scimitar* +30 (1d8+14/15–20) and
+4 *short sword* +31 (1d8+15/19–20) and
tail slap +26 (4d6+17)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +21; **Grp** +37
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Power Attack, constrict 4d6+16, improved grab (tail slap)
Special Actions *summon tanar'ri*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)
At will—*align weapon*, *blade barrier* (DC 24), *magic weapon*, *project image* (DC 25), *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 23), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy aura* (DC 26)
2/day—*greater command* (DC 24)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 34, Dex 21, Con 32, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 26
SQ hero's luck, natural commander
Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Extra Followers, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Leadership, Multiattack, Multiweapon Fighting, Power Attack
Skills Bluff +32, Concentration +31, Diplomacy +33, Hide +20, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (history) +20, Listen +31, Move Silently +24, Search +23, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +23, Spot +31, Use Magic Device +27
Possessions +2 *keen halberd*, +2 *unholy whip dagger*, +2 *wounding heavy pick*, +3 *keen scimitar*, +4 *short sword*, *ring of force shield*, *bracers of armor* +4

Extra Followers This feat (*Heroes of Battle* 97) doubles the number of followers Lillianth can lead.

Heroic Success (Ex) Lillianth can show her ability to beat the odds once per day by choosing to automatically succeed on a single saving throw instead of rolling the dice.

Hero's Luck (Ex) Lillianth gains a +2 luck bonus on all saving throws.

Legendary Reputation (Ex) Lillianth's reputation as a brilliant tactician grants her a +4 bonus on Diplomacy checks made to influence any NPC who is not already unfriendly or hostile. This bonus is not included above.

LAVINIA VANDERBOREN **CR 14**

Female human aristocrat 2/swashbuckler 7/duelist 6

NG Medium humanoid

Complete Warrior 11

Init +9; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1

Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Dodge +2, Mobility, enhanced mobility

hp 95 (15 HD)

Fort +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +7

Spd 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +17 (1d3 nonlethal)

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +12

Atk Options acrobatic charge, improved flanking, precise strike +1d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16

SQ canny defense, improved reaction, grace

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Negotiator, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Appraise +7, Balance +13, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +28, Gather Information +10, Jump +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +7, Perform (stringed instrument) +8, Profession (sailor) +6, Sense Motive +12, Tumble +19

Acrobatic Charge (Ex) Lavinia may charge through difficult terrain that would normally slow movement. She may charge through squares occupied by allies.

Dodge Bonus (Ex) Lavinia may designate an opponent during her action and receive a +1 dodge bonus to AC against melee attacks from that opponent. This bonus stacks with that granted by the Dodge feat, but Lavinia loses this bonus when she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.

Improved Flanking (Ex) Lavinia gains a +4 bonus to attack a flanked opponent.

Insightful Strike (Ex) Lavinia applies her Intelligence bonus on damage rolls with weapons that can gain the benefit of Weapon Finesse. This additional damage does not apply to targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits. Lavinia loses this bonus when she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.

Abalarian, trumpet archon: hp 126; *Monster Manual* 18.

Baorvex, ice devil: hp 147; *Monster Manual* 56.

Tactics: Lillianth's first move in combat is to telepathically contact as many of her allies she can—the six hezrous from area **23**, Jariaxer, and Lynnara. While Jariaxer and the hezrous arrive as soon as they can and loyally defend their mistress, Lynnara is a more complex story. She spends an additional round or two delaying before joining the combat, and once she joins spends the first two rounds casting *freedom of movement* and *displacement* on herself while she gauges how the combat is going. If it seems clear that the PCs are losing, she decides they're not worth allying with after all, uses her bardic music to inspire courage in the other demons, and then casts curative magic and *dominate person* as necessary. If, on the other hand, the PCs seem to be winning, she uses Arcane Strike, sacrifices a 5th-level spell, and takes a full attack action on Lillianth, gaining the benefits of sneak attack and betrayal in hopes of giving the PCs a final advantage. If Lillianth still lives, she abandons the PCs and focuses her wrath on Lynnara, in which case the succubus tumbles away and uses flight to keep the PCs between the marilith and herself. If she's already led the PCs to believe she's Nurt Bilgeflower (see area **24**), she attempts to escape via *mislead*, returning to area **24** and resuming her role as the scared gnome.

Development: Lavinia reacts to the PCs' arrival with cautious disbelief; her tormentors have repeatedly used trickery and illusion to mess with her mind over the past several days, and until the PCs can prove to her they are what they are (by revealing knowledge that only they could have shared, or by making a DC 30 Diplomacy check), she tearfully embraces them, thanking them again and again for coming to her rescue. It doesn't take her long to recover her senses, though—when she does, she sets her jaw and informs the PCs that her brother is here, and that before they leave, they need to put him down. Lavinia has no gear, but assuming the PCs can equip her, she remains with them for the remainder of the adventure to aid as best she can. She opposes any notion of "sending her away," arguing that if anyone has a right to be there when Vanthus is destroyed, it's her.

Having spent weeks in Vanthus' company, Lavinia has also managed to glean a fair amount of information about Demogorgon's plans for the savage tide. You can use Lavinia to underscore the urgency for someone to oppose Demogorgon's plot if the PCs aren't already planning on doing so.

26. Small Bridge (EL 17)

Stretching across a searing chasm that ends in a river of lava spilling out from the caldera is a narrow bridge, ten feet across and forty feet long. A single small building of stone and iron squats atop a stony pinnacle protruding from the lava at the far end of the bridge.

It's a 1,000 foot drop to the river of lava below.

Soon after arriving at the Divided's Ire, Vanthus staked his claim on this small island nestled between both compounds on the western island, guided here by the mysterious shadow demons that flocked to his side not long after his arrival on Gaping Maw. With their aid, he defeated the flight of vrocks that had taken up this area as its lair and claimed the area as his own.

This bridge and the pinnacle beyond (areas **27–28**) are not warded by the *forbiddance* or *sympathy* effects, making this an excellent fortress for Vanthus (or the PCs).

Creatures: Six of the shadow demons that have been following Vanthus have taken up lairs in the shadows of the supports under the bridge's length, where they cling like bats. The demons flap up onto the bridge itself to attack anyone who attempts to cross it.

These shadows serve the demon lord Socothbenoth, a patron (among other things) of incest—his interest in Vanthus has only grown since the death knight returned to the Abyss, and he sent a flock of shadow demons to follow him and whisper offers in his ears of the glories and rewards that he can expect if he pledges his loyalty to Socothbenoth instead of Demogorgon. Vanthus is slowly becoming convinced by their ceaseless prattle, but until he can engineer Lavinia's "rescue" he has no intentions of leaving the Ire or abandoning the Prince of Demons.

A shadow demon is a dark, insubstantial monster with long curving horns and batlike wings.

Shadows of Socothbenoth (6) CR 12
Advanced elite shadow demon
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, incorporeal)
Book of Vile Darkness 172
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Listen +22, Spot +22
Languages Abyssal, Common

AC 26, touch 26, flat-footed 17
hp 175 (15 HD); **DR** 10/good
Immune ability drain, cold, critical hits, disease, electricity, energy drain, fire, mind-affecting, nonlethal damage, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning
SR 19
Fort +16, Ref +20, Will +13
Weakness light powerlessness

Spd fly 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee 2 claws +19 touch (2d6 vile/19–20)
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +10
Atk Options Combat Expertise, improved grab, pounce
Special Actions 2 rakes +14 touch (1d6 vile)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)
At Will—*darkness*
1/day—*deeper darkness*, *damning darkness*
1/week—*magic jar* (DC 22)

Abilities Str —, Dex 28, Con 24, Int 17, Wis 19, Cha 25
SQ darkness enhancement, vile flesh-ripping claws
Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Skills Bluff +23, Concentration +25, Diplomacy +27, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Hide +37, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (the planes) +21, Listen +22, Move Silently +27, Search +21, Sense Motive +22, Spot +22

***Damning Darkness* (Sp)** This spell is detailed in the *Book of Vile Darkness*. If you don't use this book in your campaign, replace this spell-like ability with *unholy blight*.
Darkness Enhancement (Ex) A shadow demon gains power from being in darkness. In such areas, it gains a +4 profane bonus to Armor Class and on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saves, and skill and ability checks.
Vile Flesh-Ripping Claws (Su) When a shadow demon's claws touch flesh, they become corporeal, allowing the creature to claw, rake, and even grapple with opponents, yet still ignore their armor. The shadow demon's attacks resolve as melee touch attacks. Fleshless creatures, such as most constructs, are immune to the shadow demon's weapons. Corporeal foes attempting to grapple a shadow demon can only attempt to escape; they can't deal damage or pin in a grapple. All damage a shadow demon's claws and rake attacks inflict is vile damage. Vile damage is like regular damage but it can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.
Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability a shadow demon must hit a creature its size or smaller with both claw attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake the victim.
Light Powerlessness (Ex) A shadow demon is drained in bright light (such as sunlight). Within such light, it takes a –4 penalty to Armor Class and on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, and skill and ability checks.
Pounce (Ex) If a shadow demon charges, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.
See in Darkness (Su) A shadow demon can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell.
Skills Shadow demons have a +10 racial bonus on Hide checks.

27. Antechamber (EL 20)

The stench here is terrible. Human corpses, piled like cordwood, fill this chamber. It's clear from their expressions they did not die well. A single door stands on the opposite wall, and a bloody idol of Demogorgon stands against the north wall, it baboon heads staring with hungry malevolence. The broken remains of a desk, a chair, and several cabinets lie against the southern wall.

This room was once used by the Ire's jailors to process new arrivals or handle requests from visitors. It has long since fallen into ruin, and little remains to denote its former purpose.

Creatures: The bodies stacked herein are all that remains of Vanthus's crew. As they succumbed to their injuries, madness, disease, or attacks from the other denizens of the Ire, Vanthus piled their bodies here, driven by urges he didn't quite understand at the time. Yet when their spirits rose soon thereafter as dread wraiths loyal to his command, he was grateful he acted under the strange compulsion.

Dread Wraiths (8): hp 136 each; *Monster Manual* 258.

Tactics: One of the dread wraiths moves through the western wall to warn Vanthus of intruders, if he's not already on alert, while the rest converge on any obvious divine characters such as clerics or paladins.

28. The Death Knight (EL 20)

A pool of slime and effluvia collects in the center of this large chamber, and shadows drench the corners and high ceiling overhead.

Creatures: If the PCs have not yet encountered Vanthus elsewhere in the complex, they do so here. The shadows writhing in the corners of the ceiling are three of Vanthus's new shadow demon companions. The death knight has been spending many days in this grim chamber, brooding on how best to rescue his sister from the dangerous marilith to the north.

VANTHUS VANDERBOREN **CR 20**

Male lemorian death knight aristocrat 1/rogue 5/fighter 4/tempest 5

CE Medium undead

DUNGEON #143 58, *Monster Manual II* 206, *Complete Adventurer* 81

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen –1, Spot –1

Aura fear (15 ft.)

Languages Common

AC 42, touch 18, flat-footed 37; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge

hp 97 (15 HD); **DR** 15/magic

Immune cold, electricity, undead traits

Resist acid 10, fire 10; **SR** 25

Fort +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +5; evasion

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)

Melee *+4 flaming burst longsword* +25/+20/+15 (1d8+14/17–20 plus 1d6 fire and poison) and *+2 flaming burst sickle* +23/+18 (1d6+8/19–20 plus 1d6 fire and poison) and tail +15 (1d6+4 plus poison) or touch +20 (1d8+5 plus 1 Con damage)

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +15

Atk Options Spring Attack, smite good 1/day (+15 damage), sneak attack +3d6, two-weapon spring attack

Special Attacks abyssal blast, summon mount

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 19), *command* (DC 16), *unholy aura* (DC 23)

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 20), *fear* (DC 19), *mass charm monster* (DC 23), *mass suggestion* (DC 21), *suggestion* (DC 18), *unhallow*

Abilities Str 26, Dex 21, Con —, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 20

SQ ambidexterity, tempest defense +3, trapfinding, trap sense +1, turn immunity, two-weapon versatility, undead followers

Feats Dodge, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Balance +13, Bluff +16, Diplomacy +8, Forgery +10, Intimidate +19, Jump +13, Knowledge (local) +10, Profession (sailor) +7, Sense Motive +9, Swim +5, Tumble +19

Possessions *+5 mithral breastplate, +4 flaming burst longsword, +2 flaming burst sickle, ring of protection +3, amulet of natural armor +4, boots of speed, belt of giant strength +6*, 4 gold earrings worth 300 gp each

Abyssal Blast (Su) Once per day, Vanthus can unleash a blast of eldritch fire in a 20-foot-radius spread anywhere within a range of 1,000 feet. The blast deals 15d6 damage (half fire, half unholy power). A DC 22 Reflex save halves the damage done; the save DC is Charisma-based.

Ambidexterity (Ex) Vanthus's penalties for dual-wielding weapons are lessened by 2 when he's not wearing medium or heavy armor.

Fear Aura (Su) Creatures with less than 5 HD within 15 feet of Vanthus must make a DC 22 Will save or be affected as if by a *fear* spell (CL 15th). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Wis. Vanthus can poison a melee weapon with this venom as a standard action. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Summon Mount (Su) Vanthus can summon a nightmare to his side as a standard action. If this nightmare is slain, Vanthus cannot use this ability for a year and a day.

Tempest Defense (Ex) When wielding two weapons, Vanthus gains a +3 bonus to his Armor Class as long as he's not wearing medium or heavy armor.

Turn Immunity (Ex) Although he is undead, Vanthus cannot be turned.

Two-Weapon Spring Attack (Ex) If Vanthus makes a Spring Attack, he can attack once with each weapon as long as he's not wearing medium or heavy armor.

Two-Weapon Versatility (Ex) When Vanthus fights with two weapons, he applies the effects of Improved Critical, Weapon Focus, and Weapon Specialization to his sickle.

Undead Followers Given time, Vanthus can attracts a small army of undead followers.

Shadows of Socothbenoth (3): hp 175 each; see page 76.

Tactics: Vanthus has no interest in speaking to the PCs—they've killed him once before, and he's burning with a chance to return the favor. If the PC who struck the death blow on him back in "Tides of Dread" is present, he favors attacks on that PC over all others (unless another PC has become romantically involved with Lavinia, in which case that PC receives the brunt of his wrath). The shadow demons gleefully swoop in to aid Vanthus in the battle, providing flanking opportunities or immobilizing foes with improved grab so that Vanthus can make sneak attacks.

While combat is likely to begin in this room, it certainly shouldn't stay here. Vanthus's first act in combat is to Tumble through the PCs and out onto the bridge in area **26**, where he summons his nightmare, mounts up, and rides into the sky around this pinnacle so that he can use his spell-like abilities against the PCs to sow dissent in their ranks. Once he manages to confuse things by charming and dominating PCs, he picks his targets, flies down, and dismounts, taking them on in one-on-one combat. This combat should be one of the more resonant battles in the Savage Tide campaign, since Vanthus has been a thorn in the party's side since the beginning. Strive to make this fight cinematic and as memorable as possible.

If Lavinia is with the PCs when they confront Vanthus, she flies into a most-unladylike litany of profanity and curses that essentially amounts to calling Vanthus a coward and a murderer who deserves nothing less than what the PCs are about to give him. Her rebuke unsettles him, and as a result he suffers a –4 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, and weapon damage for the duration of the fight. He avoids harming her if he can, but saves his abyssal blast for a last ditch tactic if it appears that he's about to be defeated, hoping to catch both himself and his sister in this final act of petty cruelty.

29. Hall of Weeping (EL 16)

This exquisite hall extends some sixty feet and ends at a wide staircase leading up to an even larger chamber. Stone columns carved to resemble moaning, terrified faces line the walls until they come to staircases leading to side corridors.

Creatures: Saureya rescued several celestials from cells in area **7** when he first arrived in Divided's Ire. Of the few he managed to free before he was driven off by the warden's wrath, two were too hopelessly insane to realize they had

been freed and one fled. The remaining two, both trumpet archons, had grown cynical and hateful during their imprisonment. They sensed in Saureya a kinship, and pledged their lives to his cause without fully comprehending what that cause truly represents.

The trumpet archons, Danel and Uzza, do not attack the PCs unless first attacked. Danel hangs back, preparing to blow his trumpet should the PCs make a hostile move, while the other casts *detect evil* to check for corruption within the PCs. If he detects none, he steps forward in greeting, saying, "Hail heroes, and behold the kingdom of Saureya! What errand brings you to this forlorn land?"

The archons are indifferent and offer little information about their master or about the Ire itself, instead questioning the PCs about their purpose, why they intrude into their territory, and what has drawn them into the Abyss. Even if satisfied the PCs mean no harm to them, the archons bar access to area **31**, warning that their master is in an ill mood and should not be disturbed.

If the PCs manage to improve the archons' attitudes to friendly, the pair relaxes somewhat and are more amenable to letting the PCs into their territory, though they issue the same warning. They can introduce the characters to Saureya if they desire an audience.

If made helpful, the archons confide in the PCs, golden tears streaming from their beautiful eyes. "Ours is a tragic tale, friends. It was an ill-advised mission that brought us to this accursed place and for our hubris, we have been rent from our proper homes, accursed and little better than the wretched souls that dwell here, though it pains us to exist in such a state. We cannot return to our heavenly homes for shame and our own wickedness stains our souls. Flee! Flee from this place lest it consume you as it did us!" The archons solemnly lead the characters to Saureya if asked. They also cast curative magic on any obviously injured PCs.

The two archons have normal statistics despite their fallen status; their spell domains are Destruction and War. Their spell list remains mostly unchanged from the listing in the *Monster Manual*, save for the following adjustments: replace *protection from chaos* with *inflict light wounds*, *aid* with *shatter*, *magic circle against chaos* with *contagion*, *holy smite* with *inflict critical wounds*, *dispel evil* with *flame strike*, *blade barrier* with *harm*, and *dictum* with *power word blind*.

Danel and Uzza, Fallen Trumpet Archons (2): hp 126 each; AL CN; *Monster Manual* 18.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Characters who deal peacefully with these archons gain experience as if they had defeated them in combat.

30. The Shrieking Pillar (EL 10)

This oddly shaped chamber features numerous open doors leading into dusty rooms. A single pillar of iron rises up from the floor to the ceiling overhead, its surface studded with countless hooks and barbs. Stretched over these hooks are dozens of faces, seemingly skinned from the heads of men and women and affixed inside out in an overlapping pattern of flesh over much of the pillar. A grating, endless shriek wails horridly from the faces, and their eyelids and lips twitch and writhe as if in horrific pain.

This horrific ward was created by Demogorgon, more as an idle fancy than anything else. The pillar's purpose is to maim and horrify humanoid intruders to the Ire; Demogorgon initially intended on placing shrieking pillars throughout the main entrances to the three sections of the prison, but developments with Shami-Amuroae derailed these plans.

Trap: Any humanoid that comes within 60 feet of the shrieking pillar becomes infused with its sorrow and rage. He must make a DC 25 Will save (if he can hear the shrieks, he suffers a –4 penalty to this save); failure indicates that the character does whatever he can to approach to a square adjacent to the pillar. Once he reaches the pillar, he is compelled to place his face against the pillar, at which point the iron spikes animate and flense his face away, transferring it fresh and bloody to the pillar. The process inflicts 2d6 points of Constitution drain and 2d6 points of Charisma drain on the victim, who must then make a DC 25 Will save (–4 if he can hear) or be driven permanently *insane*, as the spell.

Shrieking Pillar: CR 10; magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; multiple targets (all humanoids within a 60-foot spread); compulsion to approach, 2d6 Con drain, 2d6 Cha drain, insanity; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 40.

31. The Fallen Angel (EL 18)

Pale white steps riddled with cracks lead up to a large hall, shaped something like a Y. To either side of the steps stand statues of angelic beings bent double from their suffering, one arm shielding their faces and the other thrown up as if to ward away some terrible evil. At the far end of this room is a throne, and pooled around its base is a slick of crimson blood.

Creature: Seated on the throne is a beautiful man with silvery hair and sad features. Faint tattoos, almost like scars, crisscross his flesh, making it seem like he was assembled from puzzle pieces. Rising up from his back are gory stumps that were once his wings. This forlorn figure is the fallen astral deva Saureya.

As Occipitus, the 507th layer of the Abyss, absorbed a cast-down fragment of Celestia, it took with it numerous celestial creatures including angels, couatls, and other divine beings. One of these creatures was Saureya, an astral deva. For eons, he suffered terribly under the mad will of Adimarchus, the Demon Lord of Madness and ruler of Occipitus, but somehow managed to escape annihilation and even sabotaged his master's plans by creating a means for Occipitus and its inhabitants to escape the Abyss and perhaps one day rejoin with Celestia. And while Adimarchus is now dead and mastery of the layer eventually went to a new ruler, Saureya, sickened by his time in a realm of remorseless wickedness, found he had no stomach for watching the layer undergo its transformation from falling under the control of a new steward. The corruption in his veins (to say nothing of his jaded outlook) prevented him from returning to his native plane, and so he spent the next few years wandering the Abyss.

As he traveled, he found himself longing for the power and company of Adimarchus. Such thoughts appalled him, and he did his best to quash them whenever they bubbled up in his unconscious, but despite his best efforts, reuniting with a master, any master, soon dominated his thoughts. It was in this state of mind that he inadvertently captured Demogorgon's attentions while passing through Gaping Maw. Intrigued by this creature, Demogorgon flung him into Divided's Ire until such time as he could examine the fallen angel at his leisure.

For Saureya, captivity was the final straw, and his mind snapped. He would not allow himself to be victimized by the barbaric warden and saw, in the clarity of his madness, an opportunity to reinstate himself as the right-hand servant of a demon lord. If he could just find some way to prove his worth to Demogorgon, surely the demon prince would raise him up.

Today, Saureya is of two minds, just like his new patron. One mind desperately wants to be free from the Abyss, to be healed and retake his place in the glorious skies of Celestia. The other wants an exalted place as Demogorgon's proxy, to serve this mad master in all things and spread his dominion across the Abyss and beyond. Currently this darker, more ambitious personality has exerted itself and believes by wresting control of Divided's Ire, he will prove his worth to Demogorgon.

Saureya is interested in anyone or anything that can assist him in taking control of Divided's Ire. He hates everyone else here, but he reserves the worst of his venom for Kululblax. The PCs are an opportunity for him, and he's amenable to making an alliance. If the characters manage to kill Kululblax or Orgosh, they gain Saureya's help for the remainder of this adventure.

The PCs may think to try to redeem Saureya, but there is little they can do to undo what decades in the Abyss has already wrought. Saureya has become a mountebank, an agent of Demogorgon who belongs to the Prince of Demons body and soul now. It won't be much longer before his alignment shifts to evil, at which point his fall becomes complete. The best they can do to the tragic figure is put him out of his misery. If the PCs do well in their attempts to redeem him (by casting an *atonement* spell, perhaps, or making a DC 50 Diplomacy check), his softer personality rises to the surface for a moment and begs them to end his life—the only path remaining to redemption. Saureya lowers his defenses for one round, giving the PCs that long to coup de grace him, but if he survives, his demonic personality returns and he flies into a murderous rage and attempts to slay the party for what they nearly accomplished.

SAUREYA **CR 18**

Male astral deva mountebank 8

CN Medium outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Monster Manual 11, *Dragon Compendium* 42

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +20, Spot +20

Aura protective aura

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; tongues

AC 42, touch 18, flat-footed 34; uncanny dodge

hp 202 (20 HD); **DR** 10/evil

Immune acid, cold, petrifacation

Resist electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 30

Fort +18, **Ref** +22, **Will** +13

Spd 50 ft.

Melee *+3 keen shock greatsword* +28/+23/+18/+13 (2d6+10/17–20 plus 1d6 electricity)

Ranged *+3 composite longbow* +29/+24/+19/+14 (1d8+10/×3) or *+3 composite longbow* +27/+27/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+10/×3)

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +25

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, deceptive attack +2d6

Special Actions beguiling stare (DC 22), infernal patron (disguise the soul's aspect, *infernal defense, infernal guise*, mass beguile)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*aid, continual flame, detect evil, discern lies* (DC 22), *dispel evil* (DC 23), *dispel magic, invisibility* (self only), *plane shift* (DC 25), *remove curse, remove disease, remove fear*

7/day—*cure light wounds, see invisibility*

1/day—*blade barrier* (DC 24), *heal*

Abilities Str 24, Dex 26, Con 22, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 26

SQ mark of damnation, trapfinding

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot

Skills Bluff +24, Concentration +29, Diplomacy +33, Escape Artist +23, Hide +31, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (religion) +19, Knowledge (the planes) +27, Listen +20, Move Silently +31, Sense Motive +18, Spot +20, Tumble +24

Possessions *+5 mithral shirt, +3 shocking burst greatsword, +3 composite longbow* (Strength +7) with 50 adamantine arrows, *gloves of Dexterity +4*

Beguiling Stare (Su) As a standard action, Saureya can stare into a target's eyes and beguile him. The target can resist being beguiled with a DC 22 Will save. Saureya may use this ability at will, but no more often than once per day per target. A beguiled character loses his Dexterity bonus to AC, suffers a –2 penalty on Will saves and a –5 penalty on Sense Motive checks. If the victim makes his save, he has no knowledge of the mountebank's attempt to beguile him unless he makes a DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check. This is a mind-affecting ability.

Deceptive Attack (Ex) Saureya deals +2d6 damage against targets he successfully feints. This additional damage only applies to melee weapon attacks, and cannot be used to deal nonlethal damage.

Infernal Patron (Su) Saureya's close connection to Demogorgon allows him to channel Abyssal energy into the minds of others. He may do so 12 times a day, taking a standard action to do so. He may use this energy in a number of different ways:

Disguise the Soul's Aspect (Su) Any time someone attempts to use a spell capable of determining his alignment, Sauryea can expend a use of this ability to make a Charisma check opposed by the caster's Sense Motive check. If he succeeds, he picks the alignment the caster detects.

***Infernal Defense* (Sp)** Sauryea can use *displacement* (CL 8th).

***Infernal Guise* (Sp)** Sauryea can use *alter self* (CL 8th).

Mass Beguile (Su) All creatures with 8 Hit Dice or less within a 30-foot-burst at a range of 180 feet must make a DC 22 Will save or become beguiled for 8 rounds (as if by his beguiling stare). This is a mind-affecting ability.

Mark of Damnation (Ex) If Saureya dies, Demogorgon claims his essence. He must make a DC 25 Bluff or Diplomacy check to return to the living (with a +4 bonus on the check) if someone attempts to bring him back to life.

32. Altar of the Sibilant Beast (EL 19)

Four iron statues surround a much larger fifth atop a huge dais that rises from the broken floor. Each of the smaller statues depict demonic figures kneeling in supplication before the figure in the middle. One of the four is a bloated humanoid with a ram's head and bat wings. The next is a muscular man with small horns sprouting from his head and six fingers on each hand. The third is a huge spider with a humanoid body protruding from where its head should be, this humanoid body has four arms and three heads—two wolflike and one human. The fourth and last is a nightmarish scorpion with too many legs, three stingered tails where its head should be, and a monstrous six-eyed face with a vertical mouth where the tip of its actual tail should be. The figure at the center is a massive two-headed demonic being.

This statue symbolizes Demogorgon's role as Prince of Demons, depicting his four greatest enemies in positions of servitude and humiliation. In order, they are Orcus (Prince of Undead), Graz'zt (the Dark Prince), Miska the Wolf Spider (the second Prince of Demons), and Obox-ob (the first Prince of Demons). Demogorgon himself, the third Prince of Demons, rules from the center. Spells with the evil descriptor cast within 20 feet of this altar function at +2 caster level. Good and lawful aligned creatures who approach within this range are automatically sickened (no save) for as long as they remain in range and for 2d4 rounds thereafter.

The altar's purpose is more than a show of power by Demogorgon—it's also the focus for the *forbiddance* and *sympathy* effects that blanket Divided's Ire. The statue is an artifact, and can possibly be destroyed by a *Mordenkainen's disjunction* spell. Failing that, it can also be destroyed by splashing blood from the four demon lords depicted around the central statue; doing so causes the statue of Demogorgon to crumble. Destroying the altar removes the *forbiddance* and *sympathy* fields, but also immediately alerts Demogorgon, who immediately sends a molydeus demon named Zarvab to investigate. The demon is enraged to discover the condition his master's prison has fallen into, and once he deals with anyone who remains in this area, begins a brutal crusade to cleanse the site of every living thing. With the wards over Divided's Ire gone, most of the creatures remaining in the prison opt to flee via *teleport* rather than face the wrath of an enraged molydeus.

Creature: Molydeus demons are detailed in *Fiendish Codex I*. It's unlikely you'll need their stats, but if the PCs manage to destroy the statue and you don't use this book in your campaign, replace the molydeus with a pair of marilith demons armed with cold iron weapons.

Saureya

Zarvab, Moydeus: hp 275; *Fiendish Codex I* 47.

33. Orgosh's Realm (EL 20)

This immense room looks more like a self-contained village than part of a larger structure. The vaulted ceiling arches to a nest of iron rafters fifty feet above. Thick cobwebs and swirling motes of cold blue light up there give the place the illusion of slithering life and cast a constantly undulating glow on the buildings below. These buildings are squat stone structures, each no more than one story tall and with shallow domed roofs and no windows. The streets between these buildings are cluttered with bones and bits of leathery flesh.

Unlike the other regions controlled by the various factions of Divided's Ire, this large complex has no real centralized region of command. This was once where the guards of Divided's Ire lived, trained, and operated the prison. As more and more of the prisoners of Divided's Ire escaped and sought revenge on their jailors, these guards (most of whom were half-fiend cambions) began to die off. Today, only two of the prison's original "employees" survive—warden Kululblax (see area **9**), and the craven creature responsible for tending to Divided Ire's magical needs, a bullywug lich named Orgosh.

Orgosh

Creatures: Orgosh the Despoiler is a bullywug lich necromancer called to the Abyss ages ago by Demogorgon when the Prince of Demons was first gathering resources and advisors for the creation of the first death knight. Many of the necromancers he gathered were destroyed during the process or shortly thereafter, but Demogorgon took a liking to a few of them, such as Orgosh. Demogorgon allowed Orgosh to continue his studies at Divided's Ire, keeping the lich in line by hiding away his phylactery and threatening to destroy it.

Orgosh and his undead minions were responsible for maintaining this complex's magical qualities even before it became a prison—the lich rankled deep inside at having been reduced to the role of glorified butler, but there was little he could do but keep a low profile. This worked in his favor when Demogorgon learned of Shami-Amourae's treachery, as he managed to avoid catching any unwanted attention. He served Kululblax as an advisor for some time, and now that the prison is falling apart from the inside, Orgosh is finally coming out of his long period of shame. He's used the remains of prisoner and guard alike in his necromantic experiments, and now has a sizable army of undead minions to show for it. Eventually, he hopes to use his army to reclaim his phylactery from Demogorgon and return to his beloved Vast Swamp on the Material Plane.

Yet now, a new development has come to Divided's Ire. Vanthus's arrival has forced Orgosh to abandon his preparations in order to counteract the death knight's necromantic lure. The longer Vanthus remains in the area, the stronger this lure grows, and Orgosh knows that soon his precious undead

army will defect to Vanthus and pledge their loyalty to him. Orgosh's knowledge of death knights is the only thing that's kept this from happening already, but is also ironically the reason he hasn't attempted to destroy Vanthus. The lich knows how dangerous death knights are, after all. Worse, the fact that Demogorgon managed to transform a half-fiend into a death knight concerns Orgosh, as the lich had believed the transformation could only be worked upon mortals. As a result, Orgosh worries that Vanthus may be even more powerful than he fears.

The undead that haunt this region are strangely lethargic and slow-moving, the result of Orgosh's work against Vanthus's lure—by reducing the amount of necromantic energy suffusing these undead, he makes them less susceptible to the undead knight's pull. Unfortunately, it also makes the undead slow and listless. As long as Orgosh is forced to maintain the effect, the greater shadows, spectres, blood fiends, bodaks, mohrgs, and dread wraiths that haunt this area can't take standard actions or use any of their supernatural or spell-like powers. Orgosh himself is the only exception to this rule.

The magical focus that maintains the necromantic supression in this area is a pillar of bones and skulls located in the northern part of this area. If it's destroyed, the aura vanishes immediately.

Pillar of Skulls: 4-ft. thick; Hardness 10; hp 500; Break DC 36.

Orgosh the Despoiler **CR 18**

Male bullywug lich necromancer 16

CE Medium undead (extraplanar)

Monster Manual 108, 167, *Monsters of Faerûn* 25

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.;Listen +8, Spot +8

Aura fear (60 ft., 5 HD or less, DC 17)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Dodge, Mobility

hp 104 (16 HD); **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic

Immune cold, electricity, mind-affecting, polymorph, undead traits

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee touch +9 (1d8+5 and paralysis, DC 17)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +9

Atk Options Spring Attack

Spells Prepared (CL 16th, +9 touch, +10 ranged touch)

8th—*horrid wilting* (DC 25), *maze*, quickened *enervation*

7th—*finger of death* (DC 24), *limited wish* (2), *project image*, quickened *vampiric touch*

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 23), *disintegrate* (DC 23), *eyebite* (DC 23), *flesh to stone* (DC 23), *spectral touch* (DC 23)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 22), *night's caress* (DC 22), *transmute rock to mud*, *wall of force* (2), *waves of fatigue*

4th—*burning blood* (DC 21), extended *fly*, *illusory wall*, *greater invisibility*, *enervation*, *fear* (DC 21)

3rd—*displacement*, extended *false life* (already cast), *fireball* (2, DC 20), *halt undead* (DC 20), *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *major image* (DC 20), *mind poison* (DC 20), *stinking cloud* (DC 20), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *detect thoughts* (DC 19), *ghoul touch* (DC 19), *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *spectral hand*

1st—*grease* (DC 18), *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (2), *spirit worm* (DC 18), *true strike*

0—*acid splash*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 17)

Prohibited Schools abjuration, enchantment

Abilities Str 12, Dex 14, Con —, Int 24, Wis 11, Cha 8

SQ *contingency*, marsh move, turn resistance +4

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Mobility, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spring Attack

Skills Concentration +19, Hide +10, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +13, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (religion) +21, Knowledge (the planes) +27, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Search +15, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +29, Spot +8

Possessions *rod of lesser quicken metamagic*, *bracers of armor +5*, *ring of intellect +4* (as *headband of intellect +4*), *ring of wizardry III*

Contingency If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, *teleport* activates.

Marsh Move (Ex) Orgosh suffers no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.

Spells Several of Orgosh's spells are from the *Spell Compendium*. If you don't use this book in your campaign, replace *spirit worm* with *magic missile*, *mind poison* with *slow*, *burning blood* with *enervation*, *night's caress* with *cone of cold*, and *spectral touch* with *mislead*.

Blood Fiends (3): hp 120 each; see page 55.

Bodaks (8): hp 58 each; *Monster Manual* 28.

Dread Wraiths (10): hp 104 each; *Monster Manual* 258.

Greater Shadows (24): hp 58 each; *Monster Manual* 221.

Mohrgs (20): hp 91 each; *Monster Manual* 189.

Spectres (23): hp 45 each; *Monster Manual* 232.

Tactics: Although the undead that fill this region cannot attack, they can still move and whisper, which is what they do as soon as they notice the PCs entering the area. It takes only a few rounds for this chain of whispering to reach Orgosh, alerting him that living souls have come to visit. Orgosh casts extended *fly* and then moves to a point nearby but still out of sight of the PCs so he can cast *project image*, placing an image of himself at some far intersection visible to both him and the PCs. He demands to know why the PCs have intruded upon his realm, and although he does so initially only to buy some time and size them up, he becomes intrigued if the PCs mention that they're here to destroy Vanthus or to take action against Demogorgon.

If they do so, the lich waxes crafty. He's quite intelligent, and quickly pieces things together—that the PCs likely have ties to the other recent arrival to the Ire (Lavinia), and that the timing of their arrival when combined with that of the Vanderborens cannot be a coincidence—it must have something to do with Demogorgon's plans for the savage tide.

Orgosh quickly decides to recruit the PCs. If they promise to destroy

Vanthus (whom Orgosh has no problems admitting is encroaching on his territory), he promises to help them in their battle against Demogorgon. Assuming the PCs take the bait, he chuckles softly and says that he has information for them about someone who may just know some important secrets about the Prince of Demons' weaknesses, but he'll say nothing more until the PCs bring him proof of Vanthus's destruction. See "Concluding the Adventure" for more details. If the PCs ask for his help in fighting Vanthus, he declines to assist them directly, but does tell them that he suspects a powerful creature dwells in the volcano's caldera, just east of where Vanthus lives. A powerful enough destructive spell cast upon the lava might be enough to waken it—if the PCs can lure Vanthus into the area and then awake the monster, it might be a handy distraction against the death knight. Unfortunately, Orgosh isn't quite sure what this monster is—this is the main reason he's not risked awakening it himself.

It takes Orgosh an hour to lower the necromantic suppression over the area, so if the PCs locate and attack the lich quickly, they won't have to contend with his undead army. If reduced to less than 30 hit points, Orgosh attempts to reach the pillar of skulls, hoping to cast *disintegrate* on the pillar to destroy it and release his undead in a last-ditch effort to slay the PCs.

The undead ignore the PCs unless the pillar of skulls is destroyed, at which point they close upon the living quickly. Running a combat with this many foes is a harrowing prospect, one that even a high-level group of PCs should balk at attempting. Fortunately, the undead do not pursue foes out of this area.

Treasure: A DC 30 Search of the wall behind the pillar of skulls finds a large hidden compartment that Orgosh uses to store his spellbooks. These books contain all his prepared spells, plus all other necromancy spells from levels 0 to 8. Feel free to expand the spells in these books as you see fit.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

There are three primary goals for the PCs in this adventure: rescue, revenge, and the discovery of Demogorgon's weakness. Rescuing Lavinia and destroying Vanthus are likely to be the primary goals at the start, but as this adventure proceeds, they should keep in mind that they'll also need to start thinking soon about how they hope to stop Demogorgon from triggering the savage tide. As they explore Divided's Ire, there are plenty of clues that Demogorgon may have a critical weakness, but what this weakness is cannot be divined. Yet if anyone knows the best way to strike at the Prince of Demons, it is his former lover Shami-Amourae.

The best way to impart this information to the PCs is via the bullywug lich Orgosh. He remembers Demogorgon's debauched visits to the Ire with Shami-Amourae, and remembers also the Prince of Demon's wrath when he discovered she'd found a way to manipulate him. Although Orgosh doesn't know what this secret was, he does know it was enough for Demogorgon to imprison Shami-Amourae in the Wells of Darkness. Such a drastic move speaks volumes of Demogorgon's desire to keep his former lover silent—murdering her ran the risk of an ally bringing her back to life with *true resurrection* or a *wish*, whereas imprisonment in the Wells of Darkness is much more lasting than death. Whatever Shami-Amourae knew, she paid for with more than her life.

If the PCs can help Orgosh, the lich gratefully tells them to seek out the succubus Red Shroud of Broken Reach. No greater scholar on Shami-Amourae exists than Red Shroud, and if anyone knows how she can be reached, it would be her. Of course, Orgosh has his own reasons for helping the PCs—if they can destroy (or even simply distract) Demogorgon, the lich hopes to retrieve his phylactery from the vaults below Abysm. An alliance with the living is a small price to pay in his mind.

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTER

Belairon (Filth Demon)

A shifting mass of brown and green effluvia surges forward, and as it does its surface splits open to reveal a nightmare gullet that vents clouds of noxious green vapor.

BELAIRON (FILTH DEMON) **CR 14**

Always CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil)

Init +10; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +27, Spot +27

Aura stench (30 feet)

Languages Abyssal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 31, touch 15, flat-footed 25 (–1 size, +6 Dex, +16 natural)

hp 199 (21 HD); regeneration 10; **DR** 10/good

Immune acid, critical hits, disease, electricity, poison

Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 25

Fort +19, **Ref** +18, **Will** +15

Weakness vulnerable to sonic

Spd 60 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee* 2 slams +24 (1d8+14 plus filth) and bite +19 (2d6+18 plus filth)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +21; **Grp** +34

Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, powerful bite

Special Actions breath weapon

*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 28, Dex 22, Con 21, Int 6, Wis 17, Cha 8

SQ contamination

Feats Ability Focus (filth), Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Skills Escape Artist +38, Hide +2 (+12 in sewage or filth), Intimidate +23, Jump +45, Listen +27, Search +22, Spot +27

Environment any swamp (Abyss)

Organization solitary, pair, or clot (3–10)

Treasure standard

Advancement 22–30 HD (Large), 31–50 HD (Huge), 51–62 HD (Gargantuan)

Breath Weapon (Su) 60-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 14d6 acid, Reflex DC 25 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Contamination (Ex) A beliaron pollutes any body of water in which it resides. It poisons 10 cubic feet of water each day to a maximum radius of 100 feet/HD, making it become still, foul, and unable to

support life. Creatures drinking this water must succeed on a DC 25 Fortitude save or contract blinding sickness (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 292).

Filth (Su) Any living creature struck by a beliaron's natural attacks must immediately attempt a DC 27 Fortitude save. Failure indicates that the character is sickened for 10 rounds. In addition, while sickened, the character must make a DC 35 caster level check to cast any spells with the good or law descriptor. Curative magic cast on the character always heals the minimum amount, as if each die roll resulted in a 1. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Powerful Bite (Ex) A beliaron's bite attack adds 1.5 × its Strength modifier to damage inflicted.

Regeneration (Ex) A filth demon takes lethal damage from good weapons or sonic damage.

Stench (Ex) At the start of each of the beliaron's turns, all living creatures within 30 feet must succeed on a DC 25 Fortitude save or take a –4 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks for as long as they remain in the area. Filth demons are immune to this effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Vulnerability to Sonic (Ex) A beliaron takes 50% more damage from attacks with the sonic descriptor.

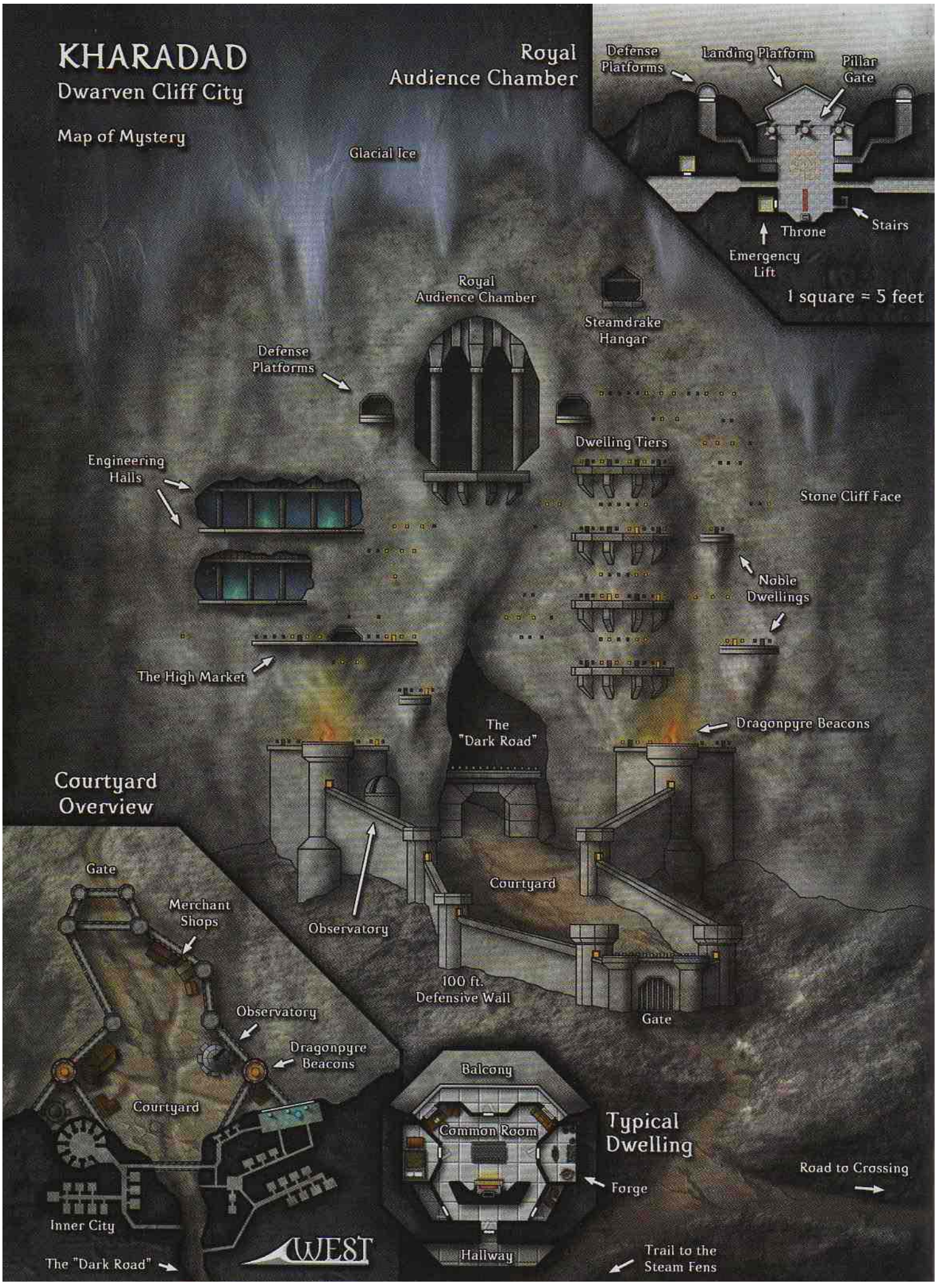
Skills Beliarons have a +10 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of sewage and grime. Beliarons have a +8 bonus on Escape Artist checks.

The belairon, known more commonly as a filth demon, is an appalling fiend of incomprehensible horror, awakened from pools of fetid ooze that collect in the cracks and crevices of Abyssal reservoirs and sewers. The catacombs below Abyssal cities like Lemoriax, Zelatar, and Orcusgate seethe with these monsters, yet they can be found anywhere that filth and refuse gather in great quantities. They are also common along Abyssal shorelines, where tainted seawater collects around the corpses of things washed on shore. These demons prey on any living things they encounter, pulverizing them with their tentacles and then devouring their bodies in an unspeakable manner.

A typical filth demon is a shuddering mass of sludge held together by the fiend's essence. Most stand around 8 feet tall and weigh as much as a half-ton. The fluid constituting their bodies is often brown or grey, but greens and blood reds can also appear.

Dimwitted but full of evil cunning, filth demons exist in a strange society. They do not recognize other filth demons as being distinct creatures, but rather see them as extensions of themselves. They are utterly chaotic, perpetrating random acts of violence on any they encounter. They respect only power, and then for as long as it suits them. They willingly fling themselves into danger, selling their lives for the chance to kill.

When not working as a staff designer and developer for Green Ronin Publishing, Robert J. Schwalb works his evil as a freelance designer. You can find more of his abominations in Tome of Magic: Shadow, Pact, and True Name Magic, Player's Handbook II, Fiendish Codex II: Tyrants of Hell, Complete Scoundrel, Drow of the Underdark, *and* Monster Manual V. *Robert lives in Tennessee with his wife Stacee and a pride of cats.*


KHARADAD
Dwarven Cliff City
Map of Mystery
Glacial Ice
Royal Audience Chamber
Defense Platforms
Landing Platform
Pillar Gate
Stairs
Throne
Emergency Lift
1 square = 5 feet
Royal Audience Chamber
Steamdrake Hangar
Defense Platforms
Dwelling Tiers
Engineering Halls
Stone Cliff Face
Noble Dwellings
The High Market
The "Dark Road"
Dragonpyre Beacons
Courtyard Overview
Gate
Merchant Shops
Observatory
Courtyard
100 ft. Defensive Wall
Gate
Observatory
Dragonpyre Beacons
Courtyard
Balcony
Common Room
Typical Dwelling
Forge
Road to Crossing
Inner City
WEST
Hallway
The "Dark Road"
Trail to the Steam Fens

Savage Tide

Wells of Darkness

The Wells of Darkness is the seventy-third layer of the Infinite Planes of the Abyss, a prison used by demon lords and a graveyard for creatures the multiverse would rather forget. Imprisoned in one of these wells is Shami-Amourae, the Lady of Delights. This minor demon lord and former consort of Demogorgon is one of the few beings who knows the true secret of Demogorgon's twin personalities and his plot to reconcile them, thereby growing immeasurably in power.

"Wells of Darkness" is the tenth chapter in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand on the campaign. Issue #357 of *Dragon* magazine features rules for three new binder vestiges connected to the imprisoned demons within the Wells of Darkness.

The PCs should be well into 18th level when they begin "Wells of Darkness," and by the end of the adventure should become 19th-level.

BY ERIC L. BOYD
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH, HIGH LEVEL (13TH–20TH), PLANAR

The Abyss

The Infinite Layers of the Abyss is a plane of chaos and evil in its purest form, of remorseless wickedness, and unthinking, random violence. There is no room for mercy or compassion, leaving only unreasoning hatred and an unquenchable thirst for slaughter. Once in the Abyss, an unprepared traveler's life can be measured in minutes, for this is the home of all things demonic.

Lawful-aligned creatures and good-aligned creatures take a –2 penalty on Charisma-based checks on the Abyss. Lawful good creatures take a –4 penalty on Charisma-based checks. Further notes on the Abyss's Planar Traits can be found on page 160 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Adventure Background

In ages past, Shami-Amourae, a minor demon lord known as the Lady of Delights, served as Demogorgon's consort. Demogorgon took particular delight in Shami-Amourae's recounting of her depraved dalliances with all manner of demons and beasts, and was never envious of her many lovers, or of the fact that she continued these dalliances while she was with him. However, his twin personalities, Aameul and Hethradiah, quickly grew jealous of each other, each believing that the Lady of Delights favored him over the other. Both Aameul and Hethradiah secretly professed their passion to the Lady of Delights, promising her great power if she chose one over the other. Shami-Amourae was no fool, and quickly realized that not even the Prince of Demons understood the extent to which his personalities were divided.

By playing on this mutual jealousy and encouraging the Prince of Demon's two personalities into greater conflict, Shami-Amourae soon achieved a great deal of influence in Demogorgon's court, and was able to manipulate the Prince of Demons into acting as she desired. She hoped to lure Demogorgon into launching an assault on the realm of Shendilavri to murder the current Queen of Succubi, Malcanthet, so that Shami-Amourae could seize her throne. Yet while she had mastered the Prince of Demons, Shami-Amourae made a fatal mistake in underestimating Malcanthet's reach. Several of Malcanthet's spies served Demogorgon already, and when they learned of the mounting invasion, she came to Gaping Maw herself to meet with Demogorgon. It was a relatively simple matter for the Queen of Succubi to catch his attention, and from there, all she needed to do was whisper to her new lover that Shami-Amourae had betrayed him.

Demogorgon's twin personalities realized immediately what Shami-Amourae had done, and saw with fresh eyes the power she had gained in his court. The Prince of Demons flew into a rage, transforming his one-time pleasure palace into a horrific prison—but only after he seized Shami-Amourae and had her imprisoned in the Wells of Darkness. Since then, the Lady of Delights has languished within the Well of Debased Eros, starved of the attention for which she endlessly hungers, neither dead nor alive, but somewhere horribly in between. Only the veneration of a small coterie of loyal succubi and the worship of a handful of depraved, hedonistic cultists on the Material Plane have kept her name from fading into obscurity forever.

Since Shami-Amourae's imprisonment, Malcanthet has firmly cemented herself in Demogorgon's favor, skillfully playing Aameul and Hethradiah against each other in the same manner as the Lady of Delights before her. Yet Malcanthet does not seek power in Demogorgon's court; she uses her charms merely to retain the allegiance of a powerful ally in her constant conflict with Graz'zt.

Malcanthet was thus one of the first to learn that Demogorgon had started work on something new. She knows the Prince of Demons intends to use the savage tide to fuel a ritual on Gaping Maw, and suspects that the ritual's purpose is to increase his power. What's good for Demogorgon is bad for other demon lords, and so Malcanthet desperately wants him to fail—almost as much as she wants to know what he's planning. Yet she knows better than to openly oppose the Prince of Demons.

Malcanthet chose the PCs early on as proxies by which she could undermine Demogorgon's plot. The Queen of the Succubi intends to put Shami-Amourae in a position where she must reveal what she knows about Demogorgon in order to win her freedom. As such, Malcanthet needs the PCs to reach Ahazu the Seizer and forge a pact with him to release the Lady of Delights, and has manipulated events on the Material Plane so that the PCs should have come into possession of Ahazu's Tooth, one of the *Teeth of Dahlver-Nar*. Further, Malcanthet knows that any investigation of Shami-Amourae's fate should lead the searchers to Malcanthet's daughter Red Shroud, the ruler of Broken Reach. The Queen of the Succubi knows that Red Shroud is working with Shami-Amourae to betray Malcanthet. In the twisted logic of demons, Red Shroud can therefore be relied upon to help the PCs locate Shami-Amourae's prison and point them toward the ruined fortress of Overlook as the most likely location in which to find a way to free the Lady of Delights.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs travel to the Abyssal town of Broken Reach to consult with Red Shroud and secure a route to the Wells of Darkness, which leads them to the Well of Arlgolcheir, the prison of a fallen demon lord. They soon discover Shami-Amourae's well, where she refuses to help them until they free her. But the only way to free a demon from the Wells of Darkness is via the demon lord who created the prison in the first place.

This demon is Ahazu the Seizer, and his well can be found below the fortress of Overlook. After defeating the fortress' guardians, the PCs negotiate with Ahazu the Seizer to secure Shami-Amourae's release. Yet when they return to the Well of Debased Eros, a contingency put in place by the Prince of Demons opens a planar breach in the depths of the River Styx, diverting the legendary river into the well and unleashing a demonic assault on those who seek the forbidden knowledge. By rescuing Shami-Amourae from this assault, they can finally learn the truth about what Demogorgon

intends to do with the harvested energy of the savage tide.

Adventure Hooks

The adventure begins with the newly acquired knowledge that Shami-Amourae, the Lady of Delights, may possess secrets capable of thwarting the plans of Demogorgon. If your players have just completed "Into the Maw," they likely learned this information from the bullywug lich Orgosh, in which case they've also been told that the foremost scholar and authority on the relatively obscure Lady of Delights is a succubus named Red Shroud, ruler of the town of Broken Reach on Pazunia, the first layer of the Abyss. The logical first step to learning more about their problem is to seek an audience with Red Shroud.

If the PCs haven't yet learned this information, you should run a quick encounter designed to clue them in; perhaps an agent of Malcanthet, eager to see the PCs continue on their quest and disguised as a mercane merchant, offers to sell them information about who might be able to help. Maybe they learn of the link by casting spells like *commune* or *divination*. They could even return to Divided's Ire to finish cleansing the place of its bickering wardens, at which point they'll have another chance to learn about Shami-Amourae from Orgosh.

PART ONE: THE PALACE OF 1,001 CLOSETS

Although the savage tide draws near, the actual timing for this event is not set; the PCs should have plenty of time to recover from their recent journey into Gaping Maw before they head on to Pazunia. They can even use the *wakeportal* on their ship to return to the Material Plane to craft magic items, shop for more gear, check up on concerns in Farshore, and so on. Lavinia's role, at this point, is left to you. While the remainder of the Savage Tide Adventure Path assumes that the PCs return her to Farshore where she continues to serve as the colony's leader (or possibly even returns to Sasserine to join the Dawn Council), in your game she could just as easily accompany the PCs on these last few missions into the Abyss, especially if she's forged a strong bond with a particular PC, or if your group just needs one more person along to help. In this case, you should continue to level her up as the adventures progress; she should never quite equal the PCs in power, but should certainly never fall more than a few levels behind them if she's going to have a chance to survive the horrors that still await the PCs.

Pazunia

The first layer of the Abyss is known by many names, the Plain of Infinite Portals and the Palace of 1,001 Closets being but the most common after its proper title, Pazunia. Pazuzu, Prince of the Lower

Pazunia Lore

Knowledge (the Planes) Check

DC 20: Pazunia, the Plain of Infinite Portals, is the first layer of the Abyss. Most means of reaching the Abyss deposit the traveler on Pazunia.

DC 25: The other layers of the Abyss can be reached via pit-portals from Pazunia. Most such pits are two-way portals, but some function in only one direction. Perched on the lips of many of these pits are iron fortresses, relics of a time before the gods and now claimed by demons not powerful enough to lay claim to an Abyssal layer of their own.

DC 30: Pazunia sees many travelers from other planes. Such travelers often visit towns such as Broken Reach or Styros.

DC 35: Broken Reach is a good site to purchase armor, weapons, consumables, and a wide variety of poisons, to acquire information about the Abyss, or to find a guide to the deeper layers. Styros is a good location to purchase slaves, hire mercenaries, or sell information regarding diabolic activities.

Aerial Kingdoms, lays some claim to the skies above, and it is from him that this realm derives its name, but he has little interest in claiming it as his own. Pazunia is a realm of windswept barrens and jagged tors flickering with swarms of winged demons. An oppressive red sun, heavy with infinite age, bathes the layer in sweltering heat and harsh light. Angry shadows curtain the plains in places, concealing hidden menace. Everywhere massive pits plunge into deeper layers of terror. Perched alongside most such pits are iron fortresses now inhabited by demons not quite powerful enough to seize control of layers of their own. Other dangerous locales include the Grand Abyss, lakes of molten iron, and several branches of the River Styx.

"Wells of Darkness" assumes that the PCs have some method of reaching Pazunia, be it via *plane shift*, *gate*, *astral projection*, or similar plane-traveling magic. One method that won't work is their *wakeportal*; the Abyssian Ocean does not touch the shores of Pazunia, so the PCs cannot sail the *Sea Wyvern* to Broken Reach (without Charon's approval, they cannot use the River Styx to navigate in this manner, although with the next adventure, "Enemies of My Enemy," this restriction is lifted). For their adventures on Pazunia and the Wells of Darkness, the *Sea Wyvern* will unfortunately need to stay at home.

If the PCs have no spellcasters capable of transporting them to the Abyss, they'll need to call on favors from an allied NPC. If they allied with Tyralandi or Kedward Bone during "Serpents of Scuttlecove," these NPCs are likely the best choices—smart parties will remember that they may need to arrange for a return trip beforehand. Once the PCs arrive in Pazunia, reaching the town of Broken Reach is likely only a *greater teleport* away. If they picked up Lynnara in "Into the Maw" as a guide, the disguised succubus can easily guide the PCs to this location by a relatively safe route that avoids the potential for dangerous encounters along the way.

Perhaps the most direct route to Pazunia, though, is via portal. Pazunia is riddled with vast pits that drop away into various other Abyssal Realms, and as fortune would have it, one of the closest pits to the town of Broken Reach is the pit to Gaping Maw. From Pazunia, those who enter this pit are whisked along the coiling conduits of the Abyss's planar pathways to be deposited among the fangs of an immense demonic skull that sits just outside the walls of Lemoriax, Demogorgon's capital city on Gaping Maw. Known as the Hungerhole, passage into and out of this portal is, in theory, under the watch of several bar-lgura mounted on retrievers, although the size of the skull and the inattention of its guardians makes it a relatively simple process for creatures to pass through the portal and thus travel to the edge of the corresponding pit on Pazunia. This portal's days are numbered—once Demogorgon realizes how close the PCs are to disrupting his plans at the end of this adventure, he closes this easy path to his realm, but for now, as long as the PCs are stealthy in their approach, they should be able to use this route to reach Pazunia with little opposition. A DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals the location and purpose of the Hungerhole.

Pazunia is detailed further on pages 113–117 of *Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss*; this description also includes a table of various encounters the PCs may have if they decide to explore Pazunia as well as several additional adventure hooks set on the layer.

Broken Reach

The town of Broken Reach sits on the Plain of Infinite Portals, first layer of the Abyss. A succubus sorceress named Red Shroud built this fortress of crumbling stone towers atop a portal to the Outlands gate-town of Plague-Mort over two hundred years ago, and the small community that soon grew up around it has served as one of the most popular gathering places on the layer ever since.

Common visitors to Broken Reach include Blood War mercenaries, merchants traveling to and from the Outlands, and even mortal adventurers who use the town as a base of operations for Abyssal adventures, as the town is one of the few places on Pazunia where such visitors are unlikely to be devoured by demons while they sleep. Red Shroud displays little tolerance for violence of any kind in her town—it's bad for business. She demands obedience from her guests and expects them to back her if trouble breaks out; if tempers flare, visitors are expected to take their grievances outside the town's walls.

Broken Reach consists of several crumbling towers surrounded by outworks of trenches, walls, and spiky barricades. Most important precincts are underground, including the portal to Plague-Mort. Food stores, the arsenal, the interrogation halls, and the crypts are likewise underground, connected by narrow tunnels. Rooms for visiting mercenaries and merchants are above ground, off the main towered hall. Broken Reach houses dozens of visitors at any one time, many of them enjoying the comfort of richly appointed (and hugely expensive) luxury suites. The inhabitants are a mix of petitioner slaves, demons of all types, and mercenaries from the Material Plane and beyond.

Broken Reach (Small City): Monstrous; AL CE; Population: 1,245; 40,000 gp limit; Assets 2,490,000 gp; Mixed (70% demon, 18% tiefling, 8% humanoid, 4% other races).

A Trip to the Market (EL 13)

Although the primary reason for the PCs' visit to Broken Reach should be to secure an audience with Red Shroud, a visit to the town's market may be in order as well. Broken Reach's marketplace opens and closes at Red Shroud's whim—normally she opens it whenever a new caravan arrives (either via the main gates or from the Outlands via portal) or when there is a sufficient number of buyers present with coins to spend, but sometimes she capriciously forces an unlucky merchant or would-be purchaser to cool his heels for days on end. You can assume that when the PCs first visit Broken Reach the market is open for business.

Dozens of traders rent alcoves along the perimeter of the town's central market, or set up tents amidst the pillars that support Red Shroud's throne room. These traders run the gamut; humans and elves, dwarves and tieflings, mercanes and githzerai, slaadi and demons, yet under Red Shroud's watchful eye, they maintain a grudging peace. Red Shroud imposes a hefty tax that effectively doubles the cost of all armor, weapons, single-use magic items (such as potions and scrolls) and charged magic items (like staffs and wands). Other magic items sell for 125% their usual cost. Poisons can be purchased only from Red Shroud, as no other trader dares carry such wares and tread on her territory. Red Shroud is said to have stock of nearly every poison imaginable, as well as several of her own invention. Likewise, Red Shroud brooks no rivals in the sphere of information brokering. It only takes a few minutes of asking around to determine that she's the one to go to for information, and that her standard price for information is 10,000 gp (although with a DC 30 Gather Information check, a merchant can warn the PCs that she responds better to larger donations, particularly if they are made in the form of exotic poisons).

As a result of Broken Reach's constant influx of merchants from all over the multiverse, the town's gp limit is 40,000 gp; significantly larger than most towns of its size.

Particularly common in the Broken Reach marketplace are the metal rods used as material components for *plane shifting* to different layers of the Abyss. Rods for relatively well-known layers such as Pazunia, the Demonweb, Gaping Maw, Thanatos, and Shendilavri sell for 3,000 gp. Rods for more obscure layers, such as Twelvetrees, Shedaklah, and Androlynne sell for 9,000 gp. Rods for truly remote realms, such as the Dreaming Gulf, the Blood Shallows, or Zionyn sell for 15,000 gp. Certain rods are particularly rare, as the Abyss itself resists allowing travel to its deepest and most important layers. This includes layers like Ulgurshek, Woeful Escarand, and the Wells of Darkness; these rods cost 40,000 gp apiece.

Creature: Being the Abyss, the Broken Reach marketplace is far from safe. Although the merchants refrain from starting fights (and are careful to relocate outside of the city walls if a fight's inevitable), these same restraints do not apply to one of the more subtle visitors to the area.

Sidith-yeus is a powerful demon known as a guecubu, an invisible and incorporeal creature born from the dreams of a dead pantheon of gods. A member of a demonic race known as the loumaras, Sidith-yeus (like most guecubus) wanders the Abyss in constant search of a host to possess. His driving need is a thirst for murder; a guecubu often "rides" on a host's soul for days, months, or even years, waiting for the right moment to usurp the host's body to commit some horrific slaying. The pleasure he takes in forcing his possessed host to kill friends and family is a testament to his cruelty.

Sidith-yeus has little interest in possessing anything other than humanoids, and the marketplace of Broken Reach isn't a very good place to find such hosts. The arrival of the PCs in the region is a beacon for his lust, and within five minutes, the invisible, incorporeal, malevolent spirit makes his move. He prefers possessing characters who appear to specialize in melee combat, such as rogues or fighters, since they often give him the best assortment of weapons to use for his murders. If he manages to possess a PC unnoticed, he remains quiet until the PCs return to the Material Plane (perhaps to replenish their supplies, do research, or recruit allies) before taking control of the PC to murder someone. As soon as the murder is successful, Sidith-yeus hops into another nearby body and watches quietly while the chaos erupts around him, intending to murder again once things cool down.

SIDITH-YEUS **CR 13**

Male advanced elite guecubu
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, incorporeal, loumara)
Fiendish Codex I 41
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +30, Spot +30
Aura haunting aura (60-ft. radius)
Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 17
hp 150 (20 HD); **DR** 5/cold iron or lawful
Immune acid, electricity, fire
Resist cold 10
Fort +15, **Ref** +15, **Will** +19

Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect)
Melee touch +23 (sleep)
Ranged thrown object +27 (2d6)
Base Atk +20; **Grp** —
Special Actions possession, telekinesis

Abilities Str —, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 20, Cha 25
SQ incorporeal, natural invisibility
Feats Ability Focus (possession, sleep touch, telekinesis), Alertness, Deceitful, Iron Will, Persuasive
Skills Bluff +32, Diplomacy +34, Disguise +32, Forgery +25, Intimidate +34, Listen +30, Sleight of Hand +28, Spot +30

Haunting Aura (Su) Outside a host body, a guecubu's presence is unnerving and distracting. All living creatures within 60 feet of a guecubu in its natural form must make a DC 27 Will save or be shaken for as long as it remains in the area. Creatures that attempt to rest in this area can do so, but gain no benefits from the rest and waken fatigued, as if they had not slept at all. Once a creature saves

against a guecubu's aura, it is immune to that particular guecubu for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Natural Invisibility (Su) This ability is constant, allowing the guecubu to remain invisible even when attacking. This ability is inherent and not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell.

Possession (Su) A guecubu can possess any sleeping animal or humanoid. It must enter a square occupied by the sleeping creature to attempt a possession. The victim must make a DC 27 Will save to resist; however, a successful save does not cause the victim to awaken, nor is the victim aware of the possessing attempt even after waking (although he can dimly recall strange, otherworldly dreams). The save DC is Charisma-based.

A guecubu can take on any of the following roles while possessing a creature: ally, controller, enemy, mutterer, or rider. These roles are described on pages 23–24 of the *Fiendish Codex I*. If you don't use this book in your game, treat a guecubu's control as similar to that granted by a *magic jar*, save that if the guecubu wishes, it can remain dormant, allowing the host to act as it will. While the guecubu is dormant, a host is unaware of its presence.

Telekinesis (Su) A guecubu can use *telekinesis* as the spell as a standard action (CL 20th). It can use this ability even while possessing a creature without that creature realizing it is technically the source of the effect. If a guecubu elects to hurl something such as a boulder or other dense object, it deals 2d6 points of damage on a hit. Weapons hurled in this manner deal damage appropriate for the weapon in question. A guecubu does not apply any Strength modifier to damage dealt by these objects. Its chance to hit is equal to its base attack bonus + its Charisma modifier.

Audience with Red Shroud (EL 20)

Red Shroud's personal quarters are hidden underground, out of reach to casual visitors and curious eyes. When she attends to supplicants, visitors, and other guests, she entertains them in her throne room, a towering structure of white marble and red glass that stands in the center of Broken Reach. The throne room itself stands 60 feet off the ground, approachable via two intertwined curving ramps of polished wood. Four red marble statues of Red Shroud stand on a platform halfway up these ramps, and a shimmering wall of opaque red fire protects the actual entrance to her throne room. This wall of fire is illusory; Red Shroud can change its coloration at a whim, even making the flames invisible. As long as the flames are opaque, they mute sound and wind as if they were heavy curtains.

Within, the throne room is a wide open space with polished floors. Curtained alcoves stand to either side, and the central floor contains a sheet of magical glass that Red Shroud can cause to vanish as a free action. Any creature standing on the glass when she causes it to vanish can make a DC 20 Reflex save to leap away, otherwise he's in for a 60-foot fall.

Red Shroud's throne stands atop a dais at the far end of the hall, often shattered and then reforged. When the PCs first arrive in Broken Reach, Red Shroud waits for them, lounging upon this throne. Visitors to her throne room need make no appointments; they simply climb the ramps to the throne room's entrance and request an audience with the succubus from Ygrax the Skullbiter, a nalfeshnee who serves Red Shroud as a doorman and bodyguard. Ygrax asks visitors what their business is with Red Shroud, communicating with his mistress via telepathy. Red Shroud immediately turns away visitors who are crass, rude, argumenta-

tive, or violent, but always grants admission to those who agree to pay up front for her services.

Creatures: Red Shroud is a stunningly beautiful succubus, with fair skin, crimson hair, large bat wings, and eyes that glow with sinister desire. She is flanked by a quartet of hezrous, and Ygrax always watches her audiences from the far end of the room, ready to aid her in a fight if necessary. In the corner, an angular-featured halfling with spiky red hair and bright orange garments with a flame motif paces restlessly—this is a wispling named Shadowfire, one of Red Shroud's favorite agents.

Red Shroud is a great poison enthusiast who enjoys toying with her prey. She delights in slow-acting venoms that subtly undermine a victim's resistance to her corrupting charms. Constantly on edge, Red Shroud has had to defend Broken Reach from mobs, githzerai, and even a minor Abyssal lord during the two hundred-some years the town has existed, but the town has never fallen to an enemy.

Red Shroud enjoys manipulating the Disciples of Delight, followers of Shami-Amourae desperate for any hint of contact with their imprisoned mistress. In recent years, Red Shroud has managed to turn much of Shami-Amourae's surviving cult to her own service, forcing them to act as a wide-ranging network of information gatherers. One of Red Shroud's most valued possesses is, in fact, one of the *teeth of Dahlver-Nar*; in particular the *tooth of Shami-Amourae*, purchased years ago in the market of Broken Reach. She has used this tooth to communicate with Shami-Amourae's vestige countless times. Red Shroud keeps her interest in Shami-Amourae an open secret, as she hopes to some day use what she learns in an attempt to overthrow her mother, Malcanthet, and claim the title of Queen of the Succubi for herself.

Red Shroud is perhaps the most infamous daughter of Malcanthet and Pazuzu. Her reputation as both a poisoner and source of dependable information is well deserved. Except when engaged in business, Red Shroud is capricious and untrustworthy, and has ordered allies to death for reasons as varied as neglecting to bow when leaving her presence, wearing unlucky turquoise, or snoring. She's even sold her own children into slavery, most notably her succubus daughter Fall-From-Grace (who survived her servitude in the Nine Hells and has cast aside her demonic nature to become a member of the Society of Sensation in the city of Sigil).

Nevertheless, Red Shroud never seems to have a shortage of minions and sycophants. Her latest favorite is a wispling named Shadowfire. Shadowfire rarely sits still, and his pranks and jokes range from cruel to murderous—thus far, they have amused Red Shroud more than annoyed her.

Shadowfire earns lucrative commissions as a guide to the infinite layers of the Abyss. He has explored at least two dozen layers (including Pazunia and the Wells of Darkness) and claims to be familiar with at least a dozen more. Although he evinces a modicum of loyalty to Red Shroud, Shadowfire is secretly in the employ of Demogorgon. His true allegiance is known only to the Prince of Demons and one of his generals, a unique demon named Hethros.

Red Shroud is playing a dangerous game. She suspects that Shadowfire is an agent of Demogorgon, and therefore hopes the wispling's presence during her audience with the PCs allows her to claim loyalty to the Prince of Demons if Demogorgon prevails in whatever plot is unfolding. Likewise, she suspects her mother has positioned her to help the PCs free Shami-Amourae, and, by doing so, hopes she can claim loyalty to the Queen of Succubi if her mother prevails in whatever plot is unfolding. Either way the situation is fraught with risk for the ruler of Broken Reach, so she chooses her words and her confidences carefully.

Red Shroud **CR 19**

Female succubus sorcerer 11/fatespinner 4
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Monster Manual 47, *Complete Arcane* 37
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +28, Spot +28
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft., tongues

AC 32, touch 18, flat-footed 28; Dodge, Mobility
hp 148 (163 with *false life*, 21 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 18
Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +19

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)
Melee *dagger of venom* +14/+9 (1d4+1/19–20) and
claw +8 (1d6)
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +13
Atk Options Arcane Strike, Flyby Attack
Special Actions change shape, energy drain, fickle finger of fate, resist fate, spin fate, *summon tanar'ri*
Combat Gear *iron bands of Billaro*, *shroud of venom* (contains 4 doses of purple worm poison, 4 doses of black lotus extract, and 2 doses of dark reaver powder)
Spells Known (CL 19th)
7th (6/day)—*greater scrying* (DC 31), *plane shift* (DC 31)
6th (9/day)—*greater dispel magic*, *repulsion* (DC 30), *true seeing*
5th (9/day)—*cloudkill*, *extract gift*, *night's caress* (DC 29), *wall of force*
4th (9/day)—*lesser globe of invulnerability*, *mind poison* (DC 28), *spider poison* (DC 28), *wall of fire*
3rd (9/day)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *stinking cloud* (DC 27), *vipergout*
2nd (10/day)—*arcane lock*, *false life*, *gust of wind*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*
1st (10/day)—*identify*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*, *unseen servant*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 24), *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)
At will—*charm monster* (DC 28), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 26), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *suggestion* (DC 27), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 19, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 38
SQ deny fate, metamagic specialist
Feats Arcane Strike, Dodge, Extend Spell, Flyby Attack, Mobility, Practiced Spellcaster, Quicken Spell, Skill Focus (Craft [poisonmaking])
Skills Bluff +43, Concentration +28, Craft (poisonmaking) +32, Diplomacy +25, Disguise +23, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +29,

Knowledge (nature) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +28, Move Silently +13, Profession (gambler) +15, Sleight of Hand +22, Spellcraft +18, Spot +28

Possessions combat gear, *dagger of venom, bracers of armor +5, ring of protection +4, tooth of Shami-Amourae*, 3 doses of *true seeing* ointment worth 250 gp each

Deny Fate (Ex) Once per day, on the first occasion when she must make a check to become stable when dying, Red Shroud's stabilization check automatically succeeds.

Fickle Finger of Fate (Ex) Once per day as an immediate action, Red Shroud can force any other creature to reroll a roll that it has just made. She must have line of sight to the target.

Resist Fate (Ex) Once per day, Red Shroud can reroll one roll that she has just made.

Spin Fate (Ex) Red Shroud has four points of spin. She may use these points to boost the save DC of a spell she casts, a skill check, attack roll, or saving throw. If applying points to a roll, she must do so before making the roll. Once she uses her spin points, they are gone for the day but replenish when she regains her spells.

Metamagic Specialist This alternate sorcerer class feature (*Player's Handbook II* 61) replaces the ability to summon a familiar with the ability to apply metamagic feats to sorcerer spells without increasing the casting time five times a day; this even allows Red Shroud to quicken sorcerer spells with the Quicken Spell feat.

Feats Arcane Strike (*Complete Warrior* 96) allows Red Shroud to sacrifice a spell as a free action to gain a bonus on her attack rolls equal to the level of the spell sacrificed and a bonus on weapon damage rolls equal to 1d4 points × the level of the spell sacrificed. Practiced Spellcaster (*Complete Divine* 82) increases her effective caster level for sorcerer spells by +4.

Spells Several of Red Shroud's spells are from the *Spell Compendium*. If you don't use this book in your campaign, replace *mind poison* with *shout*, *night's caress* with *dominate person*, *spider poison* with *contagion*, and *vipergout* with *magic circle against good*. *Extract gift* (*Fiendish Codex I*) is not a combat spell—it allows the caster to infuse herself with the essence of a demon to gain permanent competence bonuses to skill checks or permanent enhancement bonuses to ability scores. Red Shroud has used extract gift to gain a +4 enhancement bonus to her Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma, as well as a +9 bonus on her Bluff, Listen, and Spot checks. Each of these bonuses is a separate permanent spell effect that cannot be dispelled except by a caster of at least 20th level.

SHADOWFIRE **CR 13**

Male wispling rogue 6/gatecrasher 5/shadowdancer 2

CE Small outsider

Fiend Folio 139, *Manual of the Planes* 26

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Celestial, Common, Ignan, Infernal

AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 18; Dodge, Mobility, improved uncanny dodge

hp 63 (13 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +18, **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 20 ft.

Melee +1 *returning cold iron handaxe* +9/+4 (1d4+1/×3) and
+1 *returning cold iron handaxe* +9 (1d4+1/×3)

Ranged +1 *returning cold iron handaxe* +16 (1d4+1/×3)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Spring Attack, sneak attack +3d6

Special Actions open portal, summon spell dampening

Combat Gear *potion of fly* (4), scroll of *teleport*, scroll of *sending*, scroll of *scrying*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)
5/day—*analyze portal* (CL 5th)
1/day—*disguise self* (DC 11)

Abilities Str 11, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ hide in plain sight, trapfinding, trap sense +2

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Appraise +11, Balance +17, Bluff +14, Climb +12, Diplomacy +8, Escape Artist +12, Gather Information +12, Hide +19, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +12, Move Silently +17, Open Locks +15, Perform (dance) +5, Search +13 (+15 to find magic traps), Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +17, Spot +10, Tumble +15, Use Magic Device +14

Possessions +3 *mithral shirt*, two +1 *returning cold iron handaxes*, *ring of mind shielding*

***Analyze Portal* (Sp)** This spell (*Spell Compendium* 10) allows Shadowfire to determine the properties of magic portals through study; if you don't use this book in your game, simply ignore this spell-like ability.

Open Portal (Su) Shadowfire can use Open Lock checks to force magic portals to open without the correct device, spell, or key. When he makes this special Open Lock check, he applies his Intelligence modifier to the roll, not his Dexterity modifier. A typical portal is a DC 30 check to open. This requires a full-round action, and once opened, a portal remains open for 1d4+1 rounds.

Summon Spell Dampening (Su) Three times a day, Shadowfire can create a dampening field that extends 100 feet in every direction. Summoning and calling spells and spell-like abilities are suppressed in this radius. The dampening field lasts for 10 rounds.

Hezrous (4): hp 138 each; *Monster Manual* 44.

Ygrax the Skullbiter, Nalfeshnee: hp 175; *Monster Manual* 45.

Tactics: Although combat is unlikely here, Red Shroud reacts quickly and decisively if the PCs attack. She commands her minions to engage the PCs at once and then teleports into one of her underground vaults to escape peril. From there, she observes the battle by casting *greater scrying* on Ygrax, observing the PCs' tactics and preparing her inevitable retaliation. In this case, the PCs will need to seek information about Shami-Amourae elsewhere, or you could expand this adventure by sending them into the dungeons below Broken Reach. What Red Shroud won't tell them could well be hidden in her journals in her personal quarters, although these chambers are far from unguarded.

Development: When the PCs approach Red Shroud, she demands to know what they wish of her. Red Shroud's initial attitude toward the PCs is unfriendly. If the PCs refuse to pay for her time (minimum of 10,000 gp), her attitude automatically shifts to hostile. Unfortunately, if the PCs reveal that they seek

information about Shami-Amourae, she immediately suspects them of being agents of Malcanthet come to find out what her involvement with the Lady of Debased Eros actually is, and as a result the Diplomacy check to secure her aid suffers a –20 penalty. Fortunately, Red Shroud is susceptible to bribes; each additional 2,000 gp added in excess of the minimum payment grants a +1 circumstance bonus to the Diplomacy check. If rare or unusual poisons or other toxic liquids are offered, such as the poison doors from Divided's Ire, the black bile of the world from Golismorga, or yuan-ti anathema venom, they're worth ten times their normal value in this transaction. Assuming that the PCs don't make her hostile, they can continue to pile on tribute, gaining greater bonuses to their Diplomacy result until they get the information they need.

Red Shroud's reactions are as follows once the PCs ask her about Shami-Amourae and have made their Diplomacy check:

Hostile (less than 5): The succubus becomes gravely insulted, and orders the PCs to leave Broken Reach immediately. If they refuse, she orders her minions to attack as detailed in tactics, above. In any event, she now counts the PCs as her enemies, and may send assassins after them just out of spite later in the campaign.

Unfriendly (DC 5): If Red Shroud remains unfriendly, she admits that Shami-Amourae was spurned by Demogorgon due to the machinations of Malcanthet and that the Prince of Demons had her imprisoned on the seventy-third layer of the Abyss. Red Shroud intimates that the Queen of the Succubi herself had an active role in this process, and therefore might be convinced to help release Shami-Amourae. (Although strictly true, this information is designed to mislead, pointing the PCs towards Malcanthet and giving Red Shroud time to research the PCs and figure out what they're really up to). The next adventure, "Enemies of My Enemy," details a visit to Malcanthet, and both the *Fiendish Codex I* and DRAGON #353 contain a wealth of information about the Queen of Succubi, should the PCs decide to follow up on this red herring. Of course,

Shadowfire

Malcanthet actually doesn't know much more about Shami-Amourae—she has, in fact, been manipulating the PCs all this time so that they'd learn the truth from Red Shroud and then hopefully find a way of derailing Demogorgon's plans after speaking to Shami-Amourae. She may simply send the PCs back to Red Shroud if they visit, or she might be frustrated enough to take out her pent up anger on them—as a CR 28 demon lord, the PCs would be well-advised to tread carefully if they choose to pay a visit to the Queen of Succubi this soon in the campaign.

Indifferent (DC 15): If the PCs raise Red Shroud's reaction to indifferent, she reveals all the information given in the Wells of Darkness Lore and Shami-Amourae Lore sidebars (pages 63 and 70).

Friendly (DC 25): If the PCs raise Red Shroud's reaction to friendly, she also reveals all the information given in the Overlook Lore sidebar (page 71).

Helpful (DC 40): If the PCs raise Red Shroud's reaction to helpful, she also reveals all the information given in the Ahazu sidebar (page 65). In addition, Red Shroud decides that the PCs are trustworthy and/or foolish enough to attempt to release Shami-Amourae from her prison, and informs them that not only are they welcome in Broken Reach as long as they wish, but that she'll lift the taxes on purchasing items in the market for them this one time. She desperately wants Shami-Amourae to be freed, since she hopes to recruit her in her efforts against Malcanthet, but doesn't want to appear too eager for such a goal. Much better to let the PCs attempt it on their own—if they succeed, she'll know soon enough via her connection to the Lady of Debased Eros via the *tooth of Shami-Amourae*.

If the PCs reveal their possession of the *tooth of Ahazu*, Red Shroud offers a little more information if she's made friendly or helpful. She informs the PCs that the tooth was recently sold to a varrangoin outcast named Sutolore, here in Broken Reach. The seller was a lilitu demon in the service of Malcanthet, Queen of the Succubi. Red Shroud coyly shrugs her shoulders at this, letting the PCs draw their own conclusions from the information—she has nothing further to say on the topic.

If the PCs ask Red Shroud about the best route to reach the Wells of Darkness and she's been made at least Friendly, she observes that they can probably find a Wells of Darkness *plane shift* spell focus for sale here in Broken Reach. Otherwise, they'll either have to use a *gate* spell or, barring that, use the Pit of Prisoners to travel there. Of course, using the Pit of Prisoners requires that at least one person in the group carry a relic from one of the demons imprisoned in the Wells of Darkness. Red Shroud uses the *tooth of Shami-Amourae* as a key to travel there,

but the *tooth of Ahazu* works just as well—if she knows the PCs have it, she'll volunteer that information as well. Barring this, she muses that they could hire a gatecrasher to attempt to open the Pit of Prisoners without such a key by using their ability to open portals. She then indicates Shadowfire to her left, telling the PCs that, as luck would have it, a gatecrasher and Abyssal guide is right here for the hiring. Shadowfire takes this development stoically, although a DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that he's caught off guard a bit by the recommendation. Red Shroud hopes that by throwing the PCs in with Shadowfire they'll find proof (or at least suspect) his ties to Demogorgon and take care of him for her on their own.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs experience as if they had defeated Red Shroud in combat if they manage to learn about Shami-Amourae from her.

The Pit of Prisoners

The pit of prisoners is one of the countless portal pits leading from Pazunia into the deeper layers of the Abyss. The pit acts as a one-way keyed portal that links Pazunia to the Wells of Darkness; it activates only if the first person to enter the pit carries a relic of one of the demon lords or creatures imprisoned in one of the Wells of Darkness. Anyone who steps into the pit experiences a few moments of vertigo and then, just as suddenly, finds themselves stepping into the base of a deep well. This is the Well of Arlgolcheir on the seventy-third layer of the Abyss.

Anyone entering the portal without the proper key is expelled from a randomly chosen pit elsewhere on the Plain of Infinite Portals, with sufficient force to be thrown some twenty feet in the air before landing alongside the exit pit (taking 2d6 points of damage in the process and possibly attracting the attention of nearby denizens).

PART TWO: SEEKING SHAMI

The seventy-third layer of the Abyss is known as the Wells of Darkness. A steely blue sun casts dim illumination down upon this barren realm, a vast badland of tortured stone through which winds a maze of flagstone pathways that connect dozens of plazas. Each plaza is dominated by a well that drops down to an inky black pool. The stony ground of this layer is interrupted here and there by jagged tors that roughly shield individual well sites from their neighbors. Marble paths connect the wells to one another, and planar lore holds that those who wander from this path risk incurring the wrath of the Abyss itself. The sun above is strangely dim, providing light equivalent to that on an overcast day. Its alien light does no harm to creatures normally impeded by sunlight or bright light (such as nightshades, vampires, bodaks, and varrangoins).

Although the Wells of Darkness is a finite layer of the Abyss, it lies amidst an endless void that encompasses its physical core. This void is known as Shattered Night, and it may be the primal chaos that exists outside of the Abyss itself. In ages past, a demon lord named Ahazu the Seizer discovered that, by digging deep shafts in the terrain, he could reach thin

spots in the membrane that encircles this layer, black windows into the gulfs of Shattered Night. After many years of digging wells in the seventy-third layer of the Abyss, Ahazu finally found a planar tear in the depths of a great tor in the heart of the layer and stepped through, never to return.

After Ahazu left the Abyss, his followers discovered he could be contacted through strange and secret magics, for Ahazu had become a vestige—a fragmentary echo of existence. In the years that followed, the Cult of Ahazu built a great fortress atop the tor that contained the planar tear that had consumed their master, and from there they could speak to him and receive his wisdom. The Seizer demanded regular offerings of prisoners, dead or alive, to join him in the void. He had his cult place these prisoners near the thin spots in the boundary's layer at the bottoms of the wells he himself had crafted. Once imprisoned, a prisoner could be contacted telepathically by those in close proximity, but could not otherwise escape.

Yet the Cult of Ahazu eventually made a terrible error—they attempted to capture and imprison Orcus. Led by hubris and pride, their assault on Thanatos failed miserably, and in response, the Prince of Undead unleashed a horde of demons upon the Wells of Darkness. They quickly laid waste to the Cult of Ahazu, leaving their fortress of Overlook in ruins. The Seizer was left with no followers, for few inhabitants of the Abyss visit the Wells of Darkness and fewer still are skilled in pact magic.

Incalculable ages after Overlook's fall, a tribe of outcast varrangoins, batlike monstrous humanoids common in other parts of the Abyss, discovered the ruined fortress. Among their number was a trio of arcanists who had also dabbled in pact magic. The coven of varrangoin binders were delighted to discover Ahazu, and adopted the Seizer as their patron. At Ahazu's word, they resumed his cult's practice of imprisoning creatures in the Wells of Darkness. Yet the varrangoin were much craftier than their predecessors. They realized that the Wells of Darkness was a resource that the rest of the Abyss would pay dearly for, so instead of abducting victims on their own, the varrangoin coven offered to act as wardens for prisoners brought to them in exchange for magical power, knowledge, and respect. Demon lords, arch devils, and even the gods themselves took them up on their generous offer, and soon the Wells of Darkness came to host powerful prisoners indeed. The coven even managed to convince Ahazu to release prisoners on occasion, in exchange for the promise of a more powerful replacement. Such pacts require the liberators to pledge their bodies and their essences to eternal imprisonment if they failed to deliver. The coven also convinced Ahazu to offer great power to any demon foolish enough to pledge its body and essence to eternal imprisonment after death on another plane, sidestepping the normal reincarnation process demons undergo in such circumstances. Over the ages, only four have managed to escape—their wells have closed and the windows to Shattered Night are no longer available.

Shami-Amourae is the most recent addition to the Wells of Darkness, imprisoned here by her lover Demogorgon after he discovered she had been manipulating his madness and taking advantage of his dual personalities for her own gain. Acting with Malcanthet's aid, the Prince of Demons captured Shami-Amourae and worked a bargain with the Keepers of Ahazu, imprisoning her in a vacant well before returning to Gaping Maw to seek comfort in the arms of his new and more dangerous lover. Shami-Amourae's well has been visited several times since then, mostly by the remnants of her cult, yet none know how to release her. This is a secret known only to Ahazu himself.

Shattered Night

Shattered Night is a void beyond the finite boundaries of the Wells of Darkness, an infinite nothingness that may link to the void beyond other layers and other planes. Most of the Wells of Darkness are windows into Shattered Night, yet the Well of Ahazu below Overlook is in fact a form of portal known as a planar tear that permits passage through a layer's boundaries to the void beyond. A planar tear is an extremely rare phenomenon, believed to occur only in finite layers or planes; tears are not limited to the Abyss.

Thanks to the Cult of Ahazu and its master, Shattered Night now holds many Abyssal lords, godlings, and failed commanders of the Blood War. Each prisoner can be observed through a "window" at

Wells of Darkness Lore

Knowledge (the Planes) Check

DC 20: The Wells of Darkness is habitable, but abandoned by most demons. The stony ground is littered with inky black wells, spots of pure darkness at the bottom of each shaft beneath a steely blue sun. Each well is said to contain an imprisoned demon, god, or corpse. Some of the prisoners were overthrown by rivals, while others failed spectacularly in their conduct of the Blood War.

DC 25: For centuries, the Fraternity of Order has attempted to catalog the Infinite Planes of the Abyss, numbering in the order in which they are discovered. Ulricon the Necromancer explored the seventy-third layer of the Abyss in the third year of the reign of the child-factol Andalon. He named the layer the Wells of Darkness for the eponymous pits that dot the ruined landscape.

DC 30: Those who wander from the marble path that winds through the Wells of Darkness risk incurring the wrath of the Abyss itself. Those who linger more than a few hours risk gaining the attention of the Custodians, utterly silent wardens who relentlessly patrol the layer, dealing death with their baleful gazes.

DC 35: Although it is possible to escape imprisonment in one of the Wells of Darkness, such escapes usually require the Lords of Woe or the intervention of a greater deity. Those known to have escaped the Wells of Darkness include Bayemon of the Unhealing Wound, the marilith queen Shaktari, Siragle the Ineffable, and vaunted Zzyczesiya.

DC 40: Although this layer has no lord, many of its properties were established by Ahazu the Seizer, demon lord of the night and abduction.

the bottom of his or her well. Most wells contain tragic, half-remembered villains so reprehensible that their fellow demons or followers committed them to Ahazu's void. Some wells contain a slain demon who accepted the Seizer's offer of power in the misguided belief they would someday be restored to life through the mysterious properties of Shattered Night.

Living prisoners all hope to regain freedom and followers, and some may pledge service to those who visit them. Communication with an imprisoned being is possible by touching the window in the well, yet even then such communication is little more than empathic echoes and fragments of words—barely enough to prove that the creature imprisoned within ever existed at all. Dead prisoners feel the endless pull of the Abyss, which attempts to reincarnate them through the thin spots in the layer's boundary, but parasites in the service of Ahazu (mostly Abyssal ghouls and chasme) feast on the slowly reincarnating flesh that seeps through the Abyssal boundary, indefinitely delaying most regenerations. Ahazu finds this development quite entertaining.

No mortal magic can reach Shattered Night, nor can it be used to release a prisoner from its grip. Spells such as *commune, contact other plane, demand,* and *sending* cannot be used to contact the denizens of Shattered Night, and divinations like *discern location* or *locate creature* fail to reveal anyone imprisoned within as well. Shattered Night is not truly a place—it is the absence of a place. As such, there is no environment to interact with, movement is not possible, and magic has no effect.

Ahazu has apparently discovered a means of escaping some of these strictures, but how much power he has over Shattered Night is a matter of some dispute since he himself seems unable to apply these methods of freedom to himself. In addition to imprisoning creatures sent through the planar tear, he can create a binding pact that whisks a creature into Shattered Night once certain conditions (such as death, the passage of time, or failure to deliver another prisoner in an agreed upon time) are fulfilled. Likewise, he can expel a creature through a thin spot in the layer's boundaries (i.e. through the "window" at the bottom of the well of darkness through which they can be seen) if he so desires. Such "escapes" have occurred in the past, but these events are so rare that those who follow the history of the Abyss can name all known escapees from memory. In truth all such escapes were actually exchanges, in which the prisoner was exchanged for a more powerful creature.

Wells of Darkness Encounters

Although the Wells of Darkness is sparsely populated, there are nevertheless dangers present here. Each hour the PCs spend here, there's a 5% chance of an encounter—if an encounter occurs, roll on the following table.

Abyssal Ant Swarm: Abyssal ants are horrific, 8-inch-long monsters with long red and black bodies, glowing blue eyes, and purple mandibles that drip with acid. They are a dangerous menace on many of the more barren Abyssal layers,

Wells of Darkness Encounter Table

d% Roll	Encounter	EL
01–30	1d4+1 custodians	17
31–50	Thralls	Varies
51–60	1 abyssal ant swarm	16
61–80	4 varrangoin berserkers	18
81–90	2d4 ancient abyssal ghouls	17
91–100	2d4 advanced chasmes	17

and the Wells of Darkness are no exception. Flight offers a simple way to escape one of these hungry swarms, yet even then the shower of acid they can expel can be quite painful.

Abyssal Ant Swarm **CR 16**

CE Diminutive aberration (swarm)
Fiend Folio 166
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +13, Spot +13
Languages Abyssal (cannot speak)

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16
hp 150 (20 HD)
Immune acid, poison, weapon damage, swarm traits
Resist cold 20, electricity 20, fire 20; **SR** 22
Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +15
Weakness 150% damage from area effects

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee swarm 4d6 plus 2d8 acid
Ranged acid spit +16 touch (2d8)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +15; **Grp** —
Atk Options Point Blank Shot, penetration

Abilities Str 1, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 13
SQ hive mind
Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (climb)
Skills Climb +14, Listen +13, Spot +13

Acid (Ex) A swarm of abyssal ants can produce a shower of acidic spittle that works as a grenadelike weapon, dealing 2d8 points of acid damage on a direct hit and 1d4 points of splash damage to creatures within 5 feet of the target. Creatures directly hit by the acid take an additional 1d8 points of damage 1 round after being hit.

Hive Mind (Ex) An abyssal ant swarm has a hive mind, which makes it susceptible to mind-affecting spells. For purposes of such spells, the swarm is a single creature of the aberration type.

Penetration (Su) The swarm attack of an abyssal ant swarm penetrates damage reduction as if it were an evil magic weapon.

Ancient Abyssal Ghouls and Advanced Chasmes: These creatures are scavengers, feasting on the slowly regenerating flesh of the dead prisoners kept in the Wells of Darkness. This group of ghouls is on the way from one well to another,, but they don't hesitate to add the PCs to their menu. Both of these creatures are detailed in the Well of Arlgolcheir on page 67.

Custodians: The custodians are towering bodaks who have served as the caretakers of the Wells of Darkness as long as anyone can remember. Some believe that these undead monsters are the remnants of Ahazu's original cult, murdered by the armies of Orcus. Others maintain that the custodians were here even before then. In any event, they relentlessly patrol the Wells of Darkness, immediately attacking any off-plane intruders they encounter.

Custodian **CR 14**

Advanced elite bodak
CE Large undead
Monster Manual 28
Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +19, Spot +19
Aura death gaze (30 ft., DC 29)
Languages Common

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19; Dodge, Mobility
hp 202 (27 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron
Immune electricity, undead traits
Resist acid 10, fire 10
Fort +8, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16
Weakness sunlight

Spd 20 ft.
Melee slam +20
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +24

Abilities Str 24, Dex 18, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 18
Feats Ability Focus (death gaze), Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Improved Toughness, Irresistible Gaze, Mobility, Skill Focus (Move Silently), Weapon Focus (slam)
Skills Listen +19, Move Silently +37, Spot +19
Feats Improved Toughness (*Complete Warrior* 101) grants +1 hp/HD. Irresistible Gaze (*Serpent Kingdoms* 146) increases the save DC for the bodak's gaze weapon by +2; this stacks with Ability Focus (death gaze).

Varrangoin Berserkers: Periodically, flocks of varrangoin berserkers emerge from the ruined fortress of Overlook in search of a fight. They fly high above the landscape, looking for pilgrims or other interlopers to battle. If any varrangoin berserkers are killed in wandering encounters, make sure to reduce the number of berserkers at Overlook as appropriate. Statistics for varrangoin berserkers appear on page 71.

Thralls: From time to time, demons and cultists come to the Wells of Darkness to speak directly with their imprisoned masters. These groups can vary widely in makeup—one might be a single nalfeshnee seeking clues on how to release his ancient master Lazbral'thull, another could be a group of four succubi seeking to contact Shami-Amourae, while a third could be a group of tiefling cultists on a pilgrimage. Feel free to build up any manner of thralls for this encounter, but as a general rule, a thrall isn't seeking trouble. They might even be good sources of information about the Wells of Darkness.

Ahazu the Seizer Lore

Knowledge (the planes) Check

DC 35: Ahazu the Seizer was the demon lord of night and abduction, but he vanished from the multiverse long ago.

DC 40: Although the Wells of Darkness has no lord, many of its properties were established by Ahazu the Seizer.

DC 45: Ahazu the Seizer has become a prisoner of the Abyssal realm he created. He and his prisoners dwell in the void beyond the boundaries of the layer, a place known as Shattered Night. The Wells of Darkness are windows into this void, each one allowing observers to perceive one of Ahazu's prisoners.

Straying from the Path

It is dangerous to stray from the marble pathways that wend across the seventy-third layer of the Abyss. The rest of the layer is cloaked in a thin caustic mist to a height of approximately 20 ft. The presence of living creatures on or within 20 feet of the surface causes the mist to condense into a thick fog in their immediate vicinity. This fog is equivalent in effect to an *acid fog* spell (CL 20th), but it cannot be dispersed by strong winds. In addition, once every 1d4 rounds, creatures encased in the fog must make a DC 20 Will save or be driven insane, as if by the *insanity* spell.

Prisoners of the Wells

This adventure provides details on three Wells of Darkness: the Well of Arlgolcheir, the Well of Debased Eros, and the Well of the Seizer. It is possible that the PCs might wish to explore other wells across the layer. *Fiendish Codex 1: Hordes of the Abyss* discusses eight prisoners of Shattered Night, including Ansitif, Apep, Areex, Cabiri, Ebulon, Lazbral'thull, Ma Yuan, and Shami-Amourae, and notes four escapees, including Bayemon of the Unhealing Wound, the marilith queen Shaktari, Siragle the Ineffable, and Zzyczesiya. Other prisoners that can be found in regions outlying the central wells include the following entities.

Astaroth: This once-powerful tanar'ri prince had a gift for prophecy that didn't warn him about Gargauth, an exiled archdevil who once served Asmodeus as Treasurer of Hell. Gargauth has since acquired the mantle of divinity, but before then, he slew Astaroth in a terrific battle. Astaroth had sealed a bargain with Ahazu to be imprisoned here when he died, but has not yet achieved his promised resurrection. Astaroth acquired the name "Diabolus" for his infiltration of the ranks of Hell. From time to time, Gargauth still masquerades as Astaroth, and he still maintains several cults in the fallen demon lord's name. Although the Abyss continues to try to resurrect the fallen tanar'ri prince, the ever-present hellfire in Astaroth's well ignited by Gargauth continuously consumes Astaroth's reforming body.

Dahak: The great three-headed dragon spirit imprisoned here delighted in devouring the flesh of lawful good creatures, and today requires such a sacrifice before granting an audience to those who seek his wisdom. This serpent belongs to the Anurian Pantheon, one of the earliest human religions to develop upon the Great Wheel. Led by the lawful neutral sky deity Anu, this pantheon imprisoned Dahak here to prevent his relentless attacks that threatened their hold upon their subjects. Dahak knows the secrets of weather control and venomous serpents. He willingly shares this lore with those who offer fresh sacrifices, but supplicants must manage to avoid the carpet of snakes that writhes upon the platforms leading to his pool.

Echidna: The "Mother of Monsters" was a goddess of the Olympian Pantheon. Her well is dominated by a massive white marble statue depicting her as a nymph with the lower body of a serpent with speckled scales. The Well of Sirens is home to flocks of fiendish harpies, whose captivating songs have lured hundreds of pilgrims to their deaths. Great shrieks of harpies emerge from the well on rare occasions to herald the birth of a new child of Echidna, as Ahazu sometimes allows her progeny to escape his prison.

Kizarvidexus: This long-dead obyrith demon lord, described as a cloaked demonic figure with two long curved horns tipped in darkest red, served the Queen of Chaos in her war with the Wind-Dukes. Some time after Kizarvidexus destroyed the Wind Duke Zosiel, the demon himself was slain by another Wind Duke named Icosiol. Kizarvidexus's well contains a perpetual tornado that sweeps up the small bits of the Horned Duke's flesh that ooze from his well and scatters them across the layer to be eaten by abyssal ghouls and chasme.

Rr'ikin'aka: The King of Scorpions is an imprisoned tanar'ri lord who foolishly challenged Tharzax, the Chattering Prince, and Obox-ob, the Prince of Vermin, simultaneously for control of scorpions and their ilk. Rr'ikin'aka's well is now crushed beneath the husks of countless scorpions, whose decaying forms are considered a delicacy by the layer's ravenous scavengers.

Ungulex: Little is known about this long-imprisoned tanar'ri lord. He is believed to have been the first captive imprisoned in the Wells of Darkness, and has few if any followers. Ungulex's well is an empty shaft marked only by the haunting ghost-like sighs that echo through the pit from time to time.

The Well of Arlgolchier (EL 18)

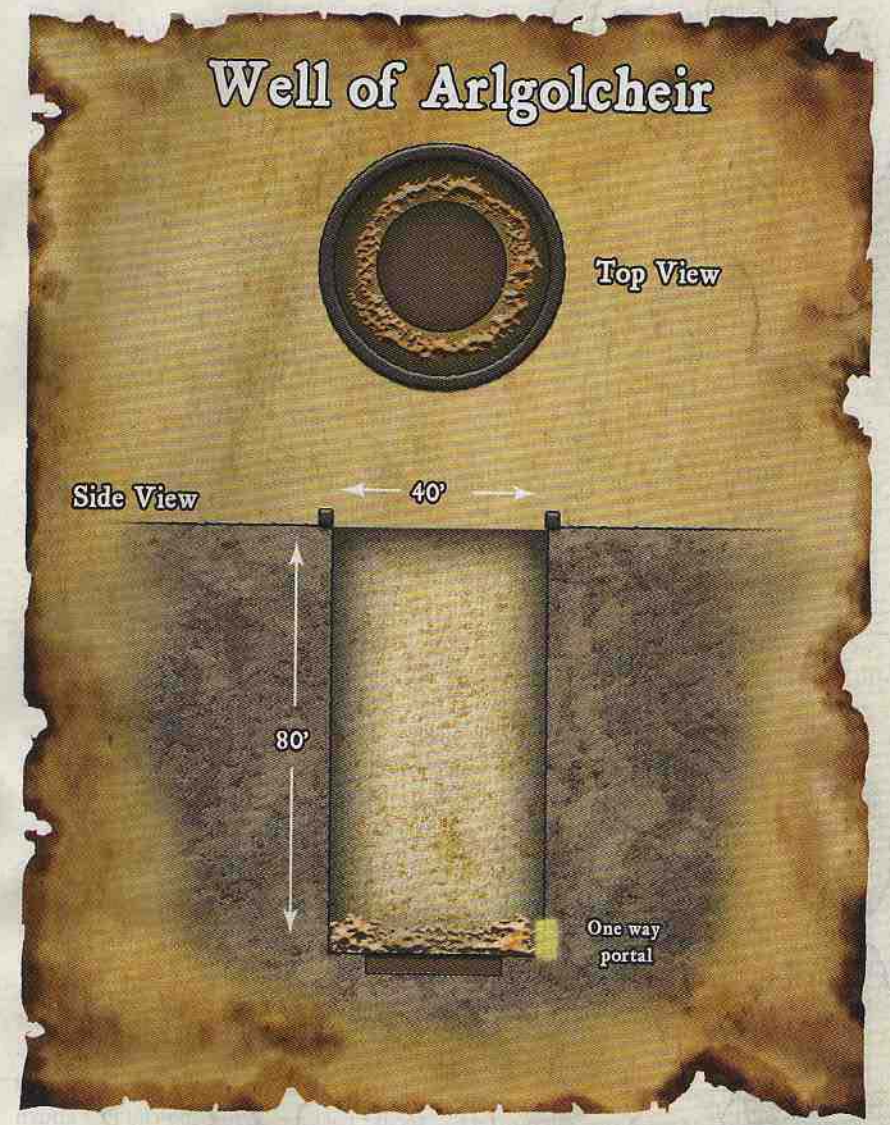
Like others who have sought a quick infusion of power, now-dead Arlgolcheir forged a pact with Ahazu, arrogantly pledging his body and essence if he ever died on another plane. As a result of the pact, Arlgolcheir rose quickly in power, eventually becoming a minor demon lord. However, the Seizer's terms came due after a trio of wizards from the Material Plane slew him many years ago. Now all that remains of the fallen demon is a corpulent pile of flesh that continues to seep through the inky black surface of this well as the Abyss slowly works to resurrect him.

This well has a unique feature—it is the arrival point of creatures who successfully utilize the Pit of Prisoners on Pazunia. Anyone who does so finds themselves appearing at the base of this well amidst heaping piles of rotted flesh oozing with foul-smelling liquids. Far above is a small circle of dim blue light. This portal is one-way; characters who lack a way to escape the Wells of Darkness on their own may be stranded here.

In the center of the pit's floor is the window into Arlgolchier's well. The pool itself appears to be a perfectly still, inky black liquid. The black surface yields to pressure, similar to a balloon filled with water. If the PCs stare into the depths of the pool, they perceive the vague outline of a corpulent, scaled figure with a three-pronged horn growing from the tip of his elongated snout. The body looks pale and lifeless and does not move—any attempt to communicate with the dead demon lord is destined to fail.

The walls of the shaft are smooth but not impossible to scale—a DC 30 Climb check allows a character to escape up into the open air above.

Creatures: The PCs are not the only creatures in the well. Several large, fly-



like demons with buzzing wings and six limbs, two of which end in long, thin-fingered hands, perch atop the rotting flesh. The head of each demon is vaguely humanoid, with a large hooked horn where its nose should be. Tufts of wiry hair sprout between the black plates covering its insect flesh. Also feasting on the decaying meat are several ghoul-like humanoids with bestial features, scaly skin, and digits ending in fearsome claws. Each creature has fearsome teeth and a foot-long tongue dangling from its mouth, trailing away into smoky incorporeality at its tip.

These creatures are scavengers—abyssal ghouls and chasme demons who feast upon Arlgolcheir's corpulent remains. The mounds of rotting flesh continue to grow and would eventually allow Arlgolcheir to regenerate if not for the scavengers' diligent efforts, keeping the Abyss from reforming the fallen demon lord. They react with furious anger at any perceived intrusion upon their banquet, and fight to the death. They do not pursue foes from the shaft, and if they are slain, more ghouls and chasmes arrive here to replace them in 2d4 hours.

Ancient Abyssal Ghoul (4) **CR 12**
Advanced abyssal ghoul
CE Medium undead
Fiend Folio 12
Init +7; **Senses** blindsight 90 ft., darkvision 60 ft., *deathwatch*; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Abyssal
AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 24; Dodge, Mobility, improved uncanny dodge
hp 180 (24 HD)
Immune electricity, undead traits
Resist acid 20, cold 20, fire 20; **SR** 20
Fort +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16
Spd 40 ft.
Melee 2 front claws +19 (1d6+7 plus disease) and 2 rear claws +17 (2d6+3 plus disease)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +19
Atk Options Spring Attack, improved grab, sneak attack +5d6
Special Actions wisdom drain
Abilities Str 25, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (front claws, rear claws), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Multiattack, Spring Attack
Skills Balance +32, Climb +34, Hide +30, Jump +40, Move Silently +30, Tumble +32
***Deathwatch* (Sp)** This ability functions as the spell of the same name, except that it's always active and allows the ghoul to observe death and life to a radius of 90 feet.
Disease (Ex) Any creature hit by an abyssal ghoul's claws must make a DC 22 Fortitude save or contract demon fever (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 292).
Wisdom Drain (Su) If an abyssal ghoul pins an opponent, it can drain 1d6 points of Wisdom with its smoky tongue on the same action. Each round thereafter it maintains the pin, it drains an additional 1d6 points of Wisdom.

Advanced Chasmes (4) **CR 12**
CR Large outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Fiendish Codex I 34
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +18, Spot +18
Aura fear (5-ft. radius, DC 16)
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common; telepathy 100 ft.
AC 26, touch 12, flat-footed 23
hp 110 (13 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 21
Fort +17, **Ref** +16, **Will** +15
Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)
Melee 2 claws +17 (1d6+5 plus wounding) and bite +15
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +22
Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack
Special Actions drone, *summon tanar'ri*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th, +15 ranged touch)
At will—*contagion* (DC 16), *darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *dispel magic*, *fly*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pound of objects only), *insect plague*, *protection from good* (DC 13), *ray of enfeeblement*, *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 17)
3/day—quickened *ray of enfeeblement*
1/day—*unholy aura* (DC 20)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14
Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*ray of enfeeblement*)
Skills Bluff +18, Climb +29, Concentration +20, Hide +15, Intimidate +20, Listen +18, Move Silently +19, Search +18, Sense Motive +18, Spot +18

Drone (Su) As a full-round action, a chasme may beat its wings to create a droning buzz in a 60-foot-radius spread. All creatures in this area must make a DC 18 Will save or fall asleep for 2d10 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.
Fear Aura (Su) As a swift action, a chasme can create an aura of fear in a 5-foot-radius spread around it. This effect is otherwise identical to a *fear* spell (CL 12th, Will DC 16 negates). If the save is successful, the creature is immune to that chasme's fear aura for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.
***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a chasme can attempt to summon 1d4 rutterkins (*Fiendish Codex I* 51) or 1 chasme with a 40% chance of success.
Wounding (Ex) A wound resulting from a chasme's attack bleeds for an additional 1 point of damage per round thereafter. Multiple wounds from such attacks result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check or the application of any form of magical healing.

Development: If Shadowfire is with the PCs, he becomes quite agitated that the portal was a one-way trip. Knowing that he won't survive long here on his own, he remains with the PCs for his own protection, but his cowardice prevents him from being a useful ally in combat. If the PCs cannot escape this pit by climbing or flight, he might try to bargain for their protection with some of his scrolls. Once out of the well, he can still serve as a guide, if reluctantly, but once he realizes the PCs are serious about trying to free Shami-Amourae, he may well try to stop them by betraying them (most likely at some point in the Overlook), in a desperate attempt to earn points with his master, Demogorgon.

The Well of Debased Eros (EL 18)

The Well of Debased Eros is named for its occupant, Shami-Amourae, the Lady of Delights, one-time lover of Demogorgon and one of the few creatures who knows Demogorgon's deepest secret and weakness. Finding which well belongs to her is a DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check; if Shadowfire is with the PCs, he already knows were the well is (having learned its location while exploring parts of Abysm, Demogorgon's palace) and can lead them there. *Find the path* can lead the PCs directly to the well also, and if they're truly desperate they can wander the layer until they meet other pilgrims. Of course, the Wells of Darkness is not a particularly large realm; the PCs can discover which of the wells is the one they seek by trial and error in a relatively short amount of time, although this method likely forces more encounters with the region's menaces.

Once the PCs reach the Well of Debased Eros, the first things they hear are howls and shrieks of anger and hunger echoing up from the well's depths. Inside, a canopy of trees blocks sight of the well's floor. These trees are strangely verdant, heavy with bright red and purple fruits and colorful flowers. An intoxicating sent of exotic perfume rises up from the shaft, but underlying the pleasant odor is the smell of animal droppings and rotted flesh.

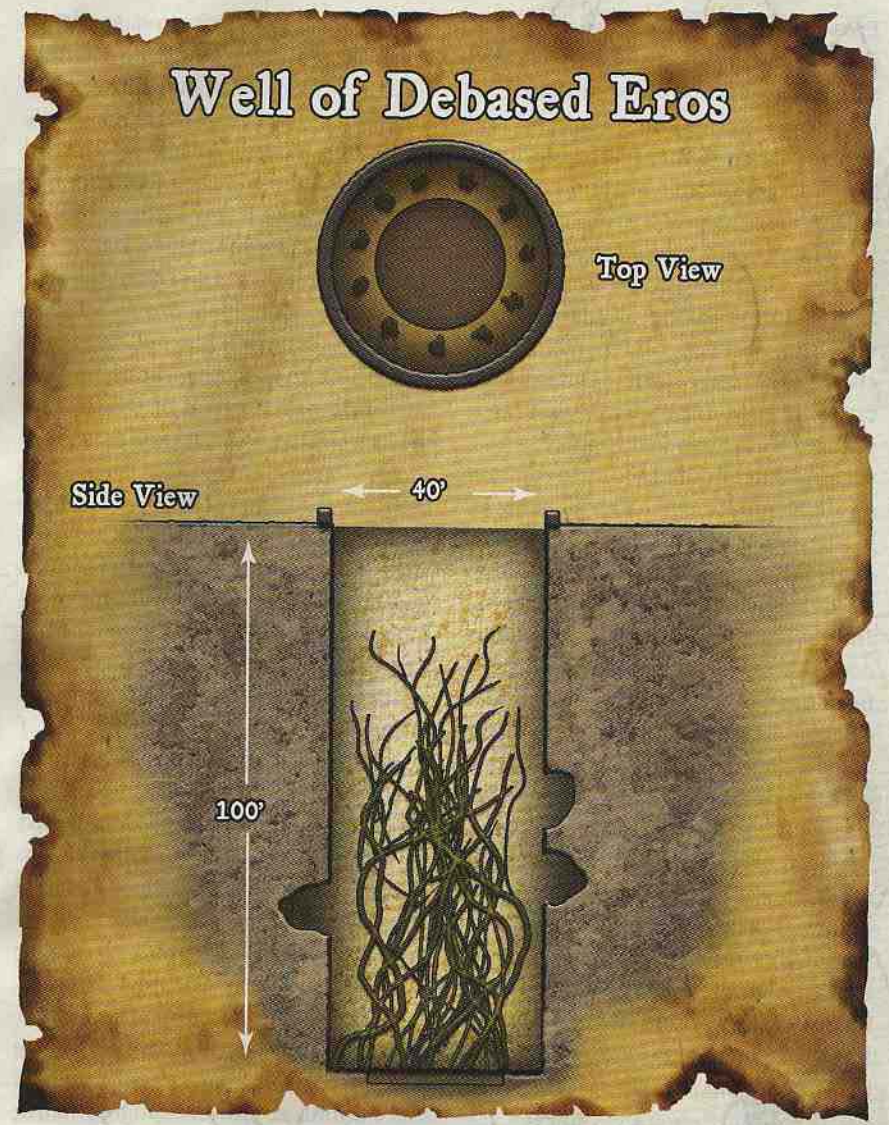
The Well of Debased Eros is 40 feet in diameter and 100 feet deep. The top third of the shaft is open. Descending this part of the shaft requires magical flight or a successful DC 20 Climb check. The bottom two-thirds of the shaft are packed tight with branches and foliage from the copse of entwined trees that have sprung up around the window into Shami-Amourae's prison. This section of the well is considered heavy undergrowth (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 87). Flight and climbing is possible, but the thick growth reduces movement to one-quarter normal. The druidic ability woodland stride negates this movement penalty.

Creatures: Demogorgon didn't simply place Shami-Amourae in one of the most notorious prisons in the multiverse. He also made sure that her cell was guarded by three groups of monstrous defenders. The first of these groups dwells in the tangle of tree branches in this well, and in narrow clefts they've dug out of the shaft walls over the ages. These are Abyss-tainted aberrations known as gorallons, monstrous abominations only dimly related to the four-armed girallon. Demogorgon originally placed them here because they could navigate the trees with ease, and because he took pleasure in their simian shapes. However, the gorallons have proved susceptible to the seductions of Shami-Amourae's succubi followers, often trading passage to the well below in exchange for satisfying their base desires. As such, the gorallons do not immediately attack but approach cautiously and crudely gesture at the most comely individuals among the PCs, suggesting a nightmare exchange of favors to secure passage. Assuming the PCs spurn any such offers, the gorallons immediately attack, using their ability to navigate the treacherous terrain to their advantage.

GORALLONS (4) **CR 14**
Corrupted advanced girallon
CE Huge aberration (augmented magical beast)
Monster Manual 126, *Book of Vile Darkness* 186
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +0, Spot +11

AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Dodge, Mobility
hp 241 (21 HD); fast healing 10; **DR** 10/magic
Fort +18, **Ref** +15, **Will** +8

Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.
Melee* 4 claws +26 (1d8+17 plus 10 vile) and bite +24 (3d6+11 plus 10 vile)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +21; **Grp** +41



Atk Options Power Attack, Spring Attack, rend 3d6+18 plus 10 vile
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 34, Dex 17, Con 22, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 5
Feats Brachiation, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Multiattack, Power Attack, Spring Attack
Skills Climb +20, Move Silently +13, Spot +11

Disruptive Attack (Su) A gorallon inflicts an additional 10 points of vile damage each time it damages a foe with a natural attack. Vile damage can only be healed in an area under the effect of *consecrate* or *hallow*.

Feats Brachiation (*Complete Adventurer* 106) allows a gorallon to move through wooded areas at its base land speed, ignoring any effects on movement due to terrain. It must be at least 20 feet from the ground; this ability only works in medium and dense forests.

Treasure: The gorallons dwell in four individual niches carved into the walls of the shaft. Each niche contains an assortment of gifts received from succubi en route to the Pool of Debased Eros and treasures stolen from slain intruders. In total, the gorallons possess gems and artwork worth 10,000 gp as well as a suit of *demon armor* and an *efreeti bottle*.

Wardens of the Well (EL 17)

At the bottom of the shaft lies a pool of inky black liquid. The banks of the pool hold the roots of a dozen great trees, whose upper reaches form the dense canopy above.

Creature: A massive spidery creature stands atop the surface of the pool. Three times as tall as a humanoid, its forelegs end in massive cleavers. Four bulbous eyes, a malevolent gleam in each one, rise out of the spider's carapace. This is Demogorgon's secondary guardian, the warden of the well, a specialized retriever granted a modicum of intelligence and an aura that suppresses teleportation. The warden only attacks if provoked or if someone attempts to free Shami-Amourae (no matter how futile). The wording of its standing orders allows (perhaps unintentionally) creatures to approach peacefully and touch the surface of the pool unmolested. When the PCs first visit the well, they are unlikely to arouse the warden's anger, but when they return later, armed with the knowledge of how to free Shami-Amourae, the spidery guardian quickly moves to attack, fighting to the death.

Warden of the Well **CR 17**
Variant retriever
CE Gargantuan construct
Monster Manual 46
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +16, Spot +16
Aura guard target (60-ft. radius)
Languages Abyssal

AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Dodge, Mobility
hp 255 (30 HD); fast healing 10
Immune construct traits
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 28
Fort +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +10

Spd 50 ft.; air walk
Melee* 4 claws +27 (4d6+29/19–20)
Ranged eye ray +23 touch (12d6 fire or cold or electricity, or petrification)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +22; **Grp** +53
Atk Options Cleave, Combat Expertise, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack
*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 48, Dex 20, Con —, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 10
Feats Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Shami-Amourae Lore

Knowledge (the Planes) check

DC 30: Shami-Amourae, the Lady of Delights, is a fallen demon lord who once aspired to the title of Queen of the Succubi.

DC 35: The cult of Shami-Amourae, known as the Disciples of Delight, has largely collapsed since the disappearance of the Lady of Delights. However, disciples bearing her sign are seen from time to time in the town of Broken Reach on the Plain of Infinite Portals.

DC 40: Shami-Amourae once played the role of consort to Demogorgon, but the Prince of Demons spurned her in favor of Malcanthet, Queen of the Succubi. Rumor holds that Demogorgon had her imprisoned in the Wells of Darkness.

DC 45: Red Shroud, leader of Broken Reach, possesses the *tooth of Shami-Amourae*, one of the *teeth of Dahlver-Nar*.

Skills Listen +16, Spot +16

Air Walk (Su) The warden of the well continuously *air walks*, as the spell. This effect cannot be dispelled.

Guard Target (Su) The warden of the well radiates a *dimensional lock* aura, as the spell. It can suppress and activate this effect as an immediate action, effectively controlling who and what can teleport into or out of this area.

Pool of Debased Eros

Anyone who peers into the depths of the black pool at the base of this well perceives the vague outline of a succubus with pale skin, golden hair, and slowly fluttering bat wings. She appears to have some sort of green necklace hanging from her neck and wears the tattered rags of a once magnificent gown.

Creatures: Shami-Amourae was a minor demon lord before she was imprisoned here by Demogorgon and Malcanthet, yet now, she is little more than a fading memory. She can communicate via limited telepathy, and then only with creatures in physical contact with the surface of the Pool of Debased Eros. Both participants in a telepathic conversation must make a DC 25 Will save each round in order to express or receive a single, simple thought, and even then, Shami-Amourae has difficulty forming recognizable words.

Demogorgon's third guardian is a fiendish symbiont known as a chokesnake. Before he imprisoned Shami-Amourae, he implanted her with this serpent. Molypente, as the chokesnake calls itself, remains in a catatonic state until Shami-Amourae is released from Shattered Night.

Despite her limited ability to communicate, Shami-Amourae uses all her wiles in a desperate bid for freedom. The Lady of Delights knows that the only things of any value that she still retains are her secrets, and under no circumstances does she reveal them unless first freed from Shattered Night. Shami-Amourae does not know how she might be freed, but she does know that Red Shroud has been looking into this conundrum. She also knows that at least one other force dwells in Shattered Night with her—she can sometimes hear his dreams and nightmares, and knows he is the architect of this prison. If anything knows how to escape, it is the one who built this place, one who is imprisoned here like she is. Yet she knows no more about this entity... not even its name.

PART THREE: AUDIENCE WITH AHAZU

Freeing a prisoner from one of the Wells of Darkness is a daunting task—such a thing has only occurred four times before, and each time the method used to free the prisoner was wildly different. Mortal magic has no effect on the wells, and cannot pierce its way to Shattered Night. The gods themselves might be able to open the gates to Shattered Night, but since Echidna attempted to unleash the prisoners eons ago to flood Asgard with the released monsters, only to become trapped herself when the Abyss itself rebelled against her, the gods have been wary about dabbling in the dangerous workings of this ancient realm.

Yet if the PCs dig deep enough (by making the appropriate Knowledge checks, casting the right divination spells, or by asking the right questions of certain NPCs), they can learn something quite interesting. This realm was not always a prison; it was made such by a vanished demon lord named Ahazu the Seizer.

Ahazu holds the key to each Well of Darkness, yet he himself is one of the realm's prisoners—his own cell the only one he does not hold the key for. Ahazu's location is a secret, but not one that's impossible to discover—he is imprisoned below the fortress of Overlook at the heart of the Wells of Darkness.

Overlook (EL 18)

At the top of the tallest tor of this layer of the Abyss sits a ruined fortress built of blood-red marble and dominated by a massive corner tower. These are the ruins of Overlook. Once the stronghold of the cult of Ahazu, the fortress was assaulted long ago by the armies of Orcus. Today, the fortress has returned to these cultists, after a fashion, for a coven of dangerous undead varrangoins have claimed the place as their own. Other undead and flocks of rager varrangoin minions haunt the run-down halls and marvelous inner chambers of this structure, repelling demonic incursions and guarding the secrets held within. The varrangoin tribe is fairly large, including a ruling coven of three anima arcanist varrangoin liches and 20 rager varrangoin barbarians. The rager varrangoins have formed four flocks, each consisting of four rager varrangoins. Although the entire colony holds allegiance to their three undead commanders, each flock keeps largely to itself, and individual flocks are often absent for days at a time as they cavort in the skies above or the hills below.

This once-grand edifice is now crumbling. Several holes in the walls open into the structure's interior, giving easy access to once-grand chambers within. Within the structure, wooden floors hang in various states of disrepair and caked in guano. A wooden staircase once spiraled up the interior wall, but large sections have collapsed and fallen to the stone floor at the base of the tower. Most chambers are open to the

cold sky above, the main tower being the only section that still retains a roof.

A few of the smaller rooms of the fortress are more or less intact. Here and there, a few eerie paintings still adorn the walls, but rectangular discolorations suggest many others have been removed. Each of the remaining paintings is more disturbing then the last, depicting scenes of horror and chaos that could only exist amidst the Infinite Planes of the Abyss.

Creatures: At any one time, only two flocks of varrangoins are present at Overlook. When the PCs approach the fortress and begin to explore its ruins, they are likely spotted by at least one flock. If the PCs use stealth and subterfuge and move quickly, they may be able to explore much of the Overlook without alerting them, but sooner or later they'll stumble upon a nest of the batlike monsters.

Varrangoin Berserkers (4) **CR 14**

Rager varrangoin barbarian 4
CE Medium magical beast
Fiend Folio 184
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +15, Spot +15
Languages Abyssal, Varrangoin

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; improved uncanny dodge
hp 118 (12 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron, 3/—
Immune mind-affecting effects
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 22
Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4
Weakness bright light sensitivity

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)
Melee 2 claws +20 (1d8+7) and bite +17 (1d6+3) and tail sting +17 (1d4+3 plus poison)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +19
Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Snatch, greater rage 4/day, rend 2d4+7
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th) 2/day—*dispel magic*, *fear* (DC 14)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ extra action, trap sense +4
Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Hide +8, Listen +15, Move Silently +8, Spot +15

Extra Action (Su) A rager varrangoin can take an extra move or single attack action each round.
Light Sensitivity (Ex) A varrangoin exposed to bright light (such as a *daylight* spell) is blinded for 1 round. Thereafter, as long as the light persists, it takes a –1 circumstance penalty on all attack rolls, saves, and skill checks.
Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 18, 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex.
Rage When a varrangoin berserker rages, its statistics change as follows:
AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 16
hp 154
Fort +15, **Will** +7
Melee 2 claws +23 (1d8+10) and bite +20 (1d6+5) and tail sting +20 (1d4+5 plus poison)
Grp +22
Abilities Str 30, Con 24

Development: Several individual varrangoins in various flocks are directly or indirectly in the employ of the various demon lords. The lords of the Abyss keep a close watch on attempts to free creatures imprisoned in the Wells of Darkness. If the PCs get caught up in open battle with the varrangoin tribe, some of the creatures steal away to alert their contacts, which then attracts a variety of magical divinations targeted at the fortress. In this fashion, all of the demon lords the PCs might encounter in "Enemies of my Enemy" become aware of the PCs' actions and possibly even their fighting tactics. From this point on, and certainly from the point of Shami-Amourae's release, the PCs are no longer unknown to the Lords of the Abyss.

Overlook Tower (EL 18)

In the corner of the fortress of Overlook stands a massive round tower, seven stories in height and twice the diameter of the lesser round tower. The walls of the great tower are pierced with holes in places, as if a massive siege engine punched holes throughout the structure, but the whole remains sturdy and upright. The tower's inner chamber (and the well of Ahazu below) is protected by an ancient *forbiddance* spell (CL 20th) keyed to chaotic evil; this prevents creatures from teleporting into or out of the tower, but more to the point, any non-chaotic evil creature that enters the tower must make a DC 28 Will save to avoid taking damage.

Within, the Great Tower is revealed to be a single immense chamber. This chamber once served the Fraternity of Order as a base of operations, and while most traces of their stay here have been

Overlook Lore

Knowledge (the Planes) check

DC 25: When Ulricon of the Fraternity of Order discovered this layer of the Abyss, he claimed a ruined fortress atop the layer's highest tor as a base from which to further his investigations of the Wells of Darkness. That fortress is now thought to be home to wraiths and spectres, possibly formed from the remnants of Ulricon's followers.

DC 30: The marvelous inner chambers of this structure allegedly include a scale model of the entire layer, complete with inky pools marked with the demonic seals of their inhabitants. Many demons believe that the fortress protects some sort of controlling mechanism for the layer, but if so no one has yet figured out how to make it work.

DC 35: The fortress of Overlook was originally constructed by the Cult of Ahazu the Seizer, demon lord of the night and abduction. The cult was destroyed by Orcusafter the followers of Ahazu tried and failed to imprison him as an offering to their patron. It was well after this destruction that Ulricon first catalouged this layer of the Abyss.

DC 40: The fortress of Overlook is now home to a tribe of varrangoins, oft-mistaken for the undead thought to roam its halls. The varrangoins are extremely protective of some great secret in the heart of Overlook.

DC 45: Ulricon and his followers were forced to flee after trying to bind Ahazu the Seizer to their will. In failing, they summoned forth the Spawn of Ahazu, who now haunt the lower reaches of the fortress of Overlook and are responsible for the occasional appearances of wraiths and spectres . The fate of Ulricon is unknown.

removed by the varrangoins, they chose to leave the collection of strange paintings that hang on the walls. These paintings are detailed below, in Treasure.

The center of the floor of the chamber is a circular mosaic, 40 feet in diameter, made of hundreds of stone tiles. The tiles create a scale model of the entire layer, complete with inky pools marked with the demonic seals of their inhabitants. In the center of the layer, where the fortress of Overlook should sit atop the layer's tallest tor, is instead the Pool of Ahazu.

Each individual tile can be depressed a fraction of an inch; when depressed, a tile turns black, making it possible to create patterns in the floor. The mosaic is actually the key to opening the well of Ahazu, below. The door can be unlocked and opened by pressing down tiles in the pattern of the sign of Ahazu. Once the correct tiles are depressed, the circular section of floor rumbles for one round, giving any creatures standing on it time to clamber to safety. At the end of the round, the tiles fold outward in a clattering storm, overlapping impossibly back on themselves as if they had no depth at all until they fold neatly into the rim of the upper edge of the exposed shaft. This is the well of Ahazu—its contents are described in the next section. Once opened, the mosaic door remains so for one minute before closing; it can be opened again from below by a single touch.

There are no clues in the room to indicate that it is the sign of Ahazu that opens this unusual door. Divination magic like *commune* can provide some clues (if the right questions are asked), but if one of the PCs possesses the *tooth of Ahazu*, a powerful compulsion to craft Ahazu's sign on the tiles overtakes him as soon as he enters this chamber. He need not act on this compulsion, but if he wishes to submit, he can quickly make the sign in one minute, doing so almost as an automation. He need not have the tooth in his jaw; possession alone is enough to trigger this compulsion.

A DC 30 Search of the mosaic is enough to reveal that it is some sort of door triggered by depressing the tiles in a specific order, yet does not provide clues as to what the pattern is. A DC 50 Open Lock check allows a character to bypass the complicated lock. For purposes of *knock*, the entire mosaic counts a single door—and as such is far too large to be opened by such magic. *Wish* and *miracle* can certainly open the door as well if the PCs get frustrated enough.

Characters still standing on the door when it opens plummet 200 feet to the floor of the well below, taking 20d6 points of falling damage. In addition, they must make a DC 25 Reflex save to avoid landing upon the planar tear at the shaft's base, with results detailed in the next section.

Creatures: Overlook Tower is the province of the Spawn of Ahazu, a flock of four nightwings that dwell in the ruins immediately surrounding the tower. These undead monsters cling to the walls and roof of the tower's upper reaches, remaining invisible and constantly alert for any intruders. They react to intrusions in the tower with *fingers of death* at the intruders, then swoop down to finish off any survivors.

Nightwings (4): hp 144 each; *Monster Manual* 197.

Treasure: The works of art that line the walls of the catacombs were placed here by the Fraternity of Order and reflect the order's discoveries in their attempt to catalog the Abyss. Ulricon the Necromancer employed the paintings as teaching aids for his apprentices. As a whole, the incredible collection is worth approximately 30,000 gp.

Two paintings are obviously different from the others; their value is separate from the collection as a whole. The first unusual painting depicts a lush Abyssal landscape bathed in a harsh blue light. A dozen cities are shown in the painting, which is detailed enough to serve as a map. The painting is labeled "Gallenshu" and depicts the 377th layer of the Abyss as it appeared long ago, when huge flocks of varrangoins made their home here. The Plains of Gallenshu are now cloaked in dust, but this painting would be very useful for an explorer seeking to uncover the buried ruins of varrangoin cities. This painting is worth 5,000 gp.

The second painting depicts a thriving city built in the heart of a great rift in the side of a mountain surrounded by jungle. The largest structures are step-pyramids suggestive of the Olman cities of the Amedio Jungle. The painting is labeled "Xuxulieto" and depicts the Forbidden City of the Xaro Mountains in Hepmonaland at its height. This painting is worth 2,500 gp.

The Well of Ahazu (EL 21)

The walls of the shaft are gouged and pitted, as if a great beast had clawed its way into the depths long ago. Several hundred feet below ripples the glint of inky black liquid. Thousands of horrifically silent ants cling to the upper walls, their cold blue eyes and dripping mandibles eerie in their stillness.

The Well of the Seizer is the greatest of the Wells of Darkness, the last of the shafts dug by Ahazu and the only one that leads directly into Shattered Night by way of a planar tear. The shaft is 40 feet in diameter and 200 feet deep. At its base, the ground is cold and stony. A 20-foot-diameter glossy black pool ripples in the center of the floor, and in the 10-foot-wide ring around the pool are stacked hundreds of books, scrolls, and stone tablets; the vast library of the Keepers of Ahazu. Interspersed among these books are strange perches made of bones on which the batlike liches rest, each standing near a twisted lectern.

The pool in the center of the room is the planar rift to Shattered Night and the window into Ahazu's prison; it is detailed in the next section.

Creatures: The ruling coven of the varrangoins spend most of their time ensconced within this chamber, studying their collection of blasphemous tomes or communing with Ahazu. The ants that cling to the upper walls of the shaft consist of three swarms of abyssal ants; they silently, but as one mind, each look upward to glare at the PCs from their thousands of eyes as the door to the shaft is opened. An instant later,

the swarms surge upward to assault the PCs.

Once the PCs defeat the abyssal ants, or as soon as anyone attempts to reach the bottom of the shaft, the true horrors dwelling within move to defend the well of Ahazu. These three arcanist varrangoins are not only binders, and thus able to harness the power of Ahazu's vestige directly, but have also discovered a method of attaining lichdom that bypasses the need of a phylactery. Effectively, the well itself is their phylactery—if they are destroyed, their spirits move into Shattered Night to be absorbed by Ahazu, yet until then they are effectively immortal. Although also capable of allowing non-humanoid creatures to become liches, the game effects of this variant form of lich are otherwise identical to the standard lich template.

Keeper of Ahazu

NARDELEM, ILLYNYM, AND ELVORAK; KEEPERS OF AHAZU (3) **CR 16**

Male arcanist varrangoin lich binder 3/anima mage 2

CE Medium undead (augmented magical beast)

Fiend Folio 182, *Monster Manual* 166, *Tome of Magic* 10, 50

Init +6; **Senses** blindsight 25 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, Listen +11, Spot +11

Aura fear (60-ft. radius, DC 19)

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal, Undercommon, Varrangoin

AC 34, touch 21, flat-footed 28

hp 84 (99 with *false life*, 13 HD); **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic

Immune cold, electricity, spells of 3rd level or lower, undead traits

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 22

Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

Weakness bright light sensitivity

Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +17 (1d4+1) and bite +15 (1d6) and tail sting +15 (1d4 plus poison) or touch +17 (1d8+5 plus paralysis [DC 19]) or Ahazu's touch +17 (*unholy blight*, CL 5th, see appendix)

Base Atk +11; **Grp** +12

Special Actions Ahazu's abduction (CL 5th, see appendix), soul binding (1 vestige)

Spells Prepared (CL 11th, +17 ranged touch)

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, *mislead*

5th—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *teleport*, *wall of force*

4th—*dimension door*, *fire shield*, *enervation*, *fear* (DC 21)

3rd—extended *false life* (already cast), *fireball* (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *slow* (DC 19), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *cat's grace*, *invisibility*, extended *mage armor* (already cast), *scorching ray*, *shatter* (DC 19),

1st—*burning hands* (DC 18), *grease* (DC 17), *magic missile* (3), *ray of enfeeblement*

0—*detect magic* (2), *ghost sound* (DC 16), *message*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

2/day—*dispel magic*

1/day—*arcane eye*, *baleful polymorph* (DC 18), *flesh to stone* (DC 19), *mirror image*, *polymorph*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 22, Con —, Int 22, Wis 17, Cha 16

SQ *contingency*, pact augmentation (1 ability), suppress sign, +4 turn resistance

Feats Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Multiattack, Extend Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (necromancy) , Weapon Finesse

Skills Concentration +16, Hide +25, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +19, Listen +11, Move Silently +25, Search +14, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +23, Spot +11

Possessions *ring of protection +4*, *ring of force shield*, *tripartite amulet of the hive mind*

Contingency If a keeper of Ahazu takes damage, a *displacement* spell activates on him.

Exploit Vestige (Su) A keeper can choose to not gain the benefits of one ability granted by a bound vestige in order to gain one additional arcane spell slot per day of any level up to the highest he can cast. Since they are undead, they typically use this ability to turn their void mind power into an additional 6th level spell.

Immunity to Spells (Su) An arcanist varrangoin ignores the effects of spells and spell-like abilities of 3rd level or lower, just as if the spellcaster had failed to overcome spell resistance. The varrangoin can deactivate or activate this ability as a free action.

Light Sensitivity (Ex) A varrangoin exposed to bright light (such as a *daylight* spell)

is blinded for 1 round. Thereafter, as long as the light persists, he takes a –1 circumstance penalty on all attack rolls, saves, and skill checks.

Pact Augmentation (Su) As long as a keeper has a vestige bound, he gains a +1 insight bonus to his Armor Class.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 16, 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex.

Soul Binding (Su) The keepers of Ahazu can bind a vestige to their soul, gaining supernatural abilities as a result of the pact. These varrangoin have bound the vestige of Ahazu to them, and the special abilities granted are incorporated into their stat blocks above. For further information about this key binder power, see *Tome of Magic*. The keepers have a binding check of +8.

Suppress Sign (Ex) Although the keepers can normally suppress the sign of Ahazu (a mouth that seeps black smoke) they never choose to do so.

Abyssal Ant Swarms: hp 150 each; see page 65.

Tactics: The three varrangoin liches have used their *tripartite amulets of the hive mind* to secure the cooperation and allegiance of the abyssal ant swarms, and prefer to leave the protection of their sanctum to them. If the ants are defeated, or if the PCs otherwise bypass them and enter the lower reaches of the shaft, the three liches take matters into their own claws and join the battle. Their first act is to seal themselves in with three *walls of force*, hopefully giving them time to cast several defensive spells on themselves, including *mirror image*, *fire shield*, *cat's grace*, and *invisibility*. Once they're ready, they lower the *walls of force* and begin the battle by casting their most devastating spells. Since they merge with Ahazu if slain, the liches attempt to escape if brought below 30 hit points, using *mislead* to escape the tower and then teleporting elsewhere in the Wells of Darkness once they're free of the *forbiddance* effect, thereafter regrouping at a prearranged spot (the well of Ungulex) so they can plan their revenge against the PCs.

Treasure: The hundreds of books present here constitute a poorly organized but well-stocked library focusing on the mysteries of the Abyss, with a particular focus on dead and forgotten demon lords. The entire collection, if organized, grants a +10 circumstance bonus on any Knowledge (the planes) check made to determine information about this topic. The collection is large enough that it can fill a *portable hole*, but if transported to civilization is worth 12,000 gp as a whole. The collection may have an even greater value to the PCs, however, in the next adventure, when they may need a bargaining chip to secure the aid of Iggwilv the Witch Queen.

Also present here are dozens of spellbooks. Many of them are the books of the three varrangoin liches, but a collection of a dozen are all emblazoned with the mark of Ulricon the Necromancer. This multi-volume collection contains every wizard spell in the *Player's Handbook*, with the exception of illusion and enchantment spells (Ulricon's prohibited schools). At your discretion, additional necromancy spells from other sources may be found in these tomes as well. No trace of Ulricon is apparent, as the doomed necromancer was pulled into Shattered Night long ago to merge with Ahazu.

A DC 30 Search of the books reveals one nameless tome filled blank pages. A hole has been cut into the pages, creating a nook in which is hidden an *amulet of the planes*.

The final treasure to be found here, however, overshadows the rest. Sitting almost casually on one of the lecterns is a large closed tome—this is a copy of the infamous *Demonomicon of Iggwilv*, and is easily the cabal's most valued item. This infamous treatise on the Abyss and the demon lords who rule its realms is priceless, especially as it constitutes a heretofore unsuspected seventh copy of the book. As with the collection of other books here, this book can be a potent bargaining chip for the PCs in the next adventure when they meet the book's beautiful author. The *Demonomicon of Iggwilv's* contents are detailed in issue #336 of DRAGON magazine, but its contents and powers are summarized in the appendix to this adventure.

Communion with Ahazu

Like the Pool of Arlgolcheir and the Pool of Debased Eros, the Pool of Ahazu appears to be made of a perfectly still, inky black liquid. If the PCs stare into the depths of the pool, they perceive a dark-skinned, naked humanoid shape with bat-like wings, an elongated head, and long, thin arms. His legs trail away into nothingness and his skin is smooth and devoid of obvious features. His face is dominated by a mouth filled with hundreds of needle-sharp fangs and his sunken eyes seem to have almost withdrawn into his skull. This creature is none other than Ahazu the Seizer, the demon lord who created the Wells of Darkness only to become one of its most enigmatic prisoners.

Unlike the other pools, the Pool of Ahazu is actually a planar tear. Contact with the pool's surface causes the black liquid to extrude dozens of tendrils that writhe and clamber up the length of whatever they touch. An object thrown into the pool is engulfed and drawn into Shattered Night in the space of one round—this item is effectively annihilated and gone forever. Artifacts placed on the pool simply rest upon the surface; the tendrils slither and grasp at the artifact but cannot draw it into Shattered Night.

In order to convince Ahazu to release Shami-Amourae from the Well of Debased Eros, the PCs must forge a demonic pact with the Seizer. In its simplest form, such a pact requires three things: the ability to communicate with Ahazu, a successful DC 40 Diplomacy check, and a willingness to agree to Ahazu's minimum requirements. There are several ways to achieve these requirements, depending on the composition of the party and its past successes.

Making Contact: As with the other wells of darkness, any creature who physically touches the Pool of Ahazu can speak telepathically with Ahazu the Seizer. Telepathic contact with Ahazu is much simpler than with any of his prisoners, requiring only that Ahazu and the creature who desires to converse with him touch the "window" of the pool. This is, unfortunately, the most danger-

ous way to establish telepathic contact with the Seizer.

A living creature that touches the pool must make a DC 30 Will save. If that creature carries the *tooth of Ahazu*, he gains a +10 circumstance bonus to this save; if he wears the tooth in his jaw, he automatically makes the save. Success indicates that his mind contacts that of Ahazu, and he may communicate freely with the imprisoned demon lord. Failure indicates that the character is drawn into the pool over the course of one round as a large facelike wave rises from the pool to engulf him. Others may attempt to rescue the doomed character by pulling him free with a DC 25 Strength check or by casting *dispel evil* or *dispel chaos* on the pool (which causes the tendrils to go dormant for one round). Once a character is drawn into Shattered Night, his body and soul are absorbed and become one with Ahazu—given enough absorbed lives, Ahazu can emerge from Shattered Night as a god. This is the true purpose of his self-imposed imprisonment. The number of lives he must absorb is left to you to determine. A creature absorbed in this manner is gone forever—*wish* and *miracle* notwithstanding. The direct intervention of a deity could perhaps restore the character to existence, but doing so may have unforeseen repercussions on that deity left to you to determine.

There are two other methods of contacting Ahazu. The spell *contact other plane* works to put a mind in contact with the demon lord without the need to touch the pool's surface. *Wish* and *miracle* can achieve this same end by duplicating *contact other plane's* effects. Alternately, a binder (see *Tome of Magic*) who binds Ahazu as a vestige can communicate with him as long as he remains within 30 feet of the pool's surface.

Making the Request: Ahazu is a terrifying demon lord whose words ring with the cold, lonely emptiness of the void. He clutches his prisoners like precious jewels and is loathe to let even one detainee escape his grasp. Before he'll even entertain a request to free a prisoner, the PC in communion with Ahazu must make a DC 40 Diplomacy check. If the PC making the Diplomacy check possesses the *tooth of Ahazu*, he receives a +5 circumstance bonus. If the PC making the Diplomacy check displays the sign of Ahazu (as a result of having implanted the tooth of Ahazu in his mouth or having bound Ahazu as a vestige), he receives a +10 circumstance bonus on his Diplomacy check. If the PC making the Diplomacy check is a binder and makes a good pact with Ahazu and negotiates the pact during the binding attempt, he receives a +20 circumstance bonus on his Diplomacy check. There are no penalties for failing the check, but until it is made, Ahazu refuses to bargain with the PCs.

Sealing the Pact: Shami-Amourae may be the most recent prisoner, but that means little to Ahazu; she is just as valued a prize as Ungulex. Before he reveals the method to free the Lady of Debased Eros, he demands a replacement prisoner to take her place. Ahazu initially muses that the PC making contact might be a good replacement, but then decides that the character is too weak and insignificant to warrant such an honor. Ahazu leaves it to the PCs to suggest a suitable replacement, with the only stricture being that the replacement must be significantly more powerful than Shami-Amourae. In game terms, this means that the replacement must be CR 24 or higher. Ahazu does not require that the third party be alive at the time of imprisonment, nor does he require the replacement immediately. Ahazu grudgingly agrees to give the PCs an interval between Shami-Amourae's liberation and her replacement's imprisonment, granting them no more than 66 days to secure the replacement. The replacement prisoner must be brought to the Well of Debased Eros in a helpless state (or dead), at which point Ahazu draws the new prisoner into the well, which immediately changes to match the new prisoner's temperament.

The logical choice for imprisonment here is, of course, Demogorgon; if the PCs can defeat the Prince of Demons and return here with his body before the time is up, he more than qualifies as a replacement. Yet the PCs are destined to meet other CR 24 and higher menaces over the next two adventures—any of their bodies will do to fulfill the pact with Ahazu. If the PCs fail to fulfill their end of the bargain, the potent pact plucks all of them (not just the PC who forged the pact in the first place) from wherever they may be in the Multiverse and absorbs them into Shattered Night—since the PCs entered into the pact of their own free will, there's nothing, not even the gods themselves, that can prevent this horrific fate.

There is a much easier way to secure Ahazu's aid, though, if the PCs still possess the *tooth of Ahazu*. The Seizer has long feared that his enemies would discover his plans to use Shattered Night as a catalyst to achieve divinity, and with his tooth out there granting all manner of creatures access to his essence, it could, in the right hands, lead his enemies to this very discovery. If the PCs are willing to place the *tooth of Ahazu* in the well, allowing the Seizer to reclaim it, he agrees to release Shami-Amourae with a creature of equal power put in her place—securing a CR 19 or higher creature should prove a much more manageable job than doing the same with a CR 24 or higher creature.

The Key: Once the PCs finalize their pact with Ahazu, the imprisoned demon lord chuckles menacingly and the air in the pit seems to drop in temperature by several degrees. Fog wafts up from the surface of Ahazu's pool, whirling and cavorting and eventually drifting toward the PC who made telepathic contact with the Seizer. The fog shrouds that character's hands, and he feels something heavy settle into them. When the fog clears a moment later, he is holding a *book of infinite spells*. Ahazu's voice explains that this particular book of infinite spells is one that has had a long history with the cult of Shami-Amourae, that it was for many years the possession of her high priest, a man named Hadonis. The book has only one page left, but as it so happens, that page is turned to a *freedom* spell. Ahazu explains that by casting this spell from this particular book while standing at the edge of Shami-Amourae's well, they can free the Lady of Delights from her prison. And with that revelation, the Seizer breaks the telepathic contact with a soft chuckle, almost as if he'd been planning events to take this course all along…

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs successfully negotiate for Shami-Amourae's release, grant them a CR 20 experience award.

PART FOUR: PRISON BREAK

The Prince of Demons plans for every contingency, including the possibility, however remote, of Shami-Amourae's escape from her prison. Well aware that the Lady of Delights knows his darkest secrets, Demogorgon long ago put in place a plan to "put the genie back in the bottle," even if Shami-Amourae had already revealed the secret the Prince of Demons wishes to keep concealed.

Setting Shami-Amourae Free (EL 20)

Upon their return to the Well of Debased Eros, the PCs find that any gorallons they killed earlier remain dead. In addition, unless they killed the warden of the well, the variant retriever waits for them at the bottom of the well. It immediately attacks the PCs once they attempt to use the *book of infinite spells* to cast *freedom* and release Shami-Amourae, launching its attack before the actual casting of the spell begins. Once it is defeated, the PCs can proceed.

Creatures: Unfortunately, once Shami-Amourae is freed from her well, Demogorgon's last guardian comes into play. This is the chokesnake Molypente that grows from the side of Shami-Amourae's neck. As the PCs finish the casting of *freedom* from the book of infinite spells, the book's final page turns automatically and the surface of the pool ripples. Shami-Amourae slowly rises from the pool's depths, stretching languidly and then looking around to establish her bearings, an expression of confusion on her lovely face. When she notices the PCs, this expression momentarily transforms into joy, only to suddenly grow slack as Molypente seizes control of her body (assuming she fails the DC 43 Will save to resist his control). He hisses in anger at the PCs, shrieking in a high-pitched voice, "You shall not have this prize! I shall use her to destroy your bodies, and I shall send your souls back to Shattered Night forever!"

Shami-Amourae: hp 319; see page 84.

Molypente, chokesnake: hp 39; see page 83.

Tactics: As long as Molypente lives, he retains control of Shami-Amourae's body; the Lady of Delights has no defense against the snake's powerful Ego. Molypente

uses all of Shami-Amourae's resources against the PCs, employing quickened *charm monsters* against fighters and rogues to keep them from aiding in combat, and opening combat with *blasphemy* and *energy drains*. If the PCs can slay Molypente without slaying Shami-Amourae, the succubus drops to her knees in a daze once the symbiont dies, then with a scream of anguish, she tears the thing from her neck, throws it to the ground, and crushes its head with her heel.

Development: Once Shami-Amourae is in control of her own body again, she quickly recovers her wits and demands to know who the PCs are. After being imprisoned for so long, she's unsure of the condition of her old lairs or her cult, and as such, she's very hesitant to use her spell-like abilities to flee. She does understand that the PCs were the ones who rescued her, though, and although she doesn't trust them, she knows that they didn't pull her out of Shattered Night on a whim.

Unfortunately, before she can speak to the PCs at any great length, Demogorgon's final contingency begins.

Shami-Amourae and Molypente

The Stygian Deluge (EL 20)

Demogorgon knew that killing Shami-Amourae would allow any one of her powerful allies could set about the process of resurrecting her. Imprisoning her in the Wells of Darkness was a more permanent solution than death, and a more cruel one. Yet the Prince of Demons knew that other prisoners had escaped from the wells before, and so he created an audacious trap to buy him some time if she were indeed released.

Demogorgon's trap is nothing less than a rerouting of the River Styx.

Only a few rounds after Shami-Amourae regains control of her faculties, a great thunderous boom tears through the air as a swiftly spreading rift of darkness opens in the sky above Shami-Amourae, even if she and the PCs have moved away from her well. A moment later, a torrent of dark water cascades from the sky, as if a great waterfall had suddenly appeared in the heavens. Demogorgon has done something here that sends ripples throughout the lower planes; he has torn a hole in bed of the River Styx, and these dark waters are now redirected into the Wells of Darkness. This deluge has two components.

- *Dimensional Lock*: The immense distortions to the underlying structure of reality caused by this planar rift create a *dimensional lock* zone to a radius of one mile around the rift.
- *Cascade of Forgetfulness*: The rift itself is 40 feet wide. All creatures directly under the rift when it opens (including Shami-Amourae and any creature within 20 feet of her) is immediately struck by the waters of the River Styx. These creatures can avoid being struck by the waters by making a DC 30 Reflex save. If they don't move out of the area of effect on their next turn, they are automatically struck by the waters at the end of their next turn.

Any creature struck by the waters must make a DC 17 Fortitude save or be struck with total amnesia—treat this effect as the *feeblemind* spell. Even those who make this saving throw lose their memories of the past 8 hours. Prepared spells remain in memory, although the victim might not realize they're prepared. Evil outsiders with the aquatic subtype are immune to the memory-draining effects of the River Styx, and creatures that do not have Intelligence scores (like most constructs) are not affected, as they have no true memories to be erased, but all other living creatures are affected, even if they are normally immune to mind-affecting effects. Finally, those struck by the cascade must make a DC 30 Fortitude save to avoid being knocked prone by the force of the water. A *heal*, *greater restoration*, *miracle*, or *wish* is required to restore memories lost to the River Styx or the *feeblemind* condition created by total amnesia.

The river continues to cascade down, filling the surrounding area quickly. If it appears over the Well of Debased Eros, it fills the shaft in 10 rounds. Once the well is full, the Styx continues to flood the surrounding region, spreading by a radius of five feet each round.

Creatures: The redirection of the Styx is only the preamble to Demogorgon's insidious trap. One round after the tear appears, four bar-lgura demons mounted on retrievers clamber through the tear in the sky above and leap down to the ground

below to attack Shami-Amourae and her saviors. Held in *temporal stasis* until this event occurs, the retrievers are immune to the effects of the River Styx (since they have no intelligence scores) and the hooded howdah strapped to their back serves to shelter their bar-lgura mounts from being struck by the water. As the retrievers leap free of the rift, a *feather fall* effect allows them to drift slowly to the ground, whereupon they seek to slay or capture Shami-Amourae and return her to Demogorgon. If possible, the demons have also been instructed to capture her would-be rescuers and return with them to the Gaping Maw where the Prince of Demons can reward them properly for their temerity.

LEMORIAN BLOODSCOUTS (4) CR 15

Advanced bar-lgura bloodhound 3/fighter 4
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Fiendish Codex I 29, *Complete Adventurer* 29
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +18, Spot +18
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 30, touch 17, flat-footed 23
hp 187 (19 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 16
Fort +19, **Ref** +18, **Will** +13

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee 2 claws +25 (1d6+6) and bite +20 (1d6+3)
Ranged *+3 seeking composite longbow* +30/+25/+20/+15 (1d8+11/19–20/×3)
Base Atk +19; **Grp** +25
Atk Options bring 'em back alive, nonlethal force, pounce
Special Actions abduction, *summon tanar'ri*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)
At will—*darkness*, *cause fear* (DC 15), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport*, *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 19)
2/day—*disguise self* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *major image* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 24, Con 21, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 18
SQ mark, ready and waiting, swift tracker, tenacious pursuit
Feats Endurance, Improved Critical (longbow), Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Stealthy, Track, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)
Skills Balance +14, Gather Information +8, Hide +30, Intimidate +12, Jump +40, Listen +18, Move Silently +26, Ride +15, Spot +18, Survival +13, Tumble +26
Possessions *bracers of armor +5*, *+3 seeking composite longbow* (+6 Str) with 40 cold iron arrows

Abduction (Su) A crimson recruiter can use *greater teleport* to transport other creatures. It can bring up to one Large or two Medium or smaller creatures with it each time it teleports. It can teleport unwilling targets as well, although an unwilling victim can attempt a DC 20 Will save to resist being transported. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Bring 'em Back Alive (Ex) At the recruiter's option, any melee attack that would reduce a foe to –2 or fewer hit points reduces the foe to –1 hit points instead.

Mark (Ex) A crimson recruiter can mark a humanoid or monstrous humanoid foe by observing the foe for 10 minutes. The crimson recruiter gains a +3 insight bonus on Gather Information, Listen, Search, Spot, and Survival checks against the mark. A mark, once established, lasts until the crimson recruiter chooses a new mark. A mark may be chosen only once per week.

Nonlethal Force (Ex) A crimson recruiter can use a melee weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage instead without taking the –4 penalty on attack rolls.

Pounce (Ex) If a crimson recruiter charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

Ready and Waiting (Ex) A crimson recruiter can ready an action against his mark, even outside of the initiative sequence. If the mark triggers the recruiter's readied action within the next 10 minutes, the recruiter can carry out the action as if the two were engaged in combat.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a crimson recruiter can attempt to summon a bar-lgura with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell (CL 6th).

Swift Tracker (Ex) A crimson recruiter can move at normal speed while following tracks.

Tenacious Pursuit (Ex) A crimson recruiter gains a +4 bonus on Constitution checks made to resist nonlethal damage from a forced march and gains a 10-foot increase to his speed when tracking his mark.

Retrievers (4): hp 95 each; *Monster Manual* 46.

Tactics: If all the PCs suffer from amnesia, they may or may not remember any details they discovered or the terms of any deal they forged with Shami-Amourae, depending upon how long the PCs took to explore the Well of Debased Eros and whether or not they recorded any notes. If she is also affected, the Lady of Delights is quick to take advantage of any confusion caused by the deluge and the subsequent assault by the bar-lguras. Using *detect thoughts*, she tries to assess the thoughts of her "rescuers" to determine what's going on. Depending on the circumstances, she might use *shapechange* to assume the guise of a female PC or even Red Shroud. If possible, she flees to Overlook, where she hopes to hide and recover her wits. If, on the other hand, Shami-Amourae makes her Reflex save to avoid the waters of the Styx, she aids the PCs in the fight against the retrievers and bar-lguras.

The bar-lguras and retrievers work in concert to recapture Shami-Amourae and return her to the Well of Debased Eros, preferring to attempt to petrify her for easy transport. For the moment, the PCs are of secondary concern, insofar as they do not interfere with the pursuit. The bar-lgura bounty hunters make a tactical decision as to whether or not to focus their attacks on the PCs, depending on the degree of their interference in the pursuit of the Lady of Delights. The retrievers can hone in on Shami-Amourae no matter where she goes across the layer using their find target ability. The Wells of Darkness is relatively small, and Shami-Amourae cannot hide from her pursuers forever.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

There's a chance that Shami-Amourae could be killed before the PCs have a chance to question her. In this case, her body decays quickly, over the course of 2d4 hours, as it is absorbed into the Abyss.

As an outsider, she cannot be restored to life via *raise dead* or *resurrection*; it takes *true resurrection*, *wish*, or *miracle* to return her to life before her body vanishes completely. If the PCs wait too long, though, the Abyss absorbs her body and restoring her to life becomes an adventure in itself. In this case, the PCs might need to return to Red Shroud and seek her advice again.

Odds are, however, that she'll survive the final battle, at which point she regards the PCs with curiosity. Although a demon, she understands that the PCs are responsible for her rescue, and when she finds out that they're seeking a way to strike at Demogorgon, she's only too happy to provide aid—her memories of being betrayed by Demogorgon and Malcanthet are still fresh in her mind, and she burns with a lust for revenge against them. The fact that she brought their wrath upon herself by betraying Demogorgon in the first place doesn't seem to matter to her.

In any event, Shami-Amourae is anxious to escape the Wells of Darkness and slip into hiding while she rebuilds and recovers from her long imprisonment. If asked about Demogorgon's weaknesses, she smiles coyly and says the following.

"Demogorgon is his own worst enemy. He is, in many ways, two creatures that share the same body. Aameul, his left head, is the more charismatic and calculating, while Hethradiah, his right head, is more impulsive and feral. Each views the other as inferior, and each believes the other incapable of outfoxing itself. It's really rather cute, after a fashion. It certainly makes it easy to manipulate him, by playing Aameul off of Hethradiah, and vice versa.

"Both of his heads have long sought ways to achieve dominance over the other. Even before they betrayed me, Aameul and Hethradiah had hatched independent plans to take control. Aameul's is to murder Hethradiah and use the life energy of the Bastion of Unborn Souls to cauterize the wound. I have my doubts that would work. Hethradiah's plan is much more insidious. He planned on seeding dozens of Material Plane cities with madness—he called it a savage tide. The resulting eruption of insanity could then be siphoned into Gaping Maw, where he could use the energy to absorb Aameul. In effect, Aameul wanted to shed his unwanted half, while Hethradiah wanted to absorb it. A much stronger plan. I always did like him better.

"If you seek to oppose him, take warning. Demogorgon is not one to be trifled with—even I wasn't able to deceive him for long. What hope do you think you have? No... if you want to even have a chance at stopping him, you need to distract him. That is Demogorgon's weakness. Each situation he faces brings two reactions, not one. And when faced with multiple dangers across multiple fronts, these reactions can paralyze him. I've seen it before, on a small scale as he's been forced to deal with uprisings and invasions. I quiver to think how he'd react to something on a larger scale... say, perhaps, an invasion of Gaping Maw by the armies of multiple enemies at once?

"In any event, I need to be away from this place, to go into hiding before he tries for me again. I have much to rebuild. I've no interest in tangling with Demogorgon again soon. Perhaps ever. But if you feel suicidal, I'd suggest consulting with someone who knows more than I do about the Abyss. Someone like that tart, Iggwilv, perhaps?"

As she finishes her speech, Shami-Amourae pauses, regarding the PC with the highest Charisma. With a smile, she invites that character to accompany her to her secret lair, to aid her in rebuilding her empire. This invitation is extended to only one PC, and wise characters refuse her offer. It has been long since the Lady of Debased Eros has had companionship, and a PC that accompanies her can look forward to a few moments of bliss on some remote Abyssal layer that quickly ends in the complete draining of his or her lifeforce. Shami-Amourae then blithely discards the dry husk and proceeds on to rebuild her empire, her appetites momentarily sated

The Lady of Debased Eros has no further role to play in the Savage Tide, yet the PCs have only just begun their interactions with the lords of the lower planes. Mere moments after Shami-Amourae *plane shifts* away, a sinister form appears in the growing lake of the redirected River Styx. Emerging from the mist and vapor churning up from the turbid dark waters is a long skiff, propelled along the water's surface by a gaunt figure. As it approaches, an almost palpable aura of menace precedes him.

Charon, Boatman of the River Styx, has arrived.

APPENDIX I: MAGIC ITEMS

Demonomicon of Iggwilv

Price (Item Level): Minor Artifact
Caster Level: 18th
Aura: Strong; (DC 24) conjuration [evil]
Activation: See text
Weight: 3 lb.

This thick tome is bound in brass with a cover of deep purple leather. A clasp shaped like a three-fingered demonic hand holds the covers tightly shut.

The *Demonomicon* is a notorious text penned by one of the most infamous scholars of the Abyss, Iggwilv the Witch Queen. Six copies of this fabulous tome are thought to exist, yet the copy found in this adventure is a heretofore unsuspected seventh.

The bearer of the *Demonomicon* casts all spells with the evil descriptor as if he were +5 caster levels higher. Also, the owner gains a +5 bonus on Charisma checks made as part of a *planar binding* or similar conjuration spell if the target is a demon, and a +3 bonus if the target is any other type of evil outsider.

The first five pages of the *Demonomicon* are blank. Each of these pages functions as a gem suitable for the purposes of casting spells like *magic jar*, *minimus containment*, or *trap the soul* that bind souls or whole forms to them (but no other spells). These pages are not destroyed when used as the material component of a spell and may be used multiple times. If a soul or creature is trapped within one of these pages, a distorted shadowy face reminiscent of the bound being's visage appears on the parchment. Although this image does not move while being directly

scrutinized, it changes whenever the tome is closed or unattended. Creatures trapped within the *Demonomicon* are aware of their surroundings but cannot directly interact with them. However, the creature with the highest HD bound within a *Demonomicon* may, once per day, use the spell *dream* on any creature who has touched the tome within the last 24 hours. Trapped beings can also be contacted and conversed with through the use of spells like *detect thoughts* or *Rary's telepathic bond*.

Currently, three creatures are trapped in these pages, leaving two pages blank. The first is a malebranche devil named Agalamnar who was betrayed by his master, Dispater. The second is an ancient drow vampire bard named Lirr-Uvati. The final creature is a bitter lilitu demon named Avanilara who once served the demon lord Lynkhab.

This copy of the *Demonomicon* contains the true names of the following evil outsiders: a rutterkin named Ruskrish, a bar-lgura named Aorkalor, a babau named Iomyn, a succubus named Veirvalara, a succubus named Arivestrix, a yochlol named N'mosk, a bulezau named Echaklak, a shadow demon named Ovoros, a hezrou named Temesmad, a lilitu named Ilaraiandi, a glabrezu named Tresvilaz, a nalfeshnee named Magortu, a molydeus named Nermanghax, and a minor demon lord of poisonous bones and teeth named Voroxid. These names hold significant value by themselves, but prove most valuable when combined with the spells within the *Demonomicon*. These unique spells, created by Iggwilv, are *dolor, ensnarement, exaction, torment, minimus containment, imbrue,* and *implore*; full details on these spells (and additional information about Iggwilv and this infamous tome) can be found in issue #336 of DRAGON magazine.

Shroud of Venom

Price (Item Level): 48,000 gp (17th)
Body Slot: Body
Caster Level: 7th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 18) conjuration
Activation: Swift (mental)
Weight: 1 lb.

This scandalous, diaphanous gown is composed of overlapping veils ranging in hue from bright crimson to reddish brown.

Once per day, you can apply a single dose of any poison to the silks of this garment. The shroud of venom absorbs the poison, storing it within its threads but remaining comfortable and dry. Thereafter, as a standard action, the shroud's wearer can use the stored poison as an attack. Contact poisons are delivered through touch attacks. Inhaled and ingested poisons are delivered through mouth-to-mouth contact following a successful grapple attack. Injury poisons are delivered through melee attacks that involve physical contact, via a melee weapon, unarmed strike, or natural weapon. Generating the poison is a swift action.

A shroud of venom can store up to ten doses of poison at a time. If the wearer is poisoned, she may opt to have the dose of poison instead be absorbed by the shroud, as long as it isn't yet full. Doing so prevents the poison from affecting the wearer, and allows her to use the poison herself at a later time.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *neutralize poison*

Cost to Create: 24,000 gp, 1,920 XP, 48 days.

Tooth of Shami-Amourae

Price (Item Level): 18,000 gp (14th)
Body Slot: Tooth (see below)
Caster Level: 9th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 19) enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Activation: Standard (mental)
Weight: —

This dainty ivory tooth seems to be a sharp canine, not quite a fang but certainly sharper than a normal human tooth.

The tooth of Shami-Amourae is one of the *teeth of Dahlver-Nar*, a set of magical items detailed further in the *Tome of Magic*. To employ the tooth, you must remove one of your own teeth and put the *tooth of Shami-Amourae* in its place. This bloody process requires a full-round action and deals 1 point of damage. Afterward, your tooth is permanently gone; you cannot later replace it after removing the *tooth of Shami-Amourae*. A *regenerate* spell replaces a lost tooth, so long as no teeth of Dahlver-Nar occupy the space of the missing tooth at the time of casting. Replacing your tooth with the *tooth of Shami-Amourae* does not affect bite damage or give you a bite attack if you normally lack one.

You must have the tooth of Shami-Amourae in your mouth for one full day before you can use its ability. During that time, your skin becomes pale, almost white, and your hair takes on a lustrous golden hue. Once the tooth is attuned to you, you may use the tooth to use *suggestion* three times a day.

As long as the tooth is in your mouth, you fall under Shami-Amourae's influence. This manifests as an all-consuming desire for attention and companionship. It also makes you vain and somewhat haughty. When you have no allies within 30 feet of you, you suffer a –1 penalty on Will saves. Whenever another person compliments you on your beauty, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff checks made against you.

Once Shami-Amourae is freed, she is no longer a vestigial being, and her tooth immediately becomes nonmagical (but otherwise continues to function as a normal tooth).

Prerequisites: The methods of creating teeth *of Dahlver-Nar*, if they were ever known, are lost. Each *tooth of Dahlver-Nar* is a unique magic item.

Tripartite Amulet of the Hive Mind

Price (Item Level): 10,000 gp (12th)
Body Slot: Neck
Caster Level: 9th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 19) conjuration [summoning], evocation
Activation: — and standard (mental)
Weight: 1 lb.

This large amulet consists of a smooth piece of amber that encases a contorted insect that twitches despite its imprisonment.

These amulets are always crafted in sets of three; if one is lost or broken, the others become inert until a replacement amulet is crafted. If all three wearers

of a tripartite amulet of the hive mind are within 30 feet of each other, then all three wearers can communicate telepathically. In addition, they share a sort of communal hive mind; as long as one is aware of a particular danger, all three are. If one in the group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No wearer in the group is considered flanked unless they all are.

The wearer of a *tripartite amulet of the hive mind* can also telepathically communicate with any swarm that has the hive mind trait. Such swarms are predisposed to treat the wearer kindly, and treat him as friendly unless he attacks the swarm or otherwise commits a hostile act against them.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *summon swarm, sending*

Cost to Create: 5,000 gp, 400 XP, 10 days.

APPENDIX II: AHAZU'S VESTIGE

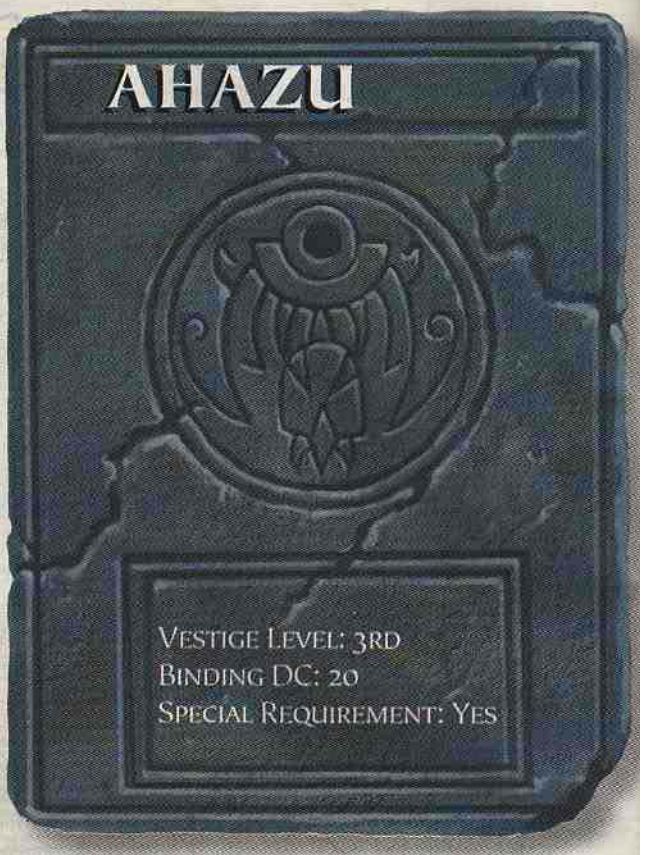
Tome of Magic introduced the binder class, a character class that uses pact magic to extract power from the vestigial remains of a powerful but dead being's spirits. Although not technically dead, neither is Ahazu the Seizer technically alive as long as he remains imprisoned in Shattered Night. This allows binders to use pact magic to draw power from his vestige.

Special Requirement: You must draw Ahazu's seal on the surface of one of the Pools of Darkness, found at the bottom of the Wells of Darkness on the seventy-third layer of the Abyss.

Manifestation: Ahazu's manifestation begins as a sphere of darkness that slowly expands in radius. In the depths of the sphere, Ahazu's form slowly takes shape, revealing a dark-skinned, naked humanoid shape with bat-like wings, an elongated head, and arms akin to that of a bodak. His legs trail away into nothingness and his skin is smooth and devoid of obvious features. The Seizer's mouth, which is filled with hundreds of needle-sharp fangs, yawns under a pair of sunken eyes which have partially withdrawn into his skull.

Sign: Your skin becomes cold to the touch and the inside of your mouth is cloaked in absolute darkness and periodically expels clouds of black smoke.

Influence: Ahazu's avarice infects you, causing you to steal small, precious objects whenever the opportunity presents itself, if you feel you can do so without getting caught. This covetousness extends to the lives of your enemies as well. If possible, you must try to imprison your enemies alive in a dark hellhole, rather than kill them or let them escape. If you allow an enemy to escape, you become wracked with anger and suffer a –4 penalty to all Charisma-based checks as long as you remain under Ahazu's influence.



Granted Abilities: Ahazu grants you abilities that reflect his demonic origin, his exile in the void, and his obsession with abduction.

Ahazu's Abduction: You can speak Ahazu's name to shunt a creature within 30 feet of you into the void between the planes. The target creature may resist the abduction by making a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your effective binder level + your Charisma modifier). If the creature resists this abduction, you may not target him again with this power for 24 hours. Once a creature is abducted, it remains trapped in the void for 1 round, effectively losing its action on that round of combat. You can use this ability at will.

Ahazu's Touch: You can produce an effect identical to *unholy blight* (caster level equals your effective binder level) on a creature you touch. The target is cloaked in a cold, cloying miasma of greasy darkness and takes damage as appropriate for his alignment. Once you use this ability, you cannot do so again for 5 rounds.

Blindsight: You have the blindsight extraordinary ability to a range equal to 5 feet per effective binder level (maximum 100 feet).

Void Mind: As a standard action, you can withdraw your mind and soul into the void beyond the boundaries of the planes, rendering you immune to spells, spell-like effects, and supernatural effects with the mind-affecting descriptor or that affect souls (such as *magic jar, soul bind,* and *trap the soul*) as long as the vestige remains bound to you. If you die while employing this granted power, you cannot be brought back to life with a *raise dead* or *resurrection* spell.

APPENDIX III: MONSTERS

Chokesnake

A writhing snake protrudes from the neck of the creature before you. The serpent has wrapped itself twice around the neck of its host like a necklace, and its hissing face rears up behind the host's head.

CHOKESNAKE **CR 5 OR HOST +1**

CE Tiny outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, symbiont, tanar'ri)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +16, Spot +16

Languages Abyssal; telepathy with host

AC 24 (39 when attached to Shami-Amourae), touch 18 (31 when attached to Shami-Amourae), flat-footed 18 (32 when attached to Shami-Amourae) (+2 size, +6 Dex, +6 natural)
hp 39 (6 HD); **DR** 15/cold iron and good
Fort +7 (+23 when attached to Shami-Amourae), **Ref** +11 (+20 when attached to Shami-Amourae), **Will** +12 (+17 when attached to Shami-Amourae)

Spd 20 ft.
Melee bite +14 (1d4 plus poison)
Space 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +6; **Grp** –2
Atk Options improved grab
Special Actions choke hold

Abilities Str 10, Dex 23, Con 15, Int 21, Wis 24, Cha 28, Ego 43
SQ dominance, share spells
Feats Ability Focus (poison), Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse
Skills Bluff +18, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +22, Hide +23, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +16, Move Silently +15, Sense Motive +16, Spot +16, Tumble +15

Choke Hold (Ex) A chokesnake deals 1 point of damage with a successful grapple check against its host. As long as the chokesnake maintains this hold, the host is considered to be suffocating (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 304).

Dominance (Su) Chokesnakes are particularly adept at dominating their host, and gain a +5 profane bonus to their Ego score.

Improved Grab (Ex) A chokesnake can start a grapple against its host as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity, and gains a +20 racial bonus on its grapple check against a host. If it establishes a hold, it can choke hold its host.

Poison (Su) Injury, Fortitude DC 17, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con. Chokesnake venom is supernaturally potent, and can even harm some creatures normally immune to poison (with the exception of constructs, oozes, plants, and undead). Against all other targets normally immune to poison, the venom inflicts 1d4 Con/1d4 Con.

Share Spells (Su) Any spell the host creature casts on itself automatically also affects the chokesnake. Additionally, the host may cast a spell with a target of "you" on the chokesnake instead of on itself. The host and chokesnake can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the host or chokesnake's type. Spells targeted on the host by another spellcaster do not affect the chokesnake, and vice versa.

Symbiont The chokesnake is a symbiont. Capable of surviving apart from a host creature for at least some length of time, it must eventually join with a host creature, usually granting the host certain benefits in exchange for the protection afforded by a larger body. The chokesnake merges with the host's neck, preventing the use of magic items that utilize the neck body slot. Like intelligent magic items, a chokesnake has an Ego score that reflects the strength of its will and drive for power. A chokesnake's base Ego score is 17; to this score it adds its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma bonuses for a total Ego of 43.

If the host creature does not share the chokesnake's alignment and goals, a conflict results between the chokesnake and the host creature. A chokesnake always considers itself superior to its host, and a personality conflict results if the host does not always agree with the chokesnake (which generally seeks to fulfill Demogorgon's desires as best it can).

When a personality conflict occurs with a chokesnake, the host must make a Will saving throw (DC = chokesnake's Ego). If the host creature succeeds, it remains dominant. If the host fails, the chokesnake is dominant. Dominance lasts for one day or until a critical situation occurs (such as a major battle, a serious threat to either the chokesnake or the host, and so on—DM's discretion). Should a chokesnake gain dominance, it directly controls the host creature's actions until the host regains dominance.

Symbiont Traits: When joined with a host, a chokesnake gains a number of benefits. It acts on its host's turn each round, regardless of its own initiative modifier. It is not flat-footed unless its host is, and it is aware of any danger its host is aware of.

If it a chokesnake is grafted onto a visible part of the host creature's body, opponents can attack the chokesnake itself instead of its host creature. This works the same way as attacking an object: the chokesnake gains the benefit of the host's Dexterity modifier to AC instead of its own, and gains any deflection bonus to AC the host has as well. Its own size modifier and natural armor bonus apply. Attacking a chokesnake instead of its host provokes an attack of opportunity from the host.

A chokesnake never takes damage from attacks directed at the host. Like a worn magic item, a chokesnake is usually unaffected by spells that damage the host, but if the host rolls a 1 on its saving throw, the chokesnake is one of the "items" that can be affected by the spell (*Player's Handbook* 166). A chokesnake uses its host's base saving throw bonuses if they are better than its own.

Chokesnakes are fiendish symbionts created in Demogorgon's Abyssal laboratories, crafted from a snake's head severed from a molydeus demon—since this process invariably results in the molydeus's death, these demons are particularly enraged by creatures who have chokesnake symbionts.

Chokesnakes are typically implanted involuntarily in a helpless creature of size Small or larger. If the victim fails a DC 15 Fortitude save (DC 15), the implantation is successful.

Chokesnakes are designed to guard their host, preventing the host from acting contrary to Demorgorgon's wishes. While chokesnakes can defend their host if necessary, their primary purpose is to take control of the host if it acts out against the will of the Prince of Demons and/or smother the victim if it grows overly rebellious.

Creatures of good alignment with an implanted chokesnake must make a DC 15 Will save every day or take 1d3 points of Wisdom damage as the experience slowly drives them insane. Creatures of a nonevil alignment must make a DC 15 Will save each day or succumb to temptation to perform an

evil act. This may result in an eventual alignment change.

When characters with an implanted chokesnake interact with nonevil NPCs, they suffer a –6 penalty on all Charisma-based checks.

Chokesnakes speak Abyssal.

Shami-Aumorae, Lady of Delights

This is a stunning, statuesque woman with flawless pale skin and long golden tresses. Her angelic form is marred by the wanton, lustful pout of her smile, the all-consuming hunger that lurks within her eyes, the large bat wings that unfurl from her back, and the writhing tail that coils around one leg.

SHAMI-AMOURAE **CR 19**

Lady of Debased Eros (minor demon lord)
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +29, Spot +29
Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 300 ft.

AC 40, touch 31, flat-footed 33 (+7 Dex, +9 natural, +14 deflection)
hp 319 (22 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 15/cold iron and good and epic
Immune electricity, mind-affecting effects, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 32
Fort +23, **Ref** +20, **Will** +17

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)
Melee 2 claws +28 (1d6+6 plus lust)
Base Atk +22; **Grp** +28
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, improved grab
Special Actions life drain, *summon tanar'ri*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)
At Will—*astral projection, blasphemy, charm monster* (DC 28), *clairvoyance/clairaudience, deeper darkness, desecrate, detect good, detect law, detect thoughts* (DC 26), *greater dispel magic, greater teleport, plane shift* (DC 31), *shapechange, telekinesis* (DC 29), *unhallow, unholy aura* (DC 32), *unholy blight* (DC 28)
3/day—quickened *charm monster, energy drain*
1/day—*soul bind* (DC 33)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 24, Con 30, Int 22, Wis 18, Cha 38
SQ profane beauty
Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*charm monster*)
Skills Bluff +39, Concentration +35, Diplomacy +49, Disguise +39, Escape Artist +32, Intimidate +43, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (the planes) +31, Listen +29, Perform (dance) +39, Sense Motive +41, Spot +29, Tumble +32, Use Rope +32

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Shami-Amourae must hit a Large or smaller target with a claw attack. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If she wins the grapple check, she establishes a hold and can energy drain her foe.

Life Drain (Su) Shami-Amourae drains energy from mortals by luring them into acts of passion, or simply by planting a kiss on the victim. If the target is unwilling, she must first grapple the target. The kiss bestows 2 negative levels, and also has the effect of a *suggestion* spell, asking the victim to accept another kiss from her. The victim must succeed on a DC 35 Will save to negate the effect of this *suggestion*. It's a DC 35 Fortitude save to remove the negative levels. Both save DCs are Charisma-based.

Lust (Su) Shami-Amourae's touch incites overwhelming lust in any corporeal living creature. The victim must make a DC 35 Will save or suffer a –20 penalty on grapple checks against Shami-Amourae. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Profane Beauty (Su) Shami-Amourae's otherworldly beauty grants her a deflection bonus equal to her Charisma bonus to her Armor Class as long as she doesn't wear armor.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, Shami-Amourae may summon 2d4 succubi. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

Shami-Amourae is a bitter, vengeful succubus consumed by lust and driven half-mad by her imprisonment in the Well of Debased Eros. She loathes Malcanthet with all her being, yet also fears the reigning Queen of the Succubi and does not dare challenge her throne. The Lady of Delights considers Demogorgon her rightful consort, yet plots all manner of vengeful plots against the Prince of Demons for his spurning of her; she may never forgive him for his betrayal.

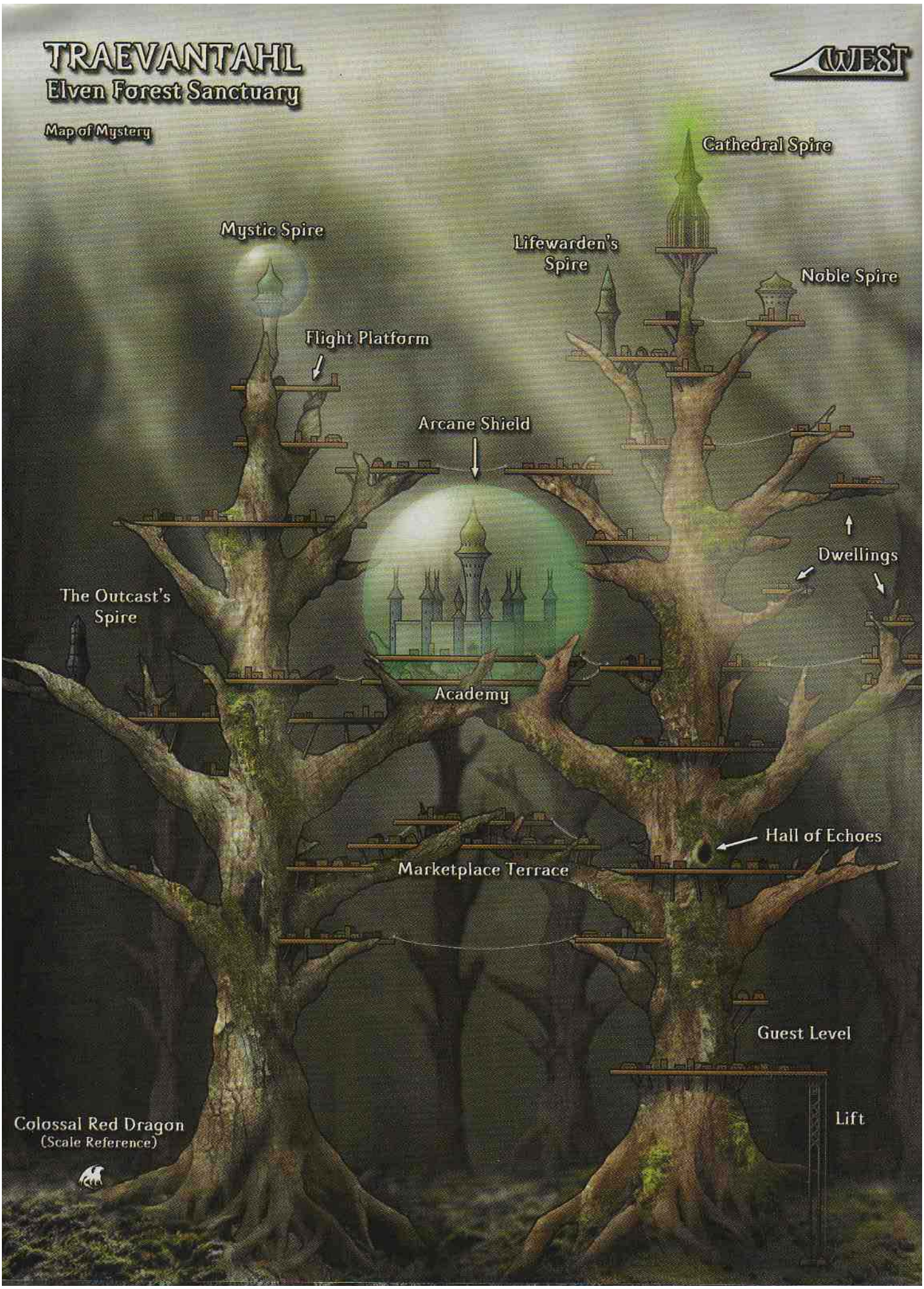
Shami-Amourae, like her sisters Malcanthet, Lynkhab, and Xinivrae, was among the first succubi to tear free of the primal matter of the Abyss when mortal sins of lust first germinated within. Her rivalry with these other three for the rights to the Razor Throne of Shendilavri and the title of Queen of Succubi is legendary in the Abyss. When she caught the attention of the Prince of Demons, she gained a powerful ally in this contest, but Malcanthet turned her two-headed lover against her by revealing to Demogorgon that Shami-Amourae had been taking advantage of his dual personalities for her own gain. He and Malcanthet cast Shami-Amourae into the Wells of Darkness, and she has remained imprisoned there for ages.

Yet the Disciples of Delight, Shami-Amourae's Material Plane cult, never abandoned their wanton goddess. They continued to sacrifice attractive human, half-elven, and elven men to her once a month on the night of the full moon. Eventually, one of her high priests, Hadonis, learned that a unique *book of infinite spells*, one written ages ago by Ahazu the Seizer, contained a spell that could release his seductive patron. Hadonis stole the book, but before he could travel to the Wells of Darkness to release Shami-Amourae, he was defeated by a band of heroes and the *book of infinite spells* was lost. Rumor holds that the book eventually returned to Overlook in the Wells of Darkness, where Ahazu holds it as he awaits the right time to reveal it to those destined to set the Lady of Delights free once again.

Shami-Amourae first appeared in DUNGEON #5, in "The Stolen Power" by Robert Kelk.

Eric L. Boyd nose how two right grate.

Many thanks to Thomas M. Costa, George Krashos, and Grayson Richardson for their invaluable feedback, and to the ever-bickering duo, Steve Greer and Richard Pett, for their help in weaving Malcanthet's plot into the Savage Tide.


TRAEVANTAHL
Elven Forest Sanctuary
Map of Mystery
WEST
Cathedral Spire
Mystic Spire
Lifewarden's Spire
Noble Spire
Flight Platform
Arcane Shield
Dwellings
The Outcast's Spire
Academy
Hall of Echoes
Marketplace Terrace
Guest Level
Lift
Colossal Red Dragon
(Scale Reference)

Savage Tide

Enemies of My Enemy

Iggwilv. Orcus. Malcanthet. Obox-Ob. Charon.

These names are among the most notorious in the multiverse, appellations belonging to some of the most dangerous and powerful creatures on the lower planes. Heroes from countless worlds have raised their arms against these immortal foes and, in most cases, these heroes have perished to their soul-blasting, life-ending might. Their lairs are as notorious as they are: the River Styx, beautiful but deadly Shendilavri, the Gray Wastes of Hades, frozen Thanatos, and mind-numbing Zionyn. Simply entering one of these scions of evil is akin to suicide.

Yet now, as the Prince of Demons begins the final rituals to bring the savage tide to the Material Plane, heroes must approach these immortal villains not as enemies, but as allies.

"Enemies of My Enemy" is the 11th chapter in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand on the campaign. Issue #358 of *Dragon* magazine features a map of the River Styx and advice for those who would use this notorious river as a route in exploring the lower planes.

The PCs should be 19th level when they begin "Enemies of My Enemy," and by the end of the adventure should be 20th level.

BY WOLFGANG BAUR
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH, HIGH-LEVEL (13TH–20TH), PLANAR

Playtested by Edward Albert, Matt E. Culver, James Larrison, Greg A. Vaughan

Where's Graz'zt?

Graz'zt, the Dark Prince, is one of Demogorgon's greatest enemies, yet he does not play a part in the Savage Tide endgame, as he is currently embroiled in his own plans involving Lolth, goddess of the drow. That three of his other greatest enemies (Orcus, Gwynharwyf, and Malcanthet) are involved in the alliance is also enough for him to wish to keep his distance. He uses his agents (perhaps even Tyralandi from Scuttlecove) to keep an eye on developments in Gaping Maw, and is ready to step in to pick up the pieces once the war is over, as detailed at the end of "Prince of Demons."

Adventure Background

Demogorgon is the Prince of Demons, yet he does not command the unwavering loyalty of the Abyssal host. Indeed, his foes far outnumber his allies, but the intrinsic chaos and hatred that runs so rife in the Abyss keeps his enemies from forming an alliance against him. Demogorgon faced no real opposition as he drew his plans to unleash the savage tide upon the Material Plane, with the ultimate secret goal of reconciling his own divided nature. If successful, he'll lose his dual mind, but the power he'll gain in return will be more than enough to give him the advantage he needs to ascend from Prince of Demons to king.

Many of Demogorgon's enemies suspect that he's up to something, and one of them (Malcanthet) knows about the savage tide, yet none of them suspect that the results of non-intervention could be quite so devastating for the Abyssal power structure. Yet even if they did learn this, their chaotic natures alone would keep them from allying to oppose Demogorgon. They need someone to broker such an alliance, and while they might curse and writhe and rail against such a notion, they are ready to join forces. Their fear and hatred of Demogorgon is enough to convince them to unite, for however short a time, against this common enemy.

Adventure Synopsis

After releasing one of Demogorgon's ex-lovers, Shami-Amourae, from her prison on the Wells of Darkness, the PCs endured a brutal counterattack by the Prince of Demon's forces that included a catastrophic redirection of the River Styx. Enraged at this affront, Charon himself arrives not long thereafter to investigate and grants the PCs passage on the River Styx if they promise to punish Demogorgon for his audacity.

Using the River Styx, the PCs travel across the Abyss, Hades, and Arborea, recruiting powerful agents in the battle to come against the Prince of Demons. As their allies mount, though, Demogorgon grows concerned, and as the PCs near the completion of their task, he sends a force from his armies to deal with the them. Assuming they survive, the PCs are now prepared to launch their assault on Gaping Maw.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure begins where "Wells of Darkness" ended, with Charon approaching the PCs. If you're not running "Enemies of My Enemy" as part of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, you can use this adventure in a couple of interesting ways.

First, you could run this adventure in place of any "army-gathering" stage in an ongoing campaign. The actual threat posed doesn't matter, be it the savage tide or an invading pantheon or the return of a long-lost deity like Tharizdun—all that matters is that the PCs need to gather a powerful host of allies to their cause.

Second, you can use any of the chapters of this adventure as a campaign seed of its own. Full statistics for a number of villains are provided, any one of which can serve as an excellent antagonist for a campaign of his or her own.

PART ONE: THE WITCH QUEEN

At the end of "Wells of Darkness," the PCs learned from Shami-Amourae that Demogorgon intends to merge his two personalities by siphoning off the collected savagery of a world gone mad. If he achieves his goal, Demogorgon will become dangerously powerful and dozens of cities from the PCs' home world will be destroyed. Shami-Amourae warned the PCs against opposing Demogorgon on their own, and even went so far as to suggest that they gather an army with which to assault his realm. She had no interest in taking part in such an assault, but gave the PCs the name of one who perhaps knows more about the Abyss and the politics of its squabbling rulers than any other creature—the witch queen Iggwilv.

Shami-Amourae plane shifted away, leaving the PCs on the slowly expanding shores of a new lake on the Wells of Darkness—a lake fed by the River Styx. Before the PCs have a chance to retreat elsewhere, though, a sinister shape approaches from the fog and spray, a gaunt humanoid figure dressed in dark robes, poling a gothic skiff along the surface of the Styx. As a DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) can confirm, this figure is the caretaker and ferryman of the River Styx—Charon.

Hail Charon! (EL 22)

As the dark waters of the River Styx plunge from the hole that Demogorgon's magic tore in the sky, Charon takes note. Never before have the waters of the Styx been redirected in such an invasive manner, and it takes Charon only a few moments to pinpoint the source of the deviation in the Wells of Darkness. He arrives on his skiff after Shami-Amourae leaves the party but before they leave the area themselves. If the PCs manage to leave the scene before his arrival, Charon uses a *wish* to determine where they've gone and approaches them to question them on their involvement.

As soon as Charon reaches the shore of the new lake, about 30 feet from the PCs, he whispers to them, "What have you done to my river?" His voice is clearly audible over the gurgling water. Charon knows that mortals lack the power to redirect the Styx, and gives the PCs a moment to explain themselves.

When he finds out the PCs are working against Demogorgon, Charon asks

for their apologies for the small part they played in diverting the Styx—after all, had they never attempted to free Shami-Amourae, none of this would have happened. Any character who refuses to apologize angers the boatman enough that he attacks them (see the sidebar).

Assuming the PCs do apologize (Charon graciously accepts even surly or grudging apologies), he nods, then invites them to join him in his skiff so he may take them away from this place. As soon as they do, he turns to face the rift in the sky above and, with a wave of his staff, the flow of stygian waters reverses. Very quickly, he, the PCs, and his skiff are swept up and through the rift, which closes behind them as they return to a point somewhere in the depths of the lower planes. As long as the PCs are in Charon's skiff, they need not fear the effects of the notorious river. Charon languidly poles the boat along the midnight waters, passing by empty cities, ruined hellscapes, and other dark avenues of the soul. Eventually, he speaks.

"We are both Demogorgon's enemies. If you would seek to oppose him, the parting words of the Lady of Debased Eros are wise. You must recruit an army of his enemies. The Prince of Demons has thousands of them, but only a few are capable of mounting a force to truly threaten him. Assaulting Demogorgon alone, no matter how powerful you think you are, is suicide. I should know. I've taken enough of those fools to their rewards over the span of the mortal stain." He pauses as he shifts his boathook from one hand to the other—as he does, the shores shift and waver as the Styx passes from one lower realm to the next.

"You need distractions and allies. I know of some of his enemies—the Dark Prince, the Lord of Undeath, the Prince of Vermin, the Court of Stars. Yet I know not which ones would make good allies, nor how one might secure their aid. And again, the Lady's words are wise, for there is one who does possess the information you seek. As it happens, I know of the Witch Queen Iggwilv. Few know where she lives these days, but I am one of these few. I can take you to her home, but your negotiations with her are your own to forge. Will you accompany me?" The cloaked figure stands perfectly still, awaiting an answer.

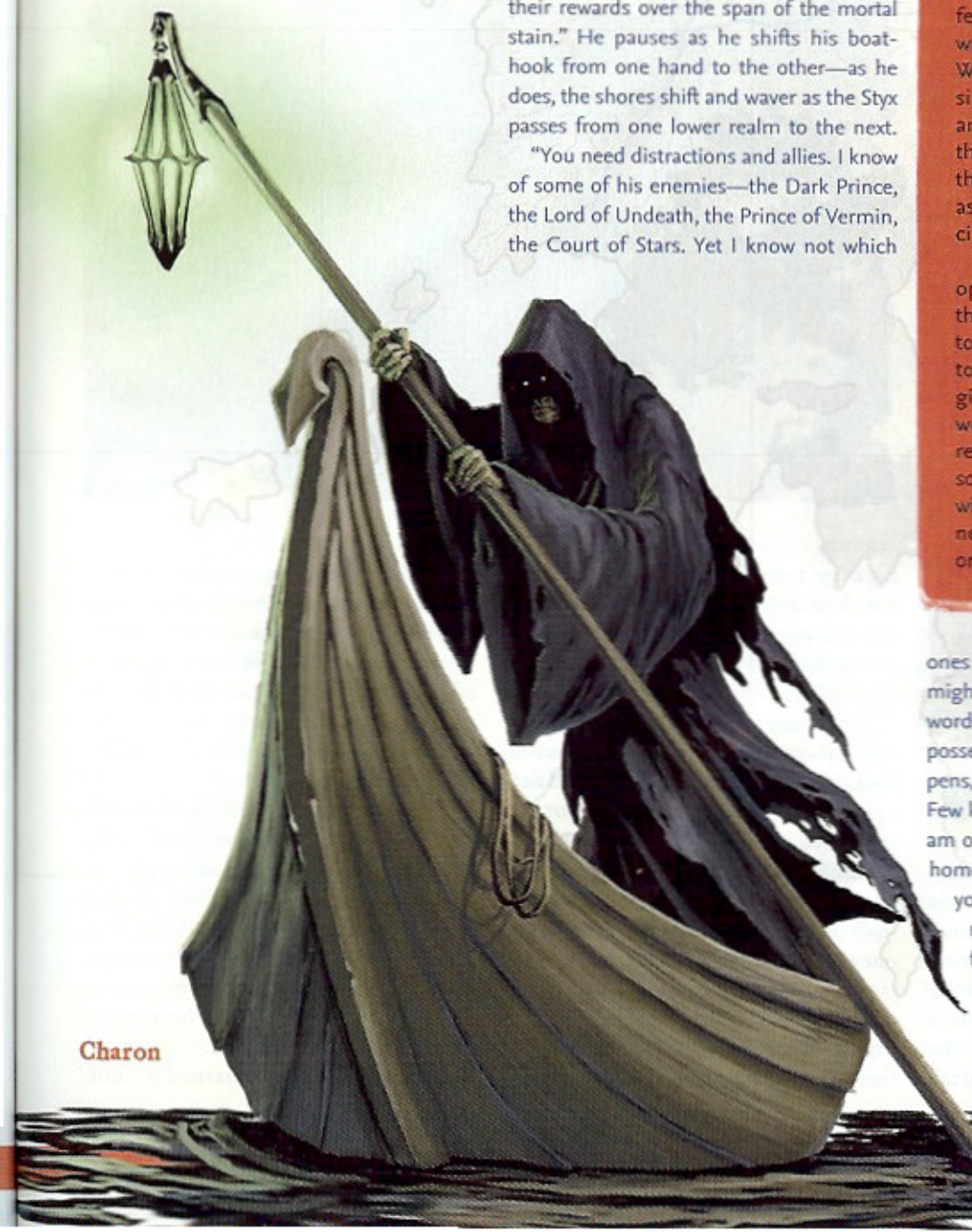
If the party accepts his invitation, he simply nods. The skiff moves quickly along the Styx, passing

Fighting Charon

If the party decides to attack Charon (because he's obviously evil or for some other reason), let them fight. Charon's a dangerous foe, but not completely beyond the PCs' power to defeat. Yet even if they do defeat him, Charon does not die. He merely reforms again at the Styx's source, and within 24 hours he seeks out the PCs again to assault them. He continues his daily attacks on them, recruiting larger and larger numbers of yugoloth allies until the PCs finally apologize or are slain.

If the party is slain by Charon, they find their souls joining him in his skiff as he prepares to ferry them to the afterlife. At this point, the PCs can do nothing but listen to the ferryman—as spirits, they have no way to attack, oppose, or resist him. With his captive audience, Charon silently repairs the rift in the Styx and then takes the PCs away from the Wells of Darkness, interrogating them about their role in the event as they glide silently through dead cities and dark hellscapes.

When Charon learns that the PCs oppose Demogorgon, he grows thoughtful for a moment, then offers to return them all to life if they agree to one condition—they must each give him a magic item or object worth 20,000 gp as penance for resisting him, or must pledge their souls to him once they die again. PCs who pledge their souls to Charon can never again be raised from the dead once he restores them to life.



Charon

The River Styx

The River Styx winds through the lower planes along a route that leads through Hades, Carceri, Gehenna, Pandemonium, Hell, and the Abyss. The waters of this legendary river are dark and languid, rippling with a faint greasy sheen. Any creature who touches the water must make a DC 17 Fortitude save or be struck with total amnesia—treat such a character as if he had been feebleminded. Even those who make this saving throw lose their memories of the past 8 hours. Prepared spells remain in memory, although the victim might not realize they're prepared. Evil outsiders with the aquatic subtype are immune to the memory-draining effects of the River Styx, and creatures that do not have Intelligence scores (like most constructs) are not affected, as they have no true memories to be erased, but all other living creatures are affected, even if they are normally immune to mind-affecting effects.

A DC 18 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals that the River Styx can be used to travel between the various lower planes, but that such travel is regulated by dangerous yugoloths known as marraenoloths, and that the master of these evil boatmen is the ferryman of the dead himself: Charon. Of course, once the PCs recieve Charon's permission and blessing to use the *Sea Wyvern* on the River Styx, they need not worry about the dangers of unexpected encounters while they remain on their ship. It's a DC 25 Profession (sailor) check to reach any point on the Styx, and due to the river's unstable, shifting nature, it always takes 1d20 hours to reach a destination.

through a dozen landscapes of death, despair, and ruin, each more depressing than the last. In 1d20 hours, the skiff reaches a dull and depressing place: the realm of Niflheim on the Gray Wastes of Hades. Ragged tors and cliffs line one bank of the River Styx, while the other stretches off into an endless swampy moor. Gray mists writhe and twist, obscuring the horizon, and the entire realm seems devoid of color. As Charon poles the PCs deeper into Niflheim, vision through the fog drops to a maximum of 100 feet. Soon, a dark shape looms before them, and as the skiff grows closer, the shape resolves into a welcome but unexpected sight: the *Sea Wyvern*.

As they approach, the PCs can even see the ship's confused crew milling about on deck—they are unharmed but baffled and growing increasingly nervous about the strange environs. The *Sea Wyvern* itself is docked at a gray wooden pier that protrudes from a rocky shore, beyond which a ledge leads up into the unseen mists above along one of the looming cliff faces.

Charon explains that not only have the PCs arrived at their destination, but that he has brought the *Sea Wyvern* to them for them to use. He grants their ship permission to ply the River Styx as long as they oppose Demogorgon, and as he draws near, the PCs can see that the wyvern figurehead now bears Charon's mark upon its face—a pair of gold coins are affixed to the wyvern's eyes. As long as these coins remain, the PCs can safely sail upon the Styx.

Charon brings his skiff up alongside the *Sea Wyvern*, and as the PCs debark, he points to the ledge leading up the cliff face and says, "Iggwilv's manor awaits at the top of this ledge. Tend to your crew first—they won't be happy when they realize where they've come to, and it would not be well for them to stay long here. And take care on your approach—the witch queen does not

leave her grounds unguarded. I must take my leave of you for now, but when you have gathered your army and are prepared for the assault, whisper in your ship's figurehead's ear and I shall return to aid you one last time."

With that, Charon pushes off the *Sea Wyvern*'s hull with his pole and in the span of only a few seconds fades into the mist.

Consult pages 161–162 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for the planar traits of the Gray Waste of Hades; in particular, note the rules on the plane's entrapping trait on page 162. The PCs would do well to keep their time in Hades short.

Handout 1

My unexpected guests—I regret that I have been unable to meet with you to discuss matters of mutual interest, or that my pets may have caused you undue harm.

My researches require my full attention for another hour; please follow my cat and await me in the Demonhunter's Room. I will join you shortly.

IGV

Iggwilv's Landing (EL 18)

Beloved and hated of Graz'zt, Matriarch of Diabolists, Mother of Iuz, Daughter of Baba Yaga, Apprentice of Zagig, the Witch-Queen of Perrenland, and author of the *Demonomicon*, Iggwilv currently dwells with her apprentices in the Grey Wastes of Hades. Iggwilv is an archmage, her apprentices arcanaloths, and her guard dogs linnorms, so her privacy is impressive.

Give the PCs time to reunite with their crew, but as soon as they turn their attentions toward the ledge leading up into the mists, have them make Spot checks. The PC who rolls the highest notices a wolf-headed humanoid figure approaching the pier from the ledge, waving them away. A moment later, the waters along the shore churn and froth as two immense monsters, snakelike dragons with gray scales and long thin snouts, surge up onto the shores to roar angrily, although it's unclear if the dragons have taken offense at the intrusion of the PCs or the wolf-headed man.

Creatures: The wolf-headed man wears fine robes and has ears adorned with expensive rings. This is Sembra, a particularly vile and weaselly arcanaloth. Like Iggwilv's other arcanaloth apprentices, Sembra doesn't appreciate the idea of competition for Her Excellency's time, and as the first to notice the PCs' arrival, is simply looking for an excuse to show the party off the grounds. The two dragons are stygian linnorms—monstrous guardians enthralled by Iggwilv but not quite as loyal to her apprentices. Sembra eyes the linnorms warily, then calls out to the *Sea Wyvern*.

"You aren't expected by Her Excellence. If you value life, you would debark from here now, before her pets grow braver. You are not wanted here!" He doesn't wait for an answer, instead signaling to the linnorms that they are to attack with a flip of a hand before he teleports back to Iggwilv's manor above.

Stygian Linnorms (2): hp 243 each; see the appendix.

Tactics: Before the linnorms emerge from the Styx, each casts *fly* on itself. When combat begins, they slither horribly into the air to circle the *Sea Wyvern*, opening battle with quickened *enervations* and a breath weapon attack, although they take care not to harm or attack anyone in contact with the *Sea Wyvern* itself, for fear of angering Charon. If the PCs realize they're safe as long as they remain in contact with the ship and use ranged atttacks against the linnorms, the dragons roar in frustration and return to the waters to wait for the infuriating intruders to leave the safety of the protected ship. A linnorm retreats to its lair if brought below 80 hit points.

Treasure: The linnorms keep their sizable treasure heaped in a nearby underwater cavern. The waters of the Styx are 40 feet deep in this cave, and dark enough to limit vision to 10 feet. Retrieving the treasure likely requires exposure to the dangerous river waters.

The treasure includes 27,676 gp, two star rubies worth 1,000 gp each, two huge moonbars worth 4,000 gp each, two pieces of jade worth 100 gp each, a pair of flawed yellow diamonds worth 800 gp each, a carved masterwork harp of chestnut with ivory inlay and black sapphire gems worth 5,500 gp, an *amulet of natural armor +4* shaped like a twisted trident impaling a dolphin, and a darkwood *helm of telepathy* carved to resemble a nest of snakes with softly glowing emerald eyes.

Iggwilv's Manor

The ledge winds up the side of the cliff to a height of 180 feet above the Styx below. Here looms Iggwilv's Manor, a sprawling mansion of gothic eaves, spiked crenellations, and iron and darkwood wainscoting. Demonic gargoyles leer from the corners of the roof, and a cold iron fence encloses the immense structure. The gates in this fence hang open in absent invitation. Within, a few dead, leafless trees decorate the courtyard. A short path, made of faces chiseled off

dozens of Iggwilv's enemies who were turned to stone by her magic, leads up to a 10-foot-tall front door.

As the PCs approach, Iggwilv's three arcanaloth apprentices take action. From the depths of the manor, one uses *telekinesis* to cause an envelope sealed with wax bearing Iggwilv's seal to float up to the first PC to enter the manor. Within is a short note written in delicate script (see Handout 1).

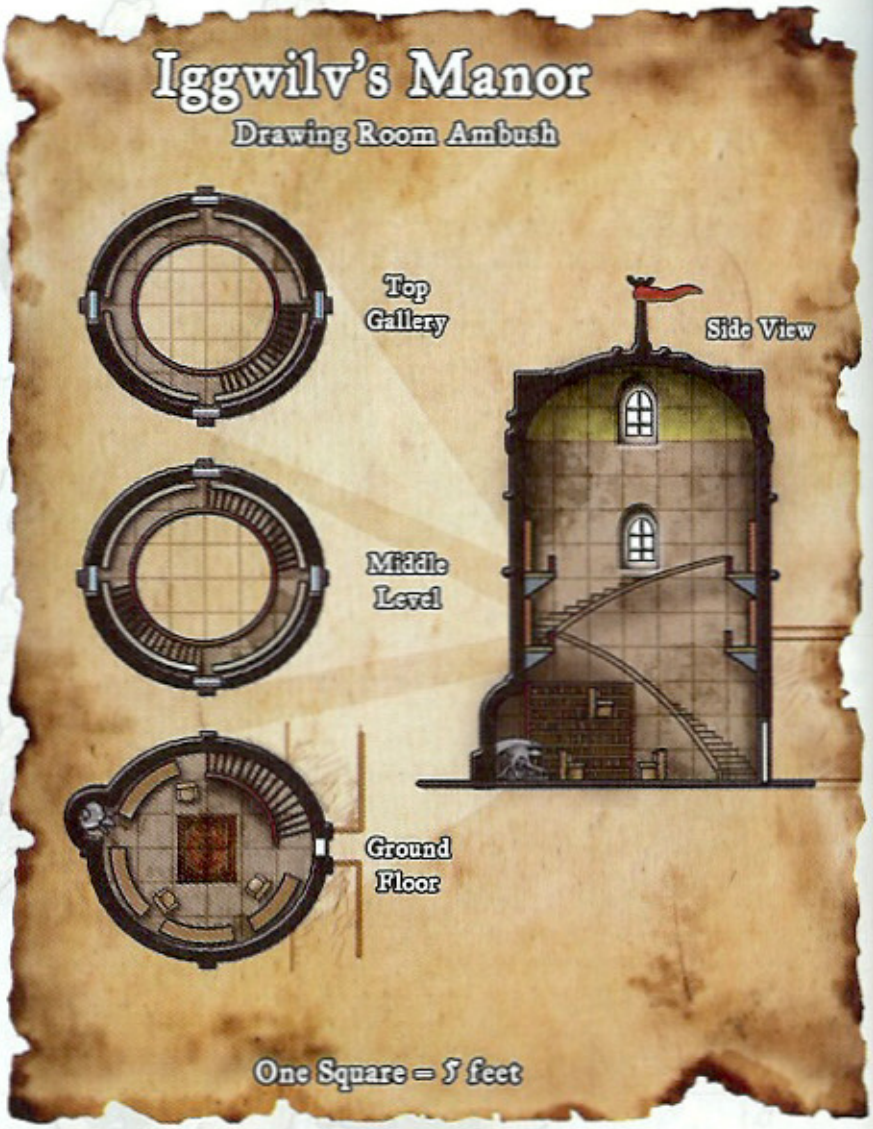
As the PCs finish reading the note, another arcanaloth casts *polymorph* to assume the form of a black cat and teleports into the parlor. He affectionately rubs against the leg of the PC holding the note, then quickly moves down a hall to the left toward the drawing room.

If the PCs see through the deception and attack the arcanaloth, or if they decide to explore the manor on their own, the apprentices are forced to improvise and spring their ambush immediately. The other two arcanaloths teleport in to aid the first and attack the party as detailed in the next section.

The Drawing Room Ambush (EL 20)

The Demonhunter's Room is a well-appointed drawing room, its walls lined with shelves of books, a small niche containing a statue of a cowering vrock demon, a small domed ceiling covered in gold leaf forty feet above, and four beautiful stuffed leather chairs. One of these chairs floats three feet in the air.

Creatures: The three arcanaloth apprentices wait here, invisible, for the PCs to make themselves comfortable. If the PCs notice them, they begin their attack immediately. Otherwise, one creates a major image of a black-haired woman wearing a rich purple leather corset over a black robe in the floating chair. The woman squints for a moment, then waves her hand at the chairs below her and says, "Sit, sit." She brushes back her hair. "Why are you here? I try very hard not to have visitors. If you have something to deliver, hand it over and then please leave. You have interrupted a major summoning, so make it quick."



While one arcanaloth uses this illusion to try to convince the party to leave immediately, threatening, sneering, and mocking the PCs with gleeful abandon, the other two move into positions around the room so they're surrounding the PCs. If the party discovers the ruse, or if they refuse to leave after 4 rounds of conversation, the arcanaloths attack.

The statistics presented for arcanaloths below are revised from their appearance in the *Monster Manual II*; they've not only been updated to the 3.5 rule set, but have been developed to be more powerful to more accurately represent these monsters as the dangerous fiends they have traditionally been.

Sembra, Sovashi, and Ridder **CR 17**
Arcanaloth yugoloths
Always NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, yugoloth)
Init +14; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +33, Spot +33
Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 35, touch 20, flat-footed 25 (+10 Dex, +15 natural)
hp 243 (18 HD); **DR** 15/good and silver
Immune acid, mind affecting, poison
Resist cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 26
Fort +20, **Ref** +21, **Will** +15

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)
Melee 2 claws +28 (1d6+5 plus 1d6 Strength drain) and bite +23 (2d6+2)
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +23

Atk Options Arcane Strike, Flyby Attack
Special Actions *summon yugoloth*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 12th; +28 ranged touch)
6th (4/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 25)
5th (6/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 24), *wall of force*
4th (7/day)—*locate creature, polymorph, wall of fire*
3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic, displacement, fireball* (DC 22), *lightning bolt* (DC 22)
2nd (8/day)—*flaming sphere* (DC 21), *locate object, scorching ray, shatter* (DC 21), *web*
1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (DC 20), *comprehend languages, mage armor, shield, shocking grasp*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash, arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th)
At will—*alter self, darkness, fear* (DC 21), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *heat metal, invisibility, magic missile, major image* (DC 20), *telekinesis, warp wood* (DC 19)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 30, Con 28, Int 23, Wis 18, Cha 24
SQ flight, swift evoker
Feats Arcane Strike, Empower Spell, Flyby Attack, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation), Weapon Finesse
Skills Bluff +28, Concentration +30, Decipher Script +27, Diplomacy +30, Forgery +27, Gather Information +28, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (the planes) +27, Knowledge (any one other) +27, Listen +33, Spellcraft +29, Spot +33, Use Magic Device +28

Arcane Strike Activating this feat is a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. When an arcanaloth activates this feat, he channels arcane energy into a melee weapon, an unarmed strike, or his natural weapons. He must sacrifice one of his spells for the day (of 1st level or higher) to do this, but gains a bonus on all attack rolls for 1 round equal to the level of the spell sacrificed, as well as extra damage equal to 1d4 points × the level of the spell sacrificed. This feat originally appeared in *Complete Warrior*.

Flight (Su) An arcanaloth's ability to fly is a constant magical effect that cannot be dispelled.

Spells An arcanaloth casts spells as a 12th-level sorcerer.

Strength Drain (Su) A creature hit by an arcanaloth's claw attack must succeed on a DC 28 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Strength drain. On a successful save, the creature takes only 1 point of Strength drain. The save DC is Constitution-based.

***Summon Yugoloth* (Sp)** Once per day, an arcanaloth can automatically summon another arcanaloth. A summoned arcanaloth remains for 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

Swift Evoker (Ex) An arcanaloth is particularly adept at quickly casting spells of the school of evocation. Once every 1d4 rounds, an arcanaloth may cast any evocation spell it knows as a free action, as if it were a quickened spell. An arcanaloth may cast evocation spells in this manner even if that spell is cast spontaneously. Many arcanaloths are fond

of casting *burning hands* in this manner as they attack with their claws.

Skills Arcanaloths gain a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

Tactics: The arcanaloths float invisibly near the ceiling of the room, coordinating their ambush telepathically. They begin combat by casting two *chain lightning* spells each. They prefer to avoid melee entirely, but if forced into it take advantage of Arcane Strike to increase their damage dramatically. Once reduced to less than 50 hit points, an arcanaloth teleports away to hide and nurse his wounds, but chances are good that the battle doesn't last that long.

Landerbold

Only 1d4 rounds after combat with the apprentices begins, Iggwilv's fourth apprentice (an arcanaloth named Landerbold) realizes what the other three have been up to. He uses *polymorph* to disguise himself as Iggwilv and then teleports into the Demonhunter's Room. Any surviving arcanaloths panic at the appearance of what could be Iggwilv and immediately drop to their knees and beg for mercy. Landerbold glares at them, raises an arm, and then appears to think better of punishing them. He commands the apprentices to leave at once and they do, teleporting away to nurse their wounds and bruised egos.

Landerbold then moves to take a seat in the floating chair and regards the PCs, bidding them to take a seat.

"Allow me to apologize for my brothers—they are fools and children in many ways. And allow me to apologize for my deception. I am not my Mistress." The beautiful woman's form wavers, and an instant later sitting in the chair before you is another arcanaloth. "My name is Landerbold, and I am Her Excellency's appointments minister. She apologizes for the jealousy and enthusiasm you've been exposed to, and has asked me to inform you that you are free to leave, unharmed. I give you my word no reprisals will be taken against you."

This is, of course, yet another attempt to get the party to leave. If the PCs remain, or ask for an audience with Iggwilv, he'll listen to them. A DC 40 Diplomacy check convinces him that Iggwilv actually does need to hear what they have to say. If the PCs mention that Charon brought them here, grant them a +10 bonus on the Diplomacy check. Alternatively, Landerbold accepts bribes of any magical item worth at least 10,000 gp to arrange a meeting with his Mistress. Once the PCs convince him, he sighs in defeat before speaking again.

"All is well. I assure you my mistress can meet with you. She'll understand about the bloodshed. It was overdue—those fools needed a lesson in humility. Gather at the top of the manor stairs in your best finery in an hour. If you lack any fine garments, work up a glamour or something—Her Excellency has discerning tastes, and shabby vagabonds rarely recieve her help."

"Oh, and one more thing. Keep your wands and weapons sheathed in Her Excellency's presence. She keeps demon lords as pets. She'll have no problem crushing you if you try anything stupid. If you're assassins, you're incredibly foolish, and I look forward to seeing your deaths."

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Once the PCs finally secure an audience with Iggwilv, award them a CR 18 experience award.

Audience With Iggwilv (EL 30)

Once the PCs are ready, Landerbold meets them as promised at the top of the manor stairs in the main hall. He leads them through a doorway carved with runes on top of runes. The room beyond has a domed golden ceiling and three windows that look out on three different

Iggwilv

landscapes: one is a view of the River Styx, one is a view of a gray and wind-swept city of demons, and the third is a lush tropical island—perhaps the Isle of Dread.

Sitting at the center of the room in another floating leather chair, and surrounded by floating books and disembodied whispers is a woman with black hair and bright eyes. A leering quasit perches protectively atop the chair's high back just over the woman's head. Landerbold bows deeply, then steps into the shadows along the room's walls.

For a minute, Iggwilv ignores the PCs completely, then she pushes one of the floating books aside and mutters an incantation in something that sounds a bit like Abyssal, or perhaps something older (obyrith-inflected Ancient Abyssal). She waves the PCs closer, and her chair descends until it's floating only an inch off the ground. As the PCs gather around her, Iggwilv speaks.

"You seek my aid. What is it that vexes you so that you would risk death in securing my assistance?"

Iggwilv's initial attitude is unfriendly. Whoever responds to her question must make a Diplomacy check after stating his case. He gains a +2 bonus on this check if he addresses Iggwilv in Abyssal. By displaying his knowledge of both magic and the planes by making a DC 35 Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (the planes) checks, a character can gain another +4 bonus on this check. Shameless flattery tempered with knowledge of Iggwilv's accomplishments, (a DC 35 Knowledge [history] check) grants another +4 bonus. A gift of a magic item grants a +1 bonus per 5,000 gp value of the item offered. Finally, if the PCs present her with a copy of the *Demonomicon* (such as the one they might have recovered in "Wells of Darkness"), they gain a +20 bonus on the check.

In order to secure Iggwilv's aid, the PCs must adjust her attitude to at least friendly with a DC 25 Diplomacy check. If they fail to do so, Iggwilv impatiently sends them away—their opportunity to draw upon her lore and aid has vanished. Barring extremely miraculous developments (such as a PC successfully affecting Iggwilv with a *charm person* spell), the PCs must continue to build their army without her assistance, a difficult task indeed. Intimidate is useless against Iggwilv, if only because her *mind blank* renders her immune to fear.

Once made friendly, Iggwilv smiles, an expression at once both seductive and terrifying. She bids the PCs sit in nearby chairs, then asks them to recount, in detail, the events that led them to this point. Once they're done, Iggwilv nods, then speaks.

"You are either very brave, or very foolish. In either case, I sense the capacity for greatness in each of you. Had we met in a different time or under different circumstances, I would take action against you, crush you to paste and destroy all you hold dear before you could approach a point where you might be able to someday hurt me. That day may yet come, I suppose. Yet it is not today. I will help you, but know that opposing the Prince of Demons is not an idle choice. It is a choice that changes your life, your very existence, for what comes after. Things will never be the same for you. For me as well, I suspect. And so, while I will aid you, each of you owes me. I shall collect upon this debt at some point in the future, in a manner of my choosing, and if you refuse to honor our bargain, rest assured I'll enjoy extracting my price from your dying souls." She smiles sweetly, waves a hand, and tall glasses of fine wine appear in your hands. "Now, let us begin."

With another wave of her hand, Iggwilv conjures up a low table, a chessboard of bone and obsidian inlaid in its surface. The white pieces are carved in the likenesses of each of the PCs and their current allies, such as Lavinia and Harliss. The black pieces represent not just foes, but possible allies among the planes. Astute PCs may quickly note that none of the pieces are representations of Iggwilv; if they comment on this, she just smiles and says, "Come now... I'm no pawn to be played with!"

One by one, Iggwilv picks up each of the black chess pieces and speaks to the PCs.

Charon: "I see that you've already begun. Charon holds fresh rage for Demogorgon, and his position in the alliance is already secure. Well done." She places Charon's figure back on the chessboard on a white square, and as she does, the piece turns white as well.

Graz'zt: "Ahhh, dear old Graz'zt. My Dark Prince. Only one in the Abyss detests Demogorgon as much as he, but unfortunately, Graz'zt is... embroiled, I suppose is the word... elsewhere, with a certain Queen of Spiders. Not that he'd be able to set aside his paranoia and ego long enough to join in any alliance he hasn't spearheaded. I'm afraid you'll find no aid here." She drops Graz'zt's piece down onto her lap with a smile.

Orcus: "Here, however, you'll find a kindred spirit. Orcus has had his share of troubles of late, and I dare say he may be open to the possibility of an alliance. Be warned, though. He does enjoy violence."

Wrath of the Witch Queen

As presented in this adventure, Iggwilv is relatively friendly and even helpful to the PCs once they finally reach her (and assuming they impress her with their request for aid). This may strike some readers as incongruous, given Iggwilv's villainous history—she has, after all, ruled nations as a tyrant, aided in flooding demons into the Material Plane, and manipulated world events from behind the scenes for her own gain. Make no mistake—Iggwilv is evil.

Yet she also sees in the situation a chance to gain not only a powerful magic item (she claims the *Iron Flask of Tuerny the Merciless* as her own in the next adventure, once it has served the PCs' purpose), but to help shape the future of the Abyss itself by aiding the PCs. Exact details of Iggwilv's plans for the Abyss are presented in next issue's "Prince of Demons."

In the meantime, if the PCs don't treat Iggwilv with the proper fear and respect you think she deserves, feel free to give them a taste of some of Iggwilv's power to put them in their place. She'll probably stop at killing the entire party for the offensive acts of one PC, but she certainly has no qualms about murdering those whom annoy her.

Lover's Call
Conjuration (Calling) [Evil]
Spellcraft DC: 74
Components: XP
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: 75 ft.
Target: One aspect of Graz'zt
Duration: 1 hour (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes
To Develop: 648,000 gp; 13 days; 25,920 XP. Seed: *summon* (DC 14). Factors: summon CR 22 creature (+40 DC), 1-action casting time (+20 DC), no verbal component (+2 DC), no somatic component (+2 DC), increase duration by 100% (five times, +10 DC), increase saving throw DC by +8 (+16 DC). Mitigating factors: burn 3,000 XP (–30 DC).

This spell allows Iggwilv to reach out across the planes and extract a portion of Graz'zt's demonic essence, forcing an aspect of the Dark Prince to appear before her to follow her orders. This is a CR 22 aspect with statistics identical to those given on page 65 of *Fiendish Codex I*. Iggwilv must beat the aspect's SR of 33 in order to cast this spell (normally an automatic success for her), and the aspect can resist being summoned if it makes a DC 40 Will save (normally only possible with a natural 20).

XP Cost: 3,000 XP.

She sets his piece down on a white square and it turns white as well.

Gwynharwyf: "This one you'll have no problems gaining aid from, but you might find it difficult reaching her. And even then, her lover Morwel keeps her on a short leash in matters relating to Demogorgon. There was, shall we say, an incident several centuries ago. But do a few favors and she'll be all yours." She sets Gwynharwyf down on a white square.

Malcanthet: "You may not realize it, but this vile slut's been in the game for quite some time already. Longer than any of the others apart from Demogorgon, in fact. Longer than you, in any event. But she'll play hard to get. She might not be willing to donate an army, but I'm certain she'll be willing to part with some of her charms if you ask really nicely." She sets Malcanthet down on a white square.

Obox-ob: "I mentioned before that only one can match Graz'zt in his hatred of Demogorgon. This would be the one. Obox-ob ruled here once, long ago. Before even I was a sparkle in the eye of the cosmos. He wants to rule here again, and while none of us particularly want that, he has his uses. He can't be reasoned with, but he can be trusted to act upon his hatred. You'll just need to determine a way to get him to where he'll do the most damage." She sets Obox-ob down on a white square.

Bagromar: "This one you may not recognize, but he serves close to Demogorgon. One of the twin generals of his armies, in fact. I don't expect you'd be able to defeat him, but I've heard some most delicious rumors that he's a bit dissatisfied with his lot of late—a spot of jealousy about his twin brother Tetradarian, I suspect. And where there's dissatisfaction, there can be dissent. I'm not sure how you can use that to your advantage, but you secured this audience with me, which tells me that you're smooth talkers and resourceful, if nothing else." She sets Bagromar down on a white square.

Demogorgon: At the end of her speech, Demogorgon remains the only black piece on the board. Iggwilv picks him up, turns the piece over in her hand as she studies it, then sets it back down on a black square surrounded by the white figures. An eyebrow arches, and with a delicate finger she tips him over. "Simple, no?"

IGGWILV **CR 30**
Female human wizard 26/archmage 4
CE Medium humanoid
Init +8; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; *read magic, tongues*

AC 53, touch 28, flat-footed 47
hp 344 (359 with *false life*, 30 HD); **DR** 15/good and cold iron
Immune electricity, mind-affecting effects, movement-impeding effects, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 36
Fort +25, **Ref** +24, **Will** +25; evasion

Spd 60 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)
Melee *staff of power* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+5)
Ranged arcane fire +21 touch (4d6 +1d6 per level of spell sacrificed)
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +15
Combat Gear *staff of power* (32 charges), *greater rod of quicken metamagic*
Spells Prepared (CL 32nd, +21 ranged touch)
Epic—*contingent resurrection* (already cast), *epic mage armor* (already cast), *lover's call*
10th—quickened *greater dispel magic*, extended *shapechange*, extended *time stop*
9th—*gate*, *imprisonment* (DC 33), *wish* (2)
8th—*binding* (DC 32), *horrid wilting* (DC 33), *maze*, *mind blank* (already cast), quickened *stoneskin*, *trap the soul* (DC 33)
7th—*banishment* (DC 31), quickened *dispel magic*, *finger of death* (DC 32), *forcecage*, *greater scrying*, *project image*
6th—*chain lightning* (DC 30), *disintegrate* (DC 30), *flesh to stone* (DC 30), *greater dispel magic* (2), *mislead*, *planar binding*, quickened *resist energy* (2), *repulsion* (DC30), *true seeing*, extended *wall of force* (2)
5th—*dismissal* (DC 29), *overland flight* (already cast), *sending*, *telekinesis* (DC 29)
4th—*charm monster* (DC 28), *dimensional anchor*, *Evard's black tentacles*, *fear* (DC 29), *greater invisibility*, *minor creation*
3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fly*, *greater magic weapon* (already cast), *magic circle against chaos*, *protection from energy*, *stinking cloud* (DC 28)
2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 27), *false life* (already cast), *glitterdust* (2, DC 27), *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 25), *web* (DC 27)
1st—*grease* (DC 26), *magic missile* (4), *shield*, *true strike* (2)
0—*mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation* (2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 32nd)
2/day—quickened *greater teleport*, quickened *limited wish*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 22, Con 24, Int 38, Wis 12, Cha 28
SQ *contingency*, *contingent resurrection*, high arcana, Lilitu's gift, permanent spells, *scry on familiar* 1/day
Feats Automatic Quicken Spell, Craft Construct, Craft Epic Wondrous Item, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Dark Speech, Demon Mastery, Epic Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Epic Spellcasting, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Improved Familiar, Improved

Spell Capacity (2), Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Spell Focus (conjuration, necromancy)

Skills Balance +26, Climb +20, Concentration +40, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +22, Jump +20, Knowledge (arcana) +47, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +21, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +27, Knowledge (geography) +27, Knowledge (history) +47, Knowledge (local) +30, Knowledge (nature) +21, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +27, Knowledge (religion) +37, Knowledge (the planes) +47, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +64

Possessions combat gear, *amulet of natural armor +5, belt of battle, boots of swiftness, bracers of health +6, Cloak of the Witch Queen, dusty rose ioun stone +5, gloves of storing* (2), *pale green ioun stone, ring of djinni calling* (does not use a ring slot), *ring of epic wizardry VI, ring of freedom of movement* (does not use a ring slot), *ring of protection +5, robe of the Abyss*, 1,000 gp in diamond dust for *stoneskin* spells, *true seeing* ointment (4 doses), 3,000 gp in ruby dust for *forcecage* spells, star sapphire worth 22,000 gp (for *trap the soul*), jade circlet worth 3,000 gp (for *shapechange*)

Lilitu's Gift (Su) Iggwilv has secured the cooperation of a lilitu demon named Tsatchti, and bears her name as a tattoo-like mark on her right shoulder. This gift grants Iggwilv a +2 profane bonus to her Charisma and a +2 profane bonus on her saving throws and can be removed by a *dispel chaos* spell. Iggwilv's weapons are treated as being chaotic for the purposes of bypassing damage reduction.

Contingency If Iggwilv is ever petrified, a *stone to flesh* spell affects her.

Dark Speech Iggwilv can use this forbidden language to achieve four effects, as follows:

Dread: When Iggwilv uses Dark Speech in this manner, she takes 1d4 points of Charisma damage. Every other creature within 30 feet must make a DC 34 Will save. Evil creatures who fail this save cower in fear for 1d10 rounds if they're 4th-level or lower, are charmed (as *charm monster*) for 1d10 rounds if they're 5th–10th-level, and 11th-level or higher evil creatures are impressed (granting Iggwilv a +2 competence bonus on attempts to change their attitude). Non-evil creatures who fail this save are shaken for 1d10 rounds and must flee from Iggwilv until she's out of sight if they're 4th-level or lower, are shaken for 1d10 rounds if they're 5th–10th-level, or are filled with loathing for Iggwilv if they're 11th-level or higher.

Power: Iggwilv takes 1d4 points of Charisma damage by incorperating the Dark Speech into the verbal component of a spell, increasing its effective caster level by 1. By using it while creating an evil magic item, she increases its caster level by 1 without increasing its cost.

Corruption: As a full-round action, Iggwilv can use Dark Speech to reduce an inanimate object's Hardness by half. She can use this ability only once per object.

Dark Unity: Iggwilv can establish a hive mind in any swarm of vermin or animals with an Intelligence score of 2 or lower, and can then give the swarm one *suggestion* (CL 30th). Using Dark Speech in this way deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage to Iggwilv.

Epic Spells Iggwilv's epic spells are detailed in full in the *Epic Level Handbook*, but they are also available online as part of the SRD. The effects of two of these spells are detailed below; the third, *lover's call*, is detailed on page 50.

Contingent Resurrection: This spell takes up an epic spell slot until it is triggered upon Iggwilv's death. One minute after her death, she is restored to life at full hit points, vigor, and health (retaining all her prepared spells), but loses one level.

Epic Mage Armor: This spell functions like *mage armor*, but grants a +20 armor bonus.

Experience Points Iggwilv has 27,000 experience points to use for casting spells like *gate* and *wish*.

Feats Automatic Quicken Spell (*Complete Arcane* 191) allows Iggwilv to cast all 0 and 1st-level spells as quickened spells without using higher-level spell slots. Craft Epic Wondrous Item (*Epic Level Handbook* 52) allows Iggwilv to create epic wondrous items. Dark Speech (*Fiendish Codex I* 85) allows Iggwilv to use the Dark Speech as detailed above. Demon Mastery (*Fiendish Codex I* 85) grants Iggwilv a +2 bonus on Charisma checks made to resolve the effects of *planar binding* and similar spells, and increases her caster level by 1, when she uses a spell to summon demons. Epic Skill Focus (*Complete Adventurer* 191) grants Iggwilv a +10 bonus on all Spellcraft checks. Epic Spellcasting (*Epic Level Handbook* 55) allows Iggwilv to develop and cast epic spells; she can prepare 3 epic spells a day.

High Arcana Iggwilv's archmage levels grant her the high arcana of arcane fire, spell power, and her two spell-like abilities.

Inherent Bonuses Iggwilv has a +4 inherent bonus to her Dexterity, Wisdom, and Charisma, and a +5 inherent bonus to her Constitution and Intelligence.

Permanent Spells Iggwilv has the following permanent spell effects on herself: *arcane sight, darkvision, read magic, see invisibility*, and *tongues*.

Iggwilv's Items

Several of Iggwilv's magic items are epic, artifacts, or unusual in nature. Since it's unlikely that the PCs will ever get their hands on them, their effects are presented here in abbreviated format.

Belt of Battle **(*Magic Item Compendium* 73)**: +2 on initiative checks. 3 daily charges; one charge grants 1 move action, 2 grant one standard action, 3 grant one full-round action. CL 13th.

Boots of Swiftness **(*Epic Level Handbook* 145)**: +6 enhancement to Dexterity. Doubles wearer's speed. Grants evasion. +20 competence bonus on Balance, Climb, Jump, and Tumble checks. 3/day *haste*. CL 20th.

Cloak of the Witch Queen **(major artifact)**: +8 enhancement to Intelligence. +6 enhancement to Charisma. Grants SR 36. +5 resistance bonus on all saving throws. Allows wearer to *plane shift* at will, as per an *amulet of the planes*. CL 30th.

Ring of Epic Wizardry VI **(*Epic Level Handbook* 136)**: As *ring of wizardry*, but doubles 6th level spells. CL 26th.

Robe of the Abyss **(minor artifact)**: Grants DR 15/good and cold iron. Grants immunity to electricity and poison. Grants acid, cold, and fire resistance 20. CL 30th.

BLACK COMET **CR —**

Male quasit

CE Tiny outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil)

Monster Manual 46

Handout 2

"Lord of Undeath, Sovereign of Thanatos, Keeper of Everlost, Master of the Last Word, Mighty Orcus!

Please send the fools who bear this missive into your arena—I give them to you for your entertainment. But if they survive your death giants and that filthy crawling head, do not intercede. Instead, send them back to me. They might aid us against a mutual enemy. In this event, I shall contact you with the particulars when the time to strike nears."

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 50 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages Abyssal, Common

AC 31, touch 15, flat-footed 28
hp 172 (30 HD); fast healing 2; **DR** 5/cold iron or good
Immune poison
Resist fire 10; **SR** 35
Fort +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18; improved evasion

Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)
Melee 2 claws +20 (1d3–1 plus poison) and bite +15 (1d4–1)
Space 2–1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +6
Special Actions deliver touch spells
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)
At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only)
1/day—*cause fear* (30-foot radius, DC 11), *maze* (CL 32nd)
1/week—*commune* (CL 12th, 6 questions)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ alternate form (bat, cat), empathic link, share spells
Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse
Skills Bluff +6, Diplomacy +2, Hide +17, Knowledge (the planes) +45, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spellcraft +52, Spot +6

PART TWO: THANATOS

Orcus is the demon lord most likely to respond quickly to requests to organize an offensive against Demogorgon and can be counted upon to rally his armies in weeks or a month, rather than the usual years it takes most demonic plots to get underway. Yet the Prince of Undead must still be convinced that the time is right.

Before the PCs head to Thanatos, Iggwilv hands one an envelope bearing her seal—a letter of introduction to Orcus. "Read it if you wish," she says. "I'm too old to bother keeping idle secrets from whelps like you." The letter is reproduced here as Handout #2.

A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals that Orcus's realm is the 127th layer of the Abyss: Thanatos. The River Styx passes through this realm, so the PCs can sail the *Sea Wyvern* there in relative safety. Orcus himself dwells in his palace Everlost, deep in the sprawling desert of bone meal called Oblivion's End. The closest point of "civilization" to Everlost via the Styx is the city of Lachrymosa. As elsewhere, Charon's blessing protects those on board the *Sea Wyvern* from the hostile effects of Thanatos and its evil inhabitants.

Thanatos

Ash-gray clouds fill the cold black skies of Thanatos, the Belly of Death, where daylight never intrudes. The layer's immense, melancholic moon changes phases at random when covered by clouds, making time difficult to measure. A handful of cities crouch upon the layer's vast tundra, havens for the mortal and immortal cultists who seek to emulate the life of their demonic patron.

Due to the layer's minor negative-dominant trait, all living mortals on Thanatos take 1d6 points of damage per round. *Death ward* and similar spells negate the damage for their duration. Mortal creatures that die upon Thanatos rise as undead (usually zombies) 1 hour after death. Chaotic evil mortals instead become manes, dretches, or rutterkin. This process can be halted by *raise dead* or *limited wish* and can be reversed by *resurrection*, *shapechange*, *miracle*, or *wish*. Undead on the layer receive fast healing 3.

Because of the thin air, all breathing creatures must also make DC 18 Fortitude saves each hour or become fatigued. Fatigued characters must make the same save every hour or become exhausted. Characters who become exhausted on Thanatos immediately begin to suffocate (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 304). Creatures on board the *Sea Wyvern* need not fear the negative energy damage or the thin air, as Charon's blessing protects them as long as they remain on the Styx.

Very few plants grow on Thanatos. Mortals wishing to eat are limited to a few indigenous mosses, molds, and fungi, and even these grow only in relatively temperate locales such as Lachrymosa or Orcusgate.

Good-aligned visitors stand little chance of survival on Thanatos without the assistance of the Dustmen, members of a shattered faction who eke out a grim existence here after having been exiled from the city of Sigil. They live in the otherwise abandoned city of Vadrian, but have outposts in all the cities of Thanatos. The Dustmen offer their services as guides for the right price (about 4,000 gp per person—and haggling drives it up). The native undead usually ignore anyone accompanied by

Dustman. Not so the mortal Skull Lords and the immortal fiends, who often seek out parties led by Dustmen guides lest anyone get the impression that it is easy to survive in the Abyss.

Outside the cities, hordes of undead—thousands of them—rove across the land in search of flesh. The strong and ambitious among Orcus's thralls dominate and command these armies, leading them on invasions of the Material Plane and the layers of rival Demon Princes such as Graz'zt and Demogorgon.

Further details on Thanatos can be found on pages 127–132 of the *Fiendish Codex I*.

Everlost (EL 22)

Beyond the Final Hills sprawls a desert of bone meal called Oblivion's End. Howling windstorms scream with the cries of lost incorporeal undead, forever bound to this desolate wasteland. At the center stands the massive fortress city of Everlost, a towering structure built from countless bones retrieved from the Demon Prince's Material Plane conquests.

Everlost is and has ever been the seat of Orcus's power on Thanatos, although the hideous demon lord can manifest himself from place to place throughout the layer at will. Here Orcus issues decrees to his cult and enemies, pronouncing death sentences that soon reach the ears of his debased followers all over the multiverse. The Prince of Undeath is unconcerned with details, preferring to let his underlings worry about how to enact his grand designs.

The party can teleport through much of the city, though it's unlikely they know their destinations well before their first visit. If they gather information or just walk in rather than teleporting from Lachrymosa, they quickly meet some of the fortress residents. Most of the inhabitants are intelligent undead, with a few demons and bodaks for variety. The majority ignore the PCs, but the vampires are a notable exception, as they often promise valuable goods (such as "protective amulets for the living" and "maps of the palace of the Risen Grave"). In return, they expect to be paid in 1d4 points of Constitution (called "pints"), drained from the buyer's neck. Of course, the amulets and maps are worthless, they are just a way of shaking down any breathing visitor in town who resists their charms.

Creatures: Just getting into the Halls of Everlost's throne room is difficult for most living creatures: demons and undead are allowed in, grudgingly, but others must show good cause to the two balors who guard the rusted iron doors leading inside. The courtyard in which they stand guard smells strangely of vinegar. The balors wear black adamantine armbands that grant them immunity to negative energy and death effects. Around their knees clamor a dozen veiled bodak minions who keep a line of vampires, death giants, and demons in order. The servants check names in a large book with thick wet pages made of human skin. As the PCs arrive, one of the bodaks finds something in the book that causes it to cry out in a bone-rattling shriek. It points at one of the vampires, and a blast of sunlight arches down from one of the tower spires above. An instant later, the line is one position shorter.

With Iggwilv's letter, the PCs can approach the balors and are let through to speak to Lord Orcus. If not, the balors stare at the PCs with amused expressions and say, "Is there going to be a problem? We've been here almost a week without a problem. Come back when you're ghosts." Attacking the balors causes panic; the creatures in line flee, while the bodaks lift their veils and join the fight. If the balors and bodaks are defeated, the PCs have 1d10 minutes to enter the hall and plead their case to Orcus before the lord's army of liches, vampires, and demons arrives to put them down.

Balors (2): hp 290 each; *Monster Manual* 40.

Bodaks (12): hp 58 each; *Monster Manual* 28.

Halls of the Risen Grave (EL 20 or 22)

Assuming the PCs present Iggwilv's letter, the two balors tug at the iron gates, which screech and groan as they open. On the other side is a short tunnel that leads to the center of the palace; the dome inside is the interior of a truly gargantuan skull, held up by curving pillars of bone that look like ribs. At the center looms a pile of skulls, and atop that rests a throne of black stone inlaid with mithral. Sitting on the throne is the enormous demon prince, his eyes burning with a mix of curiosity and contempt as they watch the PCs approach. Around him flutter varrangoins and vampires clutching various papers, half a dozen specters whispering in his twitching ears, and three gaunt ghoul lords attempting to demonstrate some form of necromantic device for his amusement. The Prince of Undeath waves a skull-tipped wand, and the undead courtiers retreat as if pushed violently away. Strange black tendrils writhe from the black throne, all of them hissing and pointing at the PCs.

Orcus waves for them to come closer and coughs like thunder.

Approaching the throne is very difficult for living creatures. The throne is a negative energy conduit, so in addition to the normal negative energy of the plane of Thanatos, the throne forces every creature (other than Orcus) within 60 feet of it to make a DC 26 Fortitude save or take 1d6 Strength damage. It also has a divinatory power: leaping shadows and tendrils of pure negative energy whip around the throne, pointing out living creatures as if they were flowers seeking the rays of the sun.

The closer a living creature comes to the throne, the more it feels pressed down by an unseen weight, pushing it to its knees. This is bearable until about 60 feet fron the skulls, at which point standing requires a DC 15 Strength check each round. Failure means the character is pushed to his knees and may only advance or retreat by crawling.

Orcus would love to assault Demogorgon, but he fears this might just be an elaborate trap. Once the PCs make their pitch to him, have them attempt a DC 50 Diplomacy check, with a +10 bonus if they had a letter of introduction from Iggwilv. If they succeed, Orcus shakes his ramlike head and taps his black wand against the throne's leaping black fire. "You are not impressing me. How can you expect to do the same to

that blighted ape Demogorgon? Your chances are slim. Can you fight as well as you claim? Do you have any other allies? Why should I risk my perfected legions? No, I need a little proof. One of your champions against one of mine." He waves his skull-topped wand, and the air in his throne seems to grow even colder. Suddenly, a black-skinned giant, both bald and surrounded by a vortex of howling ghosts, stands beside Orcus's throne. "This is my champion. Who is yours? Choose quickly!"

If the party fails the Diplomacy check, things go much, much worse for them, as they can gain Orcus's attention only in a much tougher arena combat. In that case, Orcus shakes his ramlike head as he laughs, and maggots tumble from his fur onto the floor all around him. He points his skull-topped wand at the PCs and says, "You think you are clever, but talk cannot stop Demogorgon's armies. If you want my endless legions, you must defeat two of my personal guards and one of my favorite executioners with one of your own. He waves his wand, and suddenly two death giants and a crawling head manifest nearby.

Creatures: Allow the PCs a few minutes to decide which of them will face battle for Orcus's amusement. Before the battle begins, the PCs may outfit their chosen champion with any gear they have, and may cast any number of preparatory spells upon him, but once the battle is underway, they cannot intervene without angering Orcus and drawing him into the battle as well.

When the PCs have chosen, Orcus sizes up their champion and chortles in glee. He waves his wand again, and the occupants of his throne room are transported to his arena. Orcus takes his seat at one end, inviting the non-champion PCs to sit at his feet while the battle begins.

If the PCs made their check, the champion faces one fiendish death giant. If they failed the check, the champion faces two fiendish death giants and a crawling head. Death giants are towering black-skinned menaces with pointed ears, fangs, and a nimbus of howling ghosts. Crawling heads are created from the severed heads of giants and feed upon the heads of smaller prey.

LESTRA AND ORBENET **CR 18**

Female fiendish death giant
CE Huge giant
Monster Manual III 54, *Monster Manual* 107
Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +10, Spot +10
Aura steal soul
Languages Common, Giant

AC 38, touch 10, flat-footed 37
hp 218 (23 HD) **DR** 10/magic
Immune energy drain, fear
Resist cold 10, fire 10 **SR** 25
Fort +25, **Ref** +15, **Will** +19

Spd 35 ft. (50 ft. base speed)
Melee +3 *unholy greataxe* +31/+26/+21/+16 (4d6+21/19–20/×3) and bite +23 (2d6+6)
Ranged rock +18/+13/+8/+3 (2d8+12)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +17; **Grp** +37
Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, smite good 1/day (+20 damage)
Special Actions frightful keening, rock throwing
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th, +27 melee touch)
3/day—*greater dispel magic*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 21), *unholy blight* (DC 21)
1/day—*flame strike* (DC 22)

Abilities Str 34, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 25
SQ guardian souls, rock catching, sold soul, soul healing
Feats Demonic Skin, Improved Critical (greataxe), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Precognitive Visions, Primordial Scion, Quick Draw, Vestigial Wings

Skills Concentration +19, Escape Artist –1, Intimidate +15, Jump +24, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (religion) +19, Listen +10, Spellcraft +16, Spot +10, Survival +6, Swim +10

Possessions *+4 banded mail, +3 unholy greataxe*

Frightful Keening (Su) As a standard action, a death giant can command the guardian souls that waft around its body to wail in frightful anguish. Living creatures within 100 feet that hear this keening must make a DC 30 Will save. Success means the creature is shaken until it can no longer hear the keening or moves out of range. Failure means the creature is panicked while it hears the keening and is within range, and is shaken for 24 hours thereafter. Ending the keening is also a standard action. This is a sonic, mind-affecting fear ability. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Guardian Souls (Su) Each death giant is surround by a swirling cloud of intangible spirits. These spirits provide warnings and protection, granting the creature a bonus on initiative rolls, saves, Listen checks, and Spot checks equal to its Charisma modifier. A successful turning attempt can quell these spirits for a time. If the turning attempt would turn or rebuke an undead with HD equal to the giant's, the guardian souls vanish for 1d10 rounds and the giants loses their benefit, as well as their frightful keening, soul healing, and steal soul abilities until they return.

Rock Catching (Ex) Once per round, a death giant that would be hit by a rock or similar projectile can make a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for Medium, and 25 for a Large one.

Rock Throwing (Ex) Death giants are skilled rock throwers and gain a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls with thrown rocks (range increment 120 feet).

Sold Soul (Su) A death giant cannot be raised, resurrected, or reincarnated.

Soul Healing (Su) When a death giant is protected by its guardian souls, hit point damage due to negative energy (such as from an *inflict* spell) heals rather than harms the giant. They are healed by positive energy (*cure* spells) normally.

Steal Soul (Su) Any living creature with 10 or fewer hp within 15 feet of a death giant must make a DC 30 Fortitude save each round or die instantly. This is a death effect, and the save DC is Charisma-based. Any creature that dies within 15 feet for a death giant has its spirit sucked up into the swirling guardian souls that protect it. Such creatures cannot be brought back to life as long as the death giant lives. If a living death giant is within 15 feet of a death giant that dies, the souls are not released and are instead transferred to the nearby death giant. Under extraordinary circumstances, a death giant may deliberately release a soul it has captured.

Feats Four of the feats possessed by these death giants are known as Abyssal heritor feats—manifestations of dormant demonic heritage. These feats are from *Fiendish Codex I*. Demonic Skin improves the giant's natural armor bonus by 4, but imparts a –2 penalty on Escape Artist checks. Precognitive Visions grants the giant a +1 insight bonus to its Armor Class and attack rolls, but also causes distracting mental hallucinations that impart a –2 penalty on Spot checks. Primordial Scion infuses the giant's natural weapons and any weapons it wields with chaos—these weapons are treated as chaotic-aligned for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction, and deal an additional 2d6 points of damage to lawful creatures struck, but the chaotic whispers in the giant's head incur a –2 penalty on Listen checks. Vestigal Wings grant the giant a +12 bonus on Jump checks and can be used to control a fall so that it lands without taking damage, but they complicate swimming and impart a –2 penalty on Swim checks.

LERTYCK TRUMBEL **CR 20**

Male crawling head

CE Huge undead

Fiend Folio 35

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +4, Spot +35

Aura cacophony (60 ft., DC 24)

Languages Common, Giant

AC 12, touch 8, flat-footed 12

hp 182 (28 HD); **DR** 20/magic and piercing

Immune electricity, sonic, undead traits

SR 31

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +20

Weakness water vulnerability

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +23 (2d6+10/19–20) and 4 tentacles +17 (1d8+5)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +32

Atk Options Cleave, Combat Expertise, Great Cleave, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Power Attack, constrict 1d8+5, improved grab (tentacle), vorpal bite

Special Actions absorb head

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)

At will—*animate dead, control undead* (DC 19), *death knell* (DC 19), *fear* (DC 21), *gentle repose, inflict serious wounds* (DC 20), *shield, speak with dead*

3/day—*create greater undead, create undead, finger of death* (DC 24), *wail of the banshee* (DC 26)

Abilities Str 30, Dex 7, Con —, Int 20, Wis 19, Cha 25

Feats Cleave, Combat Expertise, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Climb +49, Concentration +38, Knowledge (arcana) +36, Knowledge (religion) +36, Search +36, Spellcraft +38, Spot +35, Use Magic Device +38

Absorb Head (Su) As a free action, a crawling head can swallow the head of a Large or smaller creature that it has beheaded with its bite attack. On the following round, this head becomes one of the several heads stored in the creature's body. A crawling head can store up to 20 heads (this is how many Lertyck Trumbel has when first encountered). It can absorb one of these heads once per round as a free action to quicken one of its spell-like abilities, to heal itself of 150 hit points, or to grant itself a +6 enhancement bonus for 1 hour to one of its ability scores.

Cacophony (Su) When a crawling head attacks, the heads stored in its body create a horrific cacophony of screams to a radius of 60 feet. If a crawling head has at least 10 heads stored, the sound strikes fear into nearby creatures, who must make a DC 24 Will save each round to avoid cowering in fear. This is a sonic, mind-affecting, fear effect.

Vorpal Bite (Ex) On a successful critical hit with its bite attack, a crawling head severs the victim's head from its body. Some creatures, such as golems and undead other than vampires, are not affected by the loss of their heads, but most creatures die when their heads are cut off.

Water Vulnerability (Ex) Water affects a crawling head in the same manner that acid affects most creatures. Water deals 1d6 points of damage to the head per round of exposure except in the case of total immersion, which deals 10d6 damage per round. An attack with water, such as from a hurled vial, counts as 1 round of exposure.

Death on the March

If the party's champion survives, Orcus remains cautious but is nonetheless impressed with the group's audacity and power. He chortles, then addresses the PCs:

"Your strength is great; you might have a chance. My armies will march against Gaping Maw, legions upon legions, sweeping the pretender's armies before them. I promise that. I hope that you do not find Demogorgon before I and my generals do; I will tear him in half and animate his divided corpse so that his two heads can grovel at the foot of my throne until they crumble to dust!

"You have slaughtered some of my favorite minions, but I forgive you. However, my armies will require weeks to mobilize and travel to Gaping Maw. Gather your other allies. If your plan fails, know that my followers will find your bones and bring them to me. If this is treachery, you will not survive it. Leave my kingdom now, before I change my mind. When you make your move against Demogorgon, I will be there to win your battle for you!"

ORCUS, PRINCE OF UNDEAD **CR 32**

CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Fiendish Codex I 73

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +46, Spot +46

Aura undead command (120 ft.), *unholy aura* (spell-like ability always active)

Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 300 ft.

AC 55, touch 17, flat-footed 47 (–1 size, +8 Dex, +33 natural, +5 deflection)

hp 738 (36 HD); **DR** 20/cold iron, epic, and good

Immune ability drain, cold, critical hits, death effects, electricity, energy drain, mind-affecting effects, negative energy, paralysis, poison, sneak attacks

Resist acid 10, fire 10; **SR** 45

Fort +40, **Ref** +32, **Will** +31

Spd 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee* *Wand of Orcus* +42/+37/+32/+27 (2d6+36/19–20 plus 2d6 unholy plus 2d6 chaotic plus death) and
claw +33 (1d6+22) and
gore +33 (1d8+22) and
sting +33 (1d6+22 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +36; **Grp** +55

Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack

Special Actions last word, *summon tanar'ri*, *summon undead*

Spells Prepared (CL 20th, +43 ranged touch)
9th (6/day)—*implosion* (DC 26), *imprisonment* (DC 26), *time stop*
8th (6/day)—*create greater undead*, *demand* (DC 25), *horrid wilting* (DC 27)
7th (7/day)—*destruction* (DC 26), *mass inflict serious wounds* (DC 26), *project image*
6th (7/day)—*antilife shell*, *create undead*, *permanent image* (DC 23)
5th (7/day)—*dismissal* (DC 22), *dispel good*, *slay living* (DC 24), *wall of force*
4th (7/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 23), *freedom of movement*, *greater invisibility*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 23)
3rd (8/day)—*displacement*, *haste*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 22), *vampiric touch*
2nd (8/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 21), *death knell* (DC 21), *ghoul touch* (DC 21), *inflict moderate wound* (DC 21), *spectral hand*
1st (8/day)—*deathwatch*, *inflict light wounds* (DC 20), *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *inflict minor wounds* (DC 19), *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 25th, +43 ranged touch)
At will—*astral projection*, *blasphemy* (DC 25), *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *enervation*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport*, *plane shift* (DC 24), *shapechange*, *telekinesis* (DC 22), *unhallow*, *unholy aura* (DC 25), *unholy blight* (DC 21)
3/day—quickened *enervation*, *energy drain*, *finger of death* (DC 24), *harm* (DC 23), *symbol of death* (25)
1/day—*true resurrection*, *wail of the banshee* (DC 26)
*15-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 40, Dex 27, Con 42, Int 31, Wis 24, Cha 24

SQ negative energy affinity

Feats Cleave, Dark Speech, Fell Drain, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Hover, Improved Critical (heavy mace), Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*enervation*), Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Focus (heavy mace)

Skills Bluff +46, Climb +54, Concentration +55, Craft (alchemy) +49, Escape Artist +47, Forgery +49, Hide +43, Intimidate +50, Knowledge (arcana) +49, Knowledge (religion) +49, Knowledge (the planes) +49, Listen +46, Move Silently +47, Search +49, Sense Motive +46, Spellcraft +53, Spot +46, Use Magic Device +46

Aura of Undead Command (Su) All undead creatures feel a strange bond of attraction to Orcus. Before such a creature takes any hostile action against Orcus, it must attempt a DC 35 Will save. Failure indicates that the creature's action fails and is wasted. This aura extends to a radius of 120 feet. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Last Word (Su) During Orucs's time as Tenebrous, an undead demon, he knew a potent incantation called the Last Word. The pinnacle of destructive magic, a single syllable more potent than the entire lexicon of the Dark Speech, the Last Word could destroy gods. It was with this word that Tenebrous murdered such entities as Primus, Bwimb, and Manzicorian. After he became a living demon once again, Orcus lost the power to fully utilize the Last Word, yet he does retain a shadow of its horrific glory. Once per day, as a standard action, Orcus can use the Last Word against a single target that can hear his voice—actual distance is not a factor. The target of the Last Word must immediately make a DC 35 Will save or be destroyed. If the save is successful, Orcus must himself make this

saving throw to prevent the destructive power of the Last Word from turning back on him and destroying him. Although the chances of such a catastrophic turn of events are remote for Orcus, they are enough that he is generally loath to utter the Last Word except in times of dire need. The last word can affect any creature save a creature like a demon lord, archdevil, or deity—that level of power is now beyond Orcus's grasp. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Negative Energy Affinity (Ex) Orcus is healed by negative energy and harmed by positive energy as if he were an undead creature.

Poison (Ex) Sting—Injury, Fortitude DC 44, 2d6 Str/4d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, Orcus can automatically summon 1d6 vrocks, 1d4 glabrezus, or 1 marilith. This ability functions as a 9th-level spell (CL 25th).

***Summon Undead* (Sp)** Once per day, Orcus can automatically summon 4d10 wights, 1d8 spectres, or 1d3 mohrgs. This ability functions as a 9th-level spell (CL 25th).

Feats The effects of Dark Speech are detailed in Iggwilv's stat block on page 50. Fell Drain (*Libris Mortis* 27) is a metamagic feat. Whenever a fell draining spell damages a living creature, it bestows a negative level on that creature. The negative level disappears after a number of hours equal to the caster level. Spells prepared as fell drain spells take up a spell slot two levels higher than the spell's actual level.

Spells Orcus casts spells as a 20th-level sorcerer and can also cast spells from the cleric list. These cleric spells are considered arcane spells for Orcus, meaning he does not need a divine focus to cast them.

Wand of Orcus Orcus' signature weapon is a *+6 unholy anarchic heavy mace*. If the wand touches any nonoutsider, or any outsider with less than 15 HD, the target must succeed on a DC 25 Fortitude save or be instantly slain. This is a necromantic death effect. The wand also confers a +5 deflection bonus to the Armor Class of its wielder.

Orcus

PART THREE: THE COURT OF STARS

When the Queen of Chaos and her obyrith army was defeated on the Fields of Pesh eons ago, the Abyss was left vulnerable. The eladrin host, led by Queen Morwel and her consorts Faerinaal and Gwynharwyf, led a brutal strike against the Abyss during this time in a nearly successful effort to expunge the obyrith taint from the multiverse. While they didn't get them all, the eladrin assault did ensure that the obyriths' time in the Abyss came to a close. In a strange, ironic way, Demogorgon has the eladrins to thank for his position of power today as Prince of Demons.

Yet despite this, there is no love lost between the eladrins and demonkind. Both paragons of chaos, their shared traits only serve to further focus their differences. Since that initial devastating raid, both demon hosts and eladrin hosts have made periodic assaults on the others' realm, never to any real end apart from ensuring the perpetuity of their hatred for one another. It was on one of these raids that Gwynharwyf was trapped in the Abyss for a time and suffered greatly as Demogorgon's prisoner until Morwel rescued her in a daring strike that cost the demon lord Ilsidahur, the

Howling King of the bar-lgrua, his right hand.

This information is far from common knowledge, but a DC 45 Knowledge (the planes) reveals it. Iggwilv knows the sordid tale, of course, and if she's been made helpful by the PCs, she relates it to them. Otherwise, she has little experience with eladrins—they're "too full of moonsparkle and unicorn giggles" for her taste. Yet she does know the location of a gate to the Court of Stars not far from one of the Styx's tributaries, where the river approaches some of the roots of Yggdrasil, the World Tree. Growing on the bank of the Styx in this secluded corner of Niflheim is a grove of lightning-struck oaks. By touching sprigs of mistletoe to the lightning scars, the PCs can transport themselves to the Court of Stars near the queen's domains.

A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals that the Court of Stars is on the Olympian Glades of Arborea. The court itself is a demiplane that drifts about Arborea like an autumn leaf on a pool, shifting gracefully and effortlessly between Arborea's three layers. Queen Morwel controls who comes and goes from the court, and no matter what method the PCs use to travel there, they arrive at the same location. This demiplane resembles an autumnal sylvan forest under a starlit sky. Time does not pass here, so creatures living in the demiplane never age, hunger, or thirst. They do eat, drink, and sleep, but purely for enjoyment.

Proving One's Worth (EL 20)

When the PCs arrive in the Court of Stars, they find themselves in a titanic forest of trees as thick as houses, where even the squirrels are the size of dogs. Their arrival in this secluded demiplane has not gone unnoticed—a DC 20 Listen check reveals the fast-approaching sounds of what seems to be a hunting party, complete with barking dogs. Only 2d4 rounds later, a dozen enormous black hounds break out of the underbrush and swirl around the PCs, baying and sniffing and licking their hands. They seem friendly, though occasionally they growl.

This is a pack of moon dogs, outsiders that resemble wolf hounds but with a few strikingly human characteristics, including front paws with opposable digits. The moon dogs do not attack, but do circle and observe the PCs using *blessed sight*. If the party has any evil-aligned characters with them, the moon dogs bark and bay in anger but wait until their eladrin companions arrive in 1d4 rounds before attacking. If the party contains no evil members, the moon dogs merely keep a sharp eye on them, herding them roughly in the direction of the approaching eladrins.

A moment after the dogs pull away, a knight on a powerful white horse rides into the clearing, followed by two glowing globes of floating golden light. The horse paws the earth. The knight carries a longsword that glows like the sun. When he spies the PCs, his eyes widen and he calls out, "You! Why are you here?"

Creatures: The "knight" is in fact a powerful tulani eladrin named Sir Andros Fearnaught, a creature who resembles a 7-foot-tall elven noble dressed in shimmering robes. He has golden skin and bright purple eyes. His mount, Wanderer, is a legendary horse, while the two globes of light are Bhaenmar and Waldrop, his ghaele eladrin companions. If there are any evil characters in the party, Andros demands they leave immediately. If they resist, he shakes his head sadly and does his best to force them to leave, using all of his powers to defeat them.

Andros has more patience for lawful creatures, but not much. Even if the party contains no lawful or evil characters, Andros remains suspicious, especially if he can smell the Styx on the PCs (which he certainly can if the PCs arrived from the Niflheim portal). In any event, as he addresses the party his sword turns from a thing of metal to a shaft of sunlight so bright it hurts to look at it. He introduces himself, and if there are lawful characters, he complains that they "reek of pomposity." If the PCs ask for an audience with Gwynharwyf or Queen Morwel, Andros laughs derisively, wondering aloud why any of this fair realm's leaders would set aside time to talk to a clot of dirty and (if appropriate) lawful mortals. Play Andros as a haughty, egotistical jerk, one who almost wants to goad the PCs into attacking him so he'll have an excuse to fight back and force them out of the demiplane.

Members of the Church of the Whirling Fury who have an affiliation score of at least 21 (or any character with levels in the champion of Gwynharwyf, troubadour of stars, or a similar eladrin-friendly prestige class) get an entirely different reception: they are embraced as long-lost brothers and sisters. Andros proudly tells them they will meet the paragon eladrin themselves soon enough, and offers the characters wineskins filled with eladrin wine. Only if everyone in the party falls into this category will Andros agree to lead them personally to Queen Morwel's palace—in this case, Celeste joins the party there, rather than in "A Welcome Intervention."

If there are any lawful characters in the party, or if the PCs become particularly crass or rude to Andros, continue with "Fearnaught's Challenges." Otherwise, after a few more rounds of standoffish attitude from the tulani, proceed with "A Welcome Intervention" below.

Sir Andros Fearnaught **CR 18**

Tulani eladrin

CG Medium outsider (chaotic, eladrin, good)

Book of Exalted Deeds 171

Init +10; **Senses** *blessed sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *detect law*, *detect magic*, *true seeing*; Listen +28, Spot +28

Aura gaze (60 ft.), protective aura (20 ft.)

Languages Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Sylvian; tongues

AC 36, touch 16, flat-footed 30; Dodge, Mobility

hp 189 (18 HD); **DR** 15/cold iron or evil

Immune electricity, petrification

Resist acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 30

Fort +17 (+21 against poison), **Ref** +17, **Will** +18

Spd 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect)

Melee *+4 brilliant energy holy longsword* +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+9/19–20) or *+4 merciful lance* +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+11+1d6/×3 nonlethal)

Ranged dream ray +24 touch (1d6 Cha)

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +23

Atk Options Ride-By Attack, Spring Attack, Power Attack

Special Actions bardic music 18/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +3, inspire greatness, inspire heroics, *mass suggestion*, *song of freedom*, *suggestion*)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th)

Constant—*blessed sight*, *detect law*, *detect magic*, *magic circle against evil* (20-foot radius), *true seeing*

At will—empowered *chain lightning* (DC 29), *cure serious wounds*, *dancing lights*, *detect thoughts* (DC 25), *dispel magic*, *divine favor*, *haste*, *greater invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects), *major image* (DC 26), *mass charm monster* (DC 31), *polymorph any object* (DC 31), *righteous smite* (DC 30), *telekinesis* (DC 28), *wall of force*

1/day—*heal*, *meteor swarm* (DC 32), *power word kill*, *time stop*

Abilities Str 20, Dex 22, Con 22, Int 24, Wis 24, Cha 26

SQ alternate form, sword of light

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spring Attack, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +29, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +33, Hide +27, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (local) +28, Knowledge (nature) +18, Knowledge (the planes) +28, Listen +28, Move Silently +27, Perform (song) +29, Ride +16, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +30, Spot +28

Possessions *+4 brilliant energy holy longsword*, *+4 merciful lance*

Alternate Form (Su) A tulani can shift between its humanoid and globe forms as a standard action. In humanoid form, it cannot fly or use its dream rays. In globe form, it cannot use its gaze attack. The globe form is incoporeal.

Bardic Music (Su) A tulani uses bardic music as an 18th-level bard, and can maintain concentration on one such ability per round as a free action.

***Blessed Sight* (Sp)** This spell-like ability (*Book of Exalted Deeds* 92) functions as *detect evil* but does not require concentration and discerns aura location and strength in 1 round. It lasts for 1 minute/level.

Dream Ray (Su) This beam of light has a range of 300 feet and deals 1d6 points of Charisma damage on a hit. An evil creature reduced to 0 Charisma by this beam takes 1d10 points of damage, plus an additional 1d10 points of damage each hour until its Charisma score is raised to 1 or higher. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Gaze (Su) Slay evil creatures of 5 HD or fewer, range 60 feet, Will DC 27 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Protective Aura (Su) As a free action, a tulani can surround itself with a 20-foot-radius nimbus of light that acts as a double-strength *magic circle against evil* and as a *lesser globe of invulnerability* (CL 18th).

***Righteous Smite* (Sp)** This spell-like ability is detailed in the *Book of Exalted Deeds*, page 106. If you don't use this book in your campaign, replace this spell-like ability with *holy word*.

Sword of Light (Su) As a free action, a tulani can create a *+4 brilliant energy holy longsword*. This sword vanishes if the tulani dies or loses physical contact with the sword.

WANDERER CR 8

Male celestial legendary horse

CG Large magical beast (augmented animal)

Monster Manual II 138, *Monster Manual* 31

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages Celestial

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 17

hp 243 (18 HD); **DR** 10/magic

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 23

Fort +19, **Ref** +13, **Will** +13

Spd 80 ft.

Melee 2 hooves +21 (3d6+9) and bite +16 (1d6+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +26

Atk Options Improved Overrun, Power Attack, smite evil 1/day (+18 damage)

Abilities Str 29, Dex 14, Con 27, Int 3, Wis 15, Cha 10

Feats Alertness, Endurance, Improved Overrun, Improved Natural Attack (hoof), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack, Run

Skills Listen +9, Spot +9

MOON DOGS (7) CR 12

NG Medium outsider (good)

Book of Exalted Deeds 179

Init +6; **Senses** *arcane sight*, *blessed sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *detect snares and pits*, keen senses, scent, *see invisibility*; Listen +17, Spot +17

Languages Celestial, Common, Infernal; speak with canines, telepathy 50 ft.

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Dodge, Mobility

hp 49 (9 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or evil

SR 23

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +11

Spd 50 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d8+4)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Special Actions bark, bay, howl, shadow pattern, soothing ministrations, whine

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

Constant—*arcane sight*, *blessed sight*, *detect snares and pits*, *see invisibility*

At will—*astral projection* (self only), *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *ethereal jaunt*, *fog cloud*, *greater invisibility*, *light*, *nondetection* (DC 16)

3/day—*alter self*, *mirror image*

1/day—*greater shadow conjuration* (DC 20)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 17

SQ luck

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility

Skills Balance +4, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +17, Hide +18, Intimidate +15, Jump +15, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +17, Move Silently +18, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17

Bark (Su) As a standard action, a moon dog can bark to create a *dispel evil* effect (DC 17). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Bay (Su) As a standard action, a moon dog can bay, duplicating the effects of a *fear* spell (DC 17) that affects only evil creatures within an 80-foot radius. A creature that makes this saving throw is immune to that particular moon dog's bay for 24 hours. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect.

***Blessed Sight* (Sp)** This spell-like ability (*Book of Exalted Deeds* 92) functions as *detect evil* but does not require concentration and discerns aura location and strength in 1 round. It lasts for 1 minute/level.

Howl (Su) When a moon dog howls, evil creatures within 40 feet take 1d4+4 points of damage per round, in addition to the fear effect of its baying. Evil extraplanar creatures within 40 feet of a howling

moon dog are targeted by a *dismissal* effect as cast by a 12th-level caster (base DC 17). If more than one moon dog howls, evil creatures receive only one save but the effective caster level increases by +2 for each dog beyond the first.

Keen Senses (Ex) A moon dog sees four times as well as a human in low-light, and twice as well in normal light.

Luck (Ex) A moon dog receives a +2 luck bonus on all saving throws.

Shadow Pattern (Su) In shadowy illumination, a moon dog can create patterns of shadow as a full-round action. This pattern lasts as long as the moon dog concentrates, plus an additional 2 rounds. The pattern has a 50-foot radius; evil creatures in this area are fascinated as though by a *hypnotic pattern* spell unless they make a DC 17 Will save (CL 10th). Good creatures in this area are warded by *protection from evil* and *remove fear*. The save DC is Charisma-based.

***Speak with Canines* (Sp)** A moon dog can use *speak with animals* (CL 12th) at will to communicate with any canine animal.

Soothing Ministration (Su) By licking a wound, a moon dog can create any of the following effects, one time each per individual per day: *cure light wounds*, *remove disease*, and *slow poison*; these effects function at CL 12th.

Whine (Su) A moon dog can whine as a standard action to automatically dispel any illusion effect within 50 feet.

Bhaenmar and Waldrop, ghaele eladrins: hp 65 each; *Monster Manual* 94.

Celeste

Fearnaught's Challenges

If Sir Andros feels the PCs don't deserve to be here, he challenges each of them to prove their worth. He proclaims that he shall face each of them in turn, and that each may choose wrestling, jousting, or racing.

Wrestling: Conduct wrestling matches as normal combat. Sir Andros takes care to use only nonlethal damage when required unless his opponent uses lethal force, in which case Sir Andros ends the contest at once by calling the character a blackguard and then attacking. Whoever manages to pin his foe for 3 consecutive rounds wins the contest.

Jousting: A round of jousting begins as the two riders position themselves 200 feet apart. If no PCs carry lances, Andros begrudgingly creates one for them by using *polymorph any object* on a fallen branch. Each contestant must make a DC 5 Ride check to guide his mount with his knees, and must then spur his mount to greater speed with a DC 15 Ride check. Technically, a jouster can hold the reins in his shield hand, but in practice, it's about spurring the horse and guiding while the jouster's hands are otherwise occupied. For each check that fails, the character suffers a –4 penalty on his following attack roll.

Each jouster makes an initiative check, charges, and then rolls to hit his opponent. This attack must be made to do nonlethal damage; Andros has a *merciful* lance, so he need not worry about the –4 penalty for making such an attack. If a character is struck, he must make a special Ride check (DC equals the nonlethal damage done to him) to avoid being knocked from his saddle. Andros's damage reduction gives him an unfair advantage in this contest, but if the PCs confront him on this, he shrugs and asks that character if he'd rather challenge him to a wrestling match or a race.

The jousting tournament continues until one character falls from the saddle, either as a result of a failed Ride check or as a result of taking enough nonlethal damage to fall unconscious.

Steeplechase: The steeplechase happens over 5 rounds at full gallop, and the rider who wins the most opposed Ride checks

wins the race. Between the third and fourth ride check, a deep stream gully bisects the impromptu course, requiring the rider to make a DC 15 Ride check or the mount to make a DC 15 Jump check—whichever skill check is lower is the one that must be made. Failure at this check indicates an automatic loss.

Each character who loses one of these contests is asked by Andros to leave the plane in the name of the queen. If the PC refuses to go, he makes an enemy of Andros for refusing to recognize his authority on the queen's land. Yet before things come to blows, another eladrin intervenes.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If all of the PCs win these challenges, award them a CR 18 experience award. If at least half of them win, award them a CR 14 experience award.

A Welcome Intervention

Sir Andros's haughty attitude and insulting stance is bound to raise the hackles of some PCs. Alternatively, if even one of the PCs fails to defeat his challenges, his demands that the losers leave the Court of Stars might well lead to combat. When you judge that the PCs have had enough of his attitude, it's time for an intervention.

A strong feminine voice cries out at this point as a shimmering ball of green light wafts onto the scene. The voice says, "Andros! Do you not recognize these heroes? They are the ones our queen spoke of, the ones who are standing against our old enemy. Has your ego blinded you yet again to our queen's wishes?"

Andros seems morbidly chastised at this and immediately goes from a blustering champion to an embarassed and mortified submissive, hanging his head in shame. He mutters, "Please, Lady Celeste... I was only toying with them. I would have brought them to our queen in time..."

At this point, the ball of light transforms into a beautiful green-haired ghaele eladrin who drifts gently down to the ground. She casts one final disgusted look at Andros, tells him he may "resume his little hunt," and then ignores him, turning her attention to the PCs.

Creature: Celeste is a ghaele eladrin, and although the PCs have not met her before, she should be familiar to readers of these Adventure Paths. She has had a hand in saving the city of Cauldron from its shackles and in preventing the Age of Worms. Now, as fate would have it, she joins another group of heroes in a third and final epic adventure.

Celeste apologizes profusely for Andros's actions, providing healing to any PC who needs it, then tells them they are expected at Morwel's Palace, offering to escort them there. The walk to the palace is only an hour, and along the way Celeste engages the PCs in conversation, asking to hear detailed stories of their accomplishments over the past several months. She avoids answering any questions directed at her, apologizing and saying it's not her place to speak for her queen, but that they will be in Morwel's presence soon enough.

If the PCs are having a rough time of things in this adventure, you can have Celeste accompany them from this point on. She prefers to avoid combat, using her magic and powers to support the PCs in battle rather than seizing opportunities for glory herself. Her ability to teleport and cast *plane shift* makes it simple for her to come and go—if you determine her presence is no longer needed, she can receive a summons from Morwell and return to her queen's side for a time, only to reappear to aid the PCs if they really need help or access to healing. Think of her as a "safety net." Things only grow more dangerous for the PCs from this point out, and they probably deserve a little bit of help as a reward for making it this far.

CELESTE **CR 20**

Female ghaele eladrin bard 5/lyric thaumaturge 7

CG Medium outsider (chaotic, eladrin, good)

Monster Manual 94, *Complete Mage* 66

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +17, Spot +17

Aura protective aura (20 ft.)

Languages Celestial, Infernal, Draconic; tongues

AC 34, touch 12, flat-footed 32

hp 197 (22 HD); **DR** 10/evil and cold iron

Immune electricity, petrification

Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 28

Fort +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20

Spd 50 ft., fly 150 ft. (perfect)

Melee +4 *cold iron dancing greatsword* +29/+24/+19/+14 (2d6+13/19–20)

Ranged 2 light rays +20 ranged touch (2d12)

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +24

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Sanctify Martial Strike (greatsword)

Special Actions bardic music 16/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1), gaze, rebuke plant creatures 13/day (+10, 2d6+22, 12th), sonic might

Bard Spells Known (CL 12th, +20 ranged touch)

4th (6/day)—*freedom of movement, orb of sound, ruin delver's fortune, shout* (DC 24)

3rd (6/day)—*glibness, keen edge, scrying, secret page, wounding whispers* (DC 23)

2nd (7/day)—*alter self, enthrall* (DC 22), *scorching ray, suggestion* (DC 22), *whirling blade*

1st (7/day)—*identify, inspirational boost, magic missile, Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 21), *undetectable alignment*

0 (3/day)—*ghost sound* (DC 20), *mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 14th [CL 15th for good spells])

7th—*destruction* (DC 21), *holy word*[D] (DC 21), *mass cure serious wounds*

6th—*banishment* (DC 20), *blade barrier*[D] (DC 20), *heal* (2)

5th—*break enchantment, flame strike* (DC 19), *plane shift* (DC 19), *wall of thorns*[D]

4th—*cure critical wounds, death ward, dismissal* (DC 18), *holy smite*[D] (DC 18), *neutralize poison, sending*

3rd—*awaken sin, cure serious wounds* (3), *plant growth*[D], *protection from energy*

2nd—*barkskin*[D], *bull's strength, close wounds* (2), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *silence* (DC 16)

1st—*command* (DC 15), *divine favor, entangle*[D] (DC 15), *obscuring mist, resurgence, sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*

0—*cure minor wounds* (6)

D domain spell; **Domains** good, plant

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)

At will—*aid, charm monster* (DC 24), *color spray* (DC 21), *comprehend languages, continual flame, cure light wounds* (DC 21), *dancing lights, detect evil, detect*

thoughts (DC 22), *disguise self*, *dispel magic*, *hold monster* (DC 25), *greater invisibility* (self only), *major image* (DC 23), *see invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only)

3/day—quickened *charm monster* (DC 24)

1/day—*chain lightning* (DC 26), *prismatic spray* (DC 27), *wall of force*

Abilities Str 22, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 30

SQ bardic knowledge +18, skill tricks, spontanious casting (cure spells)

Feats Captivating Melody, Combat Expertise, Extra Music, Improved Disarm, Melodic Casting, Practiced Magic, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*charm monster*), Sanctify Martial Strike (greatsword), Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Balance +8, Bluff +35, Concentrate +18, Diplomacy +35, Disguise +21 (+25 acting), Jump +20, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +16, Listen +17, Perform (song) +35, Sense Motive +21, Sleight of Hand +11, Spellcraft +12, Spot +17, Tumble +21

Possessions combat gear, *+3 mithral moderate fortification breastplate*, *+4 cold iron dancing greatsword*, *ring of Charisma +6*, *amulet of health +4*, *boots of speed*

Sonic Might (Su) Celeste can expend a use of bardic music to add 1d6 points of sonic damage per spell level to any spell with the sonic descriptor.

Feats Captivating Melody (*Complete Mage* 40) allows Celeste to attempt a Perform check (DC 15 + spell level) when she casts a spell to increase the save DC of the spell by 2, as long as the spell being cast is a bard spell of the school of enchantment or illusion. Extra Music (*Complete Adventurer* 109) allows Celeste to use her bardic music four extra times per day. Melodic Casting (*Complete Mage* 67) allows Celeste to substitute a Perform check for Concentration checks when required to cast a spell or use a spell-like ability. She can also cast spells and activate magic items by command words or spell completion while using a bardic music ability. Practiced Magic (*Shackled City* 335) increases Celeste's caster level for her spell-like abilities by +4. Sanctify Martial Strike (*Book of Exalted Deeds* 46) allows Celeste to deal an extra point of damage to evil creatures she strikes with her greatsword, or an extra 1d4 points to evil outsiders and evil undead. In addition, her greatsword is considered good-aligned for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction. Sweet Talker (*Complete Scoundrel* 81) grants Celeste two additional interaction skill tricks at no skill point cost, and increases her limit on skill tricks known by one.

Skill Tricks Skill tricks are minor benefits gained by spending 2 skill points once the correct skill prerequisites are met. Skill Tricks are detailed on pages 82–90 of *Complete Scoundrel*. Celeste knows the following skill tricks:

Assume Quirk: When impersonating a particular individual, Celeste eliminates the normal Spot bonus granted to a viewer familiar with that individual for up to 1 hour per day.

Back on Your Feet: If Celeste falls prone, she can stand up as an immediate action without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Conceal Spellcasting: Celeste can make a Sleight of Hand check opposed by the Spot check of any onlookers to hide the fact that she's casting a spell.

Extreme Leap: If Celeste makes a horizontal jump of at least 10 feet during her turn, she can spend a swift action to move an additional 10 feet on that turn.

Second Impression: If an observer sees through Celeste's disguise with a Spot check, she can attempt a Bluff check to convince him that he's mistaken (the DC of this Bluff check is that observer's Spot check). She must be aware of the observer's discovery in order to use this trick, and even then can only use it once per day.

Social Recovery: If Celeste's Diplomacy check to influence an NPC's attitude fails, she can spend another full round talking to the NPC, then make a Bluff check with a –10 penalty. Use the result of this check in place of the Diplomacy check result, except that it can't improve the NPC's attitude by more than one step. This trick may only be attempted against a single target once a day.

Spot the Weak Point: As a standard action, Celeste can attempt a Spot check (DC equals target's AC) to find a weakness in her foe's defenses. If successful, her next attack against that opponent (which must be made no later than her next turn) is treated as a touch attack.

Twisted Charge: When Celeste charges, she can make one turn of up to 90 degrees during her movement. She must still have line of sight to her target at the start of her turn.

Spells Several of Celeste's spells are from the *Spell Compendium*. If you don't use this book in your game, replace *awaken sin* with *searing light*, *close wounds* with *hold person*, *inspirational boost* with *grease*, *orb of sound* with *confusion*, *resurgence* with *entropic shield*, *ruin delver's fortune* with *legend lore*, *whirling blade* with *shatter*, and *wounding whispers* with *slow*.

In the Court of Stars

Although this adventure assumes the PCs are escorted to Queen Morwel's presence by Celeste, it's possible they need to make their way there on their own. In this case, they are received with an unfriendly attitude, but are still given a chance to make their case.

As the PCs emerge from the forest and crest a hill, it may seem almost as if they are climbing into the heavens themselves. The hill is taller than it first appears and very quickly the PCs are above the treeline and even the clouds, with snow crunching underfoot. Yet the air seems only pleasantly crisp, not cold at all. The night stars sparkle around them, and the crystal palace before them seems close, but it takes a while for the scale to sink in. Its walls are built of glowing crystal, and when they finally reach the outer gates, the PCs see the thousands of separate magical lights glittering within—some are lanterns, but others are living creatures, some tiny, others several feet across. They float in and out of the palace like soap bubbles.

At the gate, two eladrins with opalescent eyes greet the PCs, bowing deeply and greeting Celeste if she is with them before stepping aside. Within, the palace seems brighter and brighter, until at last Celeste leads the PCs into a dazzling central dome. Hundreds of eladrins in elven and glowing light forms watch silently from the tiers rising from the room's edges. A DC 25 Spot check

notices Sir Andros in the crowd, glum and surly as he watches the PCs enter his queen's presence.

At the center of the room rest three gold thrones. Sitting regally on the central and largest throne is a tall, red-haired, and shockingly beautiful elven woman wearing a diaphanous gown that seems made up of thousands of flickering pinpoints of lights. She does not speak, but a silver-haired and deeply-tanned elven woman sitting on the throne to her right does: "Welcome, mortals. What brings you to the Court of Stars?" The throne to the left is currently empty.

The red-haired woman is Queen Morwel, ruler of the eladrin race, and the silver-haired woman is one of her consorts and bodyguards, Gwynharwyf, the Whirling Fury. Morwel's other consort, Faerinall, is away on other business at this time. Allow the party to make its pitch about taking the fight against Demogorgon into Gaping Maw, and prompt them to describe the threat of the *shadow pearls*. The eladrin paragons listen attentively, and a DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that Gwynharwyf seems especially interested in the discussion. At each mention of Demogorgon's name, her fists clench and her eyes sparkle dangerously.

When they finish, Morwel speaks.

"Your task is worthy and the stuff of heroes. And heroes such as yourselves must be supported and honored. You have my pledge of aid in this battle. Although I cannot leave the court you shall have the support of my dear friend and her armies when the time to strike comes. Gwynharwyf has had dealings with Demogorgon before, and she has been waiting for a chance to return his favors.

"Yet while my trust in you might be enough to satisfy the concerns of my children, it would be foolish of me to not offer proof of your heroic nature to them. As much as it pains me to ask, I need a favor from you before I can allow Gwynharwyf to prepare for battle.

"At the base of the World Ash gnaws a dragon, a particularly foul-tempered dread linnorm named Redfang. He has vexed my children for ages, but his distance and power have ensured his longevity. Yet of late, he has gone too far. He has razed eladrin holdings and fatted upon my children, and now lies in torpor in his lair among Yggdrasil's roots. It is time for him to die.

"Go you, then, and bring me Redfang's heads... no, wait. His heads are too large. Instead, gut the beast and release one of the stars from his belly. When you return, Gwynharwyf shall take you to the Fountain of Beauty to seal our alliance." A murmur of approval rises from the court.

Morwel is happy to answer any other questions the PCs might have. Her knowledge is vast; she has always been, and in the span of that incalculable time she has learned much. You can use Morwel to answer any concerns the PCs might have, but take care to keep a few secrets.

A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check is enough to reveal old tales of the dread linnorm Redfang, who is said to be the child of the Niddhogg itself. Redfang has eaten dozens of eladrin stars, lantern archons, and other celestial creatures—he seems to make a habit of it. Queen Morwel cares about them because over the centuries she and her court have sheltered many such creatures and turned a few of them to the cause of Chaos.

Yggdrasil

Yggdrasil, the World Ash, is truly one of the great wonders of the multiverse. Almost its own plane, this 23-mile-tall ash tree exists as a bridge between many different realms on the Great Wheel. Portals along its branches and roots allow access to these worlds, yet the tree itself is its own world, one inhabited by giant ravens, intelligent squirrels called ratatosks, and of course, the linnorms. Yggdrasil is mildly chaos-aligned (lawful creatures take a –2 penalty on Charisma-based checks here), and spells or spell-like abilities that have the plant descriptor are maximized, while spells that use chaos are extended.

Morwel informs the PCs that while she can send them to Redfang's lair, they must secure their own return to the Court of Stars. If any of the PCs can cast spells or Use Magic Device, she grants them a scroll of *gate* to effect their return—otherwise, they'll need to climb the World Ash itself to reach one of the portals in its upper branches to return. More details on Yggdrasil can be found on pages 38–40 of *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits*.

When the PCs are ready, Morwel assumes the form of a 4-foot-diameter sphere of multicolored light. She can project a violet beam up to four times per round, striking one character per beam and transporting him to a point near the entrance to Redfang's lair.

Among the World Roots (EL 22)

What first appears to be the ground is, in fact, an immense moss-covered root—closer inspection reveals that this place has no proper ground, only a tangling descent of additional roots that form a dizzying array of hills and valleys. Above, an immense wall of wood rises into the sky beyond sight, and the sky is a vast, endless canopy of branches and leaves. The horizon is a foggy expanse, and a cold, misty wind drifts along in the air.

Ahead, a cavern descends between a V shape formed by two gigantic roots, each of them ninety feet high. The space between them is about forty feet wide and littered with stones, enormous dead leaves, and two tunnel entrances, both thirty feet across. The cold, misty wind seems to be issuing from there.

Creature: Redfang the dread linnorm, known in more ancient times as Stjernespise, is an ancient creature that feasts on travelers of Yggdrasil, the World Tree, devouring dwarves, demons, and devas alike. He has no interest in outside politics, though he does posses a tremendous greed and cunning.

Redfang's lair is protected by *mirage arcana*, which hides the true entrances and makes a solid section of incredibly dense root look like entrances to caverns. If the party simply approaches without precautions, they're walking into a well-prepared death trap. The dread linnorm has covered the pits with illusory dirt and leaves using his *mirage arcana* spell. Stepping on any of them elicits a DC 25 Reflex save to avoid a fall into a 60-

foot-deep pit. Redfang himself wards the approach to his lair with silent *alarm* spells as well, and if they are triggered he prepares for battle by casting *greater heroism, fire shield, displacement, mirror image, ventriloquism,* and *invisibility,* then tries to lure PCs into pits using ventriloquism to taunt them.

Redfang is an enormous wingless dragon with two huge heads and no hind legs. His eyes are lit like lanterns from inside, flickering with reddish light, and his scales are as bright as new iron. Note that Redfang's CR has been revised from its original entry in the *Monster Manual II* to more accurately reflect his power level in a 3.5 game.

Redfang, Gnawer in Darkness **CR 22**

Male elite dread linnorm
CE Colossal dragon
Monster Manual II 141

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense 120 ft., darkvision 60 ft., keen senses; Listen +30, Spot +30
Languages Abyssal, Draconic

AC 39, touch 5, flat-footed 36
hp 450 (20 HD); **DR** 15/magic
Immune enchantment spells, mind affecting effects, sleep, paralysis
SR 36

Fort +28, **Ref** +15, **Will** +19

Spd 50 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), swim 30 ft.
Melee 2 bites +32 (6d8+20/19–20 plus energy drain) and
2 claws +30 (6d6+10) and
tail slap +30 (4d6+30)
Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.
Base Atk +20; **Grp** +56
Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Snatch
Special Actions crush, tail sweep
Combat Gear breath weapon
Spells Prepared (CL 18th, +15 ranged touch)
9th (4/day)—*wish*
8th (5/day)—*greater planar binding* (DC 28), *mind blank* (already cast)
7th (7/day)—*greater teleport, plane shift* (DC 27), *prismatic spray* (DC 27)
6th (8/day)—*disintegrate* (DC 26), *greater dispel magic, greater heroism*
5th (8/day)—*cloudkill, extract gift, mirage arcana, wall of force*
4th (8/day)—*dimension door, enervation, fire shield, hallucinatory terrain*
3rd (8/day)—*displacement, haste, slow* (DC 23), *water breathing*
2nd (9/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 22), *invisibility, mirror image, resist energy, spider climb*
1st (9/day)—*alarm, expeditious retreat, mage armor* (already cast), *shield, ventriloquism*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 20), *mage hand, mending, message, open/close, prestidigitation*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th)
At will—*fly, telekinesis* (DC 25)
4/day—*move earth*
3/day—*power word stun*
2/day—*antipathy* (DC 29), *sympathy* (DC 29)

Abilities Str 50, Dex 16, Con 42, Int 12, Wis 24, Cha 30
Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Attack (bite, claw), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Multiattack, Snatch
Skills Bluff +33, Climb +43, Concentration +39, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Listen +30, Spellcraft +24, Spot +30, Swim +28

Breath Weapon (Su) As a standard action, a dread linnorm can breathe either with one head or with both. When a head breathes, it can choose to deal fire or cold damage,

and can do so in a 70-foot cone or a 140-foot line. Each head must wait 1d4 rounds before it breathes again. Both breath weapons deal 12d6 points of damage, with a DC 36 Reflex save halving the damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Crush (Ex) A flying or jumping dread linnorm can land on opponents three or more size categories smaller than itself as a standard action. A crush attack affects as many creatures that can fit under the linnorm's space. Creatures in this area can attempt a DC 36 Reflex save to avoid being pinned and taking 4d8+30 points of damage. If the linnorm chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

Energy Drain (Su) A creature bitten by a dread linnorm gains one negative level. For each negative level bestowed, the dread linnorm heals 5 points of damage, gaining excess hit points as temporary hit points. It's a DC 30 Fortitude save to remove these negative levels. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Keen Senses (Ex) A dread linnorm sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Tail Sweep (Ex) A dread linnorm can sweep with its tail as a standard action. This affects all Medium or smaller creatures within a 20-foot-radius half-circle adjacent to the linnorm. Each affected creature takes 2d8+30 points of damage, or half on a DC 36 Reflex save.

Demonic Gifts Redfang has used *extract gift* to grant himself a permanent +4 enhancement bonus to his Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma scores. *Extract gift* is detailed on page 93 of *Fiendish Codex I*; these enhancement bonuses can be dispelled (CL 18th).

Experience Points Redfang has 20,000 experience points to use casting spells like *wish*.

Inherent Bonuses Redfang has a +2 inherent bonus to his Strength, Dexterity, and Wisdom, and a +3 inherent bonus to his Constitution and Charisma.

Tactics: Once combat begins, Redfang initially avoids melee, using spells like *prismatic spray* and *disintegrate* or his breath weapons to soften up the PCs. He uses *wall of force* and *power word stun* to divide the PCs, and if he can corner one or two alone, engages in melee. He's fond of using *wish* to heal himself when he drops below 100 hit points or to take care of unexpectedly efficient PC tactics. Redfang has existed for hundreds of centuries, and cannot conceive of being slain by mortals—he fights to the death, perhaps with a final exclamation of shock at a PC's killing blow.

Treasure: Redfang, like most linnorms, has amassed a sizable treasure in his cavern. This hoard consists of 170,400 sp, 32,350 gp, 6,061 pp, a *cloak of protection +3*, a *headband of intellect +4*, a pair of *boots of levitation*, a *ring of improved jumping*, a *ring of three wishes*, and the legendary *Bearded Anvil* of the Midgard dwarves. This 300-pound steel anvil is inlaid with mithral to show a thick silvery beard on one side. The *Bearded Anvil* is a minor artifact that grants a +4 divine bonus on any Craft or Profession check involving metalwork. Any slashing weapon that is worked on this anvil for 1 minute (requiring a DC 25 Craft [weaponsmith] check) gains the *keen* magical property (and a +1 enhancemnet bonus if the weapon is not otherwise magical) for 24 hours.

Development: Releasing one of the stars Redfang ate means splitting open his guts and fishing around until the shiny bit is uncovered. When opened, black blood pours out of the dead linnorm, far more than one would think possible. Certain portions of the linnorm's

anatomy are still infused with fire, cold, and negative energy—safely opening his belly requires a DC 35 Knowledge (arcana) check. Failure means that each minute spent exploring the immense dragon's belly has a 75% chance of the characters exposing themselves to danger as a blast of energy is unleashed from the creature's otherworldly guts. This blast explodes in a 30-foot-radius burst around one of the characters, dealing 12d6 points of damage (equal chances of fire, cold, or negative energy), with a DC 36 Reflex save halving the damage.

Once the PCs make the Knowledge (arcana) check or spend a minute rooting around in the linnorm's guts, they find the right section of its stomach. Cutting open the immense organ (which glows from within with the star's light) releases a flood of acid—the character doing the cutting must make a DC 36 Reflex save or take 6d6 points of acid damage as the star is released.

Once released, the star wafts gently up from the carcass, glowing only as brightly as a candle. It thankfully swirls around the head of the character who released it, restoring health as if a *heal* spell had been cast (CL 20th), and then shoots up into the heavens to rejoin its kin in the Court of Stars.

The Fountain of Beauty

If the party succeeds, its return to the Court of Stars is much different than its last arrival. The eladrin rejoice and celebrate the PCs' success, with Celeste helpfully pointing out which of the stars in the sky they rescued. Gwynharwyf thanks the PCs as well, and if they have any persistent maladies from their battle with Redfang, she sees to it that they are healed and dealt with before she leads the party into a forested courtyard not far from Morwel's throne.

At the center of this courtyard stands the Fountain of Beauty, the legendary source of all eladrins' beauty and, it is said, the beauty of the entire elven race. Gwynharwyf invites each PC to drink from the fountain's crystal waters. Evil creatures find the waters foul-tasting, but to any other drinkers they are incredibly refreshing. Further, these drinkers grow more beautiful and take on distinctive elven features: pointed ears, long flowing hair, and musical voices. These changes are not permanent, and last for one week, but during that week the drinkers gain a +4 sacred bonus to their Charisma scores.

Gwynharwyf thanks the PCs again, then bids them good luck as she leaves to make ready her armies for the coming war.

Gwynharwyf

GWYNHARWYF, THE WHIRLING FURY CR 26

CG Medium outsider (chaotic, eladrin, good)
Book of Exalted Deeds 155
Init 11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +37, Spot +37
Languages Celestial, Elven, Sylvan; tongues

AC 47, touch 35, flat-footed 40; improved uncanny dodge
hp 377 (26 HD); **DR** 20/epic, evil, and cold iron
Immune electricity, petrification
Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 39
Fort +25, **Ref** +24, **Will** +23

Spd 50 ft., fly 100 ft. (perfect)
Melee +3 *holy keen scimitar* +37/+32/+27/+22 (1d6+15/15–20 plus 2d6 holy) and
+2 *holy banishing scimitar* +36/+31/+26 (1d6+8/18–20 plus 2d6 holy and banishment) or
slam +38 (1d6+18)
Base Atk +26; **Grp** +38
Atk Options mighty rage
Special Actions whirlwind blast
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)
At will—*blur*, *charm person* (DC 20), *gust of wind* (DC 21), *mirror image*, *wind wall*
2/day—*lightning bolt* (DC 22), *cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 35, Dex 25, Con 30, Int 23, Wis 23, Cha 29
SQ alternate form
Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Fighting
Skills Climb +41, Concentration +39, Diplomacy +40, Escape Artist +36, Handle Animal +38, Hide +36, Intimidate +38, Jump +43, Listen +37, Move Silently +36, Ride +38, Sense Motive +35, Spot +37, Tumble +38, Use Rope +36

Possessions *+3 holy keen scimitar, +2 holy banishing scimitar*

Alternate Form (Su) Gwynharwyf can shift between her humanoid form and a whirlwind as a standard action. In humanoid form, she cannot fly or use her whirlwind blast. In whirlwind form, she cannot make weapon attacks (but can make her slam attack).

Mighty Rage (Ex) Gwynharwyf can rage 6 times per day, but no more than once per encounter. She does not become fatigued after a rage. During her rage, her stats change as follows:

AC 45, touch 33, flat-footed 38

hp 481

Fort +29, **Will** +27

Melee *+3 holy keen scimitar* +41/+36/+31/+26 (1d6+19/15–20 plus 2d6 holy) and *+2 holy banishing scimitar* +40/+35/+30 (1d6+10/18–20 plus 2d6 holy and banishment)

Grp +42

Str 43, **Con** 38

Whirlwind Blast (Su) When in whirlwind form, Gwynharwyf can attack with a scouring blast of wind, dealing 12d6 damage in a 20-foot line. A DC 33 Reflex save halves this damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

***Banishing* Weapon Quality** An extraplaner creature with 25 HD or fewer that is struck by a *banishing* weapon must make a DC 25 Will save or be banished back to its home plane. Spell resistance applies. A creature banished cannot return for at least 24 hours. The wielder may choose to deactivate this ability as a free action. This weapon quality is from *Book of Exalted Deeds*.

PART FOUR: SHENDILAVRI

While Iggwilv knows that Malcanthet has had her hand in the events surrounding the savage tide and suspects the Queen of Succubi wants Demogorgon to fail, the Witch Queen has an ulterior motive in sending the PCs to this demon lord: Iggwilv's research has hinted that Malcanthet is the current owner of a magical artifact known as the *Iron Flask of Tuerny the Merciless*. Iggwilv suspects that Malcanthet has plans for the flask in the war to come, and once the war is over, Iggwilv intends to cash in one of the favors the PCs owe her to claim the artifact as her own.

A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals that Malcanthet's realm is the 570th layer of the Abyss: Shendilavri. This realm might seem like a slice of heaven at first glance, with its constantly balmy temperature, green rolling hills, sweeping panoramic mountains, and a lush ocean, but in fact these magnificent vistas conceal a deadly truth: Shendilavri is paradise to Malcanthet alone, and its every charming feature exists only to lull visitors into a false sense of safety. The truth of Shendilavri lies hidden in its expansive torture gardens, flensing pits, and pleasure dungeons.

Getting to Malcanthet's court in Shendilavri is easy, as it is a destination for many mortal adulterers, indolent aesthetes, and those given over to pleasures of the flesh. The River Styx touches upon this hedonistic realm only briefly, flowing through the decadent city of Miomanta, a city of artists and the home of the Radiant Sisters, Malcanthet's favored minions. Alternatively, the PCs could use the wake-portal to travel to the Abyssian Ocean and from there sail into the placid waters of Shendilavri's Scarlet Sea. In any event, once the PCs arrive on Shendilavri, investigation should quickly reveal that Malcanthet can currently be found relaxing in her "summer palace" in Miomanta.

Miomanta (EL 20)

The River Styx is unusually crowded where it winds through the beautiful city of Miomanta, yet closer inspection reveals the truth—most of those who visit Miomanta are doomed. Victims both living and dead ensnared by demons are brought here in black barges crewed by vrock and hezrou crews. The city itself is a mix of beauty and ramshackle slums, with a sprawling central district known as the Fleshpits of Shendilavri, where the barges unload their cargoes and the fresh slaves are examined, cataloged, and assigned to duty. Surrounding this central expanse are the thirteen homes of the Radiant Sisters, each modeled blasphemously after temples dedicated to gods of law and good. But the palace that towers over the city from its tallest hill is Miomanta's most obvious landmark. One of Malcanthet's many residences, the palace walls are pink and cream-colored marble, with a red tile roof and many windows that remind the viewer of unfolding flowers. Its towers are topped by glowing domes upon which dozens of succubi roost.

The River Styx empties into the Miomanta harbor. As the PCs draw near in the *Sea Wyvern*, a series of shouts might draw their attention. Here, a barge is unloading, and another is just leaving the dock. A marilith notices the *Sea Wyvern* and, mistaking it for another load of slaves, waves it in to the recently vacated space with half her arms; the other three pointing to the dock below. The PCs can dock there with ease, but once they do, they'll need to deal with the pier's two attendants: twin mariliths named Portitia and Caddobryn. The PCs have two likely avenues to secure an audience with Malcanthet.

Sorting of Mortal Souls: If the party is willing to be sorted among the mobs of mortals, they can walk right in. Portitia and Caddobryn honor Charon's blessing and, as much as they might wish to claim and sort the *Sea Wyvern*'s crew, they do not molest those who remain on board. Any who debark, though, are quickly looked over and classified as labor (highest stat is Constitution), crafter (highest stat is Intelligence), entertainment (highest stat is Charisma), or nourishment (highest stat is Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom). Victims are stripped naked and their gear taken to be sold—the PCs can avoid having their belongings taken by simply leaving them on the *Sea Wyvern*.

Once sorted, the mariliths attempt to herd the PCs off into one of four lines. All four of these lines wind up through the avenues to Malcanthet's Palace, but it's a wait of 3d6 hours before arriving. Sleep is not an option; those who droop are lashed back to wakefulness by a passing succubus armed with a *+1 vicious whip*.

Requesting a Direct Audience: If the party appeals for a direct audience with Malcanthet, they'll need to either offer the mariliths an impressive bribe (at least 25,000 gp worth in gems and/or magic items), or they'll need to make

some skill checks. A DC 40 Diplomacy check convinces the mariliths that what the PCs seek might well be important enough to warrant allowing them to speak to Malcanthet, as does a successful Bluff check (opposed by both mariliths' Sense Motive checks). A successful Intimidate check works also, but if the PCs return to the dock at a later date, the vengeful mariliths are waiting with four glabrezus. Fights are common among the Miomanta docks, so the PCs won't have to suffer any lasting repercussions if they slay these six demons, although the easiest way to deal with them is to simply board the *Sea Wyvern*, since even in their anger the demons won't risk crossing Charon.

If the PCs convince the mariliths their reasons for seeking Malcanthet are valid, the demons grudgingly point up the hill toward her palace, indicating that the PCs are free to make their approach. However, the PC are only allowed in if properly "clothed for an audience," meaning naked. Adornments worn on the head, hands, wrists, neck, waist, feet, or shoulders are fine (including weapons and shields), but no clothing or armor is allowed to those seeking an audience with Malcanthet. The mariliths offer to hold the gear in safe keeping, but if the PCs use this route, the demons sell the gear by the time they return. A wiser option is to leave their gear back on the *Sea Wyvern*.

Any character who attempts to approach the palace must contend with the city's many glabrezu guardians—since glabrezus have true seeing, it's difficult to slip by them unnoticed. When first caught, the PCs are warned that they must follow the rules and present themselves down at the docks before they can approach the palace. The second time they're caught, they face a battle with a dozen glabrezus. If they manage to defeat this force, the other denizens of Miomanta leave the PCs alone.

Portitia and Caddobryn, marilith demons: hp 216 each; *Monster Manual* 44.

Glabrezus (4 or 12): hp 174 each; *Monster Manual* 43.

Within the Palace of Flesh (EL 28)

Everywhere in the palace naked demons cavort with writhing humans. In many corners, one can spot exhausted, slack-jawed souls slumped against the rose-colored walls, their eyes as empty as the Abyss, their flesh strangely puckered and withered. The floors are littered with bodies, some sleeping, some half-faded into emptiness and approaching incorporeality. The demons, though, never tire: all of them are alert, lusty, and active, as if feeding off the exertions of the groaning souls around them.

The chambers of the place are all filled with this carnival of flesh, a maze of debauchery and erotica and cloying odor. Demons and wide-eyed visitors constantly wander from room to room and hall to hall. Here, a man cries and sighs as a succubus draws a long, lingering kiss from him, causing his hair to gray and his knees to buckle. There, three giggling cambions tighten the straps around a blindfolded and gagged elf maiden affixed to a hanging nest of chains. It's easy to get lost or overwhelmed in this place, and every 10 minutes spent wandering aimlessly requires a DC 25 Will save to avoid taking 1d6 points of Wisdom damage—this danger ends as long as the PCs remain in one area. Most of the passing demons and visitors can direct the PCs to Malcanthet's chambers, but doing so requires either a DC 40 Diplomacy check, a successful Intimidate check, or several minutes of the curious soul's time (which, in the case of succubi and lilitus, can be deadly). Stubborn parties can simply keep wandering—every 10 mintues, allow a DC 50 Survival check to find their way to Malcanthet's chambers, with each successive check gaining a cumulative +4 bonus.

If the party can get through the sheer orgiastic carnage of it all, they eventually arrive in Malcanthet's pleasure dome. Since Malchanthet is who she is, you should choose to describe the scene within to whatever degree you deem appropriate. The least scandalous version follows.

This is a vast chamber packed with young, strong humans, elves, and other mortals, all of them shining examples of beauty and virility. The room is near body temperature, and the air is filled with moans and cries, some delighted, others surely the sounds of despair. At least three succubi and a dozen vrocks are here feeding on the flesh and souls around them rather than taking part in the more pervasive activities.

All of the denizens here, mortal and demon alike, serve at the pleasure of Malcanthet. She radiates a deadly beauty that makes it difficult to look directly at her. She lounges on a grasping, undulant divan made of tangled human arms that caress and support her with loving and gentle awe. Malcanthet of course notices the PCs as soon as they enter the room, but she gives no indication of such. In order to approach, the PCs must navigate the intervening 120 feet of crowd. Flight is the easiest method to reach the 30-foot radius region around Malcanthet that is free of bodies. Anyone who moves through the room does so as if through difficult terrain, and each round there's a 50% chance an idle succubus attempts to grapple and kiss him. Combat is not tolerated in this area without Malcanthet's permission, but that makes it ironically the easiest way to get to her. Any application of lethal force, by weapon or spell, causes the room to fall quiet as Malcanthet commands silence, and then indicates that the PCs should approach her.

When they enter the open area around Malcanthet, new arms grow from the ground around them, lifting the PCs gently off the floor and cradling them in impromptu chairs made of dozens of hands. These hands do no damage, and if a character would rather stand, it's a simple move action each round to swat the hands away (much to Malcanthet's amusement). If combat breaks out, the hands become more aggressive, and each creature in this area (excluding Malcanthet) faces a +30 grapple check each round to avoid being held in place.

Assuming the PCs don't react too badly, Malcanthet sizes them up and says, "My, my, my. What fine-looking visitors! I do so enjoy volunteers. Welcome to the

Palace of Flesh and Delight. How long are you staying?"

The room remains silent and still as the PCs make their proposition to Malcanthet. She listens quietly, stroking her chin with the tip of one long black fingernail. Once the PCs admit that they seek her aid against Demogorgon, Malcanthet feigns being shocked, interrupting with, "He is my lover! How can you dare suggest I would side against him?" She pauses for a moment, and then laughs. When she does, every demon and every mortal in the room immediately laughs as well. When she stops, they stop.

As the PCs speak, keep asking for Diplomacy checks from the primary speaker. Remember that Malcanthet's seductive gaze can undermine these checks to some degree, and that her profane beauty might bestow 2 negative levels on good creatures who gaze upon her. These Diplomacy checks are opposed by Malcanthet's own Diplomacy checks. With each success, Malcanthet remains silent and simply smiles, but with each failure, she interjects with an idle comment about something risqué or horrific she might like to do with or to the speaker.

After four failed checks, the demon queen of the succubi laughs and laughs, and the creatures in the room all laugh with her. At last she stops, and instantly all laughter in the room ends except for one voice that quickly turns into a scream that is cut off abruptly.

Malcanthet ignores it and says, "Oh, you are treacherous, and I like that. You remind me of Graz'zt, in a piddling mortal way. I might help you, but first I need one of you to look in my eyes. And if you can survive that, I might help you. Or I might not. You're really in no position to bargain."

She shifts her weight, and her throne groans and staggers as it adjusts itself to her new position. Her eyes light on the PC with the lowest Charisma and she smiles. "Step up," she says to this character. "And kneel! You know you'll never have a chance for bliss like this again. Look into my eyes, and tell me you'd like a kiss to seal this bargain..." If that PC refuses, she rolls her eyes and asks if any of the PCs are brave enough to seal this bargain. If no PC volunteers, she sighs in disappointment, says, "So be it," and attempts to force her initial target to comply via *demand*.

Staring into Malcanthet's eyes likely leads to a dominated PC, as she uses her seductive gaze and her dominate ability to secure that character's compliance. She drains 2 life energy levels in this way, channeling her profane beauty ability through a double-strength succubus kiss. Malcanthet drains no more than 4

Malcanthet

levels from a character in this manner. After she bestows 4 negative levels, she spends an additional round to grant her victem the effects of the Queen's Kiss, so she can observe her new champions from afar. The demon queen's kiss likely leaves the PC stunned and speechless, but after she's done, she draws that character into an embrace and whispers in his ear.

"You've served me well so far, returning that silly idol to that old bat and then releasing that wretch Shami-Amourae. Just like I planned. So don't balk now, my precious little puppet!

"Demogorgon has two heads, and has always sought to unify them. His two greatest generals, Bagromar and Tetradarian, are clones, each representing half his nature. The more bestial of the two has just returned from a great success in the Blood War; he rests with his army in a mountain camp on Pazunia, very near to my fortress of Vanelon there. His success has gone to his head, filled him with ideas that he's the better of the two. Someone as delightful as you should have no problem convincing General Bagromar to betray his cloned brother, hmmmm?"

She licks the character's ear and smiles a full-fangs smile, then pushes the character away before addressing the party again.

"There; that wasn't so bad, was it? Now, go fetch my old friend Crimson from her home and I'll give you the Iron Flask of Tuerney the Merciless to aid you in your efforts. Or, if you'd prefer, I can tell Demogorgon everything about what you're up to?" She taps her fingers in irritation on the scales of a marilith that sidles up to her. All around the audience chamber, demons are pouring in. "I'm waiting," says the demon queen. "And I hate waiting."

If the party asks for more information about Crimson, ask for an opposed Diplomacy check against Malcanthet's. If it fails, Malcanthet doesn't explain herself, just demands in a voice growing angrier by the moment that the PCs do what she commands. If the check succeeds, Malcanthet explains that Crimson is one of the Radiant Sisters, but that of late she's grown moody and morose. Malcanthet has waited for weeks for Crimson to come to her and explain her problems, but now the demon queen's patience has worn thin. She says that Crimson lives in a dreadful crumbling temple modeled after Pelor's own heart, and hints that the PCs might need to use a bit of force to get her to comply.

At the end of the audience, Malcanthet leans forward in her throne so her thin robe shifts and slips away from her chest—until her bat wings cover her entirely. From under her wings she produces a dented iron flask with a crystal stopper; it's unclear where it was hidden a moment before. "You're not paying attention, I see." Demons all around snicker. Malcanthet smiles sweetly, licks her lips, and says, "You know now all you need to know. Bring me Crimson and I'll give you this in return so you can use Turney's bauble against those old two skulls. The Queen of Succubi turns her head toward a large half-fiend centaur who stands at the edge of the crowd. The PCs seem to have lost her attention entirely.

MALCANTHET **CR 28**

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +46, Spot +46

Aura profane beauty, seductive gaze

Languages Abyssal, Common; tongues, telepathy 300 ft.

AC 50, touch 38, flat-footed 39 (+11 Dex, +12 natural, +17 deflection)

hp 429 (33 HD); fast healing 20; **DR** 20/cold iron, epic, and good

Immune electricity, mind affecting, poison, possession

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 41, reflect enchantment

Fort +35, **Ref** +33, **Will** +32

Spd 40 ft., fly 70 ft. (perfect)

Melee *Lover's Lash* +46/+41/+36/+31 (1d8+13/19–20 plus 1d6 electricity and horrid wounding) and claw +41 (1d4+4) and 2 wings +41 (1d8+4) and tail +41 (1d6+4 plus poison)

Base Atk +33; **Grp** +41

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Trip, sneak attack +12d6

Special Actions queen's kiss, *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 24th)

At will—*astral projection*, *blasphemy*, *charm monster* (DC 31), *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *greater command* (DC 32), *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport*, *plane shift* (DC 34), *shapechange*, *telekinesis* (DC 32), *unhallow*, *unholy aura* (DC 25, effects included in stats above), *unholy blight* (DC 31), *veil* (DC 33)

3/day—*demand* (DC 32), quickened *greater command* (DC 32), quickened *mind fog* (DC 32), *symbol of persuasion* (DC 33), *sympathy* (DC 32)

1/day—*binding* (DC 32), *mass charm monster* (DC 35)

Abilities Str 26, Dex 32, Con 36, Int 26, Wis 30, Cha 44

Feats Combat Expertise, Dark Speech, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (scourge, whip), Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (scourge), Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Trip, Multiattack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*greater command*, *mind fog*)

Skills Bluff +53, Concentration +49, Diplomacy +65, Disguise +53, Escape Artist +47, Forgery +44, Intimidate +57, Knowledge (local) +44, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +44, Knowledge (the planes) +44, Listen +46, Sense Motive +46, Spot +46, Tumble +47, Use Magic Device +53

Possessions *Lover's Lash*

Poison (Su) Injury, Fortitude DC 39, initial damage 3d6 Wisdom drain, secondary damage domination. The domination effect of Malcanthet's poison functions identically to the effects of *dominate monster* (caster level 24th), and can affect creatures immune to poison (the initial Wisdom drain aspect of her poison does not). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Profane Beauty (Su) Malcanthet's otherworldly beauty grants her a deflection bonus equal to her Charisma bonus to her Armor Class as long as she doesn't wear armor. In addition, her beauty nauseates creatures with the good subtype. Good creatures must make a DC 43 Fortitude save each time they attempt to make a melee attack or otherwise touch Malcanthet. Failure indicates they gain 2

negative levels as their souls are infused with her corruption. Malcanthet heals 20 hit points each time her profane beauty bestows negative levels on a creature. The save DC is Charisma-based.

As a full-round action, Malcanthet may use her profane beauty offensively. She must successfully grapple a foe in order to do so, at which point she can bestow 2 negative levels per round she maintains the grapple. Alternatively, she can bestow 2 negative levels with a kiss or other act of passion—she cannot combine this ability with her Queen's Kiss ability.

Queen's Kiss (Su) As a standard action, Malcanthet may bestow a boon upon a creature she kisses. This boon grants the target a +4 profane bonus to any one ability score of the target's choice and a +4 profane bonus on all saving throws. Malcanthet's symbol, a pair of feminine lips pierced by a spike, appears on the target's body as a crimson birthmark or tattoo that is invisible to the recipient. The queen's kiss remains active for as long as the recipient lives, fading only upon death (it does not reappear if the recipient is then brought back to life). As long as this boon is in effect, Malcanthet can monitor that character's condition and location as if she had placed a *status* spell on that character, even across planes. She can communicate telepathically with the character at all times, and by concentrating can observe the world around the character as if she were there in his place. While concentrating in this manner, Malcanthet may use any of her spell-like abilities through the recipient so they manifest as if the recipient had used the ability himself. At any time, as a free action, Malcanthet can cause the mark to tear bloodily from the recipient and fade away, leaving an ugly red scar in its wake. This deals 2d6 points of Charisma drain on the victim and removes the profane bonus to his ability score and saving throws, but does not disrupt Malcanthet's link to the character—she can still monitor and use him as detailed above. Removing the mark (or the scar) is possible with a *dispel chaos* or *dispel evil* spell. Accepting the queen's kiss is a chaotic and evil act. Malcanthet can bestow this boon on up to 13 mortals at any one time (10th-level thralls of Malcanthet do not count against this limit). A creature can resist the kiss with a DC 43 Will save. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Reflect Enchantment (Ex) Whenever an enchantment spell that targets Malcanthet fails to penetrate her spell resistance, that spell is reflected back upon the caster as if Malcanthet had cast the spell herself (although it still uses the caster's ability score modifier to set the save DC).

Seductive Gaze (Su) 30 feet, Will DC 43 negates. Those who meet Malcanthet's gaze and fail to resist are overwhelmed by her otherworldly beauty and suffer a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks, and level checks for the remainder of the round. Once per round, as a free action, Malcanthet can attempt to dominate a creature (as *dominate monster*) currently overwhelmed by her beauty. The target creature can resist becoming dominated with a DC 43 Will save. Malcanthet can dominate only one creature at a time with this ability; if she selects a new target, the old target is immediately freed from this effect. The domination otherwise persists until it is removed via *break enchantment*, *miracle*, or *wish*; it cannot be dispelled. The effect functions at caster level 24th, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, Malcanthet can automatically summon 2d6 incubi, 1d6+2 succubi, or a Radiant Sister lilitu. This ability functions as a 9th-level spell.

Tongues (Su) Malcanthet speaks and understands all languages, as if under the constant effect of a *tongues* spell.

Lover's Lash This is a *+5 shocking burst adamantine scourge* that Malcanthet can call to her hand as a free action, despite any intervening distance between it and herself. Once per day as a free action she can cause *Lover's Lash* to become infused with her sinful essence, causing its electrical aura to turn crimson. The next time she successfully sneak attacks a foe, the creature struck must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or the damage dealt becomes permanent. In order to heal this damage, the demonic nature of the horrid wound must first be reversed by a *miracle* or a *wish*. The wound still persists, but can now be healed magically by any conjuration (healing) spell, provided the caster makes a DC 30 caster level check—otherwise the spell has no effect on the wound. A creature reduced to –10 or fewer hit points by a horrid wound is not technically killed. Rather, just before he dies, he is placed in a state of suspended animation identical to that of a *temporal stasis* spell, save that the victim remains horribly aware of his surroundings and the passage of time. Restoring a creature "slain" in this matter requires a *freedom* spell, at which point the victim dies and can be restored to life by a *true resurrection* spell after a *miracle* or *wish* is used to undo the demonic wound.

Development: Malcanthet intends to use the PCs as her pawns, one way or another. If they're being stubborn (or worse, if they attack her), she does her best to enslave them with her magic. Once all the PCs are dominated, charmed, or otherwise enthralled, this adventure can actually proceed normally, although the added wrinkle of being Malcanthet's newest thralls might cause problems down the line, especially for paladins and good clerics. If the PCs actually manage to bring Malcanthet down below 100 hit points or otherwise prove to be more trouble than she anticipates, she hisses in rage and teleports away, taking the *Iron Flask of Tuerny* with her, and closing off all possibilities of this alliance completely. In fact, when the PCs do make their moves against Demogorgon in the next adventure, they'll find that Malcanthet has fled to his side, making an already difficult task all the more challenging.

Finding Crimson (EL 21)

The Radiant Sisters are lilitu demons who serve as Malcanthet's favored minions, functioning as slavers, singers, assassins, generals, and lovers. Each of these lilitu demons is unique, sporting a halo of light around her head that matches the color of her hair. Lilitu demons themselves are a form of advanced succubus that specializes in the corruption of clerics and other religious mortals. A lilitu has

four sting-tipped tails and hooved feet, but her wings are little more than charred blackend stumps—remnants of the violent ritual that created her.

Crimson's specialty as an infiltrator and assassin has served Malcanthet well in the past, but the Radiant Sister discovered that Malcanthet had recently been entrusting the important killings to an incubus assassin named Syphrian. Rather than confront Malcanthet or kill Syphrian, Crimson elected to retreat into her home and brood.

Crimson's home is built to resemble a Peloran church. The upper floor is roofless and in ruins—Crimson has been spending her time in the catacombs below for the most part, brooding alone or taking hollow pleasure from the six vampires she lives with. These vampires dress and act the role of Peloran priests, but don't bother doing too good a job, otherwise the delicious heresy of their façade is lost.

Entrance to these underground vaults is possible via a hidden trap door in the corner of the ruins above. A DC 30 Search check reveals the trap door's presence. The catacombs below consist of three areas.

1. *Preparation Room*: The first room below the temple contains seven stone biers on which the dead are prepared for interment. A small side room serves Crimson as a place to relax or watch her vampire minions "prepare" living victims out in the main room.

2. *Dining Room*: The second room contains a long wooden table. Crimson has taken to joining the vampires here in feasts of flesh and blood prepared in the previous room.

3. *The Crypts*: The last chamber consists of several crypts. Spiderwebs hang thick here, and of the crypts, six are used by the vampires as lairs. Two of the furthest crypts are completely walled over with stone and brickwork—Crimson delights in using *stone shape* to wall victims alive into these vaults, while at other times she enjoys teleporting into one of the dark oubliettes to spend several days in quiet isolation so she can be alone with her depression.

Creatures: Crimson enjoys the company of her vampire minions, but in the end they're just minions. She won't mind too much if the PCs destroy them, which is fortunate since once the PCs enter the lower level of the chapel, these six vampires quickly notice and move to intercept them. The vampires at first attempt to dominate the intruders, using their façade of being an isolated sect of Peloran missionaries. Once that fails, they gleefully move on to more violent methods of defending their mistress' home.

Crimson herself notices the battle quickly, even if she's in seclusion in a vault, since she casts *status* on her three favorite vampires every day. She prepares for battle by casting *eagle's splendor, death ward, magic vestment, freedom of movement, glibness,* and *mirror image*. This likely gives the PCs enough time to defeat her vampires, but that doesn't matter as much to Crimson as being properly "dressed" to greet guests. Once her spells are in place, she teleports to the vicinity of the battle (using information from *status* to decide where to go).

Once she arrives, Crimson gloomily asks the PCs to leave her alone. While she's certainly capable of defending herself if attacked, she's not really into fighting these days and doesn't want to start anything with the PCs. If they're still fighting her vampires when she arrives, she might try to blind a few PCs with her halo or might cast a few spells here and there; she might even take a few attacks with her *vorpal whip*, but it should be obvious that her heart isn't really into the mayhem.

Convincing Crimson to return with the PCs to speak to Malcanthet requires either a successful Bluff that her queen wants to apologize to her (or some similar lie), or a DC 50 Diplomacy check or successful Intimidate check. Otherwise, the PCs might be forced to physically restrain her and carry her back to Malcanthet. This tactic is one of the few that can spur Crimson into an honest fight.

CRIMSON **CR 18**

Radiant Sister of Malcanthet, female lilitu bard 12

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

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Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +34, Spot +34

Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 38, touch 24, flat-footed 28

hp 235 (26 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 23

Fort +18, **Ref** +27, **Will** +22; evasion

Weakness divine magic

Spd 40 ft.

Melee *+2 vorpal whip dagger* +35/+30/+25/+20 (1d6+4/19–20) and claw +31 (1d6+1) and 4 stingers +31 (1d4+1 plus poison)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with stingers, 15 ft. with whip)

Base Atk +23; **Grp** +25

Atk Options Combat Reflexes

Special Actions halo, lilitu's gift

Bard Spells Known (CL 12th)

4th (6/day)—*freedom of movement, modify memory* (DC 30), *rainbow pattern* (DC 28)

3rd (6/day)—*dispel magic, fear* (DC 27), *glibness, haste*

2nd (7/day)—*eagle's splendor, hold person* (DC 28), *locate object, mirror image*

1st (7/day)—*expeditious retreat, obscure object, Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 27), *undetectable alignment*

0 (3/day)—*detect magic, mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation, summon instrument*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 9th)

5th—*commune, greater command* (DC 31), *dominate person*[D] (DC 31), *plane shift* (DC 29), *raise dead*

4th—*cure critical wounds* (3), *confusion*[D] (DC 30), *death ward, neutralize poison*

3rd—*cure serious wounds* (4), *magic vestment, nondetection*[D], *stone shape*

2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (5), *death knell* (DC 26), *hold person* (DC 28), *invisibility*[D], *status* (already cast)

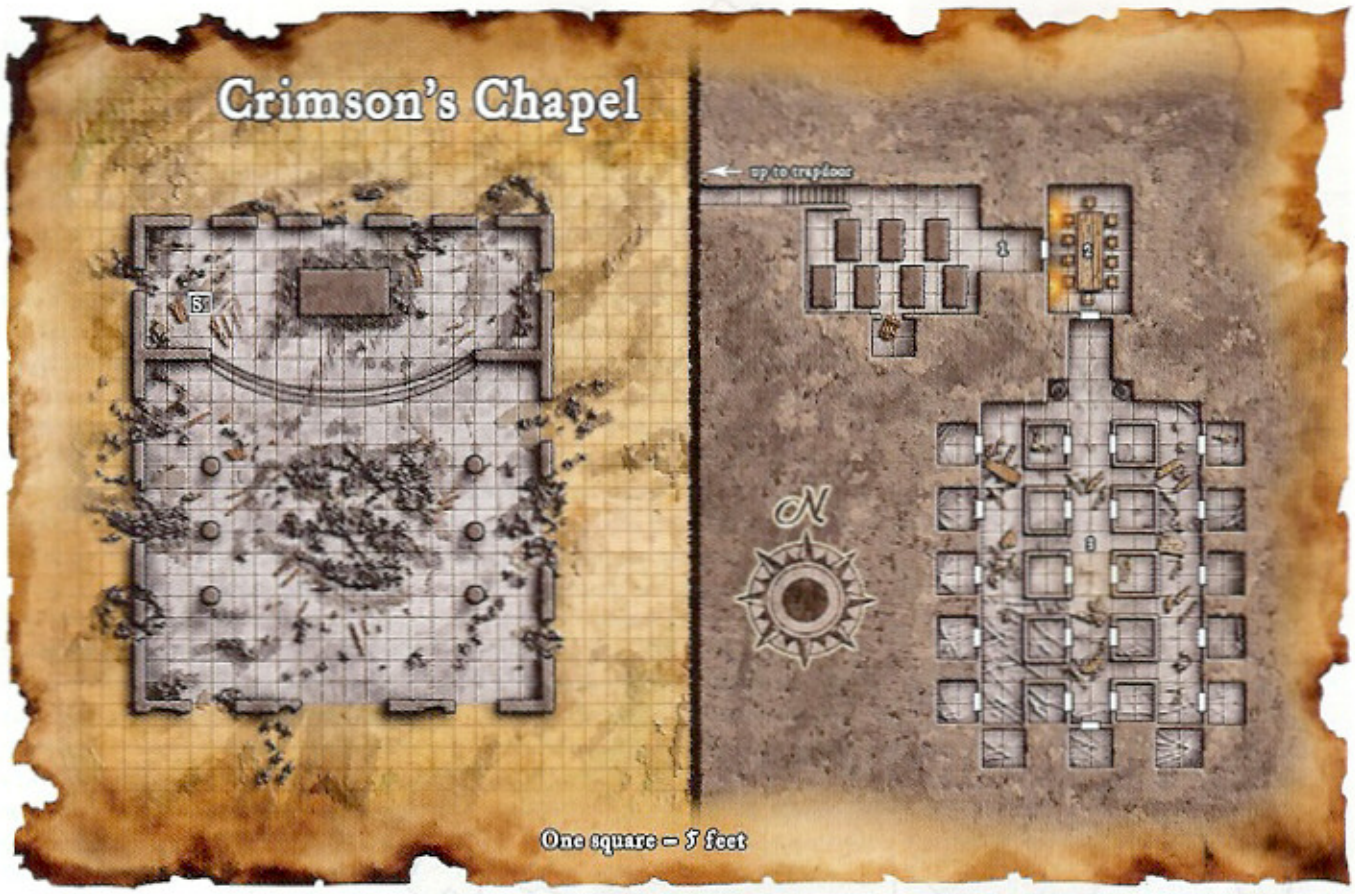
1st—*command*[D] (DC 27), *cure light wounds* (5), *divine favor, sanctuary* (DC 25), *shield of faith*

0—*cure minor wounds* (4), *detect magic, mending*

D domain; **Domains** Temptation, Trickery

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)

At will—*charm monster* (DC 28), *detect good, detect thoughts* (DC 26), *disguise self* (DC 25, no limit on duration), *fly,*



suggestion (DC 27), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *sending*, *tongues*

3/day—quickened *suggestion* (DC 27)

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 29), *symbol of persuasion* (DC 30)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 30, Con 21, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 38

SQ item use, mock divinity, shroud alignment

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech, Disguise Spell, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Multiattack, Persuasive, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*suggestion*), Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +45, Concentration +34, Diplomacy +47, Disguise +31 (+33 acting), Forgery +34, Heal +22, Intimidate +47, Knowledge (religion) +34, Listen +34, Perform (sing) +43, Perform (stringed instrument) +43, Sense Motive +34, Spot +34

Possessions *+4 glamered leather armor, +2 vorpal whip dagger* (stored in right *glove of storing*), *ring of evasion, ring of protection +4, gloves of storing* (2), golden heart worth 2,500 gp (stored in left *glove of storing*)

Disguise Spell A Radiant Sister can disguise spells as performances. To do so, she must make a Perform check as part of the action used to cast the spell. Onlookers must match or exceed her check result with a Spot check to detect that she's casting a spell. Unless the spell visibly emanates from her, observers don't know where the effect came from. A disguised spell can't be identified with a Spellcraft check, but the act of casting still provokes attacks of opportunity as normal. This feat appeared in *Complete Adventurer*.

Halo (Su) Each Radiant Sister's head is surmounted by a shimmering halo that matches the hue of her hair, a manifestation of her link and loyalty to Malcanthet. A Radiant Sister can control the intensity of illumination her halo provides as a free action, varying it from a faint glow that is all but imperceptible to a brilliance that provides bright illumination to a radius of 120 feet. Once per round as a free action, a Radiant Sister can focus the light of her halo on a single creature within 30 feet. The creature targeted must make a DC 31 Fortitude save to avoid being permanently blinded. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Item Use (Ex) A Radiant Sister can use any magic item as though she had successfully used the Use Magic Device skill.

Lilitu's Gift (Su) Once per day, a Radiant Sister can embrace a willing or helpless creature to grant a +2 profane bonus to Charisma and a +2 profane bonus on saving throws as a standard action for 24 hours. The Radiant Sister's name manifests as a tattoo in Abyssal on that creature's body. The recipient cannot see his own tattoo. As long as the gift remains active, the lilitu can monitor that character's condition and location as if she had placed a *status* spell on that character, can communicate telepathically with the character at all times (even across planes), and by concentrating can observe the world around the character as if she were there in his place. Accepting a lilitu's gift is a chaotic act. A creature can resist the gift with a DC 31 Will save. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Mock Divinity (Ex) A Radiant Sister casts spells as a 9th-level cleric, except that she

Tuerny's Iron Flask

This artifact was crafted ages ago by the wizard-tyrant Tuerny, who promptly used the flask to capture an aspect of Graz'zt and forced him to ravage the armies and holdings of Tuerny's enemies. During one battle, the aspect turned the tables and captured Tuerny in the flask. After returning to the Abyss, he transformed Tuerny into a dretch as a slave. In time, Tuerny gained power by successfully leading the demonic forces in the Blood War, and became a nalfeshnee demon. Miraculously, Tuerny maintained his personality and wizardly skills throughout this evolution, but during the time he lost track of his *Iron Flask*. The artifact became the blueprint for countless lesser versions, but the original remains the most potent of them all.

The *Iron Flask of Tuerny the Merciless* functions as a normal *iron flask*, except that it can only capture and command demons. A targeted demon can resist being captured by making a DC 26 Will save. It can hold up to 100 demons at a time, but currently contains only seven; three vrocks, a nalfeshnee, two mariliths, and a balor. The wielder can command one of the demons within to come fort to serve him for 1 hour per day; he may command demons within in the flask in this manner no more than 3 times per day. If the flask is opened without commanding one of the demons, 1d6 of them escape each round to assault and savage the flask's holder, squabbling over its control.

The flask can also be used to contain a single aspect of a demon lord, although to do so, it must first be emptied—a single demon lord aspect (regardless of that aspect's actual power) counts as all 100 demons the flask could normally store. The flask is particularly potent at capturing aspects—this was its original intent, after all. An aspect suffers a –10 penalty on the Will save to avoid being entrapped by the flask.

Overwhelming conjuration (chaos, evil); CL 25th; Weight 1 lb.

uses her Charisma score to determine bonus spells per day and spell saving throw DCs. She cannot spontaneously cast *cure* or *inflict* spells, nor can she turn or rebuke undead. Most lilitus have access to the Demonic and Trickery domains. The Radiant Sisters are an exception. As the favored agents of Malcanthet, they are allowed to choose their domains from any she normally grants her clerics—Chaos, Evil, Temptation, and Trickery.

Poison (Su) Stinger—Injury, Fort DC 21, 2d6 Wis/1d4 negative levels. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Shroud Alignment (Ex) Spells and spell-like abilities that have the good descriptor treat a lilitu as if her alignment was good. Magic items are similarly fooled.

Temptation Granted Power As long as Crimson wears no armor, she gains a +2 competence bonus on Charisma-based checks opposed by female creatures, and the save DC for any mind-affecting spells or abilities she uses against female creatures increases by 1.

Vulnerable to Divine Magic (Ex) A lilitu's heretical nature renders her particularly susceptible to divine magic. She makes all saving throws against divine magic with a –2 penalty, and checks made to overcome her spell resistance with a divine spell gain a +4 sacred bonus.

Peloran Heretics, vampire monk/shadowdancers (6): hp 90 each; *Monster Manual* 251.

Development: Assuming the PCs return to Malcanthet's palace with Crimson in tow, demons bow and clear the corridors ahead of them. Reaching Malcanthet's pleasure dome is a simple task this time, almost as if the halls of the structure themselves are twisting to aid the journey. When the PCs arrive, they find Malcanthet still lounging in her fleshy throne, but the room has been cleared of all other occupants save for the twelve other Radiant Sisters, all of whom stand in an arc before their queen. Malcanthet stares at Crimson, and the PCs might feel something happening: telepathy? Pure hate? Reconciliation? The answer becomes apparent soon enough, as with a barely perceptible nod, Malcanthet sends the other twelve Radiant Sisters to work. The execution takes an excruciatingly long time, since the Radiant Sisters can't easilly penetrate Crimson's damage reduction (unless one of them beheads her), but since Malcanthet's presence holds the outcast lilitu motionless, it's just a matter of time until Crimson has been reduced to gory ribbons. The remaining twelve bow to their queen, and with a few sly looks and winks to the PCs, teleport away.

Malcanthet turns to address the PCs at this point as a small army of deformed rutterkin servants skitter into the room to clean the bloody mess with their tongues.

"You may have the mad wizard's flask," Malcanthet says in a voice that sounds almost tired. With a flick of the wrist, she carelessly tosses the artifact across the room; it clangs as it strikes the floor, bounces, and then finally rolls to a stop.

"A pity. I'll miss Crimson, but she had it coming. I'm sure the sisters will find a replacement for me to try out soon enough." She smiles again. "You might not want to be here when they get back. You're too fragile to get caught up in that. And I'm sure you've got other things to take care of before you head up to Gaping Maw, now, don't you my dearies? Move along now. We'll have a chance to talk again later. In the meantime, I'm sure your friend Iggwilv will have a few nominees to use that flask on, hmm?"

PART FIVE: THE BLOOD SHALLOWS

To most sages, the Abyssal layer known as the Blood Shallows is a footnote at best. But Iggwilv knows better. Long ago, this marshy realm was one of many ruled by the obyrith lord and one-time Prince of Demons, Obox-ob. When he was killed by the Queen of Chaos, several of his aspects were all that remained. The Queen of Chaos hunted down as many of these aspects as she could, but she missed one. That aspect retreated to the depths of the Abyss, to the 663rd layer, and there on Zionyn this aspect has slowly returned to its previous power.

Such is relatively common knowledge in the Abyss today, yet what is not is that a second aspect escaped the queen's rampage so long ago. This second aspect escaped her notice by entering a state of imprisonment at the heart of the Blood Shallows. Yet once the Queen's rampage was over, none remained who remembered, and the knowledge of this imprisoned aspect faded. Iggwilv first heard clues of the aspect's existence from an ancient and half-insane baernaloth she encountered on one of her journeys through Hades, and over the years she's uncovered numerous other bits of supporting evidence to further prve it. She's not completely convinced there's an aspect of Obox-ob trapped here, but she does know that Demogorgon has seized one of the largest hills in the Blood Shallows, a place called Feedgut, to serve as the site for a storehouse and depot for war supplies. At the very least, a raid on Feedgut can damage his army's supply lines.

Once the PCs secure the *Iron Flask of Tuerny the Merciless*, Iggwilv feels confident enough to tell them of her suspicions about the imprisoned aspect. Her research indicates that casting a *freedom* spell atop Feedgut should be enough to release the aspect, and if the PCs are quick, they can then capture the aspect in the *Iron Flask*, giving them a perfect method of transporting the aspect deep into Gaping Maw, where its release can do the most damage to Demogorgon. Unfortunately, the *Iron Flask* can only hold the single aspect; all other demons within the flask must be emptied first, and as long as Obox-ob is trapped inside, it cannot be used to trap more demons. Iggwilv helpfully offers to take care of the demons currently trapped inside; otherwise the PCs will need to release and deal with them on their own.

A DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals that the Blood Shallows are the 81st layer of the Abyss. Demogorgon stages and trains entire legions here, though like the many other demon lords who have tried before him, he's never been able to seize control of the layer. The commonly held belief is that this is simply one of those layers the Abyss itself doesn't want controlled, but in truth, it is in fact "controlled" in secret by the imprisoned aspect of Obox-ob.

The layer is notable for its white sky and blue clouds, and for its acidic, blood-red waters. The layer is largely marshland, and areas of high ground are redoubts of petty demon lords, generals, or bitter obyriths. This high ground is valuable because the water is so painful and largely useless. Touching the water reveals its acidic nature; wading through it or falling into it deals 3d6 points of acid damage per round. The River Styx passes along the edge of this, so the PCs can sail the *Sea Wyvern* there with ease, but bringing the ship into the sodden lands of the blood-red marsh is a poor choice, as the acidic water swiftly eats through a ship's hull.

If the PCs cannot cast *freedom* themsleves, Iggwilv is willing to part with a scroll of *freedom* from her own library. If no one can even cast spells from a magic scroll, she rolls her eyes in exasperation and sends her only loyal apprentice, Landerbold, along to cast the spell from the scroll for them.

Feedgut (EL 19 or 22)

The tallest hill on this relatively small layer is indeed Feedgut. Roughly 10 miles square and half-covered with tents and barracks, the other half is given over to diseased-looking scrubland, drill grounds, and storehouses for supplies. Demogorgon stockpiles both supplies and troops here, most notably a group of enormous demons known as goristros. Dozens of other demons dwell here as well—mostly babaus, rutterkins, and barlguras—waiting not-so-patiently for the call to war but afraid to desert the army as long as Gorgant remains in charge.

Creatures: Gorgant the Two-Faced, an aspect of Demogorgon, is a horrible result of Demogorgon's early work in demonic growth and hybridization. He has two heads fused together at the back, giving him two faces looking front and back. One of his snouts is full of shark-like serrated teeth, while the other is less monstrous and is capable of normal speech. His body is covered in a mixture of scales and tough, bristly fur, which forms a sort of mane between his two skulls. His tentacular arms end in immense pincers. Gorgant speaks with a stereophonic, gurgling voice, and his eyes perpetually weep blood. In combat, Gorgant attacks with his claws, a single bite, and two ranged touch attacks.

As the final ritual to activate the savage tide grows near, Demogorgon hasn't paid much attention to this small outpost. As a result, Gorgant has grown lax with his duties. He often sends the retrievers out into the marshland to nearby hills to torment and capture the demons that have claimed them, or summons demons himself to torment. As a result, the PCs should have a relatively easy time approaching his tent.

Though the party could attack the army single-handedly in an attempt to take out Gorgant and thus rout the army, there is another way to disrupt the supply post, one that in some ways might be more dangerous but is certainly more devastating to the complex. The PCs can use a *freedom* spell to release the entrapped aspect of Obox-ob.

To cast this spell, the PCs must be in range of the central supply building, as it was on this site that the aspect imprisoned itself so long ago. It should be a relatively simple task for the PCs to reach this location, since the demons in the camp aren't very attentive. When the spell is cast, the entire hill begins shaking and rumbling. The demons begin to panic and too late realize they've been invaded. Before any of the demons can act, a towering tangle of chitinous limbs, writhing insect arms, stinging tails,

and a horrific stalk terminating in a three-faced, one-mouthed nightmare erupts from the ground in a shower of stone and soil.

The aspect of Obox-ob has atrophied mentally over the eons, and while it retains its mental statistics, it's initially overwhelmed with a tremendous rage and urge to destroy. It spends the first round ruining the building atop its grave, and then moves on to nearby tents and demons. If the PCs wish to let the aspect ruin the place, they can simply retreat to the safety of a nearby hill and watch the fun.

If you wish, you can provide the PCs with the stats for Obox-ob's avatar, and allow them to decide what actions the destructive demon lord takes each round. In 1d6 rounds, Gorgant himself arrives on the scene to attempt to slay the monster—rather than face Demogorgon's punishment for failure, Gorgant fights to the death, be his foe the PCs or an aspect of an obyrith lord.

GORGANT, THE TWO-FACED **CR 19**

Aspect of Demogorgon

CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)

Init +8; **Senses** all around vision, darkvision 60 ft., enhanced detection, low-light vision; Listen +31, Spot +39

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Undercommon; telepathy 200 ft.

AC 38, touch 13, flat-footed 34 (–1 size, +4 Dex, +25 natural)

hp 348 (24 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 15/cold iron and good

Immune charm, cold, confusion, electricity, poison

Resist acid 20, fire 20; **SR** 30

Fort +24, **Ref** +20, **Will** +20

Spd 40 ft.

Melee* 2 claws +32 (1d12+29/19–20) and bite +30 (1d8+22)

Ranged 2 blood tears +27 touch (3d6 acid)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +24; **Grp** +42

Atk Options Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Special Actions *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)

At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, darkness, desecrate, detect thoughts* (DC 28), *fly, greater magic fang, greater teleport, heat metal, telekinesis* (DC 31), *warp wood* (DC 28)

3/day—*fear* (DC 30), quickened *flesh to stone* (DC 32), *greater dispel magic, magic missile, stone shape*

1/day—*baleful polymorph* (DC 31), *cone of cold* (DC 31)

*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 38, Dex 19, Con 30, Int 22, Wis 14, Cha 23

SQ two brains

Feats Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*flesh to stone*)

Skills Balance +31, Concentration +37, Diplomacy +37, Hide +27, Intimidate +33, Jump +45, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (religion) +33, Listen +31, Move Silently +31, Search +41, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +37, Spot +39

All Around Vision (Ex) Gorgant's two faces grant him a +8 racial bonus on Search and Spot checks, and he can't be flanked.

Blood Tears (Su) Gorgant's eyes constantly weep bloody teardrops; he can squirt these acidic tears with a range increment of 30 feet, making up to two ranged attacks as a full attack action. A creature struck takes 3d6 points of acid damage, and then another 3d6 points of acid damage on the next round. Lawful or good creatures take an additional 2d6 points of unholy damage on the first round when they are hit by these tears.

Enhanced Detection (Su) Gorgant is constantly under the effects of *detect good, detect law, detect magic,* and *see invisibility.* These effects cannot be dispelled.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, Gorgant can automatically summon 1d4 hezrous or one marilith. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

Two Brains (Ex) Gorgant's two faces share the same personality and thoughts, but he still has two connected brains. He gains a +4 racial bonus on Will saves, a +2 racial bonus on Reflex saves, and is immune to charm and confusion effects.

ASPECT OF OBOX-OB **CR 22**

CE Huge outsider (chaotic, evil, obyrith)
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Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +36, Spot +36

Aura discordant drone (40 ft., Will DC 31), form of madness (120 ft., Will DC 31)

Languages Abyssal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 41, touch 11, flat-footed 38

hp 455 (26 HD); fast healing 15; **DR** 20/cold iron and good

Immune disease, mind-affecting, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 35

Fort +28, Ref +18, Will +22

Spd 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee* 3 stings +31 (3d6+17/19–20 plus poison) and
bite +29 (2d6+11) and
tongue +29 (1d8+11 plus implant chaos)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +26; **Grp** +46

Atk Options Cleave, Flyby Attack, Power Attack

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th):

At Will—*astral projection, desecrate, detect good, detect law, giant vermin, greater dispel magic, greater teleport, telekinesis* (DC 23), *summon swarm, unhallow, unholy blight* (DC 22)

3/day—*creeping doom,* quickened *giant vermin, symbol of insanity* (DC 25) quickened *telekinesis* (DC 23)

1/day—*polymorph any object* (DC 26, into vermin shape only)

*5-point Power Attack.

Abilities Str 34, Dex 17, Con 36, Int 23, Wis 24, Cha 27

Feats Cleave, Dark Speech, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (sting), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*giant vermin, telekinesis*)

Skills Climb +41, Concentration +42, Hide +24, Intimidate +37, Jump +47, Knowledge (arcana) +35, Knowledge (religion) +35, Knowledge (the planes) +35, Listen +36, Move Silently +32, Sense Motive +36, Spellcraft +37, Spot +36, Tumble +34

Discordant Drone (Su) The cacophony of Obox-ob's chitinous body shrieking and wailing creates a zone of discordant noise whenever he moves at least 5 feet. All creatures within 40 feet when this drone is in effect must make DC 31 Will saves or be deafened and confused for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Form of Madness (Su) Any creature within 120 feet that observes Obox-ob must make a DC 31 Will save. Failure indicates the creature's mind is forevermore haunted by Obox-ob's unholy shape. The affected creature must make a DC 31 Will save each time it tries to rest for the night to avoid suffering the effects of a *nightmare* spell (caster level 20th). In addition, the victim now interprets any threat as linked to Obox-ob and suffers a –4 penalty on all saving throws against fear effects. A creature immune to fear loses this immunity as long as he is affected by Obox-ob's form of madness. The victim automatically becomes shaken whenever he is within 30 feet of a vermin monster. This effect is permanent and is especially difficult to cure with magic. A *heal* or *greater restoration* can cure the effects if the caster makes a DC 30 caster level check. *Miracle* or *wish* automatically cures the condition.

A creature that makes this save is immune to Obox-ob's form of madness for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting effect that does not affect

Gorgant

chaotic evil outsiders. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Su) Injury, Fortitude DC 36, initial and secondary damage 2d8 Intelligence drain. A creature drained to 0 Intelligence is immediately transformed into a fiendish monstrous scorpion of the same size as his previous form—the victim retains none of its previous abilities, intelligence, or memories. Only *miracle* or *wish* can reverse this fate. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Implant Chaos (Su) A creature that takes damage from Obox-ob's tongue attack must make a DC 31 Fortitude save. Failure indicates the tongue implants the victim with the raw stuff of chaos. The victim gains 1d4 negative levels per round as the chaos transforms his body and soul. Once the victim has a number of negative levels equal to his Hit Dice, the chaos consumes him utterly, leaving behind only his gear. A creature destroyed in this manner can only be brought back to life with a *miracle*, *true resurrection*, or *wish* spell, and even then the caster must make a DC 30 caster level check or the implanted chaos immediately begins to destroy the victim again as soon as he is restored to life. *Dispel chaos* halts the progress of the implantation, but does not restore lost levels. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Treasure: Even as an aspect, demons are greedy. Gorgant has been doing a bit of war profiteering and keeps the profits in a huge white chest made of viper tree wood in his tent. The chest contains 400 innocent souls (which resemble magical, aligned gems worth 500 gp each), and a *+4 thundering dwarven waraxe*, a suit of *+3 full plate armor*, a suit of *+3 improved silent moves leather armor*, a *+5 sunshield*, and a *staff of transmutation* (27 charges).

Development: The aspect of Obox-ob has no real means of leaving the Blood Shallows, so once it's left the camp in ruins, the PCs should be able to move in and capture him with the *Iron Flask of Tuerny*. Doing so is dangerous, since the aspect immediately attacks anyone it notices, and in order to use the *Flask*, the PCs need to enter the range of the aspect's form of madness. Fortunately, the flask is potent, and chances are good the PCs will be able to capture the aspect in only 1 or 2 rounds. The aspect shrieks in rage as it's pulled into the *Flask*, coiling and thrashing as it turns to black smoke and is pulled inside. Once it is captured, the *Iron Flask of Tuerny* periodically shakes and trembles, and now and then new dents appear in its surface. It's capable of holding the aspect indefinitely, but only just.

Retaliation (EL 22)

Demogorgon's agents are wily demons; at some point, they figure out what the party's planehopping and alliance-building means and try to stop the heroes with a brutal assault. This event occurs not long after they destroy the camp at Feedgut, but likely not until after the PCs finish their business with General Bagromar (assuming they tackle that mission within a few days of finishing off Feedgut).

The staging and timing of this retaliatory strike depends on you—it should occur at some point when the PCs are not on board the *Sea Wyvern*, both because the demons fear Charon and because they function best when their monstrous mounts have room to move.

Creatures: This force, sent by Demogorgon himself to destroy the upstarts and (hopefully) claim the *Iron Flask of Tuerny*, consists of a unique demon called Enderan and four undead stone giant fighters. These are juju zombies created by one of Demogorgon's cultists that retain their skills in life but augment them with necromantic unlife. All five ride atop immense tyrannosaurs that have been transformed into bodaks. This force is, in all, an EL 22 encounter, and can serve well as a climax for this adventure if you time it well. If you wish, you can even time the attack so it occurs at a point where the PCs can call upon one of their new allies; if you do, consider giving the PCs a printout of Iggwilv's, Orcus's, or Malcanthet's stats for them to run in the battle. Doing this removes much of the threat of the encounter, but gives the PCs an exciting chance to see their new allies in action.

Enderan is a monkey-headed, dragon-tailed blasphemy with rings of dragon-scales over its rolls of muscle. Its helmet is strange; one helm is clearly worn on its head; the second is empty but welded next to the first. This bizarre helmet, of course, symbolizes Enderan's servitude to Demogorgon.

As the bodak-mounted lancers approach, Enderan accosts the PCs, his voice thunderous and booming.

"We have chased you across the planes long enough, pests. Stop your pathetic attempts to defy the Prince of Demons, or we will run you down!"

This warning is little more than preamble, of course. Major Enderan and his undead minions attack an instant after his threat.

MAJOR ENDERAN **CR 19**

Unique demon
CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., enhanced detection, scent; Listen +26, Spot +26
Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 38, touch 10, flat-footed 37 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +15 natural, +13 armor)
hp 341 (22 HD); fast healing 10; **DR** 15/cold iron and good
Immune death effects, electricity, mind-affecting effects, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 30
Fort +24, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14

Spd 30 ft. (40 ft. unarmored)
Melee* *+5 unholy lance* +30/+25/+20/+15 (2d6+28/×3) and
sting +20 (1d6+9 plus poison) or
+2 keen lawful outsider bane bastard sword +27/+22/+17/+12 (2d6+20/17–20) and
sting +20 (1d6+9 plus poison)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +22; **Grp** +35
Atk Options Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)
At will—*darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect thoughts* (DC 18), *fly*, *greater teleport*, *telekinesis* (DC 21), *unhallow*
3/day—*cone of cold* (DC 21), *fear* (DC 20), quickened *haste*

*3-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 28, Dex 13, Con 33, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 23

Feats Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (haste), Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample

Skills Balance +25, Climb +29, Concentration +36, Intimidate +31, Jump +33, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +28, Listen +26, Ride +26, Sense Motive +26, Spot +26, Swim +24

Possessions *+5 full plate, +5 unholy lance, +2 keen lawful outsider bane bastard sword*

Enhanced Detection (Su) Enderan is constantly under the effects of *detect good, detect law, detect magic,* and *see invisibility.* These effects cannot be dispelled.

Poison (Ex) Injury—Fortitude DC 32 negates, 3d6 Con/3d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Lemorian Lancer (4) CR 15

Male stone giant juju zombie fighter 5

NE Large undead

Monster Manual 124, *Unapproachable East* 66

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +19

Languages Common, Giant (cannot speak)

AC 37, touch 10, flat-footed 36

hp 145 (19 HD); **DR** 5/slashing

Immune electricity, *magic missile,* undead traits

Fort +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

Spd 30 ft. (40 ft. unarmored), climb 20 ft.

Melee* *+3 lance* +26/+21/+16/+11 (2d6+34/19–20/×3) or *+2 greatsword* +24/+19/+14/+9 (3d6+31/19–20)

Ranged rock +17 (2d8+13)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +32

Atk Options Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge

Special Actions rock throwing

*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 36, Dex 16, Con —, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 16

SQ rock catching, turn resistance +4

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (lance), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Toughness, Weapon Focus (lance), Weapon Specialization (lance)

Skills Climb +33, Hide –6 (+2 in rocky terrain), Jump +25, Ride +18, Spot +19

Possessions *+5 full plate, +3 lance, +2 greatsword*

Bodak Tyrannosaurus (5) CR 14

Advanced bodak tyrannosaurus

CE Huge undead

Monster Manual 61, *Dragon Compendium* 176

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +19, Spot +18

AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 22

hp 180 (24 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron

Immune electricity, undead traits

Resist acid 10, fire 10

Fort +14, **Ref** +18, **Will** +10

Weakness sunlight vulnerability

Spd 40 ft.

Melee bite +27 (3d6+16)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +37

Special Actions death gaze

Abilities Str 32, Dex 16, Con —, Int 1, Wis 17, Cha 12

Feats Alertness, Improved Natural Armor (6), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD)
Skills Listen +19, Spot +18

Death Gaze (Su) Death, range 30 feet, DC 23 Fortitude negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Flashbacks (Ex) At the start of an encounter, there is a 5% chance a bodak tyrannosaurus notices something about an opponent that causes it to recall its life (randomly determined if more than one opponent is present). If this happens, the bodak tyrannosaurus takes no action for 1 round and thereafter takes a –2 penalty on all attacks directed at that opponent.

Sunlight Vulnerability (Ex) A bodak tyrannosaurus takes 1 point of damage per round when exposed to sunlight.

PART SIX: PAZUNIA

The final mission Iggwilv suggests is one of the more dangerous, as it doesn't require the PCs to seek out one of Demogorgon's enemies. It asks them to tempt one of the Prince of Demon's own aspects to turn against its source. The previous missions can all be done with relative amounts of stealth, but once the PCs attempt this one, Demogorgon very quickly realizes what they're up to, and the call to war won't be long in coming. As a result, Iggwilv suggests they attempt this mission last.

In this mission, the PCs must infiltrate an immense encampment of demons under the command of one of two demonic clones of the Prince of Demons—General Bagromar. The camp is located in forbidding mountains about 2 miles from the fortress of Vanelon on the first layer of the Abyss, Pazunia. The River Styx flows a mere half-mile from the camp. From this point, it was easy for Bagromar to send his army into the field against one of Mammon's armies, a battle that the demon host won with ease. It also makes it a relatively easy camp for the PCs to reach.

Bagromar's Camp (EL 20)

Sprawled here in the mountains is a nightmare vista—a huge armed camp of demonic soldiers. Dozens of breeds of demon have been crammed into the strangely spiral-shaped camp. Within the camp thousands of demons, scream, fight among themselves, eat food that's still alive, and make a fiendish racket. The central section of the camp seems slightly more organized, containing several temporary buildings and round tents. At the exact center of the camp is a large tent—doubtless the abode of the army's commander.

General Bagromar does indeed wait within the large tent at the center of the camp. Despite the overwhelming presence of all these demons, the party should be able to bypass the pickets at the outskirts of the camp easily, putting them in the middle of 35,000 demons of various types. The most dangerous thing the PCs face initially as they step into the camp is the insanity ward—a network of hundreds of *symbols of insanity* (CL 20th) interspersed among the pickets. The best way to bypass these wards is to teleport past them, since flying into the camp draws too much attention—characters who fly are immediately confronted by a flight of a dozen vrocks who demand the PCs' reason for entering Bagromar's camp. The vrocks are, miraculously, still sated on mayhem from their recent triumph against Mammon's forces, and do not immediately attack. They do, however, quickly escort the PCs to one of the camp's commanding

General Bogromar

officers, a bloated balor demon named Dingoslag.

If the PCs attempt to teleport into the central section, they find that it is warded as well by an immense *dimensional lock*; attempts to teleport within fail, placing the PCs at the periphery of the teleport ward deep in the camp. And once the PCs are in the camp, it isn't long before a group of hezrous or a phalanx of tiefling blackguards intercepts them and brings them before Dingoslag.

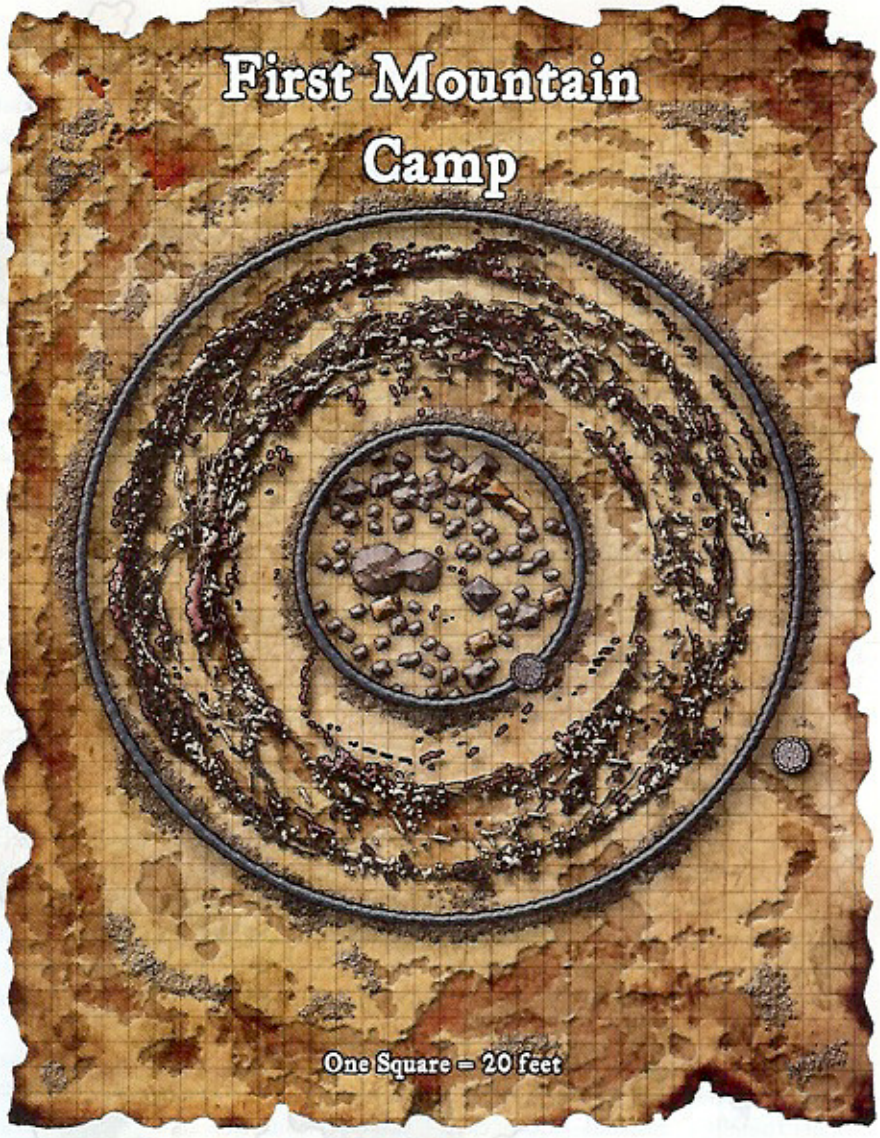
Creatures: Dingoslag is the camp's "minister of entrance," and it is his word that governs all requests to meet with the army's higher-up commanders. Most of his day is spent denying and then mocking conscripts seeking an audience with General Bagromar. As the PCs are brought before him, he puts on a show, appraising them with a cunning look.

"You're new, aren't you? No, let me guess. You're... cultists? No? Maybe blackguard recruits from Sigil? No, not quite scruffy enough. Maybe you're messengers from Mammon, with an offer of surrender?" He grins, then scratches his barrel-sized head. "I don't know. You must be on our side, though, right?"

Dingoslag isn't nearly as dumb as he acts. In fact, if the PCs try to Bluff, lie, or bribe him, he plays along. His job is to discourage those who seek to speak to Bagromar, a job he greatly enjoys. If the PCs ask for an audience with the general, Dingoslag shakes his head sadly.

"General Bagromar doesn't get a lot of visitors. His brother is the smoother talker, but Bagromar has just won a great victory in the Blood War. The slaughter was fantastic! Rivers of beautiful devilish ichor flowing along the field and all that. We defended our way of life from the enemy, I tell you. They'll be back, of course. The war just keeps going. I mean, it has for as long as I can remember. Always fighting. We never really stop. We don't really want to."

The hulking demon seems unsure of himself for a minute, then shakes himself. "Right, General Bagromar's tent. This way. We'll get there. Mind your step."



Of course, Dingoslag doesn't really intend to lead the PCs to General Bagromar—he wants simply to lead the PCs back out into the open so that when he attacks them, he'll have a nice audience to witness what he thinks will be yet another mighty victory for him. While combat in the middle of an army might seem to start things off on the wrong foot, violence in a demon camp isn't unusual. While the demons initially cheer for Dingoslag, when it becomes apparent that the PCs have the upper hand, they begin cheering for them instead. This unexpected turn of events raises Dingoslag's ire, and in a desperate attempt to regain his prestige, he fights to the death. Once the battle is over, the demons that have gathered lose interest, drifting back to their own idle fancies. From this point on, the PCs are free to wander through the camp without being accosted.

Dingoslag, balor demon: hp 290; *Monster Manual* 40.

Meeting Bagromar (EL 23)

If the party survives the encounter with Dingoslag intact and without angering the entire army, they may proceed to visit General Bagromar. Word of their triumph over Dingoslag spreads quickly, and none interfere as they approach the central tent. Bagromar's tent looks strangly shabby at first, patched with hairy and scaled pelts of all kinds, until one realizes that the walls of the tent are made from thousands of tanned devil

hides—bearded devil scales, the blue-white skin of bone devils, and even black feathered erinyes wings. The tent flap leading in seems to be either a pit fiend hide or a very good facsimile.

On either side of the entryway stand two nalfeshnee demons. Several glabrezus stand at the ready nearby. None of these demons bother the PCs, but they do keep an eye on them. This apparent lax attitude stems in fact from a mixture of fear and respect for Bagromar, who has on many occasions demonstrated his disdain for overly protective guards by eating his bodyguards alive.

Inside, Bagromar's tent has a thick, fancy carpet, a single large table made of interlaced black bones and pale wood, and a single chair in front of a golden-feathered wall. Standing at the table is the general himself, a creature that looks exactly like a one-headed Demogorgon: baboon head, tentacles, the mix of scaly and furred skin. The general idly consults a map with a measuring stick and dictates notes to three dretch scribes. They are scribbling furiously. As the PCs enter, Bagromar blinks, then waves them over to the table. Before the PCs have a chance to speak, he distractedly greets them in Common. "Yes, yes. You're the ones who just murdered Dingoslag. What do you want from me?"

Let the PCs present their case to Bagromar, and if they mention Tetradarian, Bagromar snorts in derision before replying.

"You are very brave or very foolish to come here, to suggest to me to turn against my brother, to turn traitor to the Prince of Demons, my maker. My agents and His agents have sought you everywhere, and now you just fall into my lap. Forgive me if I am suspicious.

"But still, you could be useful to me. My cursed brother has resisted the consolidation of our armies under my command. Despite my continued success in the Blood War, he would rather plot and play at his games. While I am out on the field, murdering for our maker's glory! It sickens me. Yet what is to be done?"

At this point, the PCs are in dangerous territory. The wrong inflection, the wrong tone, and General Bagromar could decide that it's best to kill these upstarts and parade their corpses before Demogorgon for his own glory. At this point, the PCs can make a Diplomacy check; the character with the highest score makes the initial check, and the others can aid this roll. The roll itself is opposed by Bagromar's Diplomacy check. If the PCs show Bagromar that they have the *Iron Flask of Tuerny* and indicate that they'll use it if he doesn't go along with the plan to undermine Tetradarian's forces, they gain a +10 bonus on their roll. If they can prove their allegiance to Iggwilv in some manner, they gain another +10 bonus to the roll. If they can prove their alliance with the Court of Stars, they gain another +10 bonus. Finally, if they can prove that they've even enlisted Orcus to their cause, they gain a +15 bonus on the roll.

With a success, Bagromar falls silent, then nods once and says simply, "Consider it done. Now leave, before common sense returns!" If they fail, Bagromar decides that parrading their corpses is the best move after all, and with a growl, he attacks.

General Bagromar **CR 23**

Clone of Hethradiah

Fiendish Codex I 61

CE Huge outsider (aquatic, chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +38, Spot +38

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common; telepathy 300 ft.

AC 48, touch 11, flat-footed 45; Dodge, Mobility

hp 499 (27 HD); fast healing 10; **DR** 20/cold iron and good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 36

Fort +29, **Ref** +23, **Will** +21

Spd 35 ft. in breastplate (50 ft. base), swim 50 ft.

Melee 2 tentacles +39 (1d8+14 plus rot) and bite +35 (2d6+7) and tail slap +35 (2d6+7 plus energy drain)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +27; **Grp** +49

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Special Actions gaze attack, *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)

At Will—*astral projection*, *contagion* (DC 22), *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *fly*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport*, *project image*, *telekinesis* (DC 24), *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 23)

3/day—*feeblemind* (DC 24), *symbol of death* (DC 27)

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 28)

Abilities Str 38, Dex 27, Con 38, Int 26, Wis 22, Cha 28

SQ amphibious

Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Multiattack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Skills Bluff +39, Concentration +44, Diplomacy +43, Intimidate +41, Jump +52, Knowledge (arcana) +38, Knowledge (history) +38, Knowledge (nature) +38, Knowledge (the planes) +38, Listen +38, Move Silently +38, Search +38, Sense Motive +36, Spellcraft +40, Spot +38, Swim +52

Possessions *+5 heavy fortification breastplate*

Energy Drain (Su) Any living creature hit by Bagromar's tail slap gains 1d4 negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, Bagromar heals 5 points of damage. If the amount of healing is more than the damage he has taken, he gains any excess as temporary hit points. It's a DC 37 Fortitude save to remove these negative levels.

Gaze Attack (Su) Bagromar's gaze is the equivalent of an *insanity* spell (Will DC 32 negates) with a range of 30 feet.

Rot (Su) Any living creature touched by Bagromar's tentacles must succeed at a DC 37 Fortitude save or its flesh and bones begin to rot. The creature takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage immediately and 1 point of Constitution damage every hour thereafter until it dies or a *remove disease* spell is cast. The spell stops further damage, but lost Constitution points return only with natural healing and cannot be restored with magic.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day Bagromar can automatically summon 1d8 vrocks, 1d6 hezrous, 1d4 glabrezu, 1d3 nalfeshnees, 1 marilith, or 1 balor

Amphibious (Ex) Even though Bagromar has the aquatic subtype, he can survive indefinitely on land.

Tactics: Attacking and killing Bagromar is certainly one way to throw chaos into Demogorgon's army, but such an assault is close to suicide. The PCs have only three rounds to take down the general before he realizes that they may be tougher than he feared, at which point he roars out commands for his soldiers to come to his aid. Every round thereafter, more demons arrive to join the fight—the teleport wards ironically preventing them from teleporting in to aid their commander. On round four of the fight, six glabrezu arrive. On round six, four nalfeshnee appear. On round eight, a pair of mariliths arrive. This pattern repeats every other round until the PCs die or flee—the number of these demons in the camp is effectively infinite.

If the PCs manage to defeat Bagromar, the camp erupts into chaos. Any demons remaining in the tent continue their fight against the PCs, but no more demons join the battle—the others are more interested in escaping the wrath of mortals powerful enough to destroy Bagromar.

Treasure: It's unlikely, but if the PCs get a chance to search Bagromar's tent, they discover that while the tent contains no coinage or cache of gems, there are three great treasures within, all well hidden.

The measuring stick that Bagromar was using is in fact a *+4 anarchic keen greatsword* disguised by a *persistent image* (CL 20th).

Embedded in a lump of clay and used as a paperweight is a *major ring of spell storing* that contains two *commune* spells.

Finally, the table bears an order of battle for the armies of Tetradarian, Bagromar's rival, and a set of reports from spies within his camp. This could be very useful when assaulting Gaping Maw in the next adventure.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure's construction is modular—the PCs can tackle the various missions to gather their army in any order. Once they've completed all of these missions, a short amount of time passes while Orcus and Gwynharwyf ready their armies, Malcanthet readies her final secret plans, and Bagromar begins his plots against his brother. This final stretch of downtime is the last the PCs will have in this campaign; encourage them to spend it well. If they wish, any of their allies allow them to spend that time nearby, although in some cases (notably Orcus and Malcanthet), remaining in their vicinity is not a very safe choice. Returning to Farshore to spend these last few days in the company of friends and relative safety is likely the best option.

For once the call to war goes out, the final battle will come quickly indeed.

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTERS

Charon

He appears out of the mist, standing silently at the stern of a twisted and gothic skiff. Dressed in dark tattered robes, his hands are old and withered. The hood hangs low over his face, obscuring all but a pair of sinister glowing eyes.

CHARON **CR 22**

NE Medium outsider (extraplanar, evil, yugoloth)

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 180 ft., true seeing; Listen +40, Spot +40

Aura fear gaze (90 feet, DC 30)

Languages all; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 42, touch 29, flat-footed 33 (+9 Dex, +13 natural, +10 deflection); Dodge, Mobility

hp 465 (30 HD); **DR** 20/good, epic, and silver

Immune acid, cold, poison

Resist fire 10, electricity 10; **SR** 33

Fort +28, **Ref** +28, **Will** +26

Spd 40 ft., swim 60 ft., water walking

Melee* *+5 quarterstaff* +33/+28/+23/+18 (1d6+15 plus stunning) and *+5 quarterstaff* +33/+28 (1d6+12 plus stunning) or touch +35 (forgetfulness)

Ranged *flask of forgetfulness* +39 (forgetfulness)

Base Atk +30; **Grp** +35

Atk Options Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

Special Actions *animate Styx, summon yugoloth*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 22nd)

At will—*death knell* (DC 17), *deeper darkness, discern lies, haste, fly, greater invisibility* (self only), *greater teleport, speak with dead* (DC 18), *true resurrection*

3/day—quickened *feeblemind* (DC 20), *mind fog* (DC 20)

1/day—*power word stun, wish*

*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 20, Dex 28, Con 32, Int 30, Wis 25, Cha 20

SQ immortal, prescient deflection, sure-footed

Feats Cleave, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (*feeblemind*), Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Balance +46, Concentration +44, Diplomacy +42, Hide +42, Intimidate +38, Knowledge (arcana) +43, Knowledge (geography) +43, Knowledge (history) +43, Knowledge (local) +43, Knowledge (religion) +43, Knowledge (the planes) +43, Listen +40, Move Silently +42, Profession (sailor) +40, Sense Motive +40, Sleight of Hand +42, Spot +40, Tumble +42, Swim +13

Possessions *+5 quarterstaff*

***Animate Styx* (Sp)** Up to three times per day, Charon may cause the waters of the River Styx to animate, up to a range of 300 feet. This creates a creature identical to an elder water elemental (*Monster Manual* 100) with 312 hit points, save that each time it touches a creature, that creature must make a DC 27 Will save or be feebleminded, as the spell. Charon can telepathically direct the actions of an animated Styx elemental as a free action.

Fear Gaze (Su) Panic for 1d10 rounds, 90 feet, Will DC 30 negates. Charon can activate or suppress this ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Flask of Forgetfulness (Su) As a free action once per round, Charon can cause a crystal flask filled with the waters of the River Styx to appear in his hand. He can throw this flask as a grenadelike weapon. Any creature struck or affected by the flask's splash must make a DC 30 Will save or be feebleminded. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Forgetfulness (Su) Any creature touched by Charon must make a DC 30 Will save or be feebleminded. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Immortal (Ex) Charon is unique in that his existence is tied to the River Styx and the lives of all living creatures. As long as at least one creature remains alive in the multiverse, the River Styx continues to flow and Charon cannot permanently die. If he is slain, he melts away into a puddle of black water that seeps into the ground to rejoin the River Styx. Charon reforms fully healed 24 hours later at the source of the River Styx. Each time Charon is reborn in this manner, the River Styx infuses him with more of its eldritch power, effectively advancing his Hit Dice by 2 with each resurrection (along with the appropriate increases to base attack, saves, feats, skill ranks, and ability score increases). This increase in power persists until Charon defeats the fool who slew him in his previous incarnation, or until that fool is slain by other means. There is no upper limit to how powerful Charon can temporarily become in this manner—and it is this unique form of immortality that makes him such a feared figure in the underworld.

Prescient Deflection (Su) Charon gains a deflection bonus to his Armor Class equal to his Intelligence modifier.

Stunning (Ex) A creature struck by Charon's quarterstaff must make a DC 36 Fortitude save or be stunned for one round. The save DC is Constitution-based. Charon can only stun one target a round in this manner.

***Summon Yugoloth* (Sp)** Once per day, Charon may summon 2 nycaloth commanders (*Monster Manual III* 203) or 2d6 marraenoloths (*Monster Manual II* 203). This ability is equivalent to a 9th-level spell.

Sure-Footed (Ex) Charon cannot be bull-rushed, tripped, or knocked prone.

True Seeing (Su) Charon is under the constant effect of *true seeing*; this ability cannot be dispelled.

Charon is a unique yugoloth, lord of the Styx from end to end. He hates and pursues wastriliths and other outsiders who interfere with his river, and demands payment from all who use its plane-hopping properties for their own gain. Charon has sworn fealty to Hades, god of the Underworld, and transports souls from the Olympian pantheon to the Grey Wastes as one of his duties. It is thought that he is given some portion of the souls of the dead as payment for this service, and that this is a source of his strength.

Usually heavily cloaked and hooded, Charon is a very thin humanoid, roughly 7 feet tall and weighing just 240 pounds, most of it powerful muscle. He has bony clawed hands and webbed feet, as well as eyes that glow orange deep within his cloak None alive nor dead have seen him without his hood in place.

Charon is self-serving, cunning, and deceptive, rarely working to anyone's good but his own. He manipulates and threatens as a matter of course, and understands neither pity nor mercy. When enraged he often creates plots that unfold months or years later in devastating revenge.

Charon lives in the Grey Wastes of Hades, rallying the yugoloths, always striving to keep the Blood War raging (as it weakens the yugoloth's greatest foes and provides a constant influx of souls to bring to Hades). He often cooperates with other yugoloth lords: perhaps the pressure on the yugoloths from two sides compels great comity. Among his minions, the marraenoloths, he expects flawless obedience to his wishes. He ignores most mortals, except those he finds useful as tools.

Charon has all the treasures of the dead, aeons of tolls, and more wealth in his riverside hovel hidden in the Grey Wastes, but he rarely carries more than a few pink and yellow diamonds with him worth 24,000 gp in all.

Charon's real wealth is kept as souls given physical form as collections of like items from wildly different styles, materials, and periods. This might be a group of jewel-encrusted daggers, worn copper coins, or ordinary wineskins. Each of these items is taken from someone he ferried across the Styx to the afterlife, and their value is not in their workmanship or materials, but in the fact that each is imbued with a fragment of the owner's soul. As a result, each of these items can act as a *speak with dead* spell for 11 questions or as a *commune* spell for a single question.

Stygian Linnorm

This immense dragon has no wings and no back feet, yet it remains ferocious and horrifying. Its front arms end in webbed talons, and its snout is long, narrow, and crocodilian. Horns curl back from its head, and its entire body is colored in shades of gray.

Stygian Linnorm **CR 16**

NE Gargantuan dragon (extraplanar)

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense 120 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +26, Spot +26

Languages Abyssal, Draconic

AC 33, touch 6, flat-footed 33 (–4 size, +27 natural)

hp 243 (18 HD); **DR** 15/magic

Immune acid, mind-affecting effects, sleep, stygian forgetfulness, paralysis effects

SR 31

Fort +18, **Ref** +11, **Will** +16

Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +27 (4d6+13 plus poison) and 2 claws +25 (2d6+6) and tail sweep +25 (2d8+19)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +43

Atk Options Cleave, Flyby Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Snatch, crush, stygian splash

Special Actions breath weapon

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th, +14 ranged touch)
At will—*fly*, *control water*
3/day—*dimension door*, quickened *enervation*, *feeblemind* (DC 21), *destruction* (DC 23)

Abilities Str 36, Dex 11, Con 24, Int 11, Wis 20, Cha 22

Feats Cleave, Flyby Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (enervation), Snatch

Skills Concentration +28, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (the planes) +21, Listen +26, Spot +26, Swim +42

Environment the River Styx

Organization solitary, pair, or family (3–6)

Treasure double standard

Advancement 19–30 HD (Gargantuan), 31–54 HD (Colossal)

Breath Weapon (Su) Cone of acidic water from the River Styx 60 feet long, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 12d6 acid, Reflex DC 26 half; effective both on the surface and underwater. Any creature that takes damage from this breath weapon must also make a DC 15 Will save or

be feebleminded. The Reflex save DC is Constitution-based, but the Will save DC is static.

Crush (Ex) A flying or jumping stygian linnorm can land on opponents three or more size categories smaller than itself as a standard action. A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under the linnorm's space. Creatures in this area can attempt a DC 26 Reflex save to avoid being pinned and taking 4d6+19 points of damage. If the linnorm chooses to maintain the pin, treat is as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

Keen Senses (Ex) A stygian linnorm sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Poison (Ex) Injury, DC 26 Fortitude negates, 3d6 Wisdom/3d6 Wisdom. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Stygian Splash (Ex) Stygian linnorms are immune to the effects of the River Styx, and rarely leave these waters. As long as they're in the River Styx, or for up to a minute after they leave the waters, the river's water drips from their bodies. Each time a dripping stygian linnorm hits a target, or each time a creature touches the linnorm, the creature must make a DC 15 Will save or be affected by *feeblemind*.

Linnorms are powerful, almost primeval or prehistoric dragons, and the stygian linnorm is no exception. Generally found only along the banks of the River Styx, these dangerous predators occasionally ally with other powerful entities to serve as guardians, but even then are nearly impossible to control.

Rarely, a stygian linnorm can be encountered in waters other than the River Styx, althogh encountering one of these creatures in waters beyond the lower planes is exceedingly rare. A stygian linnorm encountered out of the Styx loses its stygian splash extraordinary ability, but is otherwise unharmed. Driven by a need to gather treasure, displaced stygian linnorms enjoy convincing lesser races (particularly ogres and trolls) that they are gods deserving of tribute.

Since a stygian linnorm can use *fly* as a spell-like ability at will, they are rarely, if ever, encountered without this spell in effect. In combat, a stygian linnorm almost always opens by using a quickened *enervation* against the most dangerous-looking foe, followed by a breath weapon attack (or *destruction*, when faced with only a single foe). The linnorm then moves in to melee its enemies, generally saving its spell-like abilities for use against more mobile foes who can stay out of the monster's reach. A stygian linnorm rarely fights to the death (unless it's guarding its treasure), but rather uses dimension door to flee if it isbrought below 50 hit points.

For more information about linnorms in general, see "The Ecology of the Linnorm" in issue #357 of DRAGON, or consult pages 140–144 of the *Monster Manual II*.

Wolfgang Baur is a noted adventure designer and the author of "Expedition to the Demonweb Pits" and "Castle Shadowcrag," his two most recent adventures. He discusses his freelance work and upcoming patron projects at wolfgangbaur.com.

Savage Tide

Prince of Demons

Ruling uncontested in his Abyssal layer of the Gaping Maw for eons, Demogorgon's reign as first among demon lords may be coming to an end. The storm clouds gather as his inviolate sanctum is about to be breached by an unlikely alliance from across the planes. Despite its combined strength, this invasion offers no guarantees of success. For the alliance faces no house of straw, but rather the entrenched hordes and reinforced ramparts of the home of the Prince of Demons.

"Prince of Demons" is the final chapter in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign.

The PCs should be 20th-level when they begin "Prince of Demons."

BY GREG A. VAUGHAN
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH, HIGH-LEVEL (13TH–20TH), PLANAR

Adventure Background

The pieces are in place and stand ready for an epic assault on the home plane of Demogorgon, an assault that could change the power structure of the multiverse—though whether history will record the endeavor to have been heroic or foolhardy remains to be seen. Few know that Demogorgon's greatest war is not against Graz'zt or Orcus or another physical antagonist, but against himself—his two heads, Aameul and Hethradiah, both long for sole control over his body and domain. Countless times before, Demogorgon's plans have failed as his personalities, each considering themselves the true architect, unknowingly sabotage the other's work. Without this hidden disadvantage, there's no telling what Demogorgon could have accomplished. Aameul has tried to murder Hethradiah before, but in an ironic paradox, without one, the other cannot exist. Now, Hethradiah has stumbled upon a solution that may just work. Rather than destroy Aameul, he hopes to absorb him—to merge completely and become one.

Using eldritch rituals learned from the obyrith demon prince Dagon, the Prince of Demons used the first savage tide to undo the empire of Thanaclan 1,000 years ago. At the time, the savage tide was merely one of many idle distractions to bring ruin and despair to the Material Plane, but it also served as the genesis for Hethradiah's plan. Ever the more savage and feral of the two personalities, Hethradiah theorized that, with a potent enough vortex of savagery harvested from a large enough source, he could transform Aameul into something more akin to himself, allowing the two to become one. All he needed was a savage tide large enough to drive millions mad. His solution: seed dozens of Material Plane cities with *shadow pearls* and then trigger them simultaneously through a *master pearl* kept safe within an ancient edifice on the shores of the Brine Flats—a primeval temple to the Prince of the Darkened Depths known as Wat Dagon.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs gather their forces and lay their plans for the invasion of Gaping Maw. After aiding in the taking of a beach in Demogorgon's realm, they must avoid demonic assassins and aid Orcus's legions on their march to Lemoriax, along the way lifting a magical effect that bars entry into Wat Dagon, the ancient temple that holds the *master pearl* capable of triggering the mass savage tide. After fighting through Wat Dagon's defenders, the PCs finally attract Demogorgon's attention. If they wish to stop the savage tide, the Prince of Demons must fall.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure begins after the PCs have secured the aid of several like-minded entities who wish to see Demogorgon fail, yet you need not have played the rest of Savage Tide to make use of "Prince of Demons." Demogorgon is one of D&D's greatest villains, and the adventure can serve as a capstone to any campaign in which the Prince of Demons has played a major role; simply substitute out the *master pearl* at the end of the adventure for whatever device or plan he has in your campaign. Alternately, you could use this adventure as a "bank" of stat blocks and encounters for any adventure in which you send your PCs into the depths of Gaping Maw. Maybe they've been hired by a powerful good outsider to defeat Arendagrost, or perhaps the soul of a loved one has been captured and is being kept by General Ghorvash along with (or instead of) Vanthus Vanderboren's doomed soul.

PART ONE: THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

As the previous adventure came to a close, the PCs recruited several different armies and agents for the coming assault on Gaping Maw. Demogorgon's paranoia and whispers of an army gathering against him have set his own defensive forces into motion, yet he certainly doesn't suspect a coordinated attack by several of his enemies at once. This, combined with the fact that multiple enemies will cause his divided nature to work against him, is the PCs' greatest advantage.

Yet it isn't going to be as simple as storming Gaping Maw—before the PCs can even think about planning the assault, they'll need to gather the leaders of the disparate armies and convince them to work together. Orcus, Charon, Malcanthet, Gwynharwyf, and Iggwilv may all have their own reasons for wanting to attack Gaping Maw, but each have their own goals and prejudices as well. Left to their own devices, each group waits for another to make the first move, intending to swoop in once Demogorgon's defenses are focused elsewhere to claim victory for themselves. As a result, nothing develops of the assault until someone sets things in motion. This responsibility falls to the PCs.

Gathering the Forces

Depending on their success in the previous adventure, the PCs should have contacts with several of Demogorgon's enemies. This adventure assumes those enemies are Charon, Iggwilv, Malcanthet, Gwynharwyf, and Orcus; if the PCs failed to secure the aid of one of these allies, make sure to apply the appropriate adjustments to the adventure.

Contacting these five should be a simple matter for 20th-level characters—the red tape they experienced in the previous adventure is no longer a problem, and whether they show up to personally invite these five to war or send messengers makes no difference—the five are predisposed to accept visits from the PCs and their agents, provided each is treated with the respect they think they deserve. Securing a time when the five plus the PCs should meet to discuss their plans is simple, but deciding on a location might be more difficult.

All five initially demand that the War Council take place in their own domains, forcing the others out of their homes and into dangerous territory. Of course, none of the five react well to the others' demands—the only real solution is for the PCs to pick a meeting location that the other five begrudgingly accept as "neutral ground." There are very few places in the multiverse that qualify as such; a few are detailed below, but your players may come up with something equally feasible. If your PCs are having trouble coming up with ideas, the following three locations are each assigned a Knowledge (the

planes) DC that a character can make to come up with that location.

The River Styx (DC 30): Although the others initially balk at the notion, the River Styx is actually a feasible site for the meeting. Charon's power here is such that the others won't try anything funny, but before they'll agree to meet here, they must be convinced that Charon won't take advantage of them. This requires a DC 50 Diplomacy check, made once for Malcanthet, Orcus, and Gwynharwyf—Iggwilv understands Charon's nature and personality better, and she automatically agrees to the site if the others do. If the war council convenes here, it does so aboard the *Sea Wyvern*.

Sigil (DC 35): The city of Sigil, perched atop the central spire in the Outlands, is one of the classic "no-man's lands" for meetings of this sort. The Lady of Pain's rule over the city is such that only the most foolish of creatures would cause trouble. Yet the fear that Demogorgon or his agents might be active in Sigil remains present. Each of the five primaries must be convinced with a DC 40 Diplomacy check that the PCs have secured a site that's safe from such influences. If you have access to material covering Sigil, feel free to make the securing of such a site as complex as you wish—otherwise, the PCs can rent a location in the Azure Iris, a gambling tavern and inn that specializes in out-of-the-way rooms for secret meetings. **Verden** (NE female elf rogue 11) generally charges what her customers can afford—in the case of such obviously high-level characters, she charges 20,000 gp for the best room in the house—the "Diamond Suite." Of course, the Lady of Pain forbids the entrance into Sigil of any creature that has worshipers—Gwynharwyf, Orcus, and Malcanthet must send proxies (as detailed below) if this is to be the meeting site.

Outland (DC 40): Near the center of Outland, at the heart of the multiverse, the spire on which Sigil is balanced rises—here, even the magic of the gods is suppressed. While none of the five are interested in meeting in a place where their magical defenses won't work, it's actually a relatively simple matter to arrange for a meeting in the spire's proximity. At 900 miles from the spire's base, 9th-level spells (in particular, *astral projection*) no longer function, but the no-man's-land mentality extends to a range of 1,200 miles—an arrangement to hold the council of war anywhere within this range is automatically accepted by all five allies.

Council of War

Since the Council of War could take place anywhere the PCs can convince their allies to meet, no description of the meeting site is given. In any event, few of the five are interested in attending the council in person, but instead send trusted proxies. If the PCs don't think to arrange accommodations for the meeting, any of their allies can provide them using spells like *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* or a *rod of splendor* borrowed

Handout #1

from a private treasury as needed. The method of representation, the role in battle, and the particular secret goals for assaulting Gaping Maw for each of the five are given below. When the council begins, all five are bickering and arguing; leave it to the PCs to call for order and lead the discussion. Although their allies are powerful, this is the PCs' fight—let them lead the way.

Charon: If the meeting occurs on the Styx, Charon attends in person. Otherwise, he sends a proxy in the form of a lost soul, a petitioner recruited from the countless dead that make their journey along the River Styx. Of course, Charon does not select his proxy idly; he picks someone with ties to the PCs. Rowyn Kellani is perhaps the best choice for this role. Still enraged at Demogorgon for his disruption of the River Styx at the end of "Wells of Darkness," Charon has little interest in the battle other than seeing Demogorgon suffer. With countless marraenoloths (*Monster Manual II* 203) under his command, Charon can send a fleet of yugoloth boatmen into Gaping Maw to support assaults on Abysm and the Claws of Belcheresk and provide floating platforms for the invaders to attack from. He has no ulterior motives in the battle.

Gwynharwyf: Gwynharwyf attends the Council in person if it is held in the Outlands or on the Styx and is accompanied by Celeste, but if it takes place in Sigil, only Celeste attends. The eladrin paragon is the least likely to betray the PCs, but working in close tandem with demon lords and Iggwilv still tries her patience. Yet her hatred of Demogorgon burns brighter—the Prince of Demons captured and humiliated her long ago, and Gwynharwyf sees this as an excellent opportunity to realize vengeance against him. She has secured two eladrin hosts from her queen Morwel, each comprising 50,000 eladrins apiece. Her desire to see Demogorgon suffer and even perish may inadvertently offset some of the advantages the PCs have against Demogorgon later in the adventure.

Iggwilv: The Witch-Queen attends the council with her four arcanaloth apprentices, traveling via *astral projection*. She does not truly have an axe to grind in this battle—she's seen countless wars fought on the Abyss between demonic powers before, but never one involving cooperating eladrin and demonic armies. Her interest in the battle is more one of scholastic curiosity than anything else. Iggwilv's primary contribution to the battle is transportation—using her epic magic, she can open several portals into Gaping Maw through which Gwynharwyf's and Orcus's armies can invade. Of course, she does have a secret agenda as well—once the PCs have used the *Iron Flask of Tuerny*, she arrives to claim the artifact as her own in partial payment for all the aid she's provided the PCs. Her goal is to use the artifact to capture Demogorgon's parting essence should the PCs defeat him—the artifact cannot capture a being as powerful as a true demon lord (only their aspects), but Iggwilv thinks she can use it to gather what remains of Demogorgon's primal animus once he is defeated.

Malcanthet: If, in "Enemies Of My Enemy," Malcanthet convinced a PC to accept her Queen's Kiss ability, she should retain a link with that PC. In this event, she attends the Council via this link, using the PC to observe the council and make her will known, taking part in the discussion via telepathy and depending on her PC agent to repeat her words aloud. Otherwise, she attends via *astral projection*, or sends a Radiant Sister bearing the Queen's Kiss if the meeting takes place in Sigil. Malcanthet does not offer an army, claiming that Demogorgon "knows her tricks" and that her incubus infantry wouldn't be of much help. However, she can manifest her spell-like abilities through a PC bearing her Kiss, and volunteers aid in this manner—if no PC currently bears her mark, she arranges to place it on a volunteer at some point before the battle begins. Accepting her aid in this manner is a chaotic evil act, but in the grand scheme of things a minor one, especially if the PC takes pains to remove the mark via *dispel chaos* or *dispel evil* once the adventure is over. Of course, being a demon lord, Malcanthet isn't entirely forthcoming about her reasons for aiding the PCs in this battle. Now that the war is on, whatever the outcome, her alliance with Demogorgon is about to end—she suspects that Demogorgon's time has come to an end, and knows that once he's defeated, the mantle of Prince of Demons will shift. She doesn't want that crown for herself—it brings with it too much in the way of enemies and trouble—but she does very much want to be allied with, and perhaps control, whoever does inherit the crown. In fact, her goal is to try to coax her PC agent to attempt to claim the title, betraying the rest of the PCs if necessary.

Orcus: Orcus, still not completely convinced that this whole thing isn't a ruse to draw him out of Thanatos and into a trap, sends a a rotten, shambling, blood-stained cadaver known as Xerivar as his proxy no matter where the meeting takes place. Three quasits perch on Xerivar's skull and shoulders, casually tearing away and consuming small strips of his putrid flesh as they observe the proceedings. Xerivar speaks with Orcus's voice, serving as a direct link to the Prince of Undeath. Orcus has committed four of his legions to the invasion, the V Asphyxian, the IX Exsanguinos, the XIII Decapitus, and his vaunted personal legion—the I Thanatos; a legion that has never been defeated in battle. Each legion consists of 25,000 assorted demons and undead. Orcus leaves command of these legions to his generals, and makes plain his intent to confront Demogorgon atop the Prince's fortress of Abysm, a bold move indeed. Orcus desperately wants to be the one to defeat Demogorgon, and not just because he wants his power. Of all the demon lords in the Abyss, it is Orcus who has the largest cult of followers on the Material Plane. It is Orcus who is closest to becoming a god, and he hopes that the additional influx of Abyssal power he would gain by defeating his ancient enemy would finally be enough to catapult him fully into the ranks of the divine.

The Battle Plan

Let the PCs devise the battle plan for the assault on Gaping Maw. Handout #1 contains the most up-to-date information about the movement and locations of Demogorgon's army on Gaping Maw, as gathered from eladrin and demonic spies scattered throughout the layer and augmented with any papers the PCs may have discovered in "Enemies Of My Enemy." More importantly, the map indicates five locations where the PCs can stage their initial invasions of the Abyssal layer—these locations are called portal points.

Portal Points: Iggwilv can use epic magic to simultaneously open several enormous gates across the face of Gaping Maw, allowing the eladrin armies and demon armies to invade from any point in the multiverse. Unfortunately, these portals can only be opened in a few places in Gaping Maw where the planar boundaries are weak enough to bear such an invasive and enormous portal for any length of time. There are five such points in relatively close proximity to Lemoriax, but the catch is that Demogorgon knows where these points are, and has stationed Lemorian legions at them. Once armies go through, the battles begin immediately. Gwynharwyf's preference is to attack from the flanks, sending the Tourbillon Gale Host in from the Blood Run portal point and the Starry Night Host (to be commanded by Celeste) in from the Oldclot Cove portal point, and then to press in toward each other without worrying about having any of Demogorgon's legions behind them. Orcus's preference is exactly the opposite—he prefers to stage his forces at the Lemoriax portal point so that his forces can strike hard and fast at Demogorgon's capital city. This leaves two more portal points unutilized—one deeper in the Screaming Jungle (rumored to be guarded by not only a legion of demons but by one of Demogorgon's deadliest spawn—Arendagrost), and one along the Brine Flats (which has been fortified with a defensive battery of demons, but is easily the least-defended of the five points).

Expected Assault Plan

If the players aren't tactically minded, they can certainly leave the planning of the assault to Gwynharwyf and Orcus—both are old hands at such things, and their advice is sound. Left to plan the assault on their own, the forces available to the PCs deploy as follows:

Charon's Fleet: Charon's fleet of 5,000 marraenoloths are best utilized at sea, in the Brine Flats, where they can run interference against the forces of the balor Belcheresk's fleet, preventing them from providing aid to the land-based assault while at the same time pulling Demogorgon's attentions to yet another corner of his realm.

Gwynharwyf: The eladrin paragon personaly leads the Tourbillion Gale

Host at the Blood Run portal point, while Celeste commands the Starry Night Host at Oldclot Cove.

Iggwilv: Beyond creating the portals through which Gwynharwyf's and Orcus's armies invade, Iggwilv has little to add to the fight. She can certainly be convinced to open an additional portal for the PCs and any allies they wish to bring along if they wish to invade Gaping Maw via one of the portal points.

Malcanthet: The Queen of Succubi keeps her involvement subtle, acting through her chosen PC agent. Remember, she can not only observe the world through her agent's senses, but can use the agent as a focus for any of her spelllike abilities. The PC doesn't get to choose when and how she uses these spell-like abilities, but neither do they take an action on the agent's part to utilize. If no PC agrees to serve as Malcanthet's agent, she feigns insult at being rebuffed but does not volunteer any other support. Left to her own devices, she sends a disguised *astral projection* stealthily into Gaping Maw so she can maintain an eye on things, likely following along in the PCs' wake.

Orcus: The Prince of Undeath deploys his legions in order of expendability, beginning with the V Asphyxian via the portal point closest to Lemoriax. He fully expects the V Asphyxian to be destroyed, and plans on sending the IX Exsanguinos legion in immediately thereafter to break Demogorgon's forces in the region and establish a beach head. He then wishes to send in the XIII Decapitus to march to the gates of Lemoriax. At the same time, Orcus intends to challenge Demogorgon himself, planning on deploying the I Thanatos against Lemoriax once Demogorgon is defeated.

Flies in the Ointment

Three other demon lords likely have an interest in how things turn out in Gaping Maw, yet their presence is minor or behind the scenes. It's unlikely that the PCs ever learn the full extent of their involvement, but they are quickly summarized here for the DM.

Ahazu: If the PCs promised Ahazu the Seizer a replacement prisoner, Demogorgon certainly fits the bill, as do several other villains the PCs encounter during this adventure. But before Ahazu can seize the replacement, that creature must be killed. At the moment of death, the agent of said death must consign that creature to the Wells of Darkness by verbal proclamation, at which point the vacuum left by Shami-Amourae's vacancy can reach across the Abyss to take away the victim. If the PCs promised Ahazu a sacrifice but do not deliver on this promise, the repercussions are detailed in Concluding the Adventure.

Dagon: The obyrith lord Dagon is where Demogorgon first learned of the process for creating a savage tide. Dagon, being the ancient source of revelation he is, suspects that Demogorgon's bid to unleash the savage tide would indirectly result in his destruction, and as things draw to a close, the obyrith Prince of the Darkened Depths slips near to the waters surrounding the Shadowsea side of Wat Dagon and quietly attempts to claim the crown as his own as Demogorgon is slain..

Graz'zt: Like Dagon, Graz'zt lusts for Demogorgon's crown. The Dark Prince

is currently embroiled in a complex plot involving Lolth, but keeps an ear to the ground, likely paying his sometimes lover Iggwilv for whispered updates as the war progresses. Yet unlike Dagon, Graz'zt does not suspect Orcus, the PCs, and their other allies can defeat the Prince of Demons—how could they, when such a prize has eluded Graz'zt himself? Still, once the PCs confront Demogorgon, Graz'zt's hidden agents in Gaping Maw inform him, and the Dark Prince uses a secet portal to enter a secluded point in the Screaming Jungle so he'll be able to make a claim for the crown as well when the time comes.

The Savage Tide

Yet all this is, for the PCs, nothing more than a distraction. The outcome of the Battle of Gaping Maw is, in the end, irrelevant to what they are here to prevent—the savage tide. Although the details on where and how Demogorgon's planning on triggering the savage tide are secret, it should be a relatively simple matter for the PCs to determine what they need to know. If they recovered Bagromar's reports and other battle orders at the end of "Enemies Of My Enemy," 1d4 hours of investigation of the reports by someone who can read Abyssal reveals both the location and the method. Alternately, this information can be discovered through powerful divination spells like *commune, contact other plane, legend lore,* or *vision.* As the PCs soon learn, the problem isn't finding out where and how Demogorgon's going to trigger the savage tide, but how to get to the site in question.

All 34 of the *shadow pearls* seeded throughout the Material Plane are linked to a *master pearl* which is kept safe in an ancient structure perched on the shores of the Brine Flats. This structure is Wat Dagon, an ancient temple raised from the raw matter of the Abyss by devotees of the Prince of the Darkened Depths eons ago. Wat Dagon squatted on the shores of the Brine Flats before Demogorgon came to rule here, and it was the Prince of Demon's favored site for contacting Dagon for advice or to learn more secrets of the Abyss. It was here that Dagon taught Demogorgon how to craft *shadow pearls,* and it is deep within the building that the *master pearl* can be found.

Bagromar's notes indicate that the *master pearl* is the key Demogorgon intends to use to trigger the savage tide. The notes go on to indicate that, while the time is not yet right to trigger the tide (since the event requires a specific planar conjunction), that time draws quite near. You should set the timing of this event as fits best with your campaign style—if you want this adventure to be a race against the clock, you can set the conjunction for only a few days or hours in the future. In any event, it should be obvious that without the *master pearl* Demogorgon cannot trigger the savage tide.

Unfortunately, no information is available on how the *master pearl* can be destroyed or removed from Wat Dagon. Research into the nature of similar artifacts gives some clues, and it's certainly possible that *Mordenkainen's disjunction* can disable the *master pearl* as well—see page 95 for more details on how the PCs can defuse the pearl.

Making matters worse is the fact that Wat Dagon doesn't technically exist on Gaping Maw. It exists in the boundary between the 88th and 89th layers of the Abyss, "sandwiched" between Gaping Maw and Dagon's realm of Shadowsea. Wat Dagon is, in effect, a miniature layer of the Abyss of its own, a tiny demiplane (or "demilayer") with its own planar traits. Access to Wat Dagon is tightly controlled, and while the interdiction zone around Lemoriax functions, entrance into Wat Dagon is impossible without Demogorgon's consent.

PART TWO: THE BATTLE OF GAPING MAW

At the appointed time, as the forces of the eladrins and legions of Thanatos gather in their respective locations, Iggwilv and her apprentices begin to open a series of planar breaches using an epic spell she developed for just such an assault (she used the same magic many years ago to organize an invasion of the Flanaess, but was defeated by an artifact known as the *Crook of Rao*). There's no real need to run the battles between the PCs' allies and Demogorgon's armies—it's better to simply describe the mass battles at the times when the PCs are nearby. In any event, the PCs' goal on Gaping Maw should not be to aid Orcus or Gwynharwyf in their battles—these assaults are merely distractions meant to divert Demogorgon's attention and resources from Wat Dagon and the pearl within. This chapter presents several encounters that the PCs can take part in, encounters better handled by a small group of powerful characters rather than an army of eladrins or demons (whose strengths are better utilized against like threats elsewhere on Gaping Maw). Each of these encounters begins with a hook you can use to draw the PCs in; they can be accomplished in any order, and not all of them are necessarily required in order to achieve entrance into Wat Dagon. Yet each one of these encounters that the PCs handle before they attempt Wat Dagon's deadly gantlet will make their final task a little bit easier, for each of these encounters offers yet another chance to distract and confuse Demogorgon.

Although Iggwilv's magic can only open portals at five locations in Gaping Maw, she can send armies from nearly any point in the multiverse. The magic focuses on a specially prepared scepter, one of five that Iggwilv has prepared (one for each portal point). The commander of each group simply needs to plant the scepter in the ground at the location he wishes his end of the portal to open at. When Iggwilv activates the portals, they burst into being with a blast of electricity and thunder—reality ripples aside like a curtain, revealing the steaming landscape of Gaping Maw beyond. These portals can be anywhere from twenty to a thousand feet wide, depending upon the number of troops that need to move through, and remain open for only a very short time before

Iggwilv closes them—no one wants to let Demogorgon's forces leak out of Gaping Maw, after all.

Storming the Beach (EL 21)

The PCs can, of course, use their own resources to reach Gaping Maw, but it's nothing for Iggwilv to open up a portal for them to step through when she opens other portals elsewhere in Gaping Maw. A study of the portal points reveals that only one of the five is relatively unmanned—the "Shore Defense Battery," according to Bagromar's notes, has only about two dozen demons guarding the portal point. The beach is a natural bottleneck, too small to effectively stage a large invasion and edged at either sides by razor-sharp cliffs, yet if the PCs can seize the beach and the bunkers on the nearby hill, they'll be able to control one of the five portal points. Once the PCs have control of this site, Iggwilv leaves the portal open. As long as the PCs retain control of the portal site, they and their forces are only a teleport away from escaping Gaping Maw, but more to the point, the persistent portal should act like an itch Demogorgon can't scratch without sacrificing defenses from elsewhere. The beach portal may be small, but it's one more distraction in the war. If the PCs ask for aid, Gwynharwyf is willing to give them command of a group of nine bralani eladrins led by a ghaele eladrin.

Alternately, you can use this encounter as a template for any large battle that the PCs might find themselves in at the start of the adventure. If they decide to accompany one of the eladrin hosts, for example, they may be called upon to take out this battery before the host itself can advance.

A muddy beach sits at the edge of a vast tropical ocean, bounded to the left and right by jagged razor-sharp cliffs. The expanse of beach climbs gradually to a line of defensive fortifications a little over a hundred feet away. Craters and berms lie in the way of the approach to this fortified ridge, and a thick bank of dark green fog roils fifty feet above, blotting out views of an alien sky.

Iggwilv's portal manifests as a sphere of rippling energy just off the shore of the beach. When the PCs arrive, they can manifest within the portal itself or anywhere along the shoreline itself. The starting locations of their eladrin allies (if any) are indicated on the Storming the Beach map on page 66.

Creatures: In all, there are 26 demons defending the bunkers and the portal point site—twelve hezrous, eleven babaus, two mariliths, and a nalfeshnee—a formidable force to fight against, let alone run in combat as a D&D encounter. Take the time to map out the battlefield for the PCs beforehand and allow them to use the map to plan their attack; once they arrive, place all the demons that are visible but keep the others (including the locations of all the blast discs) hidden for now.

The demons are aware that an invasion could happen at any moment, and unfortunately, Iggwilv's portal is far from subtle. By the time the PCs and their eladrin allies have emerged, the demons are ready to fight.

Note that the bunkers are armed with powerful siege weapons—three force missile ballistae (each operated by a pair of babaus) and a pair of acid launchers (each operated by a marilith)—details on these magical siege engines are given in Appendix One.

Ghaele Eladrin: hp 65; *Monster Manual* 94.

Bralani Eladrins (9): hp 45 each; *Monster Manual* 93.

Nalfeshnee: hp 175; *Monster Manual* 45.

Mariliths (2): hp 216 each; *Monster Manual* 44.

Babaus (12): hp 66 each; *Monster Manual* 40.

Hezrous (13): hp 138 each; *Monster Manual* 44.

Tactics: Battles with numerous foes can be harrowing to run. Consider giving the PCs each a handful of eladrins to run during the battle so you can focus on the demons.

Before the Battle: The demons are on full alert, and even before the PCs arrive have several of their at-will spell-like abilities in effect.

- *Babaus: See invisibility.*
- *Hezrous:* None.
- *Nalfeshnee: Call lightning, unholy aura.*
- *Mariliths: Align weapon, magic weapon, unholy aura.*

First Round: On the initial round of combat, the demons quickly mobilize and prepare their defense as follows.

- *Babaus:* Each babau attempts to summon another babau, then orders any summoned babaus to teleport over to engage the invaders in melee.
- *Hezrous:* Each hezrou attempts to summon another hezrou, ordering any summoned demons to teleport over to engage the invaders in melee.

Difficult Terrain

The battlefield in this encounter presents several obstacles, as detailed below:

Muddy Beach: The ground between the shore and the ditch is muddy, making it difficult terrain (2 squares of movement per square, increase Tumble DC check by 2).

Blast Discs: Dozens of blast discs are buried under the sand and mud in the squares indicated on the map. A DC 35 Spot check allows someone to notice a square is warded by a blast disk the instant before they enter that square—creatures able to detect magic gain a +15 bonus on this check. Blast discs are detailed in Appendix One.

Craters: Each crater is five feet deep. Movement into or out of a crater requires a DC 10 Climb check.

Ditch: The ditch between the beach and the fortified ridge is ten feet deep. It's a DC 15 Climb check to move into or out of the ditch.

Razorvine Fence: The landward rim of the ditch is protected by a 10-foot-high fence made of metallic vines with razor-sharp leaves. Woodland stride allows a character to effortlessly pass through the plants, but other characters must force their way through with a DC 20 Strength check (2d6 points of damage per attempt) or hack through (hardness 5, hp 60 per five-foot section, Break DC 26).

Low Clouds: The roiling clouds 50 feet above are in fact a stationary *cloudkill* effect that extends for several hundred feet. This effect cannot be dispelled.

- *Nalfeshnee*: The nalfeshnee flies up into the cloud cover above, circling the battlefield but staying within five feet of the cloud's edge so he can see out but enjoys cover against attacks. His first act is to use an area *greater dispel magic* against the PCs.
- *Mariliths*: Each marilith puts up a *blade barrier* along the shore, attempting to catch as many characters as possible.

On the Beach: Against any targets on the beach, the demons use the following tactics.

- *Babaus*: The babaus inside the bunkers take up positions as indicated near the entrances and hide, readying an action to attack any enemy that enters the bunker. The six babaus outside, working in teams of two, use their *force missile ballistae* to fire upon random targets.
- *Hezrous*: The hezrous use *unholy blights* exclusively against the PCs, since they know eladrins are immune to *chaos hammer*.
- *Nalfeshnee*: The nalfeshnee's standard act is to blast targets with *call lightning*, but if the PCs ever group up, he hits them with a *slow*. If the PCs include a spellcaster whose magic seems particularly effective, he *feebleminds* that character.
- *Mariliths*: Each marilith, by using all six arms, can effectively fire an *acid launcher* once per round. They do so, targeting densely grouped packs of the enemy or singling out heavily armored foes (who are less likely to have good Reflex saves).

At the Bunkers: Once PCs or eladrins reach the bunkers, the demons switch to the following tactics.

- *Babaus*: The babaus hiding inside the bunkers attack from hiding to utilize sneak attacks; they are joined by the force missile crews only if few targets remain on the beach.
- *Hezrous*: Once foes reach the bunkers, they engage PCs in melee, with hezrous unable to reach them using *unholy blight* indiscriminately.
- *Nalfeshnee*: The nalfeshnee only turns his attention to the bunkers if no threatening targets remain on the beach. He can't easily fit inside the bunkers, but can land on the ground to the south to use his spell-like abilities against foes inside—his first act is to try to summon 1d4 more hezrous to send against the PCs.
- *Mariliths*: As soon as the PCs reach the bunkers, each marilith attempts to summon another marilth, then moves to engage the intruders in melee.

The demons fight to the death, so devoted to (and frightened of) Demogorgon that they avoid the standard trick of teleporting away when brought to low hit points. The price of failure is much worse than death on the battlefield in Demogorgon's army.

Development: Once the PCs gain control of the bunker, Iggwilv's portal is relatively safe. Surviving eladrins take over the site, with more arriving through the portal as needed to keep the total stationed here at a few dozen. This becomes a relatively safe place for the PCs to rest and recover, and the portal's constant flickering becomes yet another thorn in Demogorgon's side (with effects as detailed in the sidebar on page 92).

Death of the V Asphyxian (EL 23)

Orcus himself arrives in Gaping Maw at approximately the same time the PCs invade. His confrontation with Demogorgon is fated to go on for hours as the two battle throughout the towers of Abysm hundred of miles out to sea, but now and then, the roars of the two demon lords echo through the sky. Orcus planned his initial assault to coincide with an attack on Lemoriax, led by his armies. As detailed above, his opening gambit is to send in the V Asphyxian, a legion of nabassu demons and tieflieng mercenaries, to sacrifice themselves as a devastating first assault.

Unfortunately, the portal point closest to Lemoriax is also a trap, for Demogorgon augmented the Demos Horde located there with one of his deadliest minions—Arendagrost, the Maw of the Abyss—and ordered one of his partial clone generals, Tetradarian, to personally lead the defense of the region. Arendagrost and Tetradarian's armies caught the V Asphyxian completely off guard. As soon as the V Asphyxian emerged into Gaping Maw, Arendagrost took to destroying them with ravenous efficiency. At the same time, Tetradarian used a potent device created by Demogorgon, a *totem of negation*, to create a zone of dead magic in the area, locking out any further portals. The site protected from further invasion and the V Asphyxian legion destroyed, Tetradarian returned to Lemoriax, leaving Arendagrost to guard the *totem of negation*.

Not long after the PCs finish dealing with their own assault, one of them receives a brief message via *sending* from Iggwilv herself: "Lemoriax portal point compromised. Orcus's legions shut out. Arendagrost is present. If fixed, we can salvage the attack, but only if it's dealt with immediately." The site of the Lemoriax portal point is known to the PCs; if they can reach it within the hour, defeat Arendagrost, and remove the dead magic zone, the armies of Orcus can continue the attack. Attempts to recruit aid from the eladrins fail—Gwynharwyf and Celeste and their armies are locked in fantastic battles of their own. It's up to the PCs to open the way for the rest of Orcus's forces.

When the PCs arrive at the Lemoriax portal point, read them the following:

The jungle suddenly comes to an end at a blackened swath of char and blood. The desolate clearing sprawls for miles, only recently formed by the wicked blades and fell spells of demon spawn. A field of blasted stumps and ruin is all that remains of the once-tangled junglescape. In some places, the trees look burnt, in others they are melted, and still others appear frozen and shattered. Black blood, gore, and bile—still fresh from the stench of it—are splattered across mounds of dead fiends and other horrors. The calamity seems to have been complete, with no clear victors, almost as though both sides annihilated each other. At the center of the desolation stands a sinister totem, a ten-foot-tall pole of carved demon faces. A tattered battle standard bearing the black death's head emblem of Orcus's V Asphyxian Legion hangs from the totem, and dangling from its lower border by its hair is the decapitated head of the legion's undead general.

A search of the battlefield reveals the bodies of nabassu demons, tieflings, and various undead creatures, all branded with Orcus's symbol. A fair number of bar-lgura, hezrou, and babau are dead here as well, indicating that the battle wasn't completely one-sided.

The totem at the center of the clearing is a *totem of negation*, a powerful magic item that, when planted in the ground and activated, creates an immobile dead magic zone. Magic (including all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects) simply does not function in a 60-foot radius around the *totem*, which effectively prevents even Iggwilv's epic magic from opening a portal here. A *totem of negation* is fantastically expensive and time-consuming to create—Demogorgon assumed that an invading army would only attempt to use the portal point nearest Lemoriax, one of many assumptions that may well cost him dearly.

Creatures: The horror that was left behind by Tetradarian to clean up the battle field and guard the *totem of negation* remains, though it has burrowed beneath a mound of corpses 60 feet from the outer edge of the dead magic zone. Only one of his three heads remains above ground, and even it remains partially covered in the dead. In this position, since only one of his heads is exposed, Arendagrost's penalty to Hide checks from size is negated (effectively granting him a +12 bonus on his Hide check).

Arendagrost: hp 456; see Appendix Two.

Tactics: Arendagrost lies in wait until creatures approach within 120 feet (at which point he bursts from the ground, charging the closest foe to bite on the surprise round) or are about to enter the dead magic zone (in which case he emerges and roars a challenge if foes aren't in range of a charge). Arendagrost retreats into the dead magic zone if faced with powerful magic, using Fly-By Attack to swoop out of the zone as necessary so that he ends his turn back inside. Arendagrost's breath weapons and death gaze don't function in the dead magic zone, but his physical attacks, fast healing, immunities, and damage reduction certainly do.

Development: Arendagrost is closely tied to Demogorgon, and the monster's destruction is felt by the Prince of Demons as a sudden pang of rage. Demogorgon certainly doesn't mourn the death of his monstrous offspring, but it does add one more distraction to the list.

The *totem of negation* must be uprooted or destroyed to remove the dead magic zone. Once the PCs do so, Iggwilv opens a portal moments later and Orcus's IX Exsanguinos legion (a legion of vampire warlocks and fighters) and the XIII Decapitus legion (blood fiends, nabassu rogues, death giants, and nightwalkers) pour through to establish a base of command. The commanders of this legion ignore the PCs for now, instead marshalling their forces for the short march to Lemoriax where they intend to lay siege to the city.

Although the IX Exanguinos has its own commander, the leader of the XIII Decapitus legion currently acts as a general for both legions. This imposing menace is the Skull King **Quah-Nomag** (NE male human [ogre-blooded] cleric 14/thrall of Orcus 3). He knows that Lemoriax is protected by a powerful interdiction zone and curtly asks the PCs to accompany his legions to the edge of this zone—their skills may be of use therein.

Master of Assassins (EL 22)

Demogorgon knows about the PCs, and knows they seek to prevent the savage tide. Once the PCs arrive on Gaping Maw and begin to take part in the assault, he knows it's time to handle them. While unable to personally confront them (especially if Gwynharwyf and Orcus are persent on Gaping Maw), he does have a large number of assassins at his beck and call. And one of the deadliest of these is the bar-lgura assassin Ulu-Thurg.

Creatures: This encounter can occur at any time—even after the PCs have invaded Wat Dagon, although this adventure assumes it takes place not long after Arendagrost's death. Demogorgon senses Arendagrost's destruction and orders Ulu-Thurg to travel to the Lemoriax portal point as soon as he can gather his forces. The amount of time this takes is left to you, but as long as they don't dally, the PCs should have plenty of time to destroy the *totem of negation*. Ulu-Thurg arrives as Orcus's armies are deploying and decides to bide his time, waiting for a good moment to strike against the PCs.

Ulu-Thurg, Demogorgon's master of assassins, resembles a lanky, six-fingered demonic orangutan. He leads a group of war ape brutes, powerful savages culled from the wild fiendish dire ape tribes of the Screaming Jungle and awakened through Demogorgon's malevolence.

ULU-THURG **CR 21**

Advanced bar-lgura sorcerer 6/assassan 8
CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss 29
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +24, Spot +24
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 25, touch 15, flat-footed 21; improved uncanny dodge, Dodge, Mobility
hp 318 (28 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 16
Fort +20, **Ref** +20, **Will** +17

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee* *Heartsipper* +33/+28/+23/+18 (2d6+28/19–20/×3 plus wounding plus vicious) and
bite +25 (1d8+11) or
2 claws +29 (1d8+17) and
bite +25 (1d8+11)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +23; **Grp** +39
Atk Options death attack (DC 21), pounce, sneak attack +4d6, Combat Expertise, Power Attack, Spring Attack
Special Actions abduction, *summon tanar'ri*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 10th, +29 ranged touch)
3rd (4/day)—*haste*
2nd (6/day)—*bull's strength, mirror image*
1st (7/day)—*mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield*
Assassin Spells Known (CL 8th)
4th (1/day)—*freedom of movement, glibness, greater invisibility*
3rd (4/day)—*deeper darkness, false life,*

magic circle against good, misdirection
2nd (4/day)—*alter self, cat's grace, fox's cunning, pass without trace*
1st (4/day)—*feather fall, jump, obscuring mist, true strike*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)
At will—*darkness, cause fear* (DC 15), *dispel magic, greater teleport* (DC 23), *see invisibility, telekinesis* (DC 19)
2/day—*disguise self, invisibility, major image* (DC 17)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 34, Dex 16, Con 25, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 18
SQ hide in plain sight, poison use, summon familiar (none)
Feats Ability Focus (abduction), Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (spear), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack, Practiced Spellcaster (+4 sorcerer CL), Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (spear)
Skills Balance +21, Bluff +9, Climb +28, Concentration +32, Disguise +9 (+11 acting), Hide +44, Intimidate +23, Jump +41, Listen +24, Move Silently +34, Spot +24, Spellcraft +7, Tumble +22, Use Magic Device +19
Possessions *ring of protection +3, ring of chameleon power, Heartsipper* (*+3 wounding vicious spear*), *badge of passage* (see Appendix)

Pounce (Ex) If a bar-lgura charges a foe, it can make a full attack.
Abduction (Su) Unlike most tanar'ri, a bar-lgura can use *greater teleport* to transport other creatures. It can bring up to one Large or two Medium or smaller creatures with it each time it teleports. It can teleport unwilling targets as well, although an unwilling victim can attempt a DC 23 Will save to resist being transported. The save DC is Charisma-based.
***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a bar-lgura can attempt to summon another bar-lgura with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell (CL 14th).

WAR APE BRUTES **CR 16**
Awakened advanced fiendish dire ape warrior 9
CE Large magical beast (augmented animal)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +9, Spot +9
Languages Abyssal

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Dodge
hp 212 (25 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 25
Fort +19, **Ref** +15, **Will** +14

Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.
Melee* +1 *human bane spear* +25/+20/+15/+10 (2d6+23/×3) and bite +18 (1d8+9) or 2 claws +23 (1d6+13) and bite +18 (1d8+9)
Ranged mwk spear +23 (2d6+8/x3)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +21; **Grp** +33
Atk Options rend 2d6+12, smite good 1/day (+20 damage), Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 26, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9
Feats Alertness, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (spear)
Skills Climb +12, Listen +9, Jump +13, Move Silently +6, Spot +9
Possessions *+1 human bane spear*, masterwork spear, masterwork breastplate, masterwork mithral heavy shield

Tactics: Ulu-Thurg stalks the party for a time after he first spots them to observe their abilities, eventually setting up an ambush with the war apes if the PCs are traveling by foot, or waiting for a chance to strike as they camp. When the attack begins, the war apes first throw their spears and then charge into melee. Ulu-Thurg takes the opportunity to teleport in and attempt to abduct a PC to a remote location deep in the Screaming Jungle, where he tries to slay him individually before returning to the fight to repeat his attack on another PC.

Demonic Détente

Although demons and undead are tireless in their lust for destruction, there is little wisdom to forcing constant battle. As the IX Exsanguinos and XIII Decapitus legions near Lemoriax, the commanders call for a halt to organize and prepare for the siege. Fully 50,000 undead and demons, eager to begin the fight, reluctantly settle in an immense camp on a ridge at the edge of a boggy plain, several miles from Lemoriax and at the edge of what is known as the interdicted region.

This area is a spherical zone that surrounds the city of Lemoriax to a range of 10 miles (which includes Wat Dagon); this zone duplicates the effects of a massive *forbiddance* spell, preventing entry via teleportation, *plane shift*, and all other planar travel spells. Astrally projected and summoned creatures cannot enter, and summoning spells fail automatically when used within the zone. These restrictions apply only to those who have not sworn oaths of loyalty to Demogorgon—his minions and the majority of Lemoriax's denizens can teleport and summon within the zone easily. As long as the zone remains active, Orcus's armies remain reluctant to approach.

The interdiction zone is maintained by Demogorgon's will, but the immense ziggurat at the center of Lemoriax, a step-pyramid known as Demogorgon's Throne, acts as the focus. If this focus is disrupted, the interdiction zone fails and Orcus's armies can lay siege to the capital city of Gaping Maw. Unfortunately for the PCs, none of Orcus's legions or their commanders want to enter the zone—the task of disrupting it falls to the party.

If the PCs did not accompany Quah-Nomag from the portal point, he contacts them with a request phrased more like a demand via *sending*: "If you wish Orcus's legions to provide a distraction, you will come to me now. You are needed at the edge of the interdicted zone."

Quah-Nomag is an imposing man, a towering figure with the blood of ogres in his veins. Instrumental in restoring Orcus to life after the Prince of Undeath's time as Tenebrous, Quah-Nomag is one of Orcus's favorite minions. As the PCs reach his side, he explains that not only does the interdiction zone present a severe tactical disadvantage, but one of Demogorgon's largest armies, the Demos Horde, is camped nearby. Before Orcus's legions can lay siege to Lemoriax and provide the distraction the PCs need to enter Wat Dagon, the Demos Horde and the interdiction zone must be removed.

The Demos Horde (EL 22 or 24)

Though the Demos Horde outnumbers the two legions under his control, Quah-Nomag notes with a smirk that he has his own means of evening the playing field, noting that each enemy that falls provides his necromancers with a new conscript. Even so, he does not relish the thought of confronting a force so large as the Demos Horde. Yet a horde of demons is only as strong as its commander, and if the Demos Horde were to lose its leader, Quah-Nomag's armies could shatter it with ease.

The question of who commands the Demos Horde, however, depends on how the PCs handled Part Six of "Enemies Of My Enemy." Normally, the Demos Horde is commanded by General Tetradarian, one of two partial clones grown from Demogorgon's own body. If the PCs managed to convince the other clone, General Bagromar, to turn against his brother Tetradarian, then command of the Demos Horde has fallen to a lesser (but still powerful) demon named Gromsfed the Drowned. Tetradarian and Bagromar clash elsewhere on Gaping Maw, their jealousy-fueled battle destined to carry on until one slays the other or Demogorgon intervenes. As long as this adventure continues, neither of these events is likely to occur. If the PCs didn't convince Bagromar to turn against his brother, though, both Gromsfed and Tetradarian command the Demos Horde, and defeating them becomes a bit harder.

Not long after the PCs meet with Quah-Nomag and learn of what he wants them to do, a flock of ragged vargouilles flutters out of the trees toward them. Battered and ruined, having escaped the Demos Horde with only a few of their number intact, the vargouille spies report to the Skull King on the location of General Tetradarian' command post. In general layout, the Demos Horde camp is similar to that of General Bagromar's camp (for a map, see page 81 of DUNGEON #149). Nearly 100,000 demons dwell in this camp, many of which can *see invisibility* or possess *true seeing*. Combined with the interdiction zone's blockage of teleportation spells, there remain very few ways for the PCs to reach the command tent without arousing the wrath of tens of thousands of demons.

Stealth combined with a high-arcing, high-speed flightpath that descends down toward the tent (such as via *wind walk*) should get the PCs to the tent quickly enough while alerting few enough guards. With a DC 40 Diplomacy check, they can even convince Quath-Nomag to send a group of a few thousand troops on a suicide mission to attack the Demos Horde, creating a distraction that should allow the PCs the chance to reach the command tent quickly and without being noticed (Neither Tetradarian nor Gromsfed bother to personally respond to an insignificant attack by only a few thousand demons.) For further advice on infiltrating a demonic camp like this, consult the encounter "Bagromar's Camp" on pages 80–81 of DUNGEON #149.

Creatures: General Tetradarian's devilhide command tent is 60 feet in diameter, and is supported by nine adamantine poles around a thicker central pole. These hold the tent roof 40 feet off the ground. The interior is dim and smoky, and characters who participated in the raid of Bagromar's tent might experience a wave of déjà vu upon entering, for a one-headed version of Demogorgon awaits them inside. Standing nearby is a 30-foot-tall demon with the blackened skin of a frost-bitten corpse, red batlike wings, four arms, a snarling orcish head, and a massive gaping mouth in his abdomen flanked by a set of scythelike pincers. His stench is horrible, and his sodden flesh is covered with bluish patches.

This is General Tetradarian and his second-in-command, War Secretary General Gromsfed the Drowned. Normally stationed at Ungorth Reddik, Gromsfed came here to aid in coordinating the defense of Lemoriax. Once a brilliant sea captain and devotee of Demogorgon, Gromsfed's fleet was drawn through a maelstrom into the aquatic realm of Shadowsea. Unable to escape, the captain drowned. He was returned to Gaping Maw later by Dagon in his current undead form as a gift to Demogorgon. Despite his aquatic subtype, Gromsfed retains a phobia of open water. To utilize his tactical brilliance, Demogorgon removed him from his shipboard command and appointed him as his secretary of war to coordinate the defense of the Gaping Maw as well as raids against the Prince of Demons's many enemies.

GENERAL TETRADARIAN **CR 23**

Clone of Aameul
Fiendish Codex I 61
CE Huge outsider (aquatic, chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +36, Spot +36
Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common; telepathy 300 ft.

AC 48, touch 17, flat-footed 40; Dodge, Mobility
hp 499 (27 HD); fast healing 10; **DR** 20/cold iron and good
Immune critical hits, electricity, mind-affecting, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 36
Fort +29, **Ref** +23, **Will** +21

Spd 35 ft. in breastplate (50 ft. base), swim 50 ft.
Melee 2 tentacles +39 (1d8+14 plus rot) and bite +35 (2d6+7) and tail slap +35 (2d6+7 plus energy drain)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +27; **Grp** +49
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack
Special Actions gaze attack, *summon tanar'ri*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)
At Will—*astral projection, contagion* (DC 22), *desecrate, detect good, detect law, fly, greater dispel magic, greater teleport, project image, telekinesis* (DC 24), *unhallow, unholy blight* (DC 23)
3/day—*feeblemind* (DC 24), *symbol of death* (DC 27)
1/day—*dominate person* (DC 28)

Abilities Str 38, Dex 27, Con 38, Int 26, Wis 22, Cha 28
SQ amphibious
Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Multiattack, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack
Skills Bluff +39, Concentration +44, Diplomacy +43, Intimidate +41, Jump +52, Knowledge (arcana) +38, Knowledge (history) +38, Knowledge (nature) +38, Knowledge (the planes) +38, Listen +36, Move Silently +38, Search +38, Sense Motive +36, Spellcraft +40, Spot +36, Swim +52

Possessions *+5 heavy fortification breastplate*

Amphibious (Ex) Even though Tetradarian has the aquatic subtype, he can survive indefinitely on land.

Energy Drain (Su) Any living creature hit by Tetradarian's tail slap gains 1d4 negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, Tetradarian heals 5 points of damage. If the amount of healing is more than the damage he has taken, he gains any excess as temporary hit points. It's a DC 37 Fortitude save to remove one of these negative levels.

Gaze Attack (Su) Tetradarian's gaze is the equivalent of a *charm monster* spell (Will DC 32 negates) with a range of 30 feet.

Rot (Su) Any living creature touched by Tetradarian's tentacles must succeed at a DC 37 Fortitude save or its flesh and bones begin to rot. The creature takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage immediately and 1 point of Constitution damage every hour thereafter until it dies or a *remove disease* spell is cast. The spell stops further damage, but lost Constitution points return only with natural healing and cannot be restored with magic.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day Tetradarian can automatically summon 1d8 vrocks, 1d6 hezrous, 1d4 glabrezu, 1d3 nalfeshnees, 1 marilith, or 1 balor.

War Secretary-General Gromsfed the Drowned CR 22

Klurichir demon drowned one warchief 4

CE Huge undead (augmented outsider, chaotic, evil, tanar'ri, water)

Dungeon #106 48, *Fiend Folio* 48, *Miniature's Handbook* 24

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see invisibility, soulsense 60 ft., Listen +31, Spot +31

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Celestial, Draconic, Ignan, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

Aura fear 30 ft. (DC 27), nauseating appearance 20 ft. (DC 27)

AC 38, touch 10, flat-footed 36

hp 185 (24 HD); **DR** 15/cold iron and good

Immune electricity, undead traits, water pressure

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 36

Fort +20, **Ref** +19, **Will** +26

Weakness sunlight powerlessness

Spd 25 ft., fly 90 ft. (poor), swim 50 ft.

Melee* *+3 battleaxe* +34/+29/+24/+19 (3d6+32/19–20/×3 plus disease) and 2 pincers +29 (2d6+12/19–20 plus disease)
or
slam +31 (1d8+20 plus disease) and 2 pincers +29 (2d6+12/19–20 plus disease)

Ranged spines +12 (2d6+12 plus poison plus disease)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +23; **Grp** +46

Atk Options disease, improved grab (pincers), poison (DC 26, 2d4 Str/2d4 Str), rend 2d6+22, vorpal pincers +29 (2d6+20/19–20 plus vorpal), Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack

Special Actions tribal frenzy, *summon tanar'ri*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 10th, +36 melee touch, +23 ranged touch)

5th (4/day)—*wall of force*

4th (6/day)—*dimensional anchor, lesser globe of invulnerability*

3rd (8/day)—*displacement, haste, fireball* (DC 20)

2nd (8/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 19), *false life, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image*

1st (8/day)—*mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield, shocking grasp*

0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, daze* (DC 17), *disrupt undead, flare* (DC 17), *mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, resistance*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th):

At will—*blasphemy* (DC 24), *deeper darkness, desecrate, detect good, detect law, dispel good* (DC 22), *fear* (DC 21), *greater dispel magic, magic circle against good, mass charm monster* (DC 25), *mass*

Gromsfed the Drowned

suggestion (DC 23), *pyrotechnics* (DC 19), *read magic, symbol* (any) (DC varies), *telekinesis* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *tongues* (self only), *unhallow, unholy aura* (DC 25), *unholy blight* (DC 21), *wall of fire*

3/day—*destruction* (DC 24), *enervation, fire storm* (DC 24), *implosion* (DC 26), *slay living* (DC 22)

*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 40, Dex 14, Con —, Int 20, Wis 22, Cha 25

SQ hivemind, turn resistance +4

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Critical (pincers), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Iron Will, Leadership, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +34, Concentration +25, Diplomacy +36, Intimidate +36, Knowledge (history) +28, Knowledge (the planes) +28, Listen +31, Sense Motive +33, Spellcraft +28, Spot +31

Possessions *cloak of resistance +4, +3 battleaxe, rod of rulership* (200 minutes)

Deep Water Adaptation (Ex) Gromsfed is immune to water pressure damage from deep water.

Disease (Su) Victims of this supernatural disease grow lethargic and feeble as their muscles and skin turn blue like a drowned corpse. Bluerot—weapon or natural attacks, Fortitude DC 26, incubation period 1 minute, damage 1d8 Strength. If Strength is reduced to 0 it deals 1d8 Con. A victim that dies of bluerot rises as a drowned one at the next sunset. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Hivemind (Ex) Gromsfed can communicate telepathically with other drowned ones to a distance of 10 miles.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Gromsfed must hit a creature at least on size category smaller with a pincer attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can make vorpal pincer attacks against the held creature in subsequent rounds. He can hold a creature in his pincers without being considered grappled, without taking the usually penalties for grappling, and without tanking the usual –20 penalty on his grapple check.

Fear Aura (Su) As a free action, Gromsfed can produce a fear effect that functions like a *fear* spell (caster level 20th) except that it affects all creatures within a 30-foot radius (Will DC 27). Any creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the fear aura for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Nauseating Appearance (Su) Gromsfed's appearance is supernaturally horrifying. All living creatures within 20 feet that can see him in his natural form must make a Fortitude save (DC 27) or be nauseated for 1 round. A new saving throw is required for all creatures in the area each round. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rend (Ex) If Gromsfed hits a single target with both pincers, they latch onto the opponent's body and tear the flesh. This attack deals 2d6+18 points of damage. He cannot use this ability in conjunction with improved grab, so he typically uses this attack on creatures too large for him to grapple.

See Invisibility (Su) This ability functions as a *see invisibility* spell except it is always active and its range extends to the limits of Gromsfed's vision.

Soulsense (Su) Gromsfed constantly senses the presence of intelligent life in a 60-foot cone-shaped emanation. This ability functions identically to *detect undead*, save that it allows him to detect the auras of living creatures with Intelligence scores of at least 3.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, Gromsfed can automatically summon 4d10 quasits, 1d6 hezrous, 2 nalfeshnees, 2 glabrezus, or 1 marilith. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex) Gromsfed is powerless in natural sunlight (not a problem on Gaping Maw), unless it is filtered through at least 1 foot of water. If caught in sunlight, he cannot attack and can take only a single move action each round.

Tribal Frenzy (Ex) Gromsfed can spur other nearby demons into a primal frenzy, granting allied demons within 30 feet a +4 enhancement bonus to their Strength score, but dealing 1 damage to them each round for every Hit Die they posses. This ability can be activated at will as a standard action, and once activated lasts as long as Gromsfed continues to maintain it (a free action).

Vorpal Pincers (Su) If Gromsfed begins a turn with a creature held in his pincers, he can make one vorpal pincers attack against that opponent each round. This attack has a +29 attack bonus and deals 2d6+20/19–20 points of damage with a successful attack. On a critical hit, the pincers sever the opponent's head from its body.

Tactics (Gromsfed only): If Tetradarian is not present due to a conflict with his clone brother Bagromar, only Gromsfed is encoutnered here. Unlike Tetradarian, Gromsfed has no interest in chatter—he immediatley attacks the PCs. If reduced to less than 30 hit points, he attempts to teleport to Lemoriax to recover, but this has the same effect on the Demos Horde in the short run as if the PCs killed him.

Tactics (Tetradarian and Gromsfed present): While Gromsfed is obviously startled by the PCs' sudden appearance, Tetradarian seems mildly amused—as if he was possibly expecting the PCs. Unless the PCs initiate immediate hostilities, Tetradarian addresses them civilly and calmly introduces them to the war-secretary general. Tetradarian recognizes the party from the reports of spies who have been shadowing them for the last few months. He also knows them from their recent encounter with Bagromar, whether his clone brother survived or not.

Like his clone twin, Tetradarian fancies himself the dominant commander of Demogorgon's armies. He sees in the PCs something that could shift the balance of power in his favor if utilized properly. Yet before any deal can be struck with Tetradarian, he must first take care of a potential witness against him—Gromsfed. After his almost pleasant introductions, Tetradarian calmly orders Gromsfed to slay the foolish intruders and then returns to studying the reports on his desk, only occasionally glancing up to observe events in the battle.

Gromsfed takes to the order with glee, but once he drops to less than 30 hit points he flees to Tetradarian's side to beg the general for aid. At this point, General Tetradarian joins the battle, but as allies to the PCs. Gromsfed attempts to teleport to Abysm to report about Tetradarian's apparent treason to Demogorgon, so the PCs and Tetradarian have, at best, only a round to finish off the undead demon. Yet even if Gromsfed escapes, Demogorgon is busy battling Orcus—no immediate repercussions occur (and Tetradarian likely tracks him down to finish the job before Gromsfed gets Demogorgon's attention, in any event).

Once Gromsfed is dealt with, Tetradarian's calm returns, and he invites the PCs to have a seat once they are finished looting their victim. Tetradarian's attitude at this point depends on how the encounter with Bagromar ended in the last adventure. If Bagromar was slain, Tetradarian's initial attitude is indifferent—otherwise he is unfriendly. If the PCs can adjust Tetradarian' attitude to helpful, he is willing to withdraw his horde to Lemoriax, as long as the PCs can show some benefit to him as a result, as well as providing reassurances that they do not wish to overthrow Demogorgon—the savage tide doesn't really matter to Tetradarian (in fact, he worries about what it might do to the power structure of Gaping Maw).

Development: If the PCs destabilize the Demos Horde by simply killing its commander(s), it doesn't take long for the demons to turn on themselves in a violent riot as lesser commanders attempt to seize control of the horde. This is the sign Quah-Nomag is waiting for—he sends in both of his legions to assault the horde and, within a matter of minutes, breaks its back. Demons allied with the horde teleport away in droves, and the few loyalists who remain behind are slaughtered quickly and mercilessly, their bodies animated and recruited to swell the legion's ranks by the necromancers.

The Siege of Lemoriax (EL 23 or 24)

The disruption of the Demos Horde is only half of the problem—the interdicted zone remains regardless of the horde's fate. Quah-Nomag readies his legions for the siege of Lemoriax, but until the PCs do something to disrupt the zone he refuses to begin.

If the Demos Horde was madness to infiltrate, Lemoriax is suicide. The capital city of Gaping Maw, Lemoriax is also one of the most densely-populated pits of demonic evil in the Abyss. The city's burning streets and twisted towers are home to well over three million demons, and untold more monsters and menaces dwell in the catacombs and sewers that stretch for miles beneath the planar metropolis. Infiltrating the city is more than an adventure in and of itself—it's its own campaign, and likely something that the PCs simply don't have the time or resources to attempt if they wish to prevent the Savage Tide.

The interdiction zone was created recently by Demogorgon, one of several adjustments to Gaping Maw made after

the Prince of Demons finally admitted to himself that the rumors of an army massing against him had some basis in fact. Normally, mortal intervention could have little effect on the whims of a demon lord on his home plane, yet with the war in full swing, Demogorgon's resources are spread thin.

Although the tallest ziggurat in Lemoriax, Demogorgon's Throne, is the focus of the interdiction zone, and the destruction of the pyramid would probably result in the zone's collapse, the pyramid is approximately a mile from the city walls in all directions. Without the ability to teleport, any approach toward the pyramid is opposed by countless demons ranging from lowly mobs of dretch up to platoons of bar-lgura archers stationed atop mobile battlements on the shoulders of goristro demons led by balor generals. An all-out assault on Demogorgon's Throne is beyond the scope of this adventure, but fortunately for the PCs there is a simpler way to disrupt the zone, for it is as much maintained by the Throne as by Demogorgon's will. If the PCs can create a shocking enough distraction at Lemoriax's walls, the interdiction zone falters and fails. And once Quah-Nomag's legions begin teleporting in, the influx of the enemy keeps the zone from returning. Any PC who uses magic to observe the strange auras of the interdiction zone (via *detect magic*, *arcane sight*, or the like) can make a DC 35 Spellcraft check to determine these facts, yet the method of creating such a distraction is left to their imagination. A party of 20th-level characters is quite capable of any number of distractions that suffice to disrupt Demogorgon's concentration on the zone at this point—the two most likely examples are detailed below.

Mass Destruction: If the PCs can destroy up to 200 HD in demons (of any combination) within a ten-minute span along Lemoriax's walls, the sudden wash of unexpected carnage is enough to distract Demogorgon long enough for Quah-Nomag's armies to teleport in.

Unleashing Obox-ob: If the PCs managed to capture the aspect of Obox-ob within the *Iron Flask of Tuerny the Merciless* in "Enemies Of My Enemy," the solution is simple. If the aspect is released at the walls of Lemoriax, he immediately realizes that it stands at the edge of his hated enemy's capital city and begins mercilessly slaughtering demonic guardians and ruining city walls before moving into the city itself. As long as the PCs do not approach Obox-ob too closely, they are ignored by the Prince of Vermin. While the aspect's assault on Lemoriax does not damage the city that much before the pressing mass of demonic denizens take the aspect of Obox-ob apart, the unexpected manifestation of yet another of Demogorgon's enemies on Gaping Maw is all that's required to cause his concentration to falter and to disrupt the interdiction zone. In fact, the PCs can achieve this result by releasing Obox-ob anywhere within the zone, but unless they do so within the proximity of Lemoriax, the Prince of Vermin doesn't have an obvious target on which to vent his wrath, and immediately turns on the PCs. If they become necessary, stats for Obox-ob's CR 22 aspect can be found in *Fiendish Codex I* or in DUNGEON #149.

Development: If the PCs carry the *Iron Flask of Tuerny the Merciless*, Iggwilv teleports to their side once the interdiction zone fails. Even if they accomplished this via other means and Obox-ob remains within the flask, Iggwilv congratulates the PCs on their progress before demanding they hand over the flask. If they protest, she reminds them that each of them owes her a favor for the aid she has provided them to this point, and that relinquishing the flask to her absolves one of them of this favor. Iggwilv has big plans for *Tuerny's Flask*, and if the PCs resist, she has no qualms about taking the flask by force. If they become necessary, Iggwilv's stats can be found on pages 50–51 of DUNGEON #149—hopefully the PCs know better than to anger the Witch Queen.

PART THREE: TO STEM THE TIDE

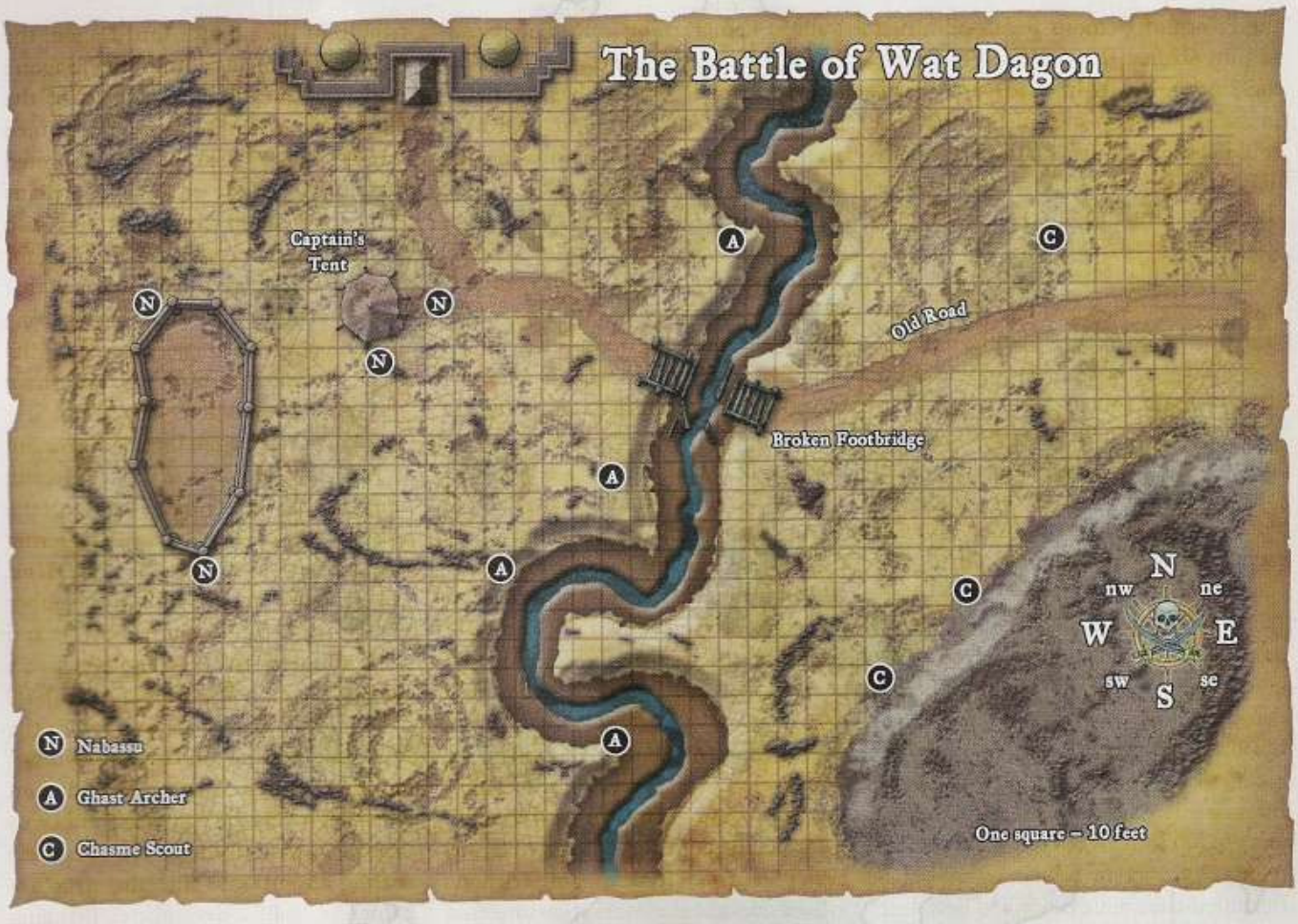
The true tests awaiting the PCs, however, are not to be found on the field of battle, but at an ancient edifice perched upon the shores of the Brine Flats. This is Wat Dagon, an ancient temple that predates Demogorgon's habitation of the Gaping Maw. Constructed during the time-misted ages of the obyriths in tribute to the obyrith lord Dagon, the edifice remained behind after Dagon's retreat to the lightless depths of the Shadowsea. When Demogorgon claimed Gaping Maw as his own, he discovered Wat Dagon already in ruins. The canny Prince of Demons explored it, and in so doing came into contact with Dagon for the first time. The alliance born of that initial encounter has since become one of Demogorgon's greatest assets, for the secrets revealed to him by Dagon have been potent revelations indeed.

It was in Wat Dagon that Demogorgon learned how to construct *shadow pearls*, and it is within the temple's heart that the *master pearl*, a device capable of triggering the *shadow pearls* on the Material Plane, can be found. Yet reaching its chamber may prove to be the most difficult and dangerous task the PCs have ever faced, for Wat Dagon is its own realm, with its own rules and reality. Even before the PCs can enter the structure, two things bar their progress. First, the interdiction zone that covers the region around Lemoriax also wards Wat Dagon, effectively sealing all entrance into the structure (which is, itself, a demiplane). Bringing down the interdiction zone removes this barrier, but there remains another obstacle—Demogorgon's armies may be engaged elsewhere on Gaping Maw, but that doesn't mean he left the approach to Wat Dagon undefended.

The Battle of Wat Dagon (EL 22)

The land approach to Wat Dagon is the least guarded, with the sea beyond practically boiling with armies of ixitxachitls, fiendish krakens, and other sea monsters. In any event, the only entrance into Wat Dagon is via the double doors at area 1.

With the exception of the old road, the ground in this region is muddy and wet, counting as difficult terrain for creatures not under a *freedom of movement* effect. The stream that winds through the region is at the bottom of a five-foot-deep gully; it's a DC 10 Climb check to move into or out of this gully. The stream itself is highly acidic—a splash does 1d6 acid damage, while a creature standing in the five-foot-deep stream takes 10d6 acid damage a round. The air in the gully to



a distance of 10 feet from either edge is poisonous as well—any creature in this area must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 2d6 Constitution damage (initial and secondary damage is the same).

An area about a hundred feet from Wat Dagon has been fenced off by stone walls. This corral once held a large number of undead warbeasts that have since been sent to aid the battle elsewhere.

Creatures: Demogorgon has entrusted the defense of Wat Dagon to one of his most infamous minions—the first death knight, Saint Kargoth the Betrayer. While the majority of Kargoth's armies fight elsewhere, he has hand-picked the demons and creatures to defend Wat Dagon. The least of these defenders are those stationed outside of Wat Dagon's walls.

The exterior defense consists of three chasme sentinels (fly-like demons with hooked claws and long, hornlike proboscises), four nabassu mercenaries (yellow-eyed gargoyle-like demons), and four powerful ghast archers created from the bodies of troglodyte cultists who gave their lives in order to become undead minions of Demogorgon—although the ghasts resemble undead troglodytes, they have the same base statistics as normal ghasts. Saint Kargoth himself has taken up position inside Wat Dagon, leaving the command of his forces out here in the hands of one of his most competent generals, the hezrou Urbala.

CHASME SENTINELS (3) **CR 12**

Advanced chasmes
CR Large outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Fiendish Codex I 34
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +18, Spot +18
Aura fear (5-ft. radius, DC 16)
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 26, touch 12, flat-footed 23
hp 110 (13 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 21
Fort +17, **Ref** +16, **Will** +15

Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)
Melee 2 claws +17 (1d6+5 plus wounding) and bite +15 (1d8+2 plus wounding) and gore +15 (1d8+2 plus wounding)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +22
Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack
Special Actions drone (DC 18), *summon tanar'ri*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th, +15 ranged touch)
At will—*contagion* (DC 16), *darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *dispel magic*, *fly*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pound of objects only), *insect plague*, *protection from good* (DC 13), *ray of enfeeblement*, *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 17)
3/day—quickened *ray of enfeeblement*
1/day—*unholy aura* (DC 20)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14
Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*ray of enfeeblement*)
Skills Bluff +18, Climb +29, Concentration +20, Hide +15, Intimidate +20, Listen +18, Move Silently +19, Search +18, Sense Motive +18, Spot +18

Drone (Su) As a full-round action, a chasme may beat its wings to create a droning buzz in a 60-foot-radius spread. All creatures in this area must make a DC 18 Will save or fall asleep for 2d10 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Fear Aura (Su) As a swift action, a chasme can create an aura of fear in a 5-foot radius spread around it. This effect is otherwise identical to a *fear* spell (CL 12th, Will DC 16 negates). If the save is successful, the creature is immune to that chasme's fear aura for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a chasme can attempt to summon 1d4 rutterkins (*Fiendish Codex I* 51) or 1 chasme with a 40% chance of success.

Wounding (Ex) A wound resulting from a chasme's attack bleeds for an additional 1 point of damage per round thereafter. Multiple wounds from such attacks result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check or the application of any form of magical healing.

NABASSSU (4) **CR 15**

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Fiendish Codex I 48

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +23, Spot +23

Aura death stealing gaze (DC 25, 30 ft.), *unholy aura*

Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 35, touch 19, flat-footed 30

hp 202 (15 HD); regeneration 5; **DR** 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 26

Fort +24, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20

Spd 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee bite +24 (2d8+9/19–20) and 2 claws +19 (1d8+4)

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +24

Atk Options sneak attack +6d6

Special Actions death-stealing gaze, feed, *summon tanar'ri*, vampiric link

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th, +20 ranged touch)
At will—darkness, enervation, ethereal jaunt, greater dispel magic, greater teleport (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *hold monster* (DC 20), *obscuring mist, silence* (DC 18), *true seeing, unholy aura* (DC 24), *unholy blight* (DC 20)
3/day—*blasphemy* (DC 23), *energy drain* (DC 25)

Abilities Str 28, Dex 20, Con 28, Int 20, Wis 21, Cha 23

SQ camouflage

Feats Ability Focus (death-stealing gaze), Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Balance +7, Bluff +24, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +8, Hide +23 (+31 in underground or barren environs), Intimidate +26, Jump +15, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (local) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Knowledge (the planes) +23, Listen +23, Move Silently +23, Spot +23, Tumble +25, Use Magic Device +24

Camouflage (Ex) A nabassu gains a +8 circumstance bonus on Hide checks made in underground or barren environments.

Death-Stealing Gaze (Su) 30 feet, Fortitude DC 25, bestows 1d4 negative levels. Any humanoid creature drained to 0 levels dies and is immediately transformed into a ghoul under the nabassu's permanent command. As a standard action, a nabassu can actively use its gaze to kill a single creature within range. A creature that fails the DC 25 Fortitude save is immediately slain.

Feed (Su) A nabassu who slays a creature with a coup de grace attack eats a significant portion of the victim while the remaining flesh rots away to a foul-smelling paste, thus preventing raising or resurrection that requires parts of the corpse. A nabassu gains the effects of a *death knell* spell (CL 20th) when it successfully feeds in this manner.

Regeneration (Ex) A nabassu takes normal damage from good-aligned weapons.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a nabassu can summon 2d4 babaus or 1d4 hezrous with a 70% chance of success, or one glabrezu with a 30% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 7th-level spell (CL 15th).

Vampiric Link (Ex) *As a standard action,* a nabassu can establish a vampiric link between itself and a living creature within 30 feet. The target is entitled to a DC 23 Will save to negate the effect; otherwise, the link remains in place until the target moves out of range or until the nabassu selects a new target. Whenever the affected creature deals damage to the nabassu, the creature takes the same damage. If the creature targets the nabassu with a spell, the effects of that spell are duplicated and affect the caster as well, even if the spell fails to penetrate the nabassu's spell resistance. This is a necromancy effect.

Eladrin Aid

Starting with the battle against Urbala and his minions outside of Wat Dagon, many of the following encounters are particularly difficult, especially if the PCs are forced to tackle one after another (as may be the case if you've set the savage tide on a short timer). If they're having trouble and think to ask for aid, only the eladrins have any interest in accompanying the PCs into Wat Dagon, and even then, they can only afford to spare a tiny portion of their numbers, establishing a half-dozen ghaele eladrins just outside of Wat Dagon to serve as healers and support for the PCs as they continue forays into the structure.

If they need more help, consider having a more powerful eladrin ally accompany them on their adventures inside Wat Dagon. Celeste (DUNGEON #149, page 61) is an excellent choice, since she's powerful enough to survive inside of Wat Dagon but not someone who's likely to steal the glory from the PCs; her strengths are in diplomacy and support.

Just remember, the point with eladrin help is to provide aid to the PCs if they need it, not to replace them.

GHAST ARCHERS (4) **CR 13**

Troglodyte ghast fighter 10
CE Medium undead
Monster Manual 255

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, *Spot +3*

Aura stench (10 feet)

Languages Abyssal

AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 23

hp 115 (14 HD)

Immune undead traits

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10

Spd 30 ft.

Melee bite +21 (1d6+7 plus ghoul fever and paralysis) and
2 claws +14 (1d6+3 plus paralysis)

Ranged +2 *composite longbow* +22/+17/+12 (1d8+9/19–20/×3)

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +19

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Abilities Str 24, Dex 23, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 18

SQ enhanced creation, +4 turn resistance

Feats Far Shot, Greater Weapon Focus (longbow, bite), Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow, bite), Weapon Specialization (longbow, bite)

Skills Balance +12, Climb +14, Hide +12, Intimidate +14, Jump +21, Move Silently +12, Spot +10

Possessions +2 *mithral breastplate*, +2 *composite longbow* (+7 Str) with 20 adamantine arrows and 20 arrows, *belt of giant strength* +2

Enhanced Creation The necromancer lich that created these ghasts for Kargoth was a specialist in his trade, and possessed several feats from *Libris Mortis* that enhanced these ghasts. Corpsecrafter grants them a +4 bonus to Strength and +2 hp/HD. Bolster Resistance increases their turn resistance to +4. Hardened Flesh increases their natural armor bonus by 2.

Captain Urbala — CR 19

Advanced elite hezrou

CE Huge outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)

Monster Manual 44

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +34, Spot +34

Aura stench (10 ft.)

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 36, touch 9, flat-footed 35

hp 341 (22 HD); **DR** 10/good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 19

Fort +24, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14

Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +33 (6d6+13) and
2 claws +31 (3d6+8)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +22; **Grp** +39

Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, improved grab

Special Actions *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)

At will—*chaos hammer* (DC 19), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects), *unholy blight* (DC 19)

3/day—*blasphemy* (DC 22), empowered *chaos hammer* (DC 19), *gaseous form*, empowered *unholy blight* (DC 19)

Abilities Str 28, Dex 13, Con 32, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 20

Feats Cleave, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*chaos hammer*, *unholy blight*), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (claws), Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Climb +29, Concentration +36, Hide +13, Escape Artist +21, Intimidate +30, Listen +34, Move Silently +21, Search +27, Spellcraft +27, Spot +34

Possessions *+5 full plate, amulet of mighty fists +4, wings of flying*

Tactics: Since the interior of Wat Dagon is effectively on another plane, there's no real way for any alarms raised out here to alert the denizens within. Still, the demons and undead stationed here do their best to guard the region. The chasmes patrol on the landward side of the acid creek, while the nabassus stand guard near Urbala's tent and the empty corral. The four ghast archers hide in foxholes along the seaward side of the creek. As soon as any one of these groups spots the PCs, they shriek out an alarm to alert the others and Urbala (who lounges inside of his tent).

All of the demons attempt to summon aid on the first round of battle, while the ghasts take their first round to begin firing arrows at any PCs in range. All of the demons and undead attempt to stay out of melee if possible, using ranged attacks and spell-like abilities against the intruders. The sole exception to this is Urbala; the corpulent hezrou uses empowered *unholy blights* and *chaos hammers* only when he isn't able to engage foes in melee. The guardians here fight to the death, again with the exception of Urbala. If reduced to less than 30 hit points, the hezrou attempts to enter Wat Dagon to alert his allies and commander within.

Approaching Wat Dagon

A turgid sea of dark water froths along the desolate shoreline under a roiling sky of green clouds and alien moons. Built upon the shore, seemingly on the verge of falling into the water, is an ominous edifice that appears to be a walled temple compound, though its once-vibrant walls are now cracked and grimed from eons of exposure to the acrid sea wind. Tall, conical domes rise above the temple, surrounding a vast stone dome at the center. Swirling eddies of vapor and twisting clouds spiral along the stony surface of the structure to give the entire building a blurry facade, almost as if it were nothing more than a mirage.

Although visible from Gaping Maw, what appears on the shore here is meerly a projection of Wat Dagon. A character who walks up to the building's sides finds the walls immaterial and ghostly—if someone steps through a wall, he immediately emerges from the opposite side. The only part of Wat Dagon that is "real" on Gaping Maw is its front doors. Wat Dagon itself exists entirely within the boundaries between the Abyss and Shadowsea. It is effectively a demiplane within the Abyss.

As such, it can only be accessed via a single portal—the entrance located at area 1. The interior of Wat Dagon is not connected to the astral plane or the plane of shadow, and thus spells that utilize these planes (including all spells of the teleportation subschool) do not function inside of the structure. Demogorgon's will prevents any other creature from using *gate* to force an opening into Wat Dagon, and summoning spells require a DC 30 caster level check to function.

The walls, roofs, and floors of the complex look and feel like stone, but are actually physical manifestations of the edge of the demiplane. This material cannot be breached by mortal magic.

Unless otherwise noted, the rooms of the temple are not illuminated. Ceilings are 20 feet high, and doors are composed of a hard, dry wood. Unlike the walls, they can be destroyed normally, yet unless otherwise noted, they do not have locks.

Finally, the entirety of Wat Dagon has become suffused with the unholy power of the savage tide. Upon entering Wat Dagon (and again every 10 minutes thereafter), a creature must make a DC 20 Will save to resist being transformed into a savage creature. Incoporeal creatures, constructs, elementals, oozes, outsiders, plants, undead, and vermin are immune to this effect—any other creature that succumbs immediately gains the savage creature template (*Dungeon* #140, page 47). (If you don't have this resource, the savage tide instead transforms the victim into a half-fiend without the spell-like abilities.) Creatures that become savage no longer honor old friendships or allegiances, and the consuming need to feed and murder forces them to fight one-time allies and enemies alike to the death. *Greater restoration* can restore a savage creature to its normal state, provided the caster can make a caster level check with a DC equal to 10 + 1/2 the savage creature's Hit Dice + the savage creature's Charisma modifier. A *miracle* or *wish* automatically restores the creature to normal. A savage creature that is killed and then brought back to life loses the effects of the template as well.

1. The Great Entrance of Wat Dagon

Wide wooden gates, moldy with age and banded with corroded strips of metal, do little to bar entrance into the complex. They stand unsecured beneath a stone arch, looking as though an errant breeze could push them open. Beyond can be seen a short entry tunnel that passes through the gatehouse before opening into a courtyard beyond. Red tiles cover the gatehouse exterior as well as the walls stretching to either side, though in many places individual tiles have fallen away to reveal the stone beneath. A steep roof of green clay tiles rising in a series of ragged points tops this gatehouse.

The gates swing open easily at a touch—there's no indication on entry that a character is moving across a planar boundary. The interior of the gatehouse is shadowy and floored with a layer of gravel. Empty rooms, one-time guard posts, open on either side—both are currently empty. A 15-foot-high veranda runs along the inner side of the gatehouse supported by intricately carven posts.

2. Courtyard (EL 20)

While this courtyard seems at first to be open to the air, a glance upward creates an unsettling sense of vertigo, for forty feet above the contents of the room are reflected, down to the smallest pebble, as if the ceiling were an immense and perfect mirror twenty feet above.

The main entrance to the building—a corroded door of beaten bronze—sits in the wall opposite the gatehouse. Squatting on a ledge above these ten-foot-tall doors is a horrific statue of a creature not quite eel or shark or octopus. A wooden frame holding a large copper bell stands to the left of the entrance. A smaller frame holds a sus-

pended log to serve as a striker for sounding the bell. At either end of the courtyard are tall, circular towers with conical golden domes. Archways, five feet off the ground, open along the walls to provide access to the chamber within. Just to the side of the gatehouse sits a small, ornamental pond overgrown with deformed lily pads and algae. A statue of a fat froglike demon sits cross-legged at the closest edge of the pool. Finally, collapsed in a corner of the yard is an immense spider-like carcass the size of an elephant. It shows signs of heavy damage and deterioration due to exposure.

The ornamental pool is only two feet deep, but the bottom is coated with a six-inch layer of green slime (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 76). A DC 21 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the spiderlike corpse as a destroyed retriever—in fact, it is the remains of Demogorgon's first attempt to craft one of these constructs. The figure above the main entrance depicts Dagon, recognizable with a DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check.

The ceiling above is an impenetrable barrier between Wat Dagon and a duplicate chamber above—the "reflections" the PCs see above are living duplicates of themselves created by the Abyss. Sound doesn't penetrate the barrier, nor can any mode of travel (magical or mundane). The duplicates follow the actions the PCs take, but not quite as exactly as a reflection might. If a PC flies up to the "ceiling" 20 feet above and touches it, his duplicate does the same—and as soon as the two do so, the "reflection" shrieks soundlessly in horror and transforms into a deformed, savage version of the PC that scratches at the barrier between them, as if insane with a need to tear the true PC apart. The character who touched his "reflection" must then make a DC 25 Will save to avoid being stunned by the sudden assault of Abyssal energy on his mind—making a new saving throw each time he comes into contact with his savage duplicate.

Creatures: Saint Kargoth is not the only one of Demogorgon's favored minions sent to Wat Dagon to aid in its defense. The notorious glabrezu Ghorvash, one of Demogorgon's favored subordinates and something of a spymaster, has also come to aid in the site's defense. Ghorvash sees himself as the first line of defense for Wat Dagon, privately assuming he was assigned here because Demogorgon doesn't trust Saint Kargoth to do the job.

Ghorvash has a particular interest in the fate of the Vanderborens and their allies, for he is the demon responsible for corrupting a young Vanthus Vanderboren so many years ago, and for sealing the man's fate (see *Dungeon* #146). When the PCs defeated Vanthus for a second time, the man's soul transformed into a larvae, a horrid wormlike manifestation of an evil soul. Ghorvash was waiting for him, and is now the proud owner of Vanthus's larval soul. He's taken great entertainment in tormenting Vanthus as he waits for the PCs to arrive, often doing so in the assumed form of Lavinia. Worse, Ghorvash knows it's only a matter of time before the PCs arrive at Wat Dagon, and has prepared an unsettling surprise for them. He's learned much of their accomplishments, and when they arrive in this courtyard, he greets them in Lavinia's form.

Ghorvash knows the PCs aren't pushovers and that they have plenty of magic available, and yet does what he can to make them think that they really are facing their friend and ally. As Lavinia, Ghorvash mocks the PCs, calling them naive fools and claiming that she had plotted these events from the start simply to see Vanthus's humiliating defeat and aid Demogorgon in seeing his goal—after all, by keeping the PCs distracted with Farshore and "pretending" to be captured, she kept the PCs from where they were truely needed, in civilization, seeking out the *shadow pearls* and preventing them from spreading so far as they did. If the PCs confront Ghorvash with the truth, he shrugs and assumes his natural form, then claims to be surprised it took the PCs "this long" to figure it out. The deceptive glabrezu then goes on to claim that he's been masquerading as Lavinia for months; he prefers to let the PCs draw their own conclusions as to when he assumed her form, but if pressed, he decides not to push things too far and claims to have taken her form at Divided's Ire, using the PCs to engineer his escape. He claims the real Lavinia is long dead.

Of course, all of these claims are lies. What aren't lies are Ghorvash's tales of how he tempted Vanthus, stories he gleefully reveals to the PCs if they ask. If they doubt him, he shrugs again and then uses *telekinesis* to pull the larval Vanthus out of his cage in area **3**, hurling the shrieking petitioner at them and inviting them to, "Ask him yourselves!"

General Ghorvash **CR 20**

Male glabrezu mortal hunter 7
CE Huge outsider (chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)
Monster Manual 43, *Book of Vile Darkness* 65
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +27, Spot +27
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 36, touch 9, flat-footed 35
hp 320 (19 HD); **DR** 10/good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 21
Fort +25, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12, spurn mortal magic

Spd 40 ft.
Melee *Kallum's skull* +31/+26/+21/+16 (1d6+14 plus *curse of betrayal*) and 2 pincers +29 (3d8+14/19–20) and claws +29 (1d8+7) and bite +29 (2d6+7)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +19; **Grp** +41
Atk Options improved grab (pincer), mortal hunting, smite mortal 1/day (+2 to attack, +14 damage)
Special Actions *detect mortals*, mortal skin, *summon tanar'ri*
Spells Prepared (CL 7th, ranged touch +18)
4th (2/day)—*arcane eye*, *call dretch horde*, *locate creature*, *morality undone* (DC 21), *phantasmal killer* (DC 21), *resonating resistance*
3rd (4/day)—*flesh ripper*, *mirror sending*, *nondetection*, *scrying* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 20), *vile lance*, *wrack* (DC 20)
2nd (4/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 19), *evil eye* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *magic circle against good*, *see invisibility*, *web* (DC 19), *wither limb* (DC 19)
1st (4/day)—*cause fear* (DC 18), *charm person* (DC 18), *detect good*, *heartache* (DC 18), *protection from good*, *sleep* (DC 18), *unnerving gaze* (DC 18)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)

At will—*chaos hammer* (DC 21), *confusion* (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *mirror image*, *reverse gravity* (DC 24), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy blight* (DC 21)

3/day—boosted mortalbane *unholy blight* (DC 23), quickened *mirror image*

2/day—mortalbane *unholy blight* (DC 21)

1/day—*power word stun*

Abilities Str 38, Dex 12, Con 34, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 24

SQ claws of the overfiend

Feats Alertness, Boost Spell-Like Ability (*confusion*), Improved Critical (pincer), Mortalbane (*unholy blight*), Multiattack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*mirror image*), Track

Skills Bluff +29, Concentration +27, Disguise +28, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (the planes) +18, Listen +27, Move Silently +16, Search +18, Sense Motive +24, Spellcraft +17, Spot +27, Survival +23

Possessions *Kallum's skull* (see Appendix One), *bracers of armor +8*, *belt of giant Strength +4*

Claws of the Overfiend (Ex) Ghorvash's natural attacks deal damage as a creature one size category larger than his actual size.

Detect Mortals (Su) This ability duplicates the effect of detect undead (CL 15th), except that mortals are detected. For purposes of this ability and other mortal hunter abilities, a "mortal" is any creature not of the outsider, undead, construct, or fey types.

Mortal Hunting (Ex) Ghorvash gains a +3 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks made against mortals. He also gains a +3 bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls against mortals.

Mortal Skin (Su) Ghorvash can graft bits of flesh to his body. Once per day, he can assume the form of a mortal creature. If the flesh used is from the exact individual being imitated, the duration is permanent. If the flesh is from a being of the same type of the form adopted, the duration is 1 hour. If the flesh is not the same type as the form adopted, the duration is 10 minutes. In all cases, Ghorvash can dismiss the ability as a standard action. Otherwise, this ability works as *polymorph*. Ghorvash currently has numerous pieces of flesh grafted to his arms, one of which is a patch of flesh procured from Lavinia Vanderboren, purchased from the marilith Lillianth during Lavinia's stay as a prisoner of Divided's Ire (through the use of a non-outsider proxy—Ghorvash didn't want to become a permanent addition to Divided's Ire).

Smite Mortals (Su) Once per day, Ghorvash can smite a mortal creature with one normal melee attack.

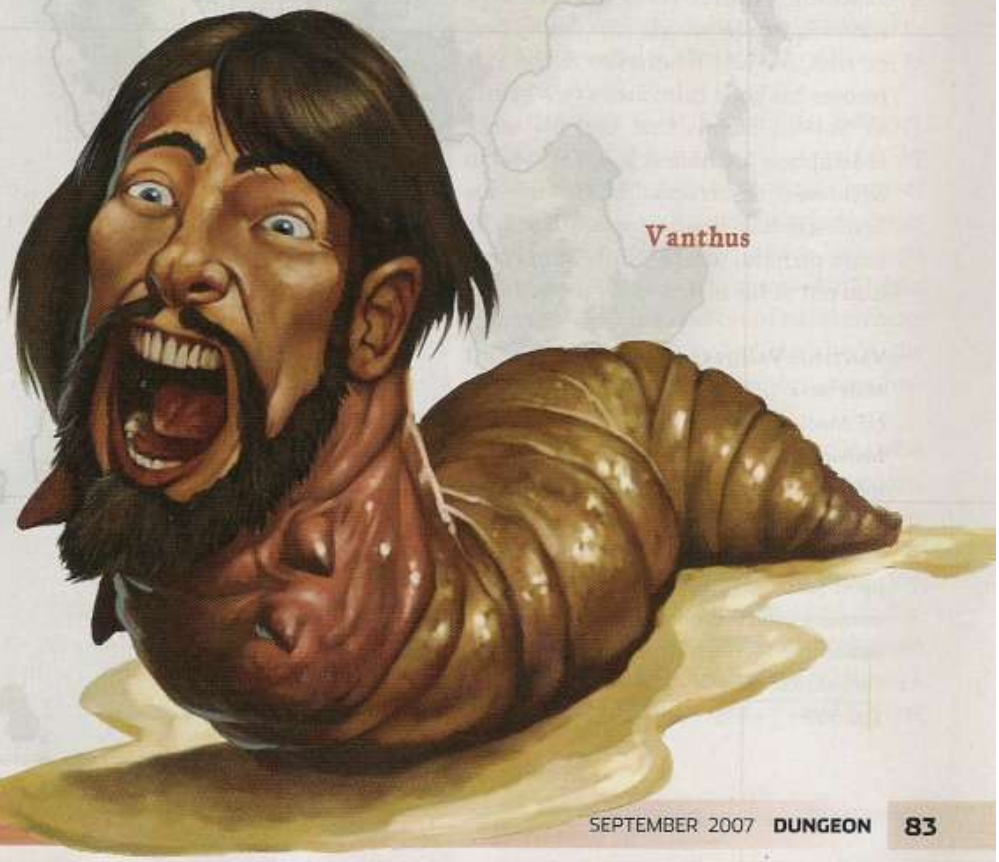
Spurn Mortal Magic (Su) Ghorvash applies his Wisdom modifier as an additional bonus on all saving throws against spells and spell-like abilities used by mortals.

Spells Several of Ghorvash's spells are from the *Book of Vile Darkness*. If you don't use this book in your game, make the following adjustments to his spells: *call dretch horde* becomes *summon monster IV*, *evil eye* becomes *desecrate*, *flesh ripper* becomes *vampiric touch*, *heartache* becomes *lesser confusion*, *mirror sending* becomes *clairvoyance/clairaudience*, *morality undone* becomes *charm monster*, *resonating resistance* becomes *spell immunity*, *unnerving gaze* becomes *doom*, *vile lance* becomes *contagion*, *wither limb* becomes *shatter*, and *wrack* becomes *blindness/deafness*.

Feats Boost Spell-Like Ability (*Book of Vile Darkness* 47) allows Ghorvash to boost the saving throw DC for *confusion* by +2 up to three times a day. Mortalbane (*Book of Vile Darkness* 49) allows Ghorvash to enhance *unholy blight* up to five times a day so that it inflicts +2d6 damage when used against mortals, but only half damage against outsiders, undead, and constructs.

Tactics: Ghorvash eventually grows tired of tormenting the PCs, and if they don't attack him first, he does so after first reverting to his true form. He activates a quickened *mirror image* on the first round of combat along with *reverse gravity* to catch as many of the PCs as he can. Characters who fall up to the "ceiling" come into contact with their reflections, with repercussions as detailed above. Each round a PC remains in contact with his duplicate, he must make a new saving throw to avoid being stunned.

Ghorvash uses his spells and spell-like abilities against PCs stuck on the ceiling, reverting to melee attacks against those who avoid being stunned or falling up and who can reach him. He fights to the death, knowing that to fail



Vanthus

Demogorgon at this stage would be the less appealing of the two ends.

3. Chedis

A curtain of heavy knotted ropes hangs before the entrance into a round chamber with a conical roof rising thirty feet above. The interior walls of the chamber are adorned with all manner of inscriptions in Abyssal. The remains of a small altar and kneeling bench sit near the back of the room.

These small buildings are chedis, or shrines. They once held relics sacred to Dagon, though they were looted ages ago. Now they stand abandoned, although Ghorvash has been using the one opposite the dead retriever as a place to torment Vanthus.

Creature: Vanthus Vanderboren, his soul now transformed into a twitching, shrieking larva, lies pinned to a wax tablet on the altar by several long rusty needles. Horrifically, Vanthus is one of those few larva who retains knowledge of his life, and upon seeing the PCs begs for redemption and salvation. You can use Vanthus to fill the PCs in on any bits of backstory involving the treacherous brother that remain to be explained. Rescuing Vanthus from his wretched state requires a *miracle*, *true resurrection*, or *wish*, (or just *resurrection* if the PCs recover his body from area **13**). Whether or not his claims that he now seeks redemption are honest is left for you to decide—if resurrected, he has lost his Lemorian half-fiend template. It may be more merciful for the PCs to simply put him out of his misery once and for all.

VANTHUS VANDERBOREN **CR 1**

Male larva
NE Medium outsider (evil)
Manual of the Planes 199
Init +3; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 11
hp 45 (currently 2 hp, 2 HD)
Immune cold, fire, mind-affecting effects
Resist acid 10, electricity 10
Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee bite +3 (1d4+1 plus disease and wounding)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Abilities Str 12, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14

Disease (Ex) Devil chills—bite, Fortitude DC 17, incubation period 1d4 days; damage 1d4 Str.

Wounding (Ex) A wound inflicted by a larva bleeds for 1 additional point of damage each round until a DC 15 Heal check is made or magical healing is applied.

4. Dagon's Gate (EL 13)

The floor of this antechamber is inlaid with a complex pattern of blue and green tiles that almost gives it the illusion of the surface of a placid pool of water.

Trap: One round after a creature enters this area, its lungs fill with nearly freezing seawater. The target must make two DC 25 Fortitude saving throws. The first determines whether or not the victim is stunned for 1d4 rounds by the sudden sensation of lungs filled with freezing water (creatures with any resistance or immunity to cold automatically make this saving throw). The second is to determine if the victim can expel the water from his lungs before he begins to drown—if the victim is stunned, this saving throw suffers a –4 penalty. Failure indicates the victim drops to 0 hp at the start of the next round and thereafter continues to drown. Water breathing creatures, of course, do not need to worry about drowning from this trap.

Breath of Dagon: CR 13; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; Fortitude DC 25 resists stunning, Fortitude DC 25 resists drowning; Search DC 40; Disable Device DC 40.

Development: Characters who succumb to this trap are likely to alert both groups of ghast archers in the nearby rooms.

5. Viharn (EL 18)

Three ornately carved benches stand here with a few small incense burners and lit tapers providing a sharp fragrance of rotting seaweed. A great net composed of rusty chain links hangs from the ceiling overhead like some kind of awning.

This chamber served as a gathering area for meditation by the temple's guardians. The chain netting above is a 20-foot-square fishing net once used for catching the great leviathans of the deep off the nearby coast—despite its ominous appearance, it is harmless.

Creatures: Saint Kargoth has stationed a half-dozen ghast archers in this room. The undead wait loyally and patiently for the death knight's command, although if they notice victims succumb to the breath of Dagon trap in area **4**, they shriek in delight (alerting the ghasts in area **6** and the occupant of area **8**) as they race into area **4** to attack drowning PCs.

Ghast Archers (6): hp 115 each; see page 79.

6. Abandoned Viharn (EL 17)

This room is bare and dusty. A pair of battered wooden benches sit against the walls.

Creatures: Like area **5**, this was once a viharn. Several ghast archers lie in wait in this chamber.

Ghast Archers (4): hp 115 each; see page 79.

7. Watchtowers

Stairs rise thirty-five feet into a single chamber at the top of each of these towers. These chambers lie beneath conical golden roofs and feature several narrow windows that look out over Gaping Maw to one side and into the swirling depths of Shadowsea to the other. These windows are transparent planar barriers—they allow observation from either side, but not transport.

A character who peers into Shadowsea has a cumulative 25% chance per round of catching a glimpse of an immense, horrific shape waiting in the dark waters. This is none other than Dagon, Prince of the Darkened Depths, lurking in the nearby waters of Shadowsea and ready to emerge into Gaping Maw when the PCs challenge Demogorgon. Dagon does not notice any PC peering through these windows, but the mere sight of the obyrith lord is enough to affect the observer with his form of madness.

Any creature that observes Dagon must make a DC 31 Will save. Failure indicates the creature develops an overwhelming fear of the ocean and its depths. As long as the ocean is in sight, the creature is distracted with fear and takes a –4 penalty on Will saving throws. He also takes a –4 penalty on attack rolls against creatures with the aquatic subtype. On the first round of combat against a creature with the aquatic subtype, the character must make a DC 31 Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d6 rounds. A *heal* or *greater restoration* spell can cure the effects if the caster succeeds on a DC 35 caster level check. *Miracle* or *wish* automatically cures the condition.

A creature that makes this save is immune to Dagon's form of madness for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear ability that does not affect chaotic evil outsiders. Even creatures that are immune to fear can be affected by Dagon's form of madness, although they suffer its effects for only 1 hour if they fail their saving throw—for all other creatures, the effect is permanent until magically cured.

8. Bot (EL 23)

A massive stone dome hangs forty feet overhead. At its apex is a large opening leading into the dark interior of the temple's central golden spire. Beneath this opening has been inscribed a magical circle with a small cauldron at its center. Tall wooden pillars support the chamber's dome. Set in between these pillars are wooden poles upon with have been mounted crude wooden fetishes.

This bot, or "most holy prayer room," was once a central place of Dagon worship in the Age before Ages. The darkened opening leading to the vault above has a 1-foot-wide lip surrounding its inner edge. The circle beneath is identifiable with a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check as some type of chaotic transmitting focus. A DC 40 check identifies it as the site from which the savage tide will be unleashed. Unfortunately it is indelibly inscribed by the morphic will of Demogorgon at caster level 30. If somehow destroyed, it reforms after 1 round. The cauldron is filled with briny water and is necessary for the activation ritual of the *master pearl*. The five fetishes are recognizable as a jaguar, a sea turtle, a rhinoceros, a tiger, and a tyrannosaurus. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to realize that the craftsmanship resembles those of the Olman of the Isle of Dread.

Creature: Saint Kargoth the Betrayer, the first death knight created by Demogorgon, has chosen this chamber as his arena for defense. He calmly awaits the arrival of the PCs, whom he knows are near, but is eager to leave Wat Dagon to return to his fortress of Kolurenth on Gaping Maw—as powerful as he is, the death knight finds the locale uncomfortable and menacing.

A corrupted human paladin who once served in the Great Kingdom, Saint Kargoth betrayed his brothers to quickly ascend through the ranks of demonic hierarchy. He has come to view Demogorgon as his lord and god, and is, in many ways, the demon prince's most loyal follower. Of the legions of demons who serve Demogorgon, Kargoth alone

would never consider betraying him. Additional information about Kargoth's history, including full details on his fall from grace and ties to the demonspawn Arendagrost, can be found in issues #290–#291 of DRAGON magazine, although they are not relevant to his role here as Wat Dagon's defender.

ST. KARGOTH THE BETRAYER **CR 23**

Male half-fiend human death knight ex-paladin 8/blackguard 10
CE Medium undead
Monster Manual 147, *Monster Manual II* 207
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect good*; Listen +4, Spot +4
Aura despair (10 ft.), fear (15 ft.)
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic

AC 45, touch 16, flat-footed 44
hp 351 (377 with *Demogorgon's Bilious Sphere*, 18 HD); **DR** 15/cold iron and good
Immune acid, cold, electricity, polymorph, undead traits
Resist acid 10, fire 10, **SR** 28
Fort +26, **Ref** +20, **Will** +22

Spd 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (perfect) (base speed 30 ft. unarmored)
Melee +5 *unholy longsword* +35/+30/+25/+20 (1d8+16/19–20) or
+5 *unholy longsword* +31/+26/+21/+16 (1d8+16/19–20) and
Demogorgon's Bilious Sphere +31 (1d8+10 plus 1d6 acid) or
touch +29 (1d8+13 negative energy plus 1 Con, DC 32)
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +29
Atk Options smite good 5/day (+13 to attack, +10 damage; 1/day +28 damage), sneak attack +4d6
Special Actions abyssal blast, command undead 16/day (+13, 2d6+21), lay on hands (130 hp/day)
Spells Prepared (CL 10th)
4th—*freedom of movement*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 18)
3rd—*inflict serious wounds* (2, DC 17), *summon monster III*
2nd—*death knell* (DC 16), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 16), *shatter* (DC 16)
1st—*corrupt weapon*, *inflict light wounds* (2, DC 15)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th)
3/day—*darkness*, *unholy aura* (DC 31), *poison* (DC 27)
1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 30), *contagion* (DC 27), *desecrate*, *horrid wilting* (DC 31), *summon monster I* (CL 20th, evil creature only), *summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 27)

Abilities Str 32, Dex 14, Con —, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 36
SQ dark blessing, fiendish servant, poison use, turn immunity, unholy toughness
Feats Cleave, Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Bluff +16, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +23, Handle Animal +21, Hide +24, Intimidate +36, Knowledge (religion) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Ride +23
Possessions +5 *improved shadow full plate*, +3 *animated heavy steel shield*, +5 *unholy longsword*, *Demogorgon's Bilious Sphere* (see Appendix One), *cloak of Charisma +6*, *amulet of natural armor +5*, *ring of protection +5*, *boots of speed*

Abyssal Blast (Su) St. Kargoth can unleash a blast of eldritch fire once per day, filling a 20-foot-radius spread anywhere within a range of 1,120 feet. The blast deals 18d6 damage (half fire, half divine power); a DC 32 Reflex save halves the damage.
Fear Aura (Su) Creatures of less than 5 HD within 15 feet must make a DC 32 Will save or become panicked.
Flight (Su) St. Kargoth's fly speed is supernatural in nature, functioning similarly to that granted by a *fly* spell, save that it cannot be dispelled.
Turn Immunity (Ex) St. Kargoth cannot be affected by turn undead.
Unholy Toughness (Ex) St. Kargoth gains a bonus to his hit points equal to his Charisma modifier times his Hit Dice.
Inherent Bonuses St. Kargoth has a +4 inherent bonus to Strength and a +5 inherent bonus to Charisma.

Tactics: Saint Kargoth is one of the deadliest foes the PCs are destined to face, as befits his history and role as the first of Demogorgon's death knights. If he hears the PCs enter area 4, he takes the time to cast *freedom of movement*, *corrupt weapon*, and *unholy aura* before stepping through the double doors into area 4 to join his ghast minions in the fight against the PCs. Kargoth activates his *boots of speed* on the first round of combat and begins the battle by casting *horrid wilting* or using his *abyssal blast* (taking care to hit as few ghasts as possible), but thereafter fights in melee. The death knight is unnervingly silent in combat, making no villainous proclamations and issuing no maniacal laughter—he is as cold and relentless in personality as he is in battle. Loyal to the end, Saint Kargoth fights to the death, confident that if Demogorgon survives what is to come, the Prince of Demons will restore him. And if the Prince of Demons is to fall, Kargoth would rather fall first.

9. Collapsed Hall

Halfway across the chamber the floor has cracked and sunken, creating a treacherous slope down into churning waters. The western half is ten feet lower and rests at an angle to the rest of the room.

The door to area **10** is swollen with wetness and barely remains on its hinges, swinging open easily but only providing 1 foot of headroom between the surface of the water and the door jamb.

10. Mondhop (EL 20)

Murky water floods this entire chamber, save for a small ledge of rubble upon which rests a tattered nest of cloth and debris. Ancient stone shelves line the walls, mostly submerged with only a few items scattered upon their tops. The ceiling rises 10 feet above the surface of the water. A fitfully-burning torch made of rushes is affixed to the south wall.

This was once the library of the temple, but the sacred texts once stored here have long since been moved to Abysm. The water is 12 feet deep. The torch is an everburning torch.

Creature: This room has been one man's home for the past thousand years, a man whose slavish devotion and dedication to Demogorgon is as full as any mortal could ever express. This

is the Olman shaman who discovered the first *shadow pearl*, and the first Olman to fall under its influence—Nulonga. Old even before his devotion to Demogorgon began, Nulonga aided Demogorgon in the cultivation of the *master pearl* over the past millennium. Here in Wat Dagon, the man never ages, never grows tired or hungry, and never wonders what might have been had he the will to resist the Demogorgon's lure so long ago.

Nulonga is an emaciated ruin of a man, both of his legs ending in stumps that bear the scars of crude stitching. His legs were his first sacrifice to the Prince of Demons so long ago—his immortal soul the next. His teeth are little more than rotten stumps sharpened to cracked points, and he carries the odor of decay about him, a manifestation of his unusual bond with death—if slain, Nulonga's spirit slips like a parasite into the closest body, resurrecting in an undead shell. Nulonga has died countless times, and has used undead hosts to secure his own resurrection as many times. His death wish is Demogorgon's greatest gift and curse to the old man, ensuring his immortality at the cost of his eternal servitude. It is unlikely that the PCs will be able to kill the ancient shaman as long as Demogorgon lives unless they take care to destroy all of the bodies of defeated ghasts in Wat Dagon.

While Nulonga is quite dangerous, his role in the defense of Wat Dagon is minimal—he prefers to leave that job to Saint Kargoth and General Ghorvash. Yet if both of them are destroyed, Nulonga feels it in his bones, and realizes he's the last thing standing between the PCs and the *master pearl*.

Nulonga

NULONGA **CR 20**

Male old human sorcerer 10/thrall of Demogorgon 10

CE Medium humanoid

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Init –2; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Olman

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 23

hp 71 (20 HD)

Fort +10, **Ref** +4, **Will** +18

Spd 10 ft. (can't run)

Melee *+1 greater empowering club* +13/+8/+3 (1d6–2)

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +12

Special Actions death touch, death wish, *Demogorgon's will*, hypnosis, reaching touch, rotting touch, *summon demon*, touch of fear

Combat Gear *staff of necromancy* (42 charges)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 14th, +12 touch, +13 ranged touch)

7th (4/day)—*finger of death* (DC 26)

6th (6/day)—*flesh to stone* (DC 24), *greater dispel magic*

5th (7/day)—*feeblemind* (DC 23), *teleport*, *wall of force*

4th (8/day)—*animate dead*, *bestow curse* (DC 23), *dimension door*, *enervation*

3rd (8/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *displacement*, *fly*, *vampiric touch*

2nd (8/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 21), *false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 21), *resist energy*, *spectral hand*

1st (8/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *magic missile*, *protection from law*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 18), *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 19)

Abilities Str 5, Dex 7, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 26

SQ dual actions, metamagic specialist, scaly flesh, two personas

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Dark Speech, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Quicken Spell, Spell Focus (necromancy), Thrall to Demon (Demogorgon), Willing Deformity

Skills Bluff +31, Concentration +23, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (religion) +16, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Spellcraft +17

Possessions *+1 greater empowering club* (as a *rod of greater empower metamagic* that also functions as a *+1 club*), *ring of*

protection +5, ring of Charisma +6 (as cloak of Charisma +6), bracers of armor +6, helm of telepathy, key to area **13**

Death Touch (Su): Nulonga can use an effect identical to that of *slay living* once per day (Fort DC 28 negates).

Death Wish (Su) As an immediate action, Nulonga can will his physical body to die. If struck by a lethal attack, he can elect to use this ability the instant before he dies. This ability frees his soul to inhabit any other humanoid corpse within 1 mile at any time within the next 24 hours. That corpse animates as a juju zombie (see *Forgotten Realms: Unapproachable East*) but gains all of Nulonga's memories, spell casting, and special abilities (including death wish). Nulonga's soul is immediately aware of all suitable corpses within 1 mile and can reach any of them instantly regardless of barriers or other magic that prevents possession, such as *protection from evil*. Once a body is vacated by Nulonga, he can no longer use it for possession. Given time, Nulonga's first act upon gaining a new body is to hack off his own legs to honor his bargains with the Prince of Demons.

***Demogorgon's Will* (Sp)**: Nulonga can call upon the Prince of Demons once per day to be granted a *limited wish*. The use of this ability requires 3 full rounds devoted to entreaties and prayers to Demogorgon before the *limited wish* is granted.

Dual Actions (Su): Twice per day, Nulonga can take two full rounds' worth of actions in the same round.

Hypnosis (Su): Once per day, Nulonga can produce an effect identical to that of the *hypnotism* spell (Will DC 28 negates), except it functions as a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet.

Metamagic Specialist This alternate class ability allows Nulonga to apply metamagic feats to his spells without extending the time required to cast them. This ability replaces his ability to summon a familiar.

Reaching Touch (Su): Three times per day, Nulonga can cause his arms to stretch unnaturally like tentacles. This provides him an extra 5 feet of reach for 1 round.

Rotting Touch (Su): Three times per day, Nulonga can deal 1d6 points of Constitution damage as a touch attack.

Scaly Flesh (Ex) Nulonga's flesh is covered with fine scales that grant him a +4 natural armor bonus.

***Summon Demon* (Sp)**: Nulonga can summon a demon of 5 HD or less once per day. This functions as a *summon monster* spell cast by a 15th level caster. Once per day, he can also summon a demon of 10 HD or less. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell; the ability to summon a 10 HD demon is the equivalent of a 7th-level spell.

Touch of Fear (Su): Three times per day, Nulonga can cause a creature he strikes with a touch attack to become frightened for 1d4 rounds. A successful DC 28 Will save means the creature touched is merely shaken for 1 round.

Two Personas (Ex): Whenever Nulonga is subjected to a mind-affecting attack that allows a saving throw, he makes two saving throws. Both saving throws must fail in order for the mind-affecting attack to affect him.

Feats Thrall to Demon allows Nulonga to gain a +1 luck bonus to one roll a day. Willing Deformity grants him a +2 deformity bonus on Intimidate checks.

Tactics: As soon as Nulonga hears the sound of combat in Wat Dagon, he casts *clairaudience/clairvoyance* to observe events in area **8**. Once Kargoth is defeated, Nulonga prepares for the inevitable by casting extended versions of *fly, false life, resist energy* (of a type he witnessed the PCs use), *protection from law*, and *shield*, then moves out to confront the PCs wherever they may be.

Once he encounters them, he shrieks curses in ancient Olman, flies up near the room's ceiling, and begins casting spells. Nulonga knows his body is fragile, and doesn't expect to last too long against the PCs, so he prefers to fight them using magic from his *staff of necromancy* (*enervation* being his favorite attack), since once he is slain and returns to "life" in an undead body, he'll have to rely more heavily on his spells. Only if the PCs prove resistant to his staff does he resort to his spells.

When slain, Nulonga's spirit seeks out the special body kept in area **13**, animates it, and prepares his second defense against the PCs.

Treasure: Among the various items scattered atop the shelves are the components of an alchemist's lab, an *elixir of vision*, a crude voodoo doll recognizable as War Secretary-General Gromsfed with a needle through its head, a huge black pearl worth 500 gp, two defaced gold statuettes (one of Tlaloc and one of Quetzalcoatul) worth 1,000 gp each, and a stone jar of black bile of the world (see DUNGEON #144).

11. Worm Tunnel (EL 20)

The tunnel beyond this archway is low and cramped, circular in cross-section, with floor, walls, and ceiling made of what looks unsettlingly like leather. These surfaces bear hundreds of thousands of words written in Abyssal, carved into the leathery substance in a tangled mass of interwoven spirals.

This "hallway" is in fact the body of a fiendish mottled worm (an aquatic variant of the purple worm) of monstrous proportions, its body cored out and preserved to create a coiling tunnel 5 feet in diameter. Although the preserved flesh has the flexibility and feel of leather, it's as tough as stone (hardness 8, hp 60 per 5-ft. section, Break DC 32). If the PCs break through the preserved hide into the surrounding room, they find merely an empty chamber full of dust and debris that once served as another sala in the temple. From the outside the purple worm is easily identifiable for what it actually is. The runes are prayers to Demogorgon interwoven with the magic of the trap that wards this chamber.

Creature: If, four rounds after a creature enters this room, there are still creatures inside the tunnel, a potent magical effect activates and resurrects the ancient worm. The monster reflexively coils up into the room (into its 20-foot space), but any creatures inside of the hallway when this transformation occurs are automatically considered to be swallowed whole—any holes or damage inflicted on the worm's body

before it resurrects is immediately healed upon its return to life. The worm immediately attacks any creatures not be already swallowed—the monster's narrow body and boneless structure allows it to squeeze through 5-foot-wide openings if it needs to pursue foes.

ANCIENT WORM **CR 20**
Advanced elite fiendish mottled worm
NE Gargantuan magical beast (aquatic)
Monster Manual 211, 107
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +35, Spot +0
Languages Abyssal

AC 20, touch 5, flat-footed 20
hp 496 (32 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 25
Fort +27, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10

Spd 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 10 ft.
Melee* bite +35 (3d8+26) and sting +30 (3d6+18 plus poison)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +32; **Grp** +60
Atk Options Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, improved grab (bite), smite good 1/day (+20 damage)
Special Actions swallow whole
*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 42, Dex 8, Con 29, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 6
SQ amphibious
Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite, sting), Improved Natural Attack (bite, sting), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite, sting)
Skills Listen +35, Swim +24

12. Boiling Pool

The floor of the chamber has collapsed, leaving a boiling pool of green water five feet below a rickety wooden bridge, its planks slippery with green mold and black mildew. The chamber is stifling, with clouds of sulfurous steam filling the room, preventing an accurate guess at the room's size or the eventual destination of the rickety bridge.

The water in this room comes from a portion of Shadowsea where volcanic vents heat the normally freezing water to boiling. As a result, the extreme heat in the room requires a Fortitude save every 10 minutes to avoid taking nonlethal damage as described on page 303 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The water itself is 20 feet deep. Being splashed causes 1d6 points of fire damage; being totally immersed in boiling water causes 10d6 points of fire damage. The steam in the room functions as obscuring mist—creatures five feet away have concealment (20% miss chance), while those farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance). A character walking on the bridge must make a DC 12 Balance check; failure by 5 or more indicates the character has slipped and fallen into the boiling water below.

The door to area **13** is made of an ultrahard metal called obdurium, and is locked by an *arcane lock* spell (CL 20th). The door is also red-hot—contact with it causes 2d6 points of fire damage. The door is locked with an almost impossibly complex lock (Open Lock DC 50)—Nulonga carries the key on a cord around his neck, but the complexity of the lock means it takes four rounds to open it with the key. Open Lock attempts take 10 rounds. Unless the door is first cooled (Nulonga typically casts *chill metal* via his *limited wish* to do so), the somewhat fragile key must make a DC 20 Fortitude save each round (using the user's saving throw) to avoid melting.

Obdurium Door: 6 inches thick; hardness 30; hp 360; Break DC 72.

13. Chamber of the Great One (EL 22)

Murky waters lap at the sloping shore that serves this room as a floor, giving off an acrid, rotten stench. In the shallows sits an enormous oyster, rising from the water like a massive shark's fin, its valves serrated and spiked and studded with razor-sharp horns. The blackened and pitted shell smokes as if had recently been exposed to great heat, and its interior is charred black as well rather than the expected opalescence of mother-of-pearl. Within, on a slithering bed of horror and alien flesh, rests a huge black pearl, larger than a man's head, that pulses with black energy in which ghostly, disembodied faces seem to shriek. A pair of four-foot-high wooden stakes with strips of leather hanging from their sharpened points protrude from the oily sand on the narrow beach near the monstrous shellfish.

The moment the room is entered and the party gets a quick look at the *master pearl*, the fiendish oyster senses intruders and snaps shut to protect its treasure. This fiendish giant oyster is the very one from which the original *shadow pearl* that brought down Thanaclan grew. Demogorgon transported it to the Abyss and has used it to grow a *master pearl* capable of detonating all of the shadow pearls simultaneously. If the pearl is triggered during the proper ritual in area **8**, the savage energy released throughout the Material Plane is siphoned into the pearl and thence into Demogorgon—if this occurs, see Concluding the Adventure. Nulonga oversaw the slow process of this pearl's growth, providing it with the humanoid sacrifices necessary for its proper growth.

The oyster itself is as hard as adamantine. Attempts to pry it open require a fantastic Strength, and any creature that attempts to do so or who attacks it with a natural weapon, unarmed strike, or light weapon takes 1d6 points of slashing damage from the shell's many razor-edged horns. *Knock* won't open the shell, but *dispel chaos* or *dispel evil* forces its valves to fall open if the caster can succeed on a DC 35 caster level check. The oyster is a living creature, so antimagic has no effect on it.

Once the oyster's shell is destroyed or its valves forced open, the *master pearl* within can be snatched with ease. Of course, any non-chaotic evil creature that touches the *master pearl* is burned for 5d6 points of vile damage (Will DC 20 half)—*telekinesis* and other methods of remote manipulation can prevent this damage, but wearing heavy gauntlets or attempting to knock the pearl loose with a weapon offers no protection—its vile energies travel through whatever object is used against it to burn its aggressor. Vile damage can

only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell. Any creature that takes any vile damage from the *master pearl* must also make a DC 30 Will save to resist being transformed into a savage creature. As an artifact, the *master pearl* is immune to most mortal attacks, although a *Mordenkainen's disjunction* has the usual chance of destroying it. Barring its destruction, simply removing the *master pearl* from Wat Dagon is enough to stem the Savage Tide until Demogorgon can retrieve the pearl.

If the PCs haven't yet slain Nulonga, a familiar corpse greets them here. Vanthus Vanderboren's body (rebuilt by Demogorgon's will if his coporeal remains were destroyed in "Into the Maw") has been put on grisly display in this room, strung up between the two wooden stakes driven into the sand. If Nulonga has been killed, his soul possesses Vanthus's body and animates it as a juju zombie.

Fiendish Giant Oyster: Hardness 20; hp 360; Open DC 34; Break DC 48; Fort +24, Ref +1, Will +12; immune to acid, cold, fire, and mind-affecting effects.

Creature: Upon inhabiting Vanthus's body, Nulonga easily wriggles free from the bonds and hacks off his legs on the razor-sharp edges of the fiendish oyster's shell. He then slides into the water on the far side of the oyster, lying in wait underwater for the PCs to arrive, casting Extended *fly*, *false life*, *resist energy*, *protection from law*, and *shield*.

NULONGA AS VANTHUS **CR 22**

Male old juju zombie human sorcerer 10/thrall of Demogorgon 10
CE Medium undead
Unapproachable East 67
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Olman

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19
hp 133 (20 HD); **DR** 5/slashing
Immune electricity, magic missile
Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +18

Spd 10 ft. (can't run)
Melee slam +14 1d6–1
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +14
Atk Options Power Attack
Special Actions death touch, death wish, *Demogorgon's will*, hypnosis, reaching touch, rotting touch, summon demon, touch of fear
Sorcerer Spells Known (see page 87)

Abilities Str 9, Dex 9, Con —, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 22
SQ dual actions, metamagic specialist, scaly flesh, turn resistance +4, two personas
Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Dark Speech, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Spell Focus (necromancy), Thrall to Demon (Demogorgon), Toughness, Willing Deformity
Skills Bluff +29, Climb +7, Concentration +23, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Spellcraft +15

Tactics: Nulonga's tactics in this final battle are similar to those he used against the PCs before, only this time he has nothing but his spells to assault them with. He casts a quickened *displacement* on the surprise round in addition to casting an area *greater dispel magic* on the party. He then

uses *wall of force* to keep the PCs divided, *feeblemind* against spellcasters, and *flesh to stone* or *finger of death* against other foes. He augments his attacks each round with quickened *magic missiles, rays of enfeeblement,* and *blindness/deafness.* If he is destroyed again, Nulonga's spirit seeks out any other suitable humanoid bodies to possess—while Saint Kargoth was a half-fiend in life (and thus, being an outsider, cannot be animated by Nulonga), the numerous troglodyte ghasts are all eligible bodies for him to return in. Nulonga takes time only to cast *fly* on himself in this case, racing back to area **13** as quickly as he can to confront the PCs again. If they think to close the door, he uses a *limited wish* to open it with a *knock* spell, otherwise he waits impatiently for Demogorgon to arrive and joins his master in the last battle.

PART FOUR: LORD OF THE SAVAGE TIDE

Despite the number of distractions the PCs have thrown against Demogorgon, he triumphs over Orcus at about the same time the PCs enter Wat Dagon, forcing the Prince of Undeath to retreat back to Thanatos to nurse his wounds (Orcus returns to Gaping Maw shortly thereafter, but arrives at a remote point in the Screaming Jungle and remains hidden—he simply wants to be on Gaping Maw if Demogorgon is defeated so he'll have a chance for the crown). Demogorgon then teleports to Lemoriax to aid in the defense of his city—by this point, Gwynharwyf and Quah-Nomag's legions have penetrated the city's outer defenses and are causing incredible damage to the city.

Yet once the PCs reach the Chamber of the Great One, Demogorgon finally realizes the truth behind the attacks. They were not orchestrated by his archenemies Orcus and Gwynharwyf, but by a band of foolish mortals. His rage at the realization intense, he abandons Lemoriax by casting *gate* to create a portal to area **13** in Wat Dagon. Through the *gate* can be seen the city of Lemoriax in flames, armies of demons being driven deeper into its heart by the advance of Gywnharwyf's and Quah-Nomag's armies. Yet the sight of the Prince of Demons himself shouldering his way through the portal should be enough to strike horror into the PCs' hearts—the final battle has begun!

Creature: As Demogorgon enters Wat Dagon, his twin heads shrieking in rage, his overwhelming dual voices ring telepathically in the heads of all present: "Fools! At last you reveal yourselves to my wrath. The audacity of your ridiculous plan is almost enough to convince me to simply destroy you. But here I find you at this, the heart of my savage tide. Know that even as my minions crush the last of your pathetic invasion, your own deaths will be neither quick nor painless. They will be works of wonder, tortures to inspire the ages. You will, at my touch, become legends!"

At the height of his power, Demogorgon is a CR 33 creature with the resources of an Abyssal layer at his command. Yet if the PCs have done their jobs, what they face now is merely a shadow of the Prince of Demon's true might. A taxing battle with Orcus, the draining of power to maintain the interdiction zone, the recent loss of several key aspects (and possibly even clones), and the portion of his very life essence that he has placed into the *master pearl* in order to make his plan of harmony between his personalities work have all combined to weaken Demogorgon to the point that the PCs may actually have a chance against him.

The statblock for Demogorgon presented below represents him at full strength. Depending on how many different steps the PCs have successfully taken to distract and weaken him, the actual incarnation of the Prince of Demons they face may be much less deadly, although never less than a CR 23 menace. There are five things that the PCs can have done to weaken Demogorgon:

- **Recruit Orcus:** If the PCs secured Orcus' aid, the Prince of Undeath confronts Demogogon at Abysm. While unable to defeat Demogorgon at this time, Orcus's efforts weaken him significantly.
- **Slay Arendagrost:** The destruction of one of Demogorgon's most powerful offspring causes a corresponding (but temporary) loss in his personal lifeforce.
- **Defeat Both Clones:** If both Bagromar and Tetradarian are slain and/or forced to turn traitor against Demogorgon, Demogorgon suffers a loss of his lifeforce that, given several months, he can rebuild.
- **Release Obox-ob:** The Prince of Vermin is, perhaps, the one thing Demogorgon fears. Even though only an aspect, Obox-ob's manifestation on Gaping Maw is incredibly demoralizing to the Prince of Demons.
- **Malcanthet's Betrayal:** If Malcanthet shares a bond with one of the PCs still, she can use that bond to telepathically lash out at Demogorgon as he appears in Wat Dagon. What the Queen of Succubi whispers to her soon-to-be ex-lover is heard only by Demogorgon, but it causes him to falter for a moment, to almost slump in rejection and defeat, and then to roar in a terrible rage. He focuses the majority of his attacks on Malcanthet's proxy, but the demoralizing rebuke has done its damage.

Total the number of factors the PCs were able to achieve; each one of these successes effectively imparts two negative levels to Demogorgon that he cannot remove without several months of recuperation in Gaping Maw. These negative levels function somewhat differently than normal negative levels; they reduce his hit points by 5 + his Constitution modifier, reduce his spell resistance and natural armor bonus by 2 each, remove some of his spell-like abilities, reduce the save DCs of his attacks, and in some cases remove special abilities entirely.

DEMOGORGON **CR 33**

CE Huge outsider (aquatic, chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +48, Spot +48

Aura demonic command (120 ft.), *unholy aura* (spell in effect)

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common; telepathy 300 ft.

AC 59, touch 19, flat-footed 44 (–2 size, +11 Dex, +32 natural, +4 armor, +4 deflection); Dodge, Mobility

hp 869 (37 HD); fast healing 20; **DR** 20/cold iron, epic, and good

A Weakened Prince

NL	HP	SR	AC	DC1	DC2	Spell-Like Ability	Special
2	823	44	56/19/41	42	35	*blasphemy*	Aura of demonic command
4	777	42	53/19/38	38	31	*power word stun*	*Symbol*
6	731	40	50/19/35	34	27	*dominate monster*	Tail energy drain reduced to 1d4
8	685	38	43/19/32	26	23	*weird*	Mage armor
10	639	36	39/19/29	22	19	*gate*	Initial rot damage reduced to 1d6 Constitution

NL: The number of negative levels imparted to Demogorgon. This number is applied as a penalty to his attack rolls, saving thows, skill checks, and ability checks.
CR: Demogorgon's effective CR score at this amount of negative levels.
HP: Demogorgon's maximum hit points with the negative levels in play.
SR: Demogorgon's new spell resistance.
AC: Demogorgon's new armor class, listed as base/touch/flat-footed
DC1: The adjusted save DC for his energy drain and rot attacks.
DC2: The adjusted save DC for his gaze weapons.
Spell-Like Ability: What spell-like ability is lost. These losses are cumulative with each additional set of negative levels.
Special: What special ability is lost. As with Spell Like Abilities, these losses are cumulative with each additional set of negative levels.

Immune electricity, petrification, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 46
Fort +42, **Ref** +35, **Will** +32

Spd 50 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), swim 50 ft.
Melee* 2 tentacles +46 (1d8+31 plus rot) and 2 bites +44 (2d6+23) and tail slap +44 (2d6+23 plus energy drain)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +37; **Grp** +61
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack
Special Actions dual action, gaze, *summon demon, symbol*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 25th)
At will—*astral projection, blasphemy, charm monster* (DC 25), *contagion* (DC 25), *desecrate, detect good, detect law, fly, greater dispel magic, greater magic fang, greater teleport, plane shift* (DC 28), *project image, shapechange, sticks to snakes* (see DRAGON #317), *telekinesis* (DC 26), *unhallow, unholy aura* (DC 29), *unholy blight* (DC 25)
3/day—quickened *feeblemind* (DC 26), quickened *greater dispel magic, gate, heal, power word stun*
1/day—*dominate monster* (DC 30), *weird* (DC 30)
*10-point Power Attack, *greater magic fang* (+5) on all natural weapons

Abilities Str 42, Dex 32, Con 46, Int 30, Wis 26, Cha 32
SQ amphibious, item master, mage armor
Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech*, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Mobility, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*greater dispel magic, feeblemind*), Spring Attack
Skills Bluff +51, Concentration +58, Diplomacy +59, Hide +43, Intimidate +55, Jump +64, Knowledge (arcana) +50, Knowledge (history) +50, Knowledge (nature) +50, Knowledge (religion) +50, Knowledge (the planes) +50, Listen +48, Move Silently +51, Search +50, Sense Motive +48, Spellcraft +54, Spot +48, Swim +64
*Dark Speech is a feat from *Fiendish Codex I*. If you don't have access to this book, replace this feat with Awesome Blow.

Aura of Demonic Command (Su) As Prince of Demons, Demogorgon exudes an aura of demonic command to a radius of 120 feet. With a few exceptions, no demons within this area can take any action without Demogorgon's permission. Demogorgon reflexively grants permission to act on the demon's turn. An affected demon in this area must make a DC 39 Will save whenever he attempts to take any action that Demogorgon does not permit. Success indicates that he may take the action, while failure means that the demon not only loses that action but also takes 2d6 points of Charisma damage as Demogorgon's wrath tears into his mind. Demons within the area that Demogorgon are not aware of may act as they will, as can any demon with the Abyss-Bound Soul feat keyed to any other demon lord (although Demogorgon automatically recognizes rival Abyss-Bound Souls as soon as they enter his aura of demonic command). The Abyss-Bound Soul feat is detailed in *Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss*. Demon lords are not affected by Demogorgon's aura of Demonic Command. The save DC is Charisma-based.
Dual Action (Ex) Demogorgon, having two heads with distinct intelligences and personalities, can take two rounds' worth of actions in any given round, as if he were two creatures.
Energy Drain (Su) Any living creature hit by Demogorgon's tail slap gains 1d6 negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, Demogorgon heals 5 points of damage. If the amount of healing is more than the damage he has taken, he gains any excess as temporary hit points. It's a DC 46 Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Constitution-based.
Gaze (Su) Each of Demogogon's heads has its own gaze attack. Any creature within 30 feet of the demon lord must make two successful DC 39 Will saving throws each round at the beginning of its turn, the first save against Demogorgon's beguiling gaze and the second one against his insanity gaze. The save DC is Charisma-based. Demogorgon can actively target foes with his beguiling gaze and insanity gaze, in which case each gaze requires a standard action to activate. As a standard action, he may lock the gazes of both heads on a single target and

use a special hypnosis effect. He cannot use his hypnosis gaze during the same round in which he uses his beguiling gaze, his insanity gaze, or both.

Beguiling Gaze: The gaze attack of Aameul, Demogorgon's left head, is the equivalent of a *charm monster* spell.

Insanity Gaze: The gaze attack of Hethradiah, Demogorgon's right head, is the equivalent of an *insanity* spell.

Hypnosis Gaze: Only a target with 15 Hit Dice or more is allowed a save to avoid the gaze of both Demogorgon's heads. Those who succumb to this gaze are affected as though by a *hypnotism* spell.

Item Master (Ex) Demogorgon can use any magic item, even spell completion items such as wands or scrolls. He can also create any magic item or construct as though he had the necessary feats and pre requisite spells or other requirements.

Mage Armor (Su) Demogorgon is constantly surrounded by an aura of force that provides armor protection identical to a *mage armor* spell that cannot be dispelled.

Rot (Su) Any living creature touched by Demogorgon's tentacles must succeed on a DC 46 Fortitude save, or its flesh and bones rot away. The creature takes 1d8 points of Constitution damage immediately and 2 points of Constitution damage every hour thereafter until it dies or a *remove disease* spell is cast. This spell stops further damage only if the caster makes a DC 30 Caster Level check. The save DC is Constitution-based.

***Summon Demon* (Sp)** Demogorgon can summon demons to his side to serve him, using a variant of most tanar'ri's *summon tanar'ri* spell-like ability. He can summon any number of demons with this ability as a standard action, as long as all the demons summoned are of the same type—if Demogorgon wishes to summon a succubus and a nalfeshnee, he'll need to use this ability two separate times. He can summon up to 30 Hit Dice of demons per day with this ability. Although he can summon any type of demon (including loumaras, obyriths, and demons without a subrace), he cannot summon unique demons or demon lords using this ability. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell (CL 20th).

***Symbol* (Sp)** Demogorgon can cast any *symbol* spell once per day as a spell-like ability.

True Seeing (Su) Demogorgon has the effects of *true seeing* constantly active; this ability cannot be dispelled.

Constant Spell-Like Abilities Since he can use *fly*, *unholy aura*, and *greater magic fang* at will as spell-like abilities, these spells are always in effect when he's encountered. The effects of these spells and spell-like abilities are included in the stat block above.

Tactics: As Demogorgon creates his *gate*, Gwynharwyf notices the portal open from the field of battle. Eager to aid in the fight against her old enemy, Gwynyarwyf assumes whirlwind form on the surprise round. She rolls a +11 initiative check on the first round of combat—if she beats Demogorgon, she can take a run action to move through the *gate* and into area **13** to aid the PCs as well (note that she can automatically tumble through Demogorgon's square and avoid attacks of opportunity as she passes through the *gate*). Gwynharwyf's stats appear in *Dungeon* #149—if she makes it into area **13**, you should hand the PCs a copy of her stats and allow them to run her in the battle to come. Gwynharwyf enters the battle already wounded, at only 200 hit points and with only one mighty rage remaining, and having expended both *cure serious wounds* spell-like abilities for the day.

Another individual notices Demogorgon's act as well—watching the battle of Lemoriax from a safe distance, Iggwilv notices the *gate* open. She teleports to the main entrance of Wat Dagon and enters the structure via that route, not wishing to get caught up in a battle against Demogorgon but eager to be nearby when it reaches its conclusion.

Once the battle begins in earnest, Demogorgon utilizes the following tactics.

Surprise Round: Demogorgon opens his *gate* and steps into area **13**, delivers his telepathic monologue to the PCs. Gwynharwyf notices the *gate* open and assumes whirlwind form. Iggwilv notices *gate* open and teleports to the entrance of Wat Dagon. Soothed by Demogorgon's presence, the fiendish oyster relaxes and opens its valves.

Round 1: If she beats Demogorgon's initiative, Gwynharwyf can move into area **13**, whereupon she falls under PC control. On his turn, Demogorgon ceases concentrating on the gate (causing it to close behind him), uses a quickened *feeblemind* on a spellcasting PC, and then uses the first of his actions to *telekinesis* the *master pearl* into Hethradiah's mouth (his right head) where it is promptly swallowed. He uses his second action to summon a balor (Demogorgon does not have to make the caster level check to use summon spells in Wat Dagon).

Round 2: Demogorgon attempts to telepathically contact Nulonga if he isn't present; if he discovers that the now-undead shaman is waiting on the other side of the closed and locked door in area **12**, Demogorgon can spend a standard action to open the door. Otherwise, he spends one of his actions to attack (a full-round attack if possible), uses another action to use an area *greater dispel magic* on the PCs, and uses a second quickened *feeblemind* on a PC.

Round 3+: In the following rounds, Demogorgon generally takes one of his dual actions to make a full attack action (or to move and make a single attack) and uses another action to use a spell-like ability or to direct a gaze weapon at a specific PC. Whenever he's reduced below 300 hit points, he casts *heal* on himself. In the first few rounds of combat, he's likely to focus the majority of his attacks on Gwynharwyf—she can likely take a few rounds of dedicated attacks from the Prince of Demons, but she won't last for long. But by distracting Demogorgon, she certainly gives the PCs the opportunity to get in a few rounds of actions. If the PCs retreat back through Wat Dagon, Demogorgon is too large to squeeze through five-foot-wide doors and has to instead cast *shapechange* to temporarily assume a smaller form to pursue.

Iggwilv reaches area **12** at the end of round 3. If the door to area **13** is closed and locked, she opens it with a *limited wish* (to duplicate a *knock* spell) but remains out of sight in the steam, preparing an action in case Demogorgon tries to escape.

Unless the PCs manage to fully distract him and inflict the full 10 negative levels,

Demogorgon retains the ability to create a gate. If things are looking grim and he's reduced to less than 100 hit points, the Prince of Demons casts *gate* to retreat to Abysm in an attempt to escape with the *master pearl* safe in his belly. Unfortunately for Demogorgon, by this point Iggwilv has reached the area and has prepared an action for just such an event. As he casts *gate*, the Witch Queen casts *dimensional lock* in the room, effectively blocking the gate and giving the PCs one more round to finish him off.

There's a small chance nevertheless that Demogorgon might manage to escape once things turn bad. If he can retreat to Abysm with the *master pearl*, he's effectively unreachable for now—penetrating Abysm's defenses is an adventure in and of itself. Demogorgon still lives, and the *master pearl* still exists, but this situation still isn't a total loss for the PCs (see Concluding the Adventure).

End of a Demon Prince

Although the PCs need not slay Demogorgon to prevent the savage tide (see Concluding the Adventure), killing the Prince of Demons is the most direct way to stop his plans. If Demogorgon is struck a mortal blow, a nimbus forms around his heads resembling two crowns of dark energy. These crowns quickly merge into one single crown, and as the towering demon lord crumbles to the ground, his dying roar echoes out from Wat Dagon and into both Gaping Maw and Shadowsea—a beacon to all who lust for power.

At this point, all creatures on Gaping Maw and Shadowsea are instantly aware of Demogorgon's fall and realize that the strange crownlike emanation is the right of mastery over the entire layer. Every being on the plane who aspires to the title of Prince of Demons realizes he may attempt to claim the title as his own.

To attempt to claim the title of Prince of Demons, a character need only make a level check modified by his Charisma modifier. The character who struck the killing blow on Demogorgon (not just one who reduced the demon lord to 0 or negative hit points) gains a +15 circumstance bonus on this check. Creatures with a blood relation to Demogorgon gain a +5 circumstance bonus on the check. Creatures (like Graz'zt) who did not participate in a meaningful way in the savage tide or the War of Gaping Maw suffer a –10 penalty. While many creatures on Gaping Maw and Shadowsea lust for the mantle of rulership, only a few are likely contenders and thus need be considered in this contest. These individuals and their modified checks are as follows: Arendagrost +33, Bagromar +41, Belcheresk +34, Dagon +38, Ghorvash +26, Graz'zt +42, Gromsfed +36, Kargoth +31, Nulonga +28 (+26 as juju zombie), Orcus +43, Tetradarian +41, Ulu-Thurg +32, and Urbala +27.

Neither Celeste nor Gwynharwyf elect to try and take on such an onerous mantle, and Charon abstains as well (since the title would essentially amount to a "demotion" for him). Quath-Nomag, loyal as ever to Orcus, abstains in deference to his leige. Although she's tempted, Iggwilv also abstains, as she is happier with her current plans to utilize Demogorgon's "soul" for her own purposes—she more than any other mortal understands the perils associated with becoming a Princess of Demons.

Of course, any of the PCs are welcome to roll as well—and in fact, attempting to take the roll if only to keep such power from Orcus or the other fiends is an almost noble reason for sacrificing one's soul (which is essentially what taking on the mantle of Prince of Demons amounts to). Each contender rolls once, with ties being resolved by additional rolls. The winner becomes the new ruler of Gaping Maw, gaining control over its morphic characteristics and the tanar'ri subtype if he doesn't already have it. The new Prince of Demons's alignment immediately shifts to a chaotic or an evil alignment (prince's choice), and he is considered a native of the 88th layer of the Abyss. If a character is still serving as Malcanthet's proxy, she tries to force that PC to claim the crown, promising whatever she thinks it'll take in reward for essentially becoming her new lover. She resorts to casting *demand* on the player if it comes to it. If her agent fails to become the Prince of Demons for whatever reason, she tears her mark free from him, leaving an ugly red scar and inflicting 2d6 points of Charisma drain in the process. Malcanthet holds grudges—that PC has certainly not heard the last form her.

Stopping the Savage Tide

The surest way to stop the mass savage tide from ever occurring is to destroy the *master pearl*. *Mordenkainen's disjunction* has a chance of doing this, but such a route is risky. Once the PCs have control of the *master pearl*, they can retreat to a safe location (such as the eladrin Court of Stars, or even Iggwilv's Manor) where Demogorgon won't be able to follow with ease. If Demogorgon survives, he'll certainly wage war against wherever the PCs go in an attempt to regain the *master pearl*, so the PCs don't have a lot of time to research a method for the artifact's destruction. Fortunately, with the *master pearl* at hand, the solution is only a DC 40 Knowledge (arcana) check and a day of study in a well-stocked library away—the surest and safest way to destroy it is to immerse the savage artifact in waters of exceptional serenity and purity. Half a dozen such locations exist in the multiverse, but the one that the PCs likely have the easiest access to is the fountain of beauty in the Court of Stars. The pearl, once immersed, crackles and smokes, and seems ready to burst and trigger its savage tide anyway, then just as suddenly turns white and brittle, the consistency of chalk.

If the PCs don't have the allegiances with the eladrins or otherwise don't have the resources to destroy the *master pearl*, secreting the artifact away is a temporary solution at best. Demogorgon spares no expense in tracking the pearl down, and eventually finds it, no matter how well hidden it is. Of course, if this buys the PCs enough time to seek out and destroy all 34 *shadow pearls* hidden in the Material Plane, success is still theirs.

If Demogorgon is slain, the *master pearl* remains a threat. Anyone who learns the relatively simple ritual of activation can trigger it. The ritual, of course, must be performed in area **8** of Wat Dagon, so preventing access to this spot is a semi-

effective way to stave off the savage tide. Of course, if the new Prince of Demons is allied with the PCs, he can use his ability to exert morphic control over Gaping Maw to shunt Wat Dagon into oblivion, although doing so makes a permanent and dangerous enemy of Dagon.

If Demogorgon survives and manages to escape Wat Dagon with the *master pearl*, the PCs have still bought themselves a little time. It will take Demogorgon several weeks of recuperating in his fortress of Abysm before he's able to return to Wat Dagon to trigger the savage tide. In that time, the PCs could go on a crusade in the Material Plane to scour the world of the 34 *shadow pearls*, could bargain with Dagon to seal off Wat Dagon from Gaping Maw, or could even organize a daring invasion of Abysm in an attempt to finish the job. Such adventures are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this adventure (but see Continuing the Campaign below).

The worst case scenario sees the PCs failing to stop the savage tide, either because Demogorgon slew them all or because they were forced to flee the Abyss. In this case, Gwynharwyf is forced to abandon her assault soon thereafter—Orcus has already essentially quit the field. Charon, satisfied that Demogorgon has paid for his crimes against the Styx, returns to his traditional duties as well. Gaping Maw emerges from the war scarred but largely unchanged, and soon thereafter, the savage tide descends upon the world.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs were successful in their quest, weighty matters have come to a head. Methods for destroying the master pearl are detailed above, yet there likely remains several loose ends that need tidying up.

A Sacrifice to Ahazu: It's likely that the PCs were forced to make an unpleasant bargain with Ahazu the Seizer in return for the release of Shami-Amourae. If the PCs have already provided the Seizer with a replacement, then you can consider this loose end dealt with. If, on the other hand, they attempt to offer Demogorgon as the replacement, Iggwilv steps in to throw a kink into the plan (see below). In any event, Ahazu is not destined to gain Demogorgon as his latest prisoner. The PCs have what remains of their 66 days to find a replacement, otherwise they'll be drawn into the Wells of Darkness themselves. Of coruse, for epic-level characters, there are always other options—see the Ahazu Ascendant campaign seed.

Demogorgon's Death: With Demogorgon's death, the defense of Gaping Maw falls apart as his hordes disperse in a panic, melting into the endless jungle and oceans. Orcus quickly claims Lemoriax whether he's become the new Prince of Demons or not—if not, he maintains a reinforced beachhead that remains a thorn in the side of whomever rules in Demogorgon's stead. The eladrins conclude that their part in the invasion is done with Demogorgon's death and begin a systematic withdrawal, but not before Gwynharwyf and Celeste make sure that the PCs have a way out of the Abyss as well. The PCs have made eternal friends of the Court of Stars, but if one of them took the mantle of Prince of Demons, that one is forever viewed suspiciously as the eladrins wait to see if he, too, will succumb to demonic tendencies and need to be destroyed. Regardless, the great alliance that laid Demogorgon low quickly dissolves as each faction returns to its own interests.

Iggwilv's Plan: Iggwilv, now in possession of *Tuerny's Iron Flask*, makes herself known a few rounds after Demogorgon's defeat. If one of the PCs has become the new Prince of Demons, she smiles at him and invites him to drop by her manor, any time, for a long chat. She then unstoppers the flask and uses it to draw in the lingering motes of blackness and writhing smoke that coil around Demogorgon's corpse. As she draws in this essence, capturing what's left of Demogorgon's "soul," the dead demon lord's body melts away into the Abyss, leaving behind a permanent black stain on the shore. Iggwilv doesn't explain why she's gathering Demogorgon's soul, but it certainly prevents Ahazu from seizing him (see above), and if the PCs want to stop her, they'll need to fight her. Once she's gathered all of Demogorgon's remains in the flask, she retreats to her manor—she has little interest in pursuing further interactions with the PCs at this time.

The Vanthus Situation: Vanthus, a thorn in the PCs' sides throughout the majority of the campaign, finds his final fate in the PCs hands. Lavinia has little interest in redeeming him, and indeed he may be beyond redemption, yet a PC who takes him under his wing may find that after all he's been through, Vanthus Vanderboren may yet have a sliver of honor left in what remains of his fractured soul.

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

By the end of this adventure, the PCs should be at least 21st level, yet this does not mean that the adventure is over. Presented here are several adventure seeds that you can use to develop additional scenarios to challenge your now-epic-level PCs.

Ahazu Ascendant

If the PCs promised Ahazu a replacement prisoner for Shami-Amourae, they likely have only a few weeks remaining to find a proper sacrifice. Yet, as powerful as Ahazu is, he remains a prisoner himself, and the PCs are now powerful as well. If the characters decide to go back on their word and don't provide a replacement prisoner, the Wells of Darkness attempt to claim them instead, striking against the PCs 66 days after Shami-Amourae's release. Normally, nothing could prevent the PCs from being captured by the Abyss, but if Demogorgon has been defeated, they are the stuff of legend. Each PC gains a DC 30 Will save to resist being drawn into the Wells of Darkness, and since the Wells are attempting to capture all of them, all of the PCs must fail this save in order for them to become imprisoned. PCs on the Abyss at the time take a –10 penalty on this save, and those actually on the Wells of Darkness automaticaly fail their save.

If the Wells of Darkness fail to capture them, they do not try again. Yet the vacancy left by Shami-Amourae vexes and enrages Ahazu, and over the course of the next several months or years, the Siezer breaks free

from his self-imposed prison in a fit of rage that releases all of the other prisoners of the Wells. The sudden return to the multiverse of so many powerful entities takes many pantheons by surprise, and the PCs may be called upon time and time again to deal with these escaped menaces. Eventually, Ahazu seeks the PCs out in an attempt to capture them himself—unless the PCs can defeat the CR 29 demon lord, they may be doomed.

New Thanaclan

Iggwilv may have helped the PCs against the savage tide, yet she has never truly had their best interests at heart. In fact, one might view her actions as nothing more than a way to gather Demogorgon's essence in *Tuerny's Iron Flask*.

Once she has this essence, Iggwilv sets her newest plot into motion, a plot to rebuild her empire on the Material Plane. The site for her plot, this time, is none other than the Isle of Dread. Using Demogorgon's essence, Iggwilv travels to the ruins of Thanaclan, and in a single night of hideous power, resurrects the fallen city, rasing ruins from lake and erosion to build herself a new empire. She populates New Thanaclan with demons, cambions, apprentices, and other monsters culled from the region, and soon begins to lay her plans to create a series of portals through which she hopes to extend her rule to several bickering and unsuspecting regions to the north.

Of course, Farshore is among the first locations to learn of the strange new developments on the central plateau, and if the PCs aren't already living there, a panicked message from Lavinia about strange lights atop the plateau and rumors of a reborn Thanaclan should be more than enough to bring the PCs to investigate. Opposing Iggwilv is no small task, though, especially since the Witch Queen likely knows their weaknesses.

The Return of Obox-ob

Regardless of who claims the mantle of Prince of Demons (or even if Demogorgon survives), the events in Gaping Maw leave the Prince of Demons weak and shaken. Obox-ob, the Prince of Vermin, senses this weakness from the depths of Zionyn, the 663rd layer of the Abyss, and while he doesn't immediately assault Gaping Maw, he certainly begins sending his armies of obyrith monstrosities (some of which have never before been seen by those beyond Zionyn's uncharted reaches). These attacks grow quickly in power, and if Obox-ob manages to depose the Prince of Demons to reclaim his crown, the very nature of the Abyss changes. The tanar'ri, once fecund and potent, are forced into hiding as the Abyss itself begins to disgorge new obyrith armies. While one might suppose that what's bad for the tanar'ri is good for the rest of the multiverse, the ascending obyrith plague does not remain in the Abyss. Horrors long dead begin spilling through portals and into the Astral Plane, plaguing dozens of sites throughout the multiverse. The eladrin and the elemental planes are hit hardest—the obyriths remember their loss so long ago and are ravenous for revenge. As one of the few who stood against a prince of demons and survived, powerful forces may turn to the PCs to aid them in stemming the obyrith tide and sending Obox-ob back into the depths of Zionin.

Rise of a Demon Prince

Demogorgon's nature was partially the result of the will of the Abyss, as manifested through Gaping Maw. Each month the new Prince of Demons rules the layer, he must make a DC 30 Will save to avoid succumbing to a form of madness that implants within him conflicting dual personalities that eventually result in the growth of a second head. Only beings who were already demon lords escape this fate.

In any event, a PC Prince of Demons finds that his new title may not be worth the trouble. Both Orcus and Graz'zt, assuming the new prince to be weak and untested, wage a relentless war against Gaping Maw. The new prince may have to seek alliances with other demon lords in order to keep his prize—Malcanthet is certainly a good start, but other demons like Dagon, Ilsidahur, and Zuggtmoy who once maintained alliances with Demogorgon may (or may not) be interested in continuing such ties with the new prince. Of course, these allies likely require perilous and dangerous deeds by the new prince before they pledge their aid.

The Succubus War

With Shami-Amourae's release from the Wells of Darkness, Malcanthet's claim to the Razor Throne of Shendilavri begins to erode. Shami-Amourae wastes no time in rebuilding her resources, and before long has not only forged an alliance with Lynkhab, but has delved into the Dreaming Gulf to rescue the succubus Xinivrae from the horrid fate Malcanthet visited upon her. Malcanthet defeated these contenders for her crown before, but now the three succubi are working together, and as their combined forces begin to whittle inexoriably away at Malcanthet's armies and resources, the Queen of Succubi may just turn to the PCs she helped against Demogorgon. This time, though, it is she who needs the aid, and if the PCs refuse to help, she may just set into motion one of her typically complex plots to manipulate mortals into doing her bidding... starting with framing Shami-Amourae for all maner of horrendus crimes against the PCs in an attempt to trick them into opposing the Lady of Debased Eros.

Demogorgon Rising

Finally, there is the matter of Demogorgon himself. Even if the PCs manage the near-impossible and slay him on his home plane, the ex-Prince of Demons will not remain dead for long. Like Obox-ob and Orcus before him, it's only a matter of time before Demogorgon returns to the Abyss, whether grown from the shell of a surviving aspect, resurrected by a loyal and powerful minion, or even spontaneously reformed by the Abyss itself. And once his strength returns, it takes no huge stretch of the imagination to predict who tops his list for revenge.

APPENDIX ONE: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Acid Launcher

Price (Item Level): 20,000 gp (15th)
Body Slot: — (siege weapon)
Caster Level: 10th

Aura: Moderate; (DC 20) evocation [acid]
Activation: See below
Weight: 1,400 lb.

This magical ballista does not use traditional ammunition. Instead it fires a sphere of acid (maximum range 800 feet) that explodes in a 20-foot-radius spread. All creatures in the area take 10d6 points of acid damage, or half with a DC 15 Reflex save. An acid launcher requires no attack roll, takes up a 5-foot square, and requires a crew of three (or a single creature with six arms) to operate. Firing an acid launcher is a full-round action for all of its crew. The device, when created, has 50 charges—upon expending its final charge, the acid launcher melts into a puddle of acid itself, inflicting 3d6 acid damage on its crew (Reflex DC 15 negates this damage).

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *acid fog*.

Cost to Create: 10,000 gp, 800 XP, 20 days.

Blast Disk

Price (Item Level): 3,000 gp (7th)
Body Slot: —
Caster Level: 10th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 20) evocation (force)
Activation: Standard (manipulation)
Weight: 1 lb.

A *blast disk* resembles a jet-black 8-inch-diameter plate covered with tangled runes. When triggered, a blast disc explodes in a 10-foot-radius spread, dealing 5d6 points of force damage (Reflex DC 14 halves). The explosion completely consumes the disk, making this a one-use item.

A *blast disk* can be set to explode via proximity or a timer of up to five minutes—once the timer is set, you can deactivate it with a touch and a move-equivalent action. Others can deactivate it only wtih a DC 30 Use Magic Device check and a full-round action.

If the device is set to explode via proximity, the *blast disk* arms 3 rounds after it is activated. Thereafter, it explodes when the next Small or larger creatue enters the square in which it sits. That creature suffers a –2 penalty on the save to reduce damage inflicted by the *blast disk*.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *magic missile*.

Cost to Create: 1,500 gp, 120 XP, 3 days.

Demogorgon's Bilious Sphere

Price (Item Level): Major Artifact
Body Slot: — (held)
Caster Level: 20th
Aura: Strong; (DC 25) abjuration, conjuration, enchantment, evocation
Activation: See below
Weight: 5 lb.

This twisted iron rod is topped by the *Bilious Sphere*, an obscene parody of the *Orb of Sol*. Any good creature that wields this major artifact gains one negative level that persists as long as the rod is held; this negative level never results in actual level loss, and cannot be overcome in any way while the rod is held.

Demogorgon's Bilious Sphere has the following powers:

- It functions as a +5 *heavy mace* that deals an additional +1d6 points of acid damage on a hit. Five times a day as a free action, the wielder may increase the acid damage done on a single hit to +3d6.
- It can be used to cast *stinking cloud* five times per day.
- It can be used to cast *acid fog* three times per day.
- Three times per day it can create three spheres of acid. These spheres function as *flame sphere*, save that they glow green and inflict acid damage. All three spheres can be moved individually with a single move action.
- Once per day, it can be used to create a feeling of intense hatred in a creature within 60 feet. The target can resist this effect with a DC 23 Will save, otherwise it views another creature within sight (chosen by the rod's user) as its most hated enemy. The target must do everything in its power to slay its enemy. This effect persists until the enemy is dead or 24 hours pass; it may be dispelled as if it were *dominate monster*.
- A creature whom Demogorgon favors can, as a free action, gain the following benefits once per day: immunity to acid, 4d12 temporary hit points, a +6 enhancement bonus to Strength, or DR 15/cold iron and good.

Force Missile Ballista

Price (Item Level): 20,000 gp (15th)
Body Slot: — (siege weapon)
Caster Level: 10th
Aura: Moderate; (DC 20) evocation [force]
Activation: See below
Weight: 1,400 lb.

This balista does not use traditional ammunition. Instead it fires a barrage of five *magic missiles* unerringly at any single target within 800 feet; each *magic missile* deals 1d4+1 points of force damage. After the missiles strike their initial target, an additional missile fires at every other creature within 30 feet of the primary target—each of these missiles strikes unerrignly as well for 1d4+1 points of force damage.

A *force missile balista* requires no attack roll, takes up a 5-foot square, and requires a crew of two (or a single creature with four arms) to operate. Firing a *force missile balista* is a full-round action for all of its crew. The device, when created, has 50 charges—upon expending its final charge, the *force missile balista* bursts into a storm of missiles that inflicts 5d4+5 points of force damage on every creature within a 30-foot radius—demonic commanders often order their underlings to save the device's last charge until the enemy is right on top of them and then use the final charge as a last-ditch attack.

Skull of Kallum

Price (Item Level): Major Artifact
Body Slot: — (held)
Caster Level: 20th
Aura: Strong; (DC 25) necromancy
Activation: See below
Weight: 2 lb.

This is a human skull with a bronze strap riveted around it transversely to hold its jawbone in place. Battered and stained from long years, its four front teeth are missing and a rune written in Abyssal glows upon its forehead.

This skull once belonged to the adventurer Kallum Vanderboren, murdered by his own nephew Vanthus after he was seduced to evil by Ghorvash. Some time after Kallum's death, Ghorvash claimed the skull and, with Demogorgon's aid, caught the spirit of the betrayal in the skull.

The *skull of Kallum* is meant to be wielded as a light weapon. When a creature attacks with it, the skull's jaw bites and tears, inflicting 1d6 points of piercing, slashing, and bludgeoning damage. Although the skull provides no enhancement bonus to attack or damage rolls, it is treated as a magic evil weapon for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

The skull's true power lies in the betrayer's curse. Each time the skull inflicts damage, the victim must make a DC 22 Will save or become affected by this curse. This curse manifests in combat only—there's a 25% chance each round that the victim attempts to harm his closest ally with his most effective attack or spell rather than take his intended action. If no allies are within reach, he moves toward the closest visible target. If no allies are visible, the cursed victim spends his round roaring in anger and rage and can take no other action.

This curse is a mind-affecting compulsion. It can be removed by a *miracle* or *wish*, but *remove curse* is only effective if the caster succeeds at a DC 30 caster level check.

Totem of Negation
Price (Item Level): 200,000 gp (25th)
Body Slot: — (held)
Caster Level: 20th
Aura: Strong; (DC 25) abjuration, conjuration, enchantment, evocation
Activation: See below
Weight: 60 lb.

This is a hideous wooden pole decorated with leering demon faces. One end of the totem is sharpened to a point. Initially created by Graz'zt for use in battles against legions of spellcasting enemies, the secret of creating these powerful totems has long since been sold to numerous demon lords, among them Demogorgon. Nonetheless, the fantastic cost of creating a *totem of negation* ensures that they are not often used on the battlefield.

A *totem of negation* is a one-use item that activates as soon as it is thrust into the ground. At this point, the totem creates a 60-foot-radius spread of dead magic, a region in which no spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability can function. The dead magic zone persists as long as the totem remains in place. An active *totem of negation* remains anchored in place via an effect identical to that utilized by an immovable rod, except much more powerful. This effect is the only magical effect that can function inside of a dead magic zone created by a *totem of negation*. If a creature pushes against an active *totem of negation*, it must make a DC 30 Strength check to topple the totem—doing so causes the dead magic zone to end and leaves the *totem of negation* a mundane totem pole. A *totem of negation* can also be destroyed by damage, but it has Hardness 20 and 600 hit points. Regardless of how the totem is destroyed, the dead magic zone ceases to function immediately.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *antimagic field*.

Cost to Create: 100,000 gp, 8,000 XP, 200 days.

APPENDIX TWO: NEW MONSTER

Arendagrost: Maw of the Abyss

It is huge: a corpulent thing of darkness and hate and madness. A trio of maws gape from vaguely fiendish heads, each gigantic rotting mouth filled with row upon row of fangs. An obscenity of anger the size of a house, its body is little more than a writhing tangle of tentacles, each large enough to crush the life out of a man with but a moment's idle whim.

ARENDAGROST **CR 23**

CE Gargantuan outsider (aquatic, chaotic, evil, tanar'ri)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +30, Spot +30

Aura death gaze (30 ft.)

Languages Abyssal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 42, touch 6, flat-footed 42 (–4 size, +36 natural)

hp 487 (25 HD); fast healing 20; **DR** 15/cold iron and good

Immune acid, death effects, electricity, fire, mind-affecting effects, poison

Resist cold 30; **SR** 32

Fort +28, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16

Spd 60 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect), swim 40 ft.

Melee 3 bites +35 (2d8+14/19–20) and 4 tentacles (2d6+7/19–20)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Base Atk +25; **Grp** +51

Atk Options Awesome Blow, Cleave, Fly-By Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

Special Actions breath weapons

Abilities Str 39, Dex 10, Con 38, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 16

SQ amphibious

Feats Ability Focus (death gaze), Awesome Blow, Cleave, Fly-By Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite, tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack

Skills Hide +16, Listen +30, Move Silently +28, Spot +30, Swim +50, Tumble +28

Environment 88th Layer of the Abyss

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Advancement —

Breath Weapons (Su) Each of Arendagrost's hideous maws possess a different breath weapon, each usable once every 1d4 rounds. The left head breathes a 50-foot cone of fire (20d6 fire, Reflex DC 36 half), the right a 50-foot cone of frost (20d6 cold, Reflex DC 36 half), and the central a 100-foot line of bloody acid (20d6 acid, Reflex DC 36 half). As a full-round action, Arendagrost can use all three breath weapons at the same time; otherwise, use of a single breath weapon is a standard action. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Death Gaze (Su) Any living creature within 30 feet that meets Arendagrost's gaze must make a DC 27 Fortitude save or die instantly. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Arendagrost is the legendary offspring of Demogorgon, the Prince of Demons, and Malcanthet, Queen of the Succubi, the result of their first unholy tryst. For an age, Arendagrost was kept secretly shackled in the deepest bowels of Abysm, an abomination so horrid that not even the demon lord could stomach its twisted countenances. Arendagrost's first known appearance occurred almost 400 years ago when Lord Kargoth, first of the death knights, released Arendagrost from its prison as part of a profane ritual corrupting the power of the *Orb of Sol*. Arendagrost was unleashed upon the Great Kingdom outside Rel Deven and cut a swath of destruction toward the capital of Rauxes, laying waste to all in its path before finally being cut down by the combined might of the Knight Protectors of the of the Great Kingdom. Arendagrost's defeat banished it back to the Gaping Maw for 100 years, but it had proven its worth to its father.

Demogorgon saw that Arendagrost could be used to enforce his will if monitored carefully. The Prince of Demons created a lair for Arendagrost beneath the fortress of Ungorth Reddik, where it could serve to guard the land approach to his capital city of Lemoriax. Arendagrost also proved to be an expedient way to dispose of powerful prisoners that Demogorgon wished to eliminate. After Arendagrost's initial banishment had ended, Demogorgon began using it cautiously to wreak havoc and destruction on other layers of the Abyss and other planes. Legends tell of a small Material Plane world, now cold and dead, that incurred the Demogorgon's wrath. He sent Arendagrost to punish it for a century. In addition, both Orcus and Graz'zt have felt the heavy tread of the Maw of the Abyss in assaults upon their homes. In addition to its first death upon the Material Plane, Arendagrost has been slain twice in combat with Orcus, though always at the cost of many of the Prince of Undeath's most powerful servants, banishing it again to Gaping Maw. Arendagrost is once again nearing the end of its latest term of banishment, and Demogorgon is contemplating new strategies of deployment against powerful strongholds on the Material Plane rather than wasting its might in futile battles with other demon lords. In a few short years, the "Tarrasque of the Great Wheel" will once again prey upon mortal worlds.

Arendagrost is a being of pure hate, and tends to crash into combat in almost mindless savagery, reveling in the destruction it causes. Characters slain or incapacitated by the creature are devoured as soon as possible. The destruction caused by its draconic heads is of particular amusement to the creature, and it attacks with its breath weapons as often as possible, delighting in turning its ire onto characters that appear to be near death, waiting for them to beg for mercy or quiver in terror before obliterating them. Arendagrost only withdraws from combat at Demogorgon's direct order.

Demogorgon and Malcanthet produced many other hideous offspring, but none as horrific and powerful as the Maw of the Abyss. As an outsider, Arendagrost breathes but does not need to eat or sleep. It does not appear that Arendagrost can produce its own offspring, but since it attempts to destroy any other being it encounters, this theory is unlikely to be tested. Arendagrost can only be permanently killed on the Gaping Maw, its home layer of the Abyss.

As always, Greg thanks those who contributed to the creation of this adventure, including his playtesters, James and the guys at DUNGEON *and, of course, all the writers of the Savage Tide Adventure Path for their inspiration and assistance. He'd like to dedicate "Prince of Demons" to his son, born during its writing. (Just don't tell his wife—she might take it the wrong way.) Greg also thanks Richard Pett for his aid in creating Arendagrost, the Maw of the Abyss.*

Haleford
Felgrim Heath
Doomfang Peaks
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Goblin's Grove
Serpent Lake
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Tidewash
The Necrodome
The Harrowfen
Fengate
Blightwood
The Broken Straits
The Blistering Height
Hallowdale
Dreadforge
2
5
Ruins of Isprea
Sea of Isprea
The Smoke Rift
Last Stand
The Warspire
Tyranor
The Isprean Current
7
12
Camlin's Delta
The Raptor Coast
Lake Tympaniss
The Sunken City
The Rainlands
Jaquarta
Base Camp