Christian Eichhorn's

Secrets of Icespire

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Secrets of Icespire is a collection of quests, random encounters, bounty hunts, and sidekicks for adventurers of level 6 and above who shake up the hinterlands. The content can serve as a basis for the continuation of a *Dragon of Icespire Peak* or *Lost Mine of Phandelver* campaign or as a standalone source of adventure and inspiration. Thematically, the quests best fit into mountainous regions but can be easily adapted for different environments. Only a *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *Player's Handbook*, and *Monster Manual* are needed to run the content. Consult the System Reference Document as an alternative to these books, which includes most of the needed information.

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Chapter 1: Quests

Dark Plans & Ancient Crypts

There may come a time when an adventuring group of higher level decides to explore the more dangerous parts of the hinterlands. Be it after finishing official campaigns like *Lost Mine of Phandelver* and *Dragon of Icespire Peak* or in the course of a Westmarches-style campaign. The quests detailed in this chapter are tailored for exactly this case.

What steps should you take before diving right in? To run these quests, you ideally need a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Additionally, reading a quest at least once before running it is absolutely necessary. As presented, the quests have a runtime of 3 to 6 hours. To stretch the playtime, consider adding a random encounter found in chapter 2. The Adventuring Opportunities table gives an overview of available quests and their recommended level range. If the quests appear in an ongoing campaign, and the characters have the opportunity to return to ongoing quests later, disregard the recommendation.

Adventuring Opportunities (By Range)

d8	Level Range	Name
1	5-6	Winged Sheep Thieves!
2	6-7	House of Treasure!
3	8-9	Missing Husband!
4	8-9	Column of Light!
5	8-10	Haunted Crypt!
6	10-12	Dwarven Poachers!
7	12-14	The Skullband!
8	14-16	The Dead Stir!

Adventuring Opportunities (Alphabetical)

d8	Page	Name
1	5	Column of Light!
2	9	Dwarven Poachers!
3	14	Haunted Crypt!
4	19	House of Treasure!
5	22	Missing Husband!
6	26	The Dead Stir!
7	33	The Skullband!
8	37	Winged Sheep Thieves!

Landscape with a Castle by Paul Sandby

Column of Light!

> I was out and about recently, collecting mushrooms and berries. When it grew late and dark, I saw a column of light erupting far to the east! It burns ever since and might be worth checking out, for you adventuring types!
>
> ~ Galinda Kowo

If the characters visit Galinda to acquire more information, she treats them to some crackers and cherry marmalade. Galinda can show the characters on a map roughly where she saw the phenomenon but cannot help otherwise.

Background

The column of light is a magic beacon, originally intended to assemble priests and officials. The creators and their kingdom have long since died, but one **guardian naga** named Jihiri remained, residing over the ancient ruins. After two **spirit nagas** invaded its home, Jihiri activated the beacon to call for help while being eaten alive by the enemy. Since then, the beacon burns, attracting adventurers like moths to a flame.

Now, the spirit nagas have made the ruins their home and consume Jihiri's body whenever it comes back to life. They have grown fat and enjoy this carefree life.

Ancient Ruins

Approaching the Site

Following Galinda's description and their own abilities, the characters find the source of the light after two days of travel. The light erupts from the top of a sizable mound, located in a large clearing.

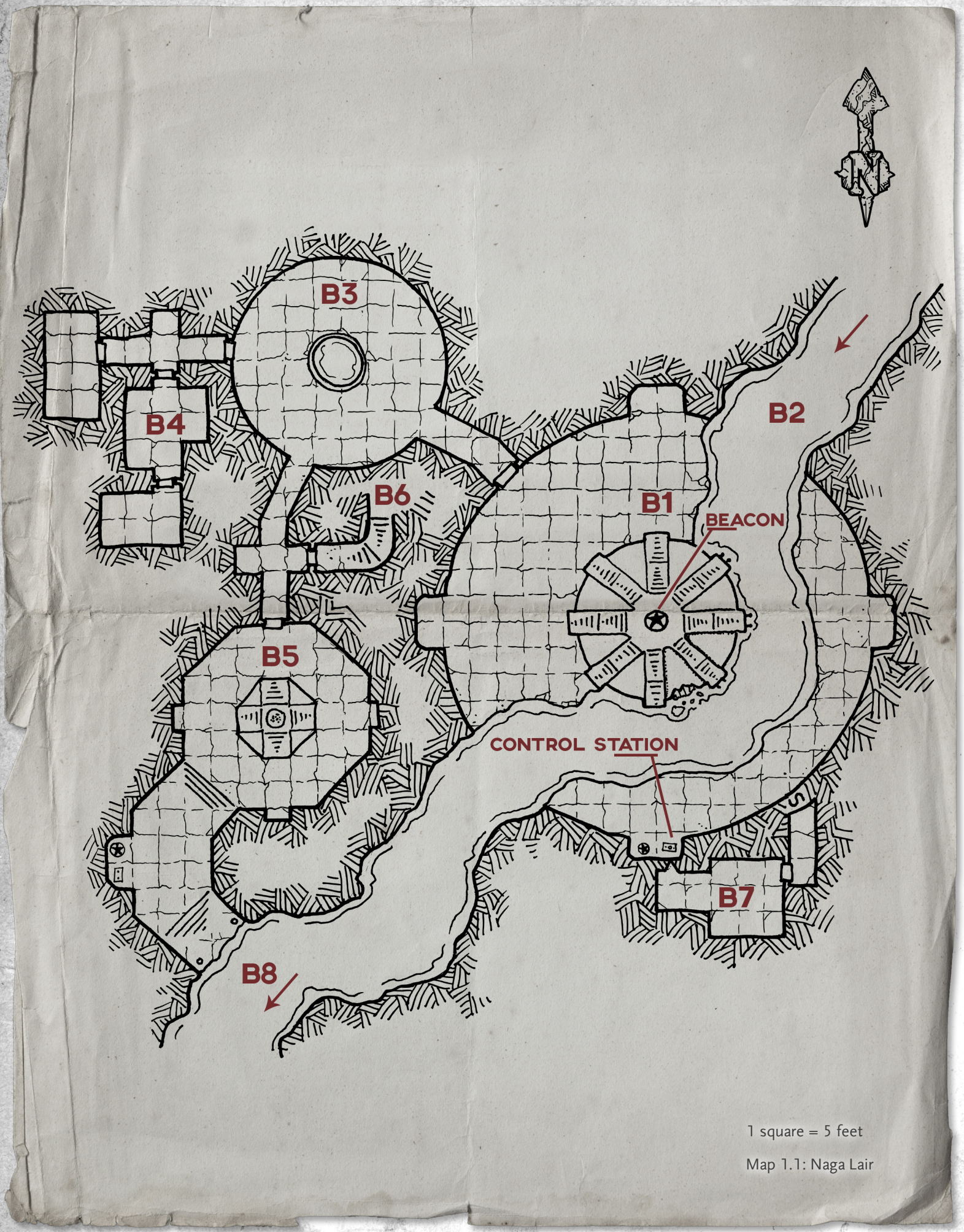
Inexperienced Colleagues. When the characters arrive, they spot two figures standing next to the light, armed with shovels. They are two adventurers called Bumi (chaotic neutral female half-elf **acolyte**) and Froschor (lawful neutral male half-orc **guard**). Bumi and Froschor constantly bicker about the right course of action, like digging in from the top or side, buying new weapons or an inn from the soon to be unearthed treasure, or putting more vegetables or meat in the stew. Both react friendly to the characters, if they return the courtesy. Bumi and Froschor would prefer to work with a larger team, if the treasure is split fairly.

Entering the Ruins. If the characters enter the complex from the digsite Bumi and Froschor started, they arrive in room B1, directly above the beacon. A 100-foot-long rope is needed to reach the bottom from the top of the hill, which Bumi and Froschor can supply. A character who searches the area and succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check finds irregularities in the flora, hinting at a buried entrance. If the characters dig at the newly found location, they arrive on the staircase in B6.

B1. The Beacon

A radiant beacon, erupting from a small ziggurat, bathes the room in bright light. Next to it, an underground river rushes through the chamber. The current is strong, carrying away pebbles into the dark.

Control Station. The characters can manipulate the beacon via a large control station located on the room's southern wall. It features many levers, buttons, nobs, and dials. A character who operates the station must make an Intelligence check. The total indicates the outcome on the table below:



1 square = 5 feet

Map 1.1: Naga Lair

DC	Outcome
1-4	The character accidently intensifies the beacon.
5-9	The characters changes the beacon's color.
10-14	The character learns how to activate and deactivate the beacon.
15+	The character learns how to activate, deactivate, and intensify the beacon and opens the secret door to room B7.

Intensifying the Beacon. While the beacon is intensified, creatures in the room take 7 (2d6) radiant damage at the beginning of their turn. Roll a die each round the beacon is intensified, beginning after the first. On an odd number, the beacon and the diamond in room B7 are destroyed. Additionally, the beacon burns nonmagic ropes the characters used to descend into the chamber.

Secret Door. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 20 or higher spots irregularities in the walls, hinting at a secret door. The characters can open the secret door with the control station, or destroy the wall. If the characters are too loud and the spirit nagas are alive, they are alerted and attack.

B2. Underground River

The crystal clear waters wash pebbles and colorful rocks downstream.

A character who falls into the river must succeed on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check, made with disadvantage if the character wears heavy armor, or suffers from one level of exhaustion. The character exits the river in location B8 prone. If the characters follow the river downstream, they can exit the cave system after 2 days.

B3. Spirit Naga Lair

A small pool of hot, bubbling water in the center of the room spreads warmth and a sulphurous smell.

Unless alerted by noise from the characters, the two **spirit nagas** warm up in the center of the room, slung around the hot pool.

Tactics. The nagas attack as soon as they notice the characters and open combat by casting *hold person* at 5th level, always picking characters who appear heavily armored. The nagas renew the *hold person* once they lose concentration or all characters succeed on their saving throws. If the characters stand lined up in a corridor and they can hit at least two of them, the nagas cast *lightning bolt*. Otherwise, the nagas expend all 4th-level spell slots casting *blight*, and then use their regular attack. The nagas fight to the death, knowing that they will soon come back to life to exact revenge.

Naga Knowledge. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check knows that nagas come back to life after a few days. The naga always reassembles at the location of the largest remaining piece of their corpse.

B4. Fake Treasure Chamber

Two halves of a skeleton lie on the ground, slowly falling to dust in the middle of the room. Small piles of rust and metal flakes have accumulated in between the bones, discoloring some of the bleached remains.

Incautious Spelunker. The skeleton is that of a long-deceased spelunker. The adventurer fell victim to the trap.

Magic Trap. A character who searches for traps without passing the room's halfway mark and succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check is certain that no mundane traps are installed. A character who checks the room with a *detect magic* spell finds magic triggers criss-crossing the entirety of the room's halfway mark, making them unavoidable. Additionally, the character sees a waist-high strip of magic on the room's walls, a trap that creates a deadly force field.

The force field originates from all walls simultaneously, crushing affected creatures' pelvis region. If a character passes the halfway mark, the force field appears and creatures in the area must make a DC 20 Strength saving throw. A target takes 65 (10d12) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The characters can avoid the trap by crawling on the floor. In the final room, the characters find empty chests.

B5. Jihiri's Resting Place

A gnawed snake skull of unusual size rests on a small ziggurat, smeared with dried blood.

The spirit nagas stored Jihiri's skull in this room so they can consume the naga as soon as it revives. Roll a d6 to determine after how many days Jihiri uses its Rejuvenation.

Treasure. Inside the small ziggurat, shielded by 1 inch of lead, rests the true treasure. A character who casts *detect magic* notices the shielded area. If the characters destroy the ziggurat and open the secret compartment, roll on the *Dungeon Master's Guide's* Treasure Hoard: Challenge 11-16 table, rerolling results other than 16 - 74.

B6. Staircase

A staircase leads upwards but debris and earth block the way.

The staircase leads up to the surface.

B7. Machine Room

A large diamond, fastened in a metal contraption, rests in a waist-high pillar in the center of the room. The smell of burned oil and metal lies heavily in the air.

The diamond is worth 5,000 gp and can be extracted without issue if the beacon is deactivated. As long as the beacon is active, a character who attempts to take the diamond must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. A target takes 39 (6d12) fire damage and cannot retrieve the diamond on a failed save, or half as much damage and gets the diamond on a successful one.

B8. Jetty

A jetty borders the rushing underground river, with no boats in sight.

The characters can access the complex or river from this location.

Conclusion

If the characters take Jihiri's skull with them, or wait around long enough, the **guardian naga** comes back to life. It thanks the characters for their help, if they killed and removed the spirit nagas. If the characters took the treasure from the ziggurat, or the diamond from the machine room, Jihiri asks the characters to return the treasure or it attacks.

Dwarven Poachers!

> A nasty band of dwarves recently started roaming the woods, killing any animal they could get their grubby hands on. Pregnant deer, shoats, and now the woodlanders tell me of a dead unicorn; they stop at nothing. When I confronted them, they shot at me, and I ran. Pay me a visit if you are interested in helping.
>
> — Forest Ranger Kilé

When the characters arrive, Kilé (lawful neutral female human **scout**) treats them to some roasted liver and explains the situation. She upholds the order in the woods, and these poachers upset the local wild elf population. If the dwarves continue, the elves will seek retribution against whoever comes before their bows. Kilé hasn't found the dwarves' hideout yet, but with the characters' help, she feels comfortable seeking them out.

Background

The dwarven poachers are actually duergar who operate a small surface slaver camp. They work with different mercenaries who capture the locals, which the duergar buy for a good price. The slaver camp is located in an abandoned diamond mine, hidden deep within the forest. A tunnel connects the camp to the Underdark, through which the duergar funnel

their slaves and march them to a duergar city. A total of twelve **duergar**, a **duergar slave lord**, and four **quaggoth** make up the camp's forces.

The Duergar Camp

Finding the Camp

With Kilé's help, the characters find the duergars' tracks at the site of a recent kill. Reaching the camp is no challenge and takes the characters 2 hours. Read the following when the characters approach:

> *A deep gash in the ground, located on the foot of a small hill, marks the site of a dig. Rusted mining equipment lies strewn about; toppled carts and broken picks litter the area.*

If the characters decide to watch the camp, roll a d6 for each hour that passes. On the roll of a 6, or after 6 hours have passed, they see duergar walking around the compound. Only a character who succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check and a subsequent DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check can tell that these are duergar, not regular dwarves. A character who has encountered duergar before automatically succeeds on the Nature check.

D1. Guard Post

> *The path branches out into a small, partially collapsed room. Broken supports and debris litter the ground, but somebody cleared a narrow way which leads further inside.*

Two invisible **duergar** guards watch the narrow pathway leading up to the camp from the cave mouth, while two additional **duergar** take a short rest in the adjoining room. They change position each hour, when the other team can use their Invisibility action again. When the duergar spot the characters, one alerts the resting duergar. If the characters pass by the guard post, the invisible duergar follow them.

If the characters enter, the duergar attack and scream for help, alerting the camp. After the camp is alerted, all forces assemble in room D2 to throw back the attackers.

A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 18 or higher spots the secret door, as well as the mechanism to open it, in the guard post. The duergar have found none of the secret doors yet.

D2. Slave Lord's Room

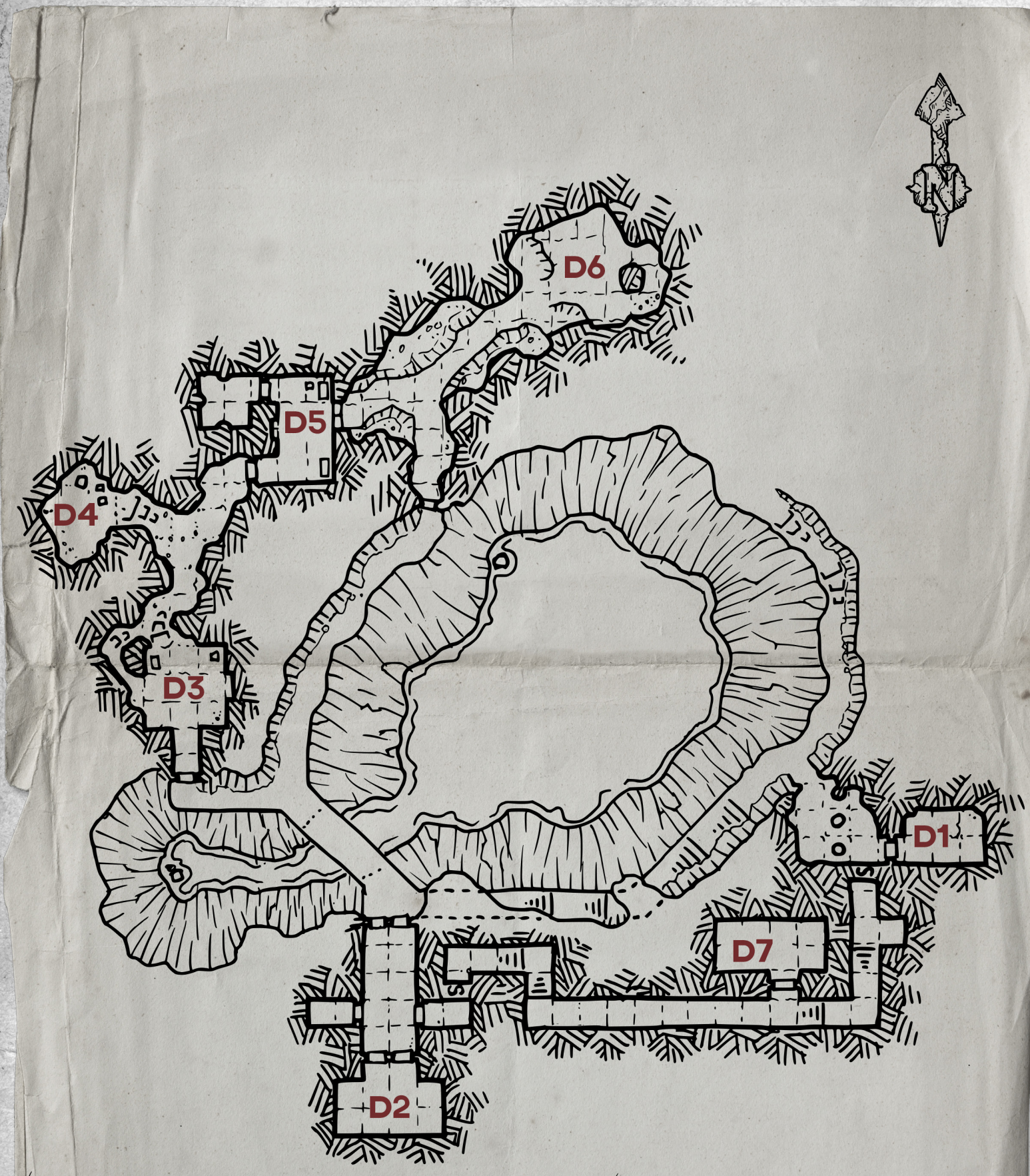
> *A collection of fetters and shackles adorn the walls of this room. All are well oiled and free of rust. On a large desk lies a thick ledger, surrounded by writing material, stamps, and stacks of parchment.*

In the northern anteroom, three trained **giant magma beetles** (see below) scurry around and guard the entrance. They attack any creature who does not carry the familiar smell of a duergar or quaggoth. After a fight starts, the remaining duergar and quaggoth join the battle after 4 rounds, if the camp wasn't alerted prior.

A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 18 or higher spots the secret door, as well as the mechanism to open it.

The **duergar slave lord** (see below) and three **duergar** helpers use room D2 to organize the operation.

If the characters search the room, they find extensive records about the duergar operation and a chest containing ten garnets and ten tourmaline, worth 2,000 gp in total. A character who peruses the records for 10 minutes finds that the duergar have led 78 people into the Underdark, where they sold them on the slave markets. Additionally, the character finds that ten additional people are being held further inside the complex. The character also learns that most slaves the duergar buy stem from a mercenary group called the Skullband.



1 square = 5 feet

Map 1.2: Duergar Camp

D3. Barracks

A handful of steaks sizzle on a large stone slab in the center of the room, surrounded by several bunk beds.

Eight **duergar** use this room as their temporary home. They sleep in bunk beds and have only a few amenities. They roast unicorn meat on an enchanted stone slab in the center of the room, which heats up and becomes red-hot after speaking the command word "cook" in Undercommon.

If the characters search the room, they find duergar currency worth 145 gp and a unicorn horn worth 1,000 gp.

Cursed Flesh. A character who examines the flesh and succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check realizes that it stems from a unicorn, a celestial creature. Characters who eat of the unicorn steaks feel strange and must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, they are constantly harassed by woodland beings, suffering from disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks in forests. A druid or priest who follows a god with the nature domain can help affected characters appease nature, by handing them a dangerous quest to make amends.

D4. Underdark Tunnel

A ladder sticks out from a small hole in the ground, from which a howling sound and strong breeze emerge.

A narrow, vertical 50-foot-tunnel connects this room with a cavern below. The duergar installed a zurkhwood ladder which allows easy access. If the characters descend, and succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check, they can follow the duergars' tracks through the deep and into the Underdark.

D5. Quaggoth Pen

The rank smell of wet dogs hangs strongly in this room. The floor is covered with old, torn sacks and dried grass.

Four trained **quaggoth** are located in this room. They attack creatures other than duergar on sight. When the alarm is raised, the quaggoth leave their room and support the duergar in battle. The room contains nothing of worth.

D6. Slave Pen

Almost a dozen people, shackled and gagged, huddle against the walls. Their clothes are torn and their faces dirtied.

Ten **commoners** in shackles can be found in this room. The duergar intend to lead them through the tunnel into the Underdark once replacement troops arrive. The duergar who return home guard the commoners along the way.

D7. Secret Storage Room

Thick dust covers a large number of vials stored on shelves lining the walls. A small chest stands on a table in the center of the room, likewise coated with stone powder.

The diamond mine was abandoned after an orc attack during which the foreman who knew about the secret storage died. If the characters search the storage, they find a diamond worth 5,000 gp and twenty flasks of alchemist's fire.

Duergar Slave Lord

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (plate and shield)
Hit Points 119 (14d8 + 56)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +8
Skills Animal Handling +8, Athletics +8, Insight +8, Intimidation +6, Persuasion +6
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Undercommon
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The slave lord's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16). It can cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *friends, message*

1/short rest each: *enlarge/reduce, hold person, invisibility*

Duergar Resilience. The slave lord has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the slave lord has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The slave lord makes two attacks with its battleaxe and uses Call to Arms if possible.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage or 9 (1d10 +4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Call to Arms (Recharge 3-6). Allies within 30 feet of the slave lord that can hear it gain 5 temporary hit points and advantage on their next attack roll.

Mind Tear (Recharge 6). Enemies within 30 feet of the slave lord that it can see must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage and is paralyzed until the beginning of the slave lord's next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and is not paralyzed.

Giant Magma Beetle

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Death Burst. The magma beetle explodes when it drops to 0 hit points. Each creature within 10 feet of it must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

> I had to leave my brothers behind in an old ruin in the mountains. I will tell you the location, if you are interested in treasure, but please bring the corpses back with you, if you make it out. I am staying in the local watering hole. Ask for Rogar.

Rogar, a half-mad drunk by now, invites the characters to warm mead when they find him, for which he pays with ancient coins. He tells the characters of a tomb full of riches that he and his now-dead brothers discovered. It was easy pickings, but when the brothers opened one of the most promising graves, a deafening screech greeted them. Rogar ran as if chased by demons and left his collapsed brothers behind. If the characters promise to retrieve the corpses, and be cautious to not die as well, Rogar tells them the tomb's location. Additionally, Rogar advises the characters to bring heavy equipment since most chambers are sealed.

"Be very cautious in there! Might be my own brothers now haunt these halls. They were unpleasant while still alive. Who knows what cruelties they can come up with now that they are probably ghosts."

Background

The brothers found the tomb of Wormking, a goliath warlock who terrorized the region almost a century ago. His undead body is bound by powerful spells that are fueled by the essence of his former comrades Safi and Morkar. By slaying Wormking's undead companions, the spells can be broken and Wormking set free once more.

Wormking received his name from his chieftain, who argued that this young upstart would soon be king of worms if he dared to challenge him. The roles were reversed, however, for Wormking buried the chieftain the very same day. Wormking's reign was uneventful until he found an exotic artifact.

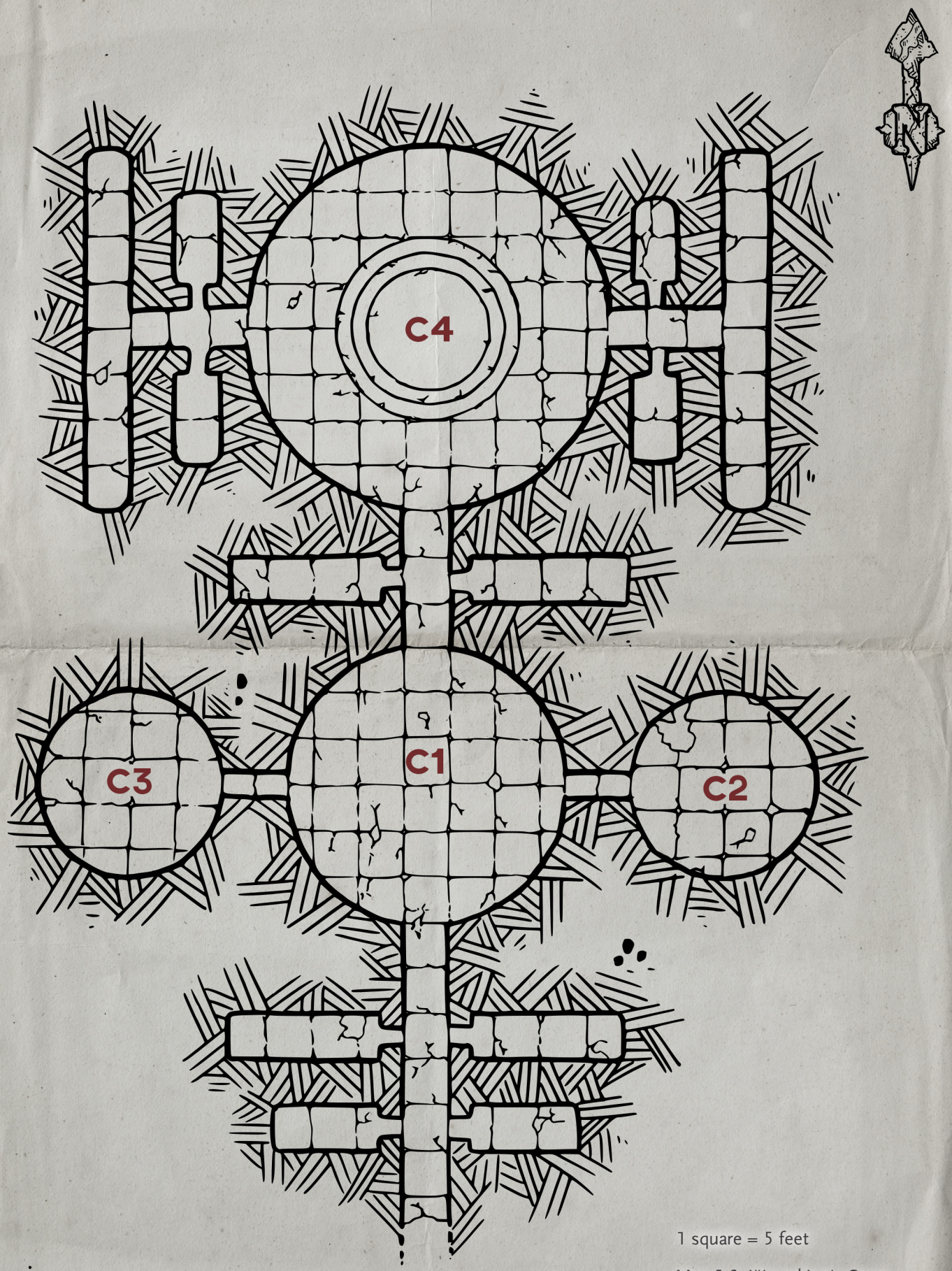
To his surprise, Wormking found himself in a pact with Kostchtchie after spending many hours with it. Kostchtchie, also known as the Prince of Wrath, is a demon lord worshipped by frost giants. The demon granted Wormking many powers, which he quickly mastered.

A decade later, Wormking became a hated blight on civilization. Heroes who challenged Wormking found him unkillable for his patron made sure that he survived in one form or the other. A small cadre of druids led by their master Bumblebee lured Wormking into an old tomb, where they planned to trap him for eternity. Their plan worked, but Bumblebee had to sacrifice himself since one person had to ward the prison from the inside. The foolish act that led Wormking to his demise was henceforth remembered as "Wormking's Blunder".

Wormking's Tomb

General Features

The ceiling is only 6 feet high and made of large, weathered stone slabs. Thick icicles hang from the already low ceiling, making it difficult to traverse the area. The tomb is considered difficult terrain for Medium or larger creatures. Recesses for coffins are embedded in the stone walls at regular intervals, and each coffin contains an old skeleton. There are no light sources—the tomb counts as a heavily obscured area due to the darkness. It smells of fresh snow and earth.



1 square = 5 feet

Map 1.3: Wormking's Crypt

C1. Entrance Hall

An icy gale howls through the halls of a forgotten tomb. The raging winds carry fresh snow deep inside its darkest recesses, covering the crypt like a shroud.

Warded Doors. A stone door on the western wall, leading to room C3, is covered with runes from top to bottom. A character who examines the runes and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes them as warding spells against evil. The runes on the door glow and hiss if the characters try to destroy the door. Using mining equipment, it takes the characters 2 hours to break through the door. A similar stone door was located on the eastern wall, leading to room C2, but Rogar and his brothers destroyed it. The debris still covers the ground but the room is easily accessible. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 14 or higher notices snow-covered mining equipment on the floor.

Corpses. The corpses of Rogar's brothers lie frozen in the center of the room. A character who examines the corpses and succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines that the cause of death was neither violence nor exposure.

C2. Safi's Prison

A small pile of bandages and broken metal lie on this room's floor. Strange burn marks cover the walls, appearing like blackened runes.

The characters find the room deserted. A heap of bandages, formerly worn by Safi, lies on the floor. The walls of this room, and the bandages, are covered with expired runes similar to those found on the intact western door. The characters find steel scraps and *mithral chain mail* forged for a female among the bandages.

Safi, who is now a **banshee**, was incarcerated in room C2 and hides in an inaccessible part of the tomb, waiting for more heedless mortals to arrive.

C3. Morkar's Prison

A wriggling, smoldering mummy hangs in the center of this room, suspended in mid-air by thick, metal chains.

Morkar is a mummified humanoid. He swings back and forth, trying to break free, all the while laughing maniacally. After struggling for 1 minute, while the runes on the room's walls glow white hot, a **flameskull**, what remains of the mummy's body, breaks through Morkar's bandages and attacks the characters. The tomb's resident **banshee** Safi, alerted by the noise, joins the fray after 1 round. The flameskull does not have the Rejuvenation trait.

After the characters slay both Safi and Morkar, paraphrase or read out loud:

The enemies lie dead and peace returns to the tomb. Suddenly, the earth rumbles, and you hear the pounding of fist on stone. Terrible screams originate from below your feet that augur ill omens.

C4. Wormking's Prison

Floor & Walls. A large circular stone slab is embedded in this room's floor. The walls are covered in crude murals and writing in Giant, telling the story of Wormking and his tribe. A character who can read Giant and succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (History) check pieces together Wormking's history and gains inspiration from understanding the annals.

The Prison Below. Below the giant stone slab lies Wormking's prison. He shares his cell with the remains of Bumblebee, the druid that facilitated Wormking's capture. His skeleton sits cross-legged in the center of the room. Wormking himself is bound to the walls by magic chains. A character who is able to communicate with Bumblebee, for example with the *speak with dead* spell, learns about Wormking's history.

Wormking Unbound. After the characters slay what remains of Safi and Morkar, Wormking's magic chains break. Wormking needs 5 minutes to break through the stone slab. He is kept in an undead state by his patron; a disgusting, rotting husk at this point. **Wormking** (see below) attacks whoever hinders his escape. After he frees himself, Wormkings asks of the characters:

> *"Ah, free at last! And who are you, my saviors or enemies?"*

Treasure. Wormking wears *Wormking's Mantle*. Additionally, the characters can retrieve a *staff of swarming insects* from Bumblebee's remains.

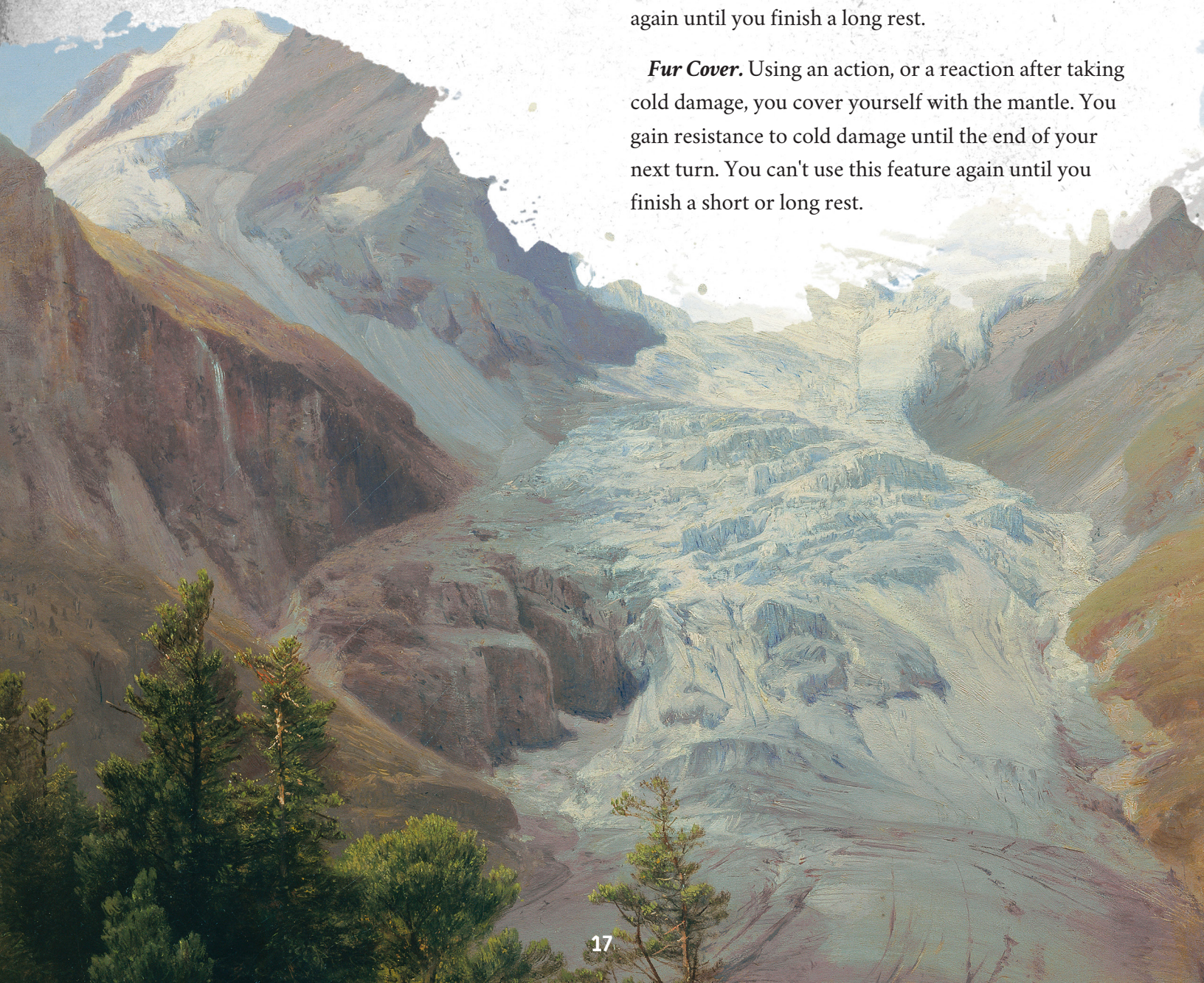
Wormking's Mantle

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This thick yeti fur mantle has a musky smell and retains some of the monstrosity's magic. Wormking crafted it himself after spending many months hunting yetis until he slew the perfect specimen.

Frosty Gaze. Using an action, you target one creature you can see within 30 feet of you. If the target can see you, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 3d6 cold damage and is paralyzed for 1 minute, unless it is immune to cold damage. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

Fur Cover. Using an action, or a reaction after taking cold damage, you cover yourself with the mantle. You gain resistance to cold damage until the end of your next turn. You can't use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest.



Der Palügletscher by Anton Hansch

Wormking

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 171 (18d10 + 72)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +9, Cha +8
Skills Athletics +10, Perception +8
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If Wormking fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Wormking is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He regains his expended spell slots when he finishes short or long rest. He knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, eldritch blast, minor illusion, poison spray*

1st-5th level (2 5th-level slots): *armor of Agathys, banishment, cone of cold, haste, hex, hold person, ice storm, misty step, sleet storm, slow*

Actions

Multiattack. Wormking makes three attacks: one with his bite and two with his chain whip or chain sling attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or take 39 (6d12) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Chain Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 15 feet toward Wormking.

Chain Sling. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or takes an additional 26 (4d12) bludgeoning damage from being flung 60 feet away from Wormking in a random direction.

Legendary Actions

Wormking can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Wormking regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cast Cantrip. Wormking casts a cantrip.

Whip It (2 Actions). Wormking makes one chain whip or chain sling attack.

House of Treasure!

Explorers, spelunkers, and adventurers rejoice! We have reclaimed Auril's derelict temple and converted it to a house of treasure. If you search for magical trinkets, or want to have yours appraised for sale, visit the old mountain temple!

-- The Disciples of Mystra

Background

The "Disciples of Mystra" are five **lamias** who use their abilities to mislead, rob, and dispose of travelers. With their major image spell, the lamias present the still-ruinous temple as a palace filled with splendor. Using their *disguise self* spell, the lamias appear as humans or elves, wearing blue robes with white stars. The lamias only appear in their true form while sleeping. The Lamia Alter Ego table shows the lamias' false names and their roles.

Lamia Alter Ego

No.	Name	Race	Role
1	Eirina Virmaer	Elf	High Priestess
2	Bedar Sha	Human	Appraiser
3	Chei Toa	Human	Instructor
4	Malonn Qin	Half-Elf	Acolyte
5	Galan Genthyra	Elf	Acolyte

The House of Treasure

Modus Operandi

The lamia called Malonn Qin sleeps during the day and watches over the temple by night, alerting the others to danger. The lamias warmly greet travelers who appear in the temple and lead them inside. Their plan is to simultaneously cast *charm person* on all visitors. If more than four travelers appear, the lamias separate them, or the sleeping lamia is woken if five will suffice.

If the lamias must separate groups, they lead the surplus to room T2, a chamber that appears like a decadent guest room. The rest accompany the lamias to room T5, where the negotiation and appraisal takes place. If all visitors fall for their charm, the lamias simply take all interesting items from them and send them on their way. Otherwise, the lamias attack and kill the travelers.

General Features

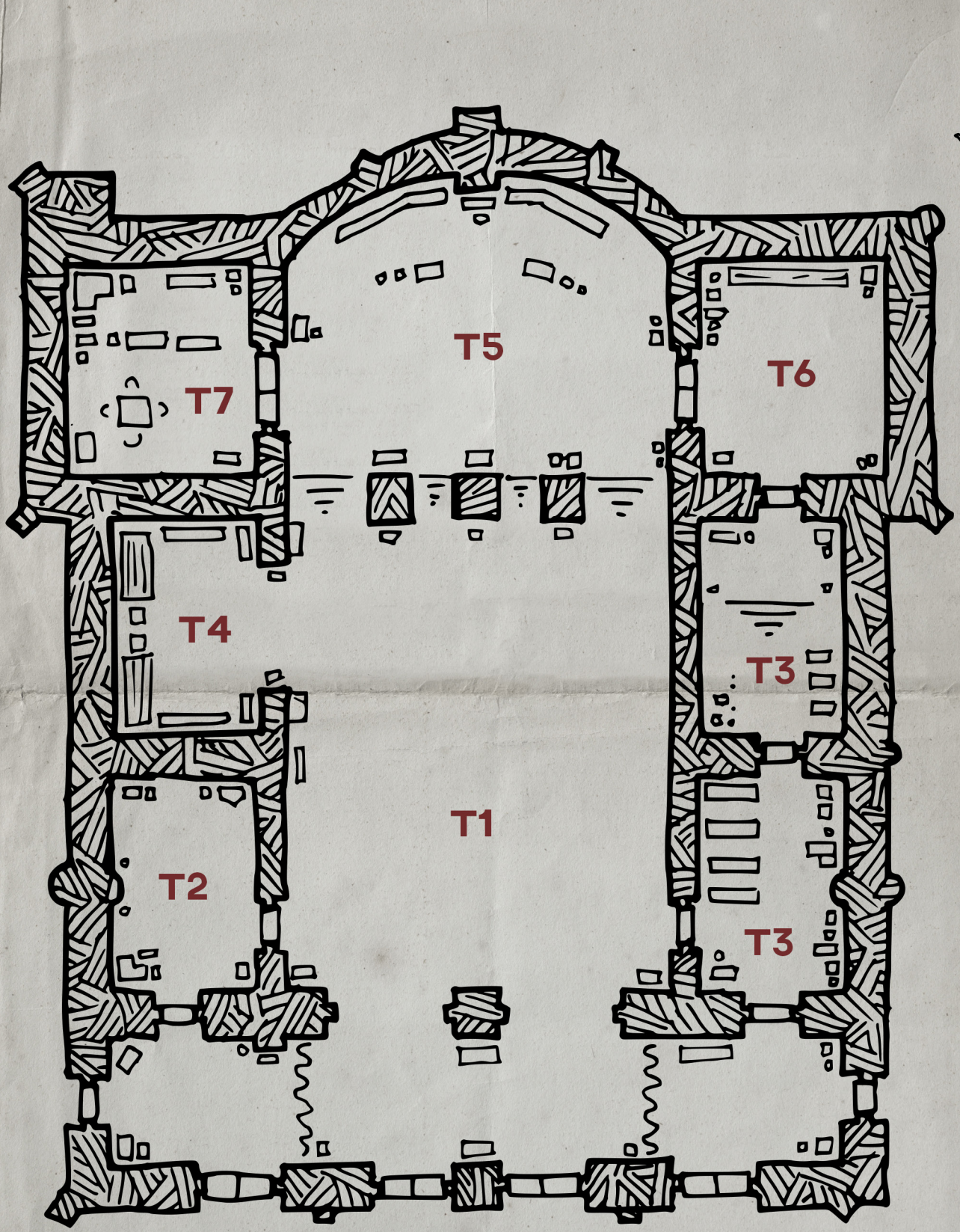
Using their permanent *major image*, the lamias have disguised the derelict temple. The furniture throughout the temple appears high quality but is actually broken and moldy. Illusory silk banners adorn the walls, and the cracked floor tiles appear like the finest marble. Cold wind blows through the broken windows that appear like colorful, leaded glass. Real candles and braziers bathe the interior in a warm, bright light. It smells of incense that masks the omnipresent mold.

If the characters move any of the furniture around or cast *detect magic*, the illusion is revealed. Characters with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 13 or higher immediately see through the illusion.

Approaching the Temple

Gray stones, sanded by cutting winds, make up an old temple. Light shines through the colorful windows, allowing glimpses inside.

The old temple of Auril is a well known location in the area and the characters have no issue finding it. Situated high in the mountains, cold winds blow all year round and the snow never melts. All rooms have windows, allowing the characters to enter either through one of the six doors or the windows.



Map 1.4: House of Treasure

T1. Entrance Chamber

Golden candelabras hold flickering flames that bathe the room in a warm light. Blue banners with white stars hang from the walls and in between stand silver statues on marble pillars.

When the characters arrive, the head priestess welcomes them in the entrance chamber. The lamia introduces itself as Eirina Virmaer and asks if the characters have come to marvel at the House of Treasure's exhibits or trade.

T2. Guest Chamber

The chamber appears like a lavish waiting room, brightly lit, with burlwood furniture and alabaster statues. If too many visitors arrive, some are parked in room T2 while the lamias deal with the rest. Real, non-illusionary, refreshments are on small tables in the room.

T3. Sleeping Chambers

The lamias sleep in these chambers, which appear luxuriously furnished. In reality, there is only old cloth and hay covering the floor. There is nothing of worth here.

T4. Fake Showroom

Several fake display cases and cabinets stand in this room. They appear to contain various magic trinkets, one prettier than the other.

T5. Altar Room

The lamias guide visitors to the altar room, where it appears as if the former altar to Auril was consecrated for Mystra. They make a grand show while appraising items or bargaining. At an opportune moment, they cast *charm person* to defang the hapless visitors.

Several censers produce copious amounts of smoke, which masks the smell of the dead that seeps from room T6.

T6. Corpse Room

The lamias store several dead bodies in this room for later consumption. The room isn't heated, which keeps the food fresh. The lamias have disguised the corpses as seat cushions, in case a visitor sneaks a peek inside.

Survivor. Among the corpses lies an unconscious half-orc called Orkara (neutral female half-orc **veteran**). The lamias placed Orkara among the corpses, believing her to be dead. A character who examines the corpses and succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check finds that Orkara is alive. Healing magic or a successful DC 14 Intelligence check using a healer's kit saves Orkara's life and brings her back to consciousness. Orkara supports the characters in their fight if the lamias are still alive. Otherwise, she thanks the characters for their help.

T7. Treasure Chamber

Overflowing chests, stuffed to the brim with coins and other valuables lie neatly arranged on tables.

The items the lamias take from their victims lie here. In contrast to the illusory grandeur of the other rooms, this particular chamber looks truly decadent. Roll on the *Dungeon Master's Guide's* Treasure Hoard: Challenge 11-16 table, rerolling results other than 16 - 66, to determine what the characters find.

Conclusion

As the lamias die, the illusions vanish one by one. Nothing of the splendor remains and darkness returns to the old temple. If the characters spread the news about the charming killers, petitioners may arrive to reclaim their lost items or gold.

Missing Husband!

My dear husband Bobling went adventuring a tenday ago and hasn't returned yet. Usually, he is home by supper, and now I am starting to worry. Please, if you have a kind heart, visit me across from the Old Well in the Underfoot-hole. A hot meal and spirited drink await you!

— Kuni Underfoot

Kuni lives with her family—five children, grandmother and two cousins—in a luxurious halfling-hole. When the characters arrive, she treats them to a five-course meal. She opens the culinary battle with a cheese plate and berries, quickly followed up with a spicy pumpkin soup. The main course is a roasted duck, filled with apples. The first dessert is a custard with hot cherries, and the second an ample supply of sweetened wine and rhubarb strudel.

Finally, Kuni tells the characters that her husband Bobling went eastward, mentioning a strange tower he heard rumors about in the tavern. Since it is a cruel world, Kuni is always prepared for the worst, but would prefer the characters keeping an eye out. As a reward for Bobling's safe return, Kuni promises the characters an enchanted shield, an heirloom from her great grandfather.

Rewards. The shield Kuni references is an *arrow-catching* shield.

Background

Bobling Underfoot (neutral good male halfling **spy**) set out to explore Isildan's haunted tower, a terrible choice as it turns out.

With his magic ladder, which functions as a *rope of climbing*, Bobling made his way to the upper levels. There, the adventurer encountered Isildan's ghost, who imprisoned the halfling, believing him to be a mere burglar—which is true to some extent. Using the burial option of the *imprisonment* spell, Isildan holds Bobling in a sphere deep underground.

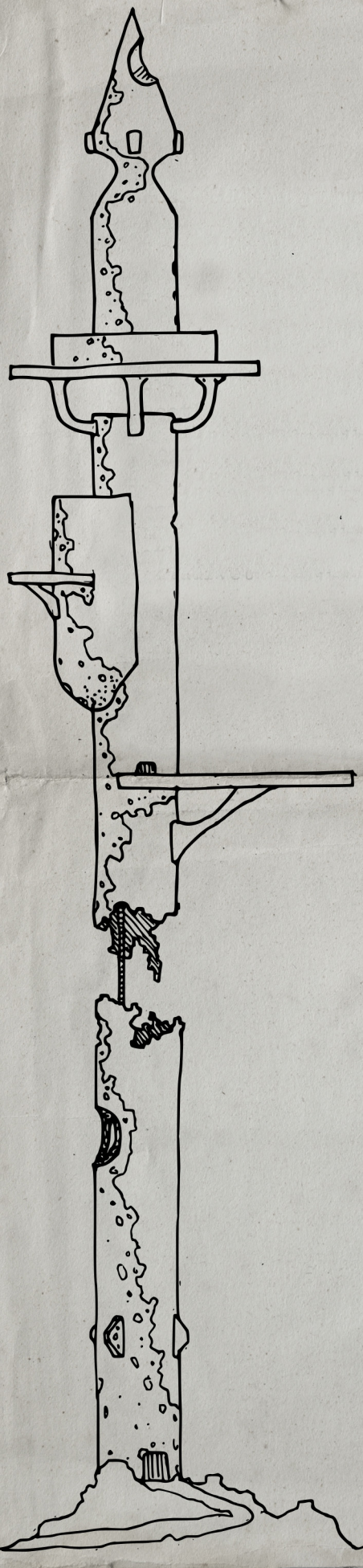
Isildan's tower is a new addition to the countryside. It arrived 33 years ago from a different plane, where Isildan battled a group of hydras. The tower still bears the marks of this fight, and Isildan lost his life over it. After Isildan realized his ghost remained, he teleported the entire tower to preserve his heritage. Isildan remains in the tower to this day, some days aware that he is a ghost, and others oblivious to the fact.

Isildan's Tower

Approaching the Tower

Defying gravity, the broken remains of a battered tower stand the tests of time. Some parts of the tower show huge bite marks, other areas were neatly annihilated. The entire upper structure floats above the lower levels; the stumps of the missing floors looking like they were consumed by a powerful corrosive agent.

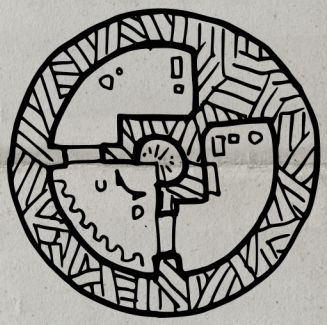
The ground on which the tower stands is from a different dimension and sticks out from the surrounding area. Purple grass and aquamarine crystal growths give it an alien look. A character who examines the grass or crystal structures and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check or a DC 18 Intelligence check using alchemist's supplies determines different alien properties, not found on this plane.



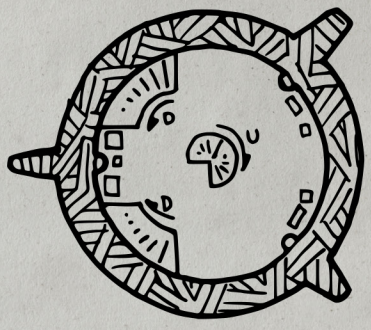
LEVEL 5

LEVEL 4

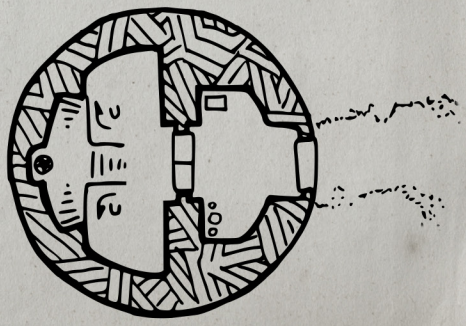
LEVEL 3



LEVEL 2



LEVEL 1



Map 1.5: Isildan's Tower

Level 1

Between the outer and inner doors stands a **galeb duhr** servant. When the characters enter, it greets them in Common and asks for their desire. If the characters ask for anything other than talking to the tower's owner, the galeb duhr answers that their wish cannot be fulfilled. If asked about the owner, the servant explains that the omnipotent archmage Isildan rules these parts.

If the characters ask for an audience, the servant escorts them to the 5th level, where it exclaims that it cannot fulfill its task. The galeb duhr judges that the small ladder is not traversable and returns to its post and leaves the characters behind.

If the characters try to force their way in, or steal from the items in the levels in between, the galeb duhr attacks.

Level 2

The second floor hosts an extensive library, well taken care of by a **dust mephit** called Cugh. The mephit only dusts, and tortures the characters with sarcastic remarks about their looks, if they understand Auran or Terran. All books in the library are written in Elvish or Sylvan. A character who searches the library and succeeds on a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check finds 1d4 random *spell scrolls* of a level determined by a d6. The characters can succeed three times before the library's supplies are exhausted; each check takes 1 hour.

A character who speaks Elvish or Sylvan and makes an Intelligence (Arcana) check in the library makes the check with advantage, utilizing appropriate books over the course of 1 hour.

Level 3

Northern Room. A small laboratory with many test tubes, flasks, and burners. Most are broken and unusable. A character who searches the laboratory and succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds diamond dust worth 500 gp.

Southern Room. A storage room for potions, philters, and draughts. Most bottles lie shattered on the ground or are dried up. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence check using alchemist's supplies can rehydrate a *potion of greater healing*, a *potion of invisibility*, and a *potion of speed* with 10 minutes of work each.

Level 4

Nothing but broken furniture and dust remains of this floor. A character who inspects the destroyed part of the wall determines that no mundane weapon or creature could leave such clean cuts in the stone. A character who knows the *disintegrate* spell knows this damage to be the result of that spell, but on a much grander scale.

Level 5

The floor of this level, including the walls, are scorched and molten. Debris that fell down from the levels above litters the floor, and birds have built nests in the nooks and crannies. The view from this height is already outstanding, but one can't see the tower's spire from this position. A small ladder leads up to the next floor. It is Bobling's magic ladder, which functions as a *rope of climbing*.

Upper Levels

Encounter with Isildan. Immediately after entering the upper levels, no matter through which entrance or window, the characters encounter Isildan's ghost. Isildan acts peeved and speaks:

> *"Who might you be, more thieves coming to rob me blind? Or do you seek wisdom and knowledge? I swear, if you took anything of mine I will cast you down into the hells where you will burn for your insolence!"*

If the characters took something from the lower levels and lie about it, they have to succeed on an opposed Charisma (Deception) group check against Isildan's Wisdom (Insight) check. If the characters fail, Isildan attacks in an attempt to knock them unconscious, shackles them, and uses *imprisonment* on them one by one. If the characters come forward and return the items, Isildan is lenient, but the characters make all subsequent Charisma checks with disadvantage.

Upper Rooms. The upper levels contain (in order): an abandoned griffon eyrie, an arboretum, Isildan's private chamber, Isildan's arcane laboratory, and an astronomical observatory. If the characters loot Isildan's private chamber, roll on the *Dungeon Master's Guide's* Treasure Hoard: Challenge 11-16 table, rerolling results other than 16 - 66. In the observatory, the characters find a masterfully crafted spyglass and cartographer's tools, each worth 1,000 gp.

Freeing Bobling

The characters have the following options to free Bobling:

- Appealing to Isildan's good side and succeeding on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check.
- Helping Isildan move on as described below.
- Killing Isildan, which leads to Bobling's reappearance in the tower's upper levels.

Helping Isildan

As a ghost, Isildan has unfinished business: finishing a book about the movement of the stars. He is missing an important folio "A Planeswalker's Guide to Celestial Bodies," which includes many reference tables. The characters can find copies of the folio in temples of Oghma in metropolises like Baldur's Gate or Waterdeep, or in centers of learning like Candlekeep. The book has a worth of 5,000 gp. Finishing the book allows Isildan to move on to the afterlife.

Alternatively, Isildan would leave the work, and his tower, in the hands of a capable character or other mage they can find. They must have an Intelligence of 16 or higher and at least eight levels in the cleric, druid, sorcerer, or wizard class.

Isildan has the statistics of an **archmage** with the following changes and additions:

- Isildan is an undead creature with a ghostly, elven appearance.
- Isildan is chaotic neutral and has a challenge rating of 14 (11,500 XP).
- Isildan gains the traits and spells described below.

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Incorporeal Movement. Isildan can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. Isildan takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Spellcasting. Isildan has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, light, mage hand, minor illusion, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *comprehend language, identify, illusory script, mage armor, magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *crown of madness, hold person, locate object, see invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, lighting bolt, slow, vampiric touch*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, greater invisibility*

5th level (3 slots): *bigby's hand, dominate person, wall of force*

6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning*

7th level (1 slot): *reverse gravity*

8th level (1 slot): *feeblemind*

9th level (1 slot): *imprisonment*

We have received troubling news about razed villages, emptied graveyards, and an undead dragon that ravages the land. Beware of these foul creatures, and if you can, flee as far as your feet can bear! Brave heroes who seek gold and renown, visit the parish center to support those who want to remain and fight.

In the parish center, the characters find six armed peasants (**commoners**) and Hruthgor (neutral good male human **veteran**). Hruthgor treats the characters to a swig from his flask, which contains a hot root spirit. He is attempting to organize a resistance but knows that there is not much to work with. If the characters volunteer, Hruthgor suggests they keep an eye out for a dragon and follow it to its lair.

"Look at them. This one is holding a spear the wrong way around! I fear we are doomed."

Background

Kergum, a cleric of Myrkul, plans to become his god's Chosen by building an army of the dead. Kergum's first move was to raise Cryovain after the characters killed it. If the characters did not slay the dragon in a previous adventure, Kergum raises a dragon called White Death. With the support of this powerful mount, Kergum believes to be able to fulfill his ambition. He visits settlements in the temple's periphery, kills the inhabitants, and raises them along with whomever lies buried in the local graveyard. Parts of the skeletons return to the temple, others roam the countryside to kill whatever they encounter.

Myrkul's Temple

Reaching the Temple

Myrkul's temple lies far underground, reachable only by boat. The characters can find the temple by following Kergum and his dragon, or following the returning undead. Zusha (neutral evil male human **acolyte**) is the ferryman tasked with bringing the skeletons and zombies to the temple. He steers a large ferry along a river into a mountain, where he lands at room M1 and unloads.

General Features

Myrkul's temple, originally a dwarven outpost, is a charnel house. Skulls and bones decorate the walls and ceiling, either unaltered or fashioned into items like candlesticks, picture frames, or door handles. The ceiling is 10 feet high, unless otherwise stated.

Undead Furniture and Helpers. Benign, toothless, and embalmed zombies roam the halls to sweep dust and perform other maintenance. If attacked, they don't fight back and continue with their task. Other zombies serve as furniture like stools, tables, censer bearers, or candleholders.

Lighting. The priests use *continual flame* to light the insides of skulls and bone lamps with blue and green flames. Bright light shines in the entire complex, unless the characters dispel the flames.

Smells. Despite the presence of many undead, it smells only of embalming fluid and incense.

M1. Mooring Point

An opening in the damp cave walls leads into an old structure. Hewn directly into the stone, these dark halls stand the test of time.

Map 1.6: Myrkul's Temple

Ferries going to and from the temple moor here. Dozens of skulls surround the entrance like a wreath. They clatter with their teeth to greet visitors, and make futile attempts to bite them from their sockets.

M2. Nara's Study

This room is a small study, filled with many books and a small desk. The furniture is made of polished bone, some carved with intricate details. In one corner of the room stands a zombie, holding a bottle of wine and several glasses.

Nara (neutral evil female human **priest**) is the second in command after Kergum and is not happy about the latest developments. She would prefer Kergum not become the Chosen of Myrkul, a place obviously more suited for her. If the characters stumble into her study, she sees her chance to rid herself of Kergum. Nara pretends to be a person who wants to dispose of Kergum because he doesn't represent Myrkul's will. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) or DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check recognizes that Nara is lying.

Nara's Support. Nara helps the characters by explaining where to find Kergum and warns the characters that they should not fight both Kergum and his dragon together. Additionally, Nara explains the nature of the traps located on the bridges, and hands the characters holy symbols that protect them.

Treasure. A small chest contains 18 holy symbols of Myrkul. A character who searches the bookshelves for 1 hour, or succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check, finds two *spell scrolls* of *raise dead* and one of *create undead*.

"I can guess what brought you here. Kergum, the old fool. You are not alone in your wish to add him to the long list of the dead."

M3. Skeleton Storage

Dozens of skeletons are located here, stacked and terse, using every last corner to make them fit.

These rooms hold sixty **skeletons** which pour out in a continuous stream once one of the doors is opened. The skeletons attack anyone who isn't wearing priestly robes and holy symbols of Myrkul.

M4. Bridges

This ancient bridge is made of heavy stone slabs, featuring waist-high and sturdy walls to the left and right. Manifold glowing skulls on the balustrade watch passersby in silence. Wet stones glisten in the colorful light, while the rushing river passes below.

The bridges are 6 feet above the water line, supported by sturdy stone pillars. The river blow is 10 feet deep with a moderate current.

Traps. Both bridges feature a 6th-level *glyph of warding* on their half-way point. The explosive runes deal 31 (7d8) thunder damage to affected creatures. A character who uses *detect magic* or succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the traps. The *glyph of warding* lets undead creatures and creatures carrying a holy symbol of Myrkul pass unharmed. Triggering a trap alerts the entire complex.

M5. Waterfall

A small waterfall sends cold mist across the water. From time to time, fish and crabs come flying down, flop into the water, and continue on their way.

The waterfall is 15 feet high. A character who attempts to climb must succeed on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to safely reach the upper parts.

M6. Common Room

Large tables stand in this room, covered with dishes, books, and random trinkets. In the southernmost corner is small kitchen area with bubbling kettles and an ample supply of wine bottles and ale kegs.

Most disciples meet in the common area which they use to relax while not occupied with priestly duties. In the seven adjoining rooms stand several bunk beds where the inhabitants sleep. A total of thirty **acolytes** use these facilities. During a normal rotation, ten acolytes sleep, ten accolyes use the common rooms to relax, while five others work in the embalming chamber (M7) and five at the altar (M10).

M7. Embalming Chamber

Several corpses lie on rusted iron tables, gutted and strapped to large bottles that hang from the ceiling. Bandages, large scissors, hammers and nails, and clamps lie next or inside the bodies. An incomparable smell hangs in the air, mixing the sweet smell of death, alcohol, and incense.

Unless the characters alerted the complex, they find five **acolytes** working the bodies in the embalming chamber. Aside from the corpses, the room contains embalming fluids worth 500 gp, stored in the large bottles.

The five alcoves in the corridors adjoining room M7 house five dwarven **mummies**, each alcove containing one mummy and grave goods worth 250 gp. The mummies leave their alcoves and attack the characters if there is fighting in room M7 or if the glyph of warding on the nearby bridge is triggered.

M8. Kergum's Sanctum

The mortal remains of hundreds of people decorate the walls and ceiling of this chamber. Be it furniture, tiles, or simple utensils. Entire skeletons and zombies were nailed to the walls, who still wriggle and groan.

If Kergum was not alerted to the characters' presence, they find him in his private chambers. His dragon, who rests in room M9, joins any fighting after 2 rounds. When Kergum notices the characters, paraphrase or read out loud:

"More bodies for my growing collection I see. I will have to take special care not to damage my new servants' corpses excessively!"

Treasure. The characters find several magic items and other treasures in Kergum's chambers. Roll on the *Dungeon Master's Guide's* Treasure Hoard: Challenge 11-16 table, rerolling results less than 51.

M9. Dragon Enclosure

The floor, walls, and ceiling of this room show deep claw marks, cut into the stone. A thick, white dust covers the tiles that forms small hills, dales, and dunes.

Kergum's dragon—either Cryovain or White Death—remains in this room at all times, unless the compound is under attack. The **undead dragon** (see below) can rearrange its bones so it can pass through 5-foot corridors and doors. Kergum, who rests in room M8, joins any fighting after 2 rounds.

"Do you know why I cannot be stopped? As long as my soul is willing, I will return. I may return in this body, I may return in a different body, or I return as one of the living dead. I merely have to succeed one time. You, however, must succeed every time!"

M10. Altar to Myrkul

This altar is built from bones and organs of all sizes. Several beating hearts send fresh blood coursing through the veins that lace up the construction. Eyes roll around in carved bone sockets and watch each of your steps with care.

Five **acolytes** pray in the altar room at all times. They join a fight in the adjoining rooms after 2 rounds.

Tainted Revival. A character who examines the altar and succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Religion or Arcana) check realizes that a cleric can revive people on the altar, for example by using the raise dead or resurrection spell, without the need for material components. A person who is revived in this fashion gains a random madness from the Long-Term Madness section in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The madness is permanent and can only be cured with a wish spell. Additionally, the character knows that destroying the altar will raise Myrkul's wrath.

Destroying the Altar. The altar has an AC of 3, 50 hit points, a damage threshold of 25, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Characters who participate in its destruction must make a DC 22 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, Myrkul curses the character, who suffers from disadvantage on death saving throws. The curse can be lifted with a *wish* or *remove curse* spell cast at 8th level or higher.

Conclusion

Unless the characters kill all of Myrkul's clerics, they remain a permanent threat in the area. If the corpse is available, any remaining cleric revives Kergum on Myrkul's altar. Otherwise Nara takes over the operation.

Undead Dragon

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 210 (20d10 + 100)
Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +10
Skills Perception +10
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages understands Common and Draconic but can't speak
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Flyby. The dragon doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The dragon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon uses its Necrotic Shroud if it can. It then makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Necrotic Shroud (Recharge 3-6). The dragon chooses up to three creatures within 120 feet of it that it can see, located within 30 feet of each other. The targets must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 33 (6d10) necrotic damage and receive the moribund condition. A moribund target cannot benefit from magic healing, including from potions and items. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Bone Storm (Recharge 6). The dragon summons a storm of broken bones in a 50-foot-radius, 100-foot high cylinder centered on a point within 120 feet. Creatures who start their turn in the affected area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 52 (4d10 + 30) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The storm remains for 1 minute or until the dragon uses this feature again. The dragon must maintain concentration, as if it was casting a spell.

Kergum

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (half plate, shield)
Hit Points 170 (20d8 + 80)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +9, Wis +10, Cha +9
Skills Arcana +7, Insight +10, Intimidation +9, Medicine +10, Religion +12
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Kergum fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Kergum is a 11th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, cure wounds, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *aid, hold person, silence, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, speak with dead*

4th level (3 slots): *death ward, guardian of faith*

5th level (2 slots): *flame strike, scrying*

6th level (1 slot): *create undead, heal*

Actions

Infused Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage.

Army of the Dead. Kergum chooses a point on the ground within 120 feet of him that he can see. Undead extremities spring up in a 90-foot radius around the point, turning it into difficult terrain. A hostile creature that starts its turn in the area must succeed on a DC 18 Strength or Dexterity saving throw or become restrained and take 7 (2d6) piercing damage. At the beginning of Kergum's turn, he chooses a point in the area. A skeleton rises at the point and attacks hostile creatures in the area. The extremities and skeletons remain for 1 minute or until Kergum uses this feature again. Kergum must maintain concentration, as if he was casting a spell.

Legendary Actions

Kergum can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Kergum regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Whispers From the Grave. Kergum chooses a creature within 120 feet of him that he can see. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw or their hit point maximum is reduced by 21 (6d6) for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. A target that is reduced to 0 hit points by or while under this effect makes death saving throws with disadvantage. This feature's effect isn't cumulative.

Maggots and Speck. Kergum chooses a creature within 120 feet of him that he can see. The target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage and a continuous stream of maggots oozes from its mouth, preventing it from casting spells with verbal components. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

The Skullband!

A band of masquerading riders troubles the settlements and travelers in these regions. They are brutal marauders who stop at nothing to line their purses; charged with arsony, pillagery, abduction, and murder. Each head is valued at 100 gold coins, collectible as bonds at official custom stations and town halls.

Officials who the characters ask about the Skullband can supply them with a map of recently ransacked settlements. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check can extrapolate the Skullband's camp's location. Otherwise, the characters can wait for the Skullband in a yet-untouched village.

"They are always on horseback, strike like lightning, and vanish before the thunder rings out."

Background

The Skullband is a nomadic mercenary group on the hunt for infamy and treasure. Currently, they are in the employ of duergar, who operate a slaver camp in an abandoned diamond mine. The peasants and travelers they catch are detained in their camp until duergar envoys appear to take them away. Eleanor Whitecross (neutral evil female human **mage**) is their cunning and cold-hearted leader, while her plaything Crimson Tusk (neutral evil male half-orc **gladiator**) keeps the members in line with brute force. A total of twelve **veterans** and eight **scouts** make up the lower ranks of the band.

Strategies

Riding. During travel between locations, ten **veterans** of the Skullband ride double file. Crimson Tusk leads the front, while Eleanor brings up the rear. Two groups of two **scouts** each ride 300 feet ahead and behind of the column. Only four scouts and two veterans remain in the camp to guard the slaves and treasure.

Encamped. While the Skullband stays in the camp, four **scouts** watch the premises. A team of two patrols in the eastern woods, while the second team watches the premises, standing on the bridge entrances. When the scouts spot enemies, they retreat and raise the alarm. The Skullband assumes a defensive position but saddle their horses as a precaution. If the enemies do not attack during the following 6 hours, the camp is abandoned. The Skullband rides out in full force, carrying the slaves and treasure away to a new location.

The Skullband's Camp

The Approach

Huddled against a rock face lie the ruins of a former outpost. Debris litters the ground, small trees grow from collapsed roofs.

The abandoned outpost is surrounded by extensive woodlands to the east and steep cliffs to the west. The Skullband enters and exits the compound through a narrow passage to the north, the only path traversable by their mounts.

If the characters attempt to approach the camp in a stealthy manner, they must succeed on a contested Dexterity (Stealth) group check with the **scouts**' Wisdom (Perception) check. Otherwise, or on a failure, the scouts alert the camp, if they reach it alive.

Map 1.7: Skullband Camp

S1. Barracks

Several bunk beds and small tables stand in this shabby room. The sour smell of old wine, sweat, and rancid oil hangs heavy in the air. The tables are covered in tankards of all forms and sizes, as well as cards and several daggers that pierce the wood.

While the Skullband makes camp, the members try to find some rest in these rooms. Six **veterans** are awake and armored, while six veterans and four scouts sleep unarmored. While the main forces roam the land, only one veteran and two scouts sleep unarmored.

Treasures. The characters can find a total of 231 gp in unlocked chests. The armory holds spare equipment: five suits of splint, three suits of chain mail, two greatswords, and four heavy crossbows with 20 bolts each.

S2. Crimson Tusk's Chamber

A crude room with a makeshift hay bed, broken stones as furniture, and gruesome trophies hanging from the walls. In one corner, the debris is cleared to make room for a small pile of loot.

Crimson Tusk's room is barebones, but since he spends most nights in Eleanor's chambers, there is no need for fancy furniture. From the walls hang severed fingers and ears in various states of decay, still featuring rings and assorted jewellery worth 550 gp.

Pile of Shiney. Crimson Tusk has amassed other treasure in a small pile, fancying himself as a bizarre dragon. Aside from broken blades and pieces of armor, the characters find ten gems worth 1,000 gp and an *ioun stone of strength*—a present from Eleanor he couldn't make heads or tails of.

S3. Eleanor's Chamber

An almost-empty yet elegant room. Fine fabrics hang from the walls and several pelts cover the floor. A spacious bed made of various cushions lies in one far corner of the room. In the other corner stands a small desk, covered with assorted writing materials and a gilded mirror.

The Company Book. Among the writing material lies a thick book. It details the Skullband's revenues and expenditures. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check, or spends 4 hours to read the book, finds that there are 22 members to the Skullband and that their income is made up of equal parts plunder, and payments by duergar slavers.

Magic Mirror. Eleanor's mirror has 4 charges, and recovers 1d4 charges daily at dawn. By using an action and expending 1 charge, the user can cast the *sending* spell, which also portrays the recipient in the mirror. Every time the mirror is used, roll a d20. On a 1, the mirror breaks and is destroyed.

Company Coffers. While the Skullband makes camp, Eleanor keeps the company coffers hidden in a secret compartment. Inside the small chest are 203 pp. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 22, or a character who searches the room for a hidden compartments and succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check, finds the hidden chest. Otherwise, Eleanor keeps the chest on her horse.

S4. Stables

In and around the stables, the Skullband maintains a stable of thirty **warhorses**. While the Skullband is encamped, all of the horses are here, bound to the walls and stakes. While the Skullband pillages the countryside, only ten warhorses remain.

A character who approaches the horses must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check or spooks the animals. The ensuing noise alerts the camp and the warhorses attack.

S5. Treasure Chamber

The door to the treasure chamber is locked. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools can open the door without making loud noises. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Strength check can force open the door, alerting the camp in the process.

Treasure. Inside the treasure chamber, the characters find 5,145 cp and 1,313 sp. Additionally, the characters find silver jewelry worth 825 gp.

S6. Slave Pens

In the slave pens, the Skullband holds ten human **commoners** and Magpie (neutral good female halfling **druid**), destined to be sold to the duergar. The commoners are held in the northern room. Magpie is held in the southern room, bound and gagged. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools can open a door without making loud noises. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Strength check can force open one door, alerting the camp in the process. Magpie's equipment, among it her druidic focus, is stored in the room opposite of her cell.

If the characters free Magpie, she supports them in their battle against the Skullband, if they are still alive. Magpie buries all—due to the bounty possibly headless—corpses of the Skullband, and plants chestnut trees on their graves.

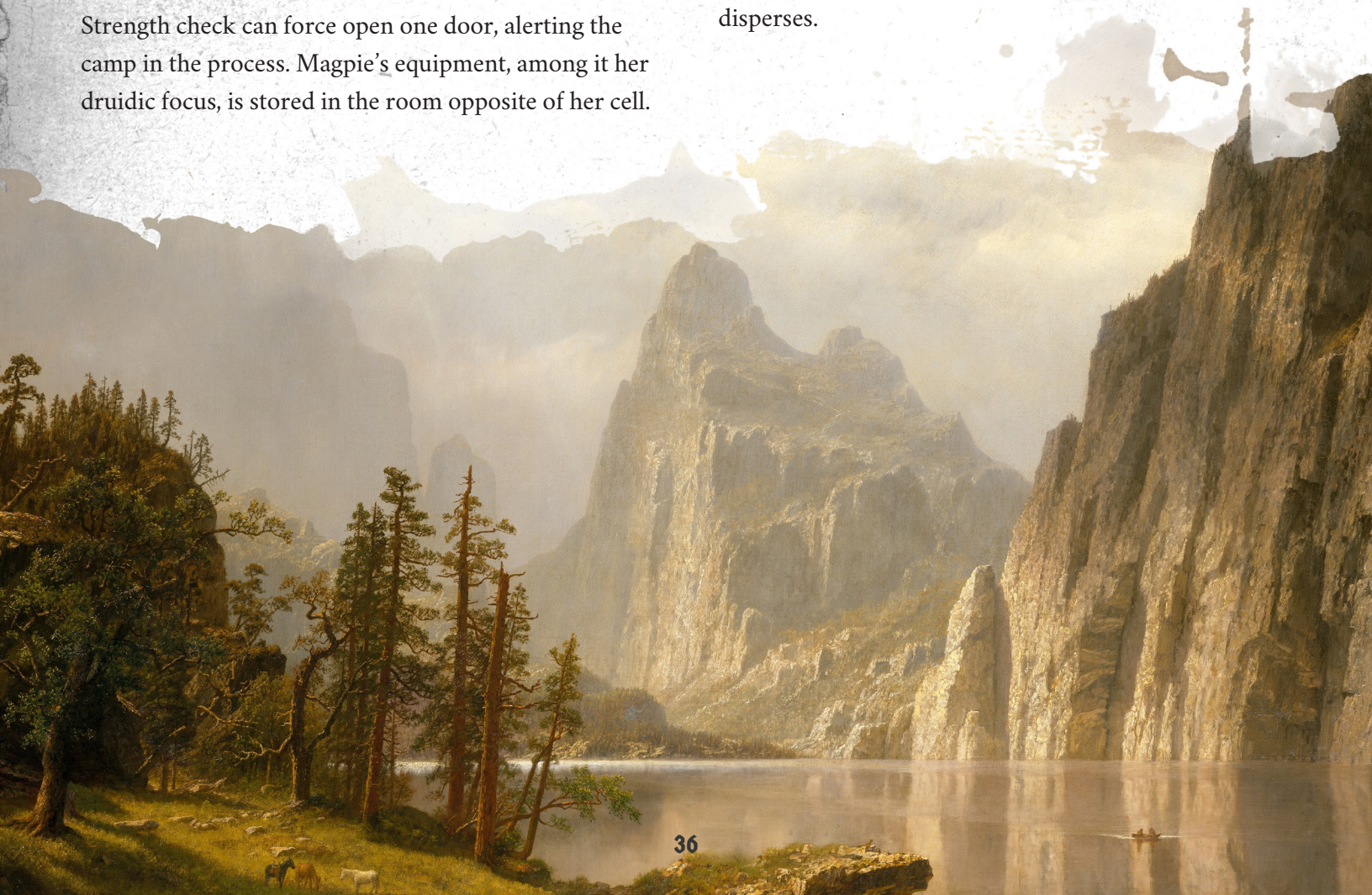
S7. Storage

The storage room holds fifty days of rations, fifty torches, five 10-foot-long chains, 10 grappling hooks, 10 flasks of oil, and 5 bullseye lanterns.

Ending the Skullband's Threat

The characters can end the threat the following ways:

- By eradicating them completely.
- By killing the leader Eleanor Whitecross, after which Crimson Tusk takes over, leading the Skullband to ruin soon after.
- By killing the leader Eleanor Whitecross and Crimson Tusk, after which the Skullband immediately disperses.



Merced River by Albert Bierstadt

Winged Sheep Thieves!

Some vile, winged beasts carried away my flock during the night! They also snatched up my puppy Wrangler and vanished with him never to return. I want to you to tear out their limbs and burn their nests, then I will piss on their remains. Visit me on Orod's Farm!

When the characters visit Orod, he treats them to a bowl of horseradish soup with chicken bits. He explains that the winged beasts descended on his flock like hungry locusts, but instead of killing and eating the sheep then and there, they carried them off in an easterly direction. Orod speaks:

> *"I have no hope of ever seeing my poor animals again, so all I want is bloody revenge. Bring me one of their heads, and I will reward you with my dead son's weapon. He was an adventurer like you once but all that returned of him was that damn sword."*

Rewards. The sword Orod references is a *flame tongue*.

Background

Thena (see below), a medusa living in an abandoned temple, maintains a flock of twelve **gargoyles** responsible for the theft. The gargoyles differ from usual specimens in that they turn to stone by day but become flesh during the night. Additionally, they speak Common. After sunset, the gargoyles roam the countryside to gather food and return with the catch before the sun rises.

The medusa, who goes by the name of Thena, is a former high priestess of Sune. She brought ruin over her temple by making a bargain with Levistus. Instead of acquiring eternal youth and beauty, becoming a medusa was her fate.

Thena turned the priests and priestesses in the temple to stone to safeguard her secret. The statues remain well kept in the temple, to be revived one day. Vele'thuil (chaotic good male elf **acolyte**), one of the priests Thena did not enclose in eternal stone, gouged out his own eyes to immunize himself against Thena's powers when he saw what had become of her.

For several decades now, Thena has researched ways to revert her transformation. The only progress is the recent creation of her trusted minions, the gargoyles. Vele'thuil still keeps her company and supports Thena, in the hopes that she succeeds in regaining her humanity and the statues can be safely reverted one day.

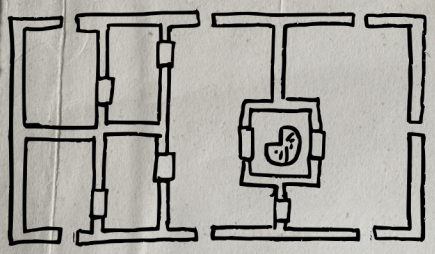
Thena's Temple

Approaching the Temple

What the characters see on their approach depends on the time of day. While the sun is up, paraphrase or read out loud the following:

> *You discover a tumbledown temple, sitting on a high rock formation. Ivy grows on the foundation, walls, roof, and out of the broken windows. A stone arc that connected the building to the outside world must have crumbled in the past. It was replaced by a rickety wooden bridge. Several motionless gargoyles guard the stone steps leading up to the bridge, and more perch on the building's roof.*

Map 1.8: Thena's Temple

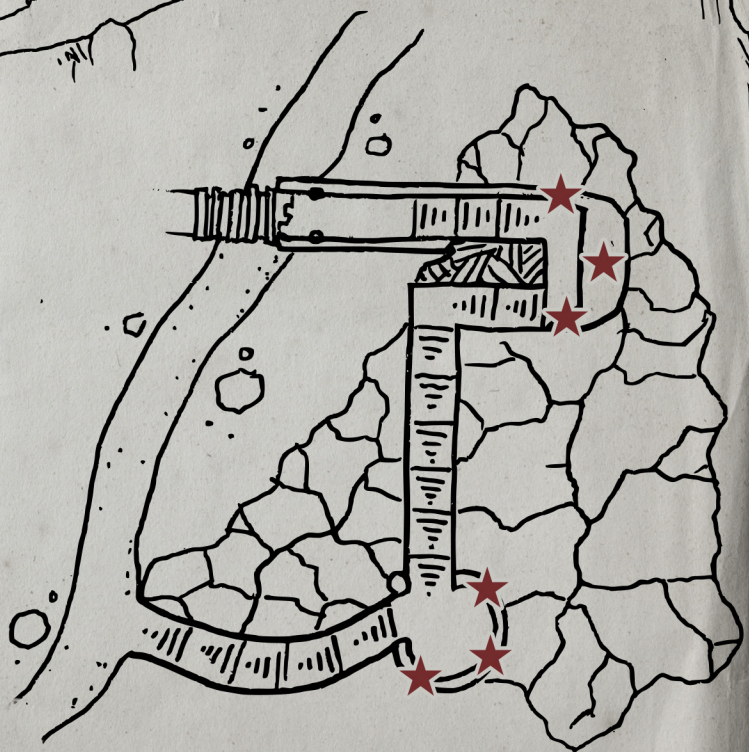


LEVEL 2

LEVEL 1

CAVE

CAVE



APPROACH

During the night, paraphrase or read out loud the following:

> *A tumbledown temple looms high on a rock formation, contrasted by a full moon. Only one window is brightly lit, whereas the lighting sometimes changes in sudden flashes, from yellow to blue or a piercing red.*

The Cave

On their way up to the temple, the characters first pass by the cave entrance. The gargoyles keep their prey, mostly farm animals, locked inside until they or their master grows hungry. From the pathway, there is no telling what is inside. A character that ascends the rock and looks inside witnesses the following:

> *The cave looks natural, but a few feet in, the entrance is barred with wooden planks. You hear a faint bleating from the inside, and it smells of animal dung.*

A wooden gate, locked with a simple bar, keeps the animals from escaping. Inside the cave, the characters find six sheep and four cow calves; all abducted from outlying farms.

The Approach

During the day, the characters find six **gargoyles** on the approach. The stars on the map represent the gargoyles' locations. A character who examines one of the gargoyles can attempt a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, the character learns that the gargoyles show no signs of weathering and claw marks in the stone suggest that they can move.

During the night, there is nothing of interest.

Destroying the Gargoyles. During the day, the gargoyles are defenseless. Superficial damage is repaired during the transformation, but deep cuts and missing limbs are not healed or repaired.

A character can spend 10 minutes destroying a gargoyle with a blunt weapon, or must succeed on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to topple a gargoyle down the rockface.

If the characters destroy one of the gargoyles as described above, without using spells like *silence*, Thena hears the ruckus and reacts. She peeks out of her window, and uses the *thaumaturgy* cantrip to address the characters with an imposing voice: *"Cease your attacks or I will rend the flesh from your bones!"*

Couatl Summon. If the characters continue their destruction, Thena uses her *conjure celestial* spell to summon a **couatl**, commands the summon to prevent the characters from destroying more gargoyles, and leaves the temple to attack. As per the conjure celestial spell, the couatl only obeys orders that don't violate its alignment. From its perspective, only a band of armed rapscallions damages stone statues and stopping them would be a lawful action. First, the couatl would attempt to reason with the characters and offer to mediate in the conflict. Only if the characters continue their destruction without explanation does it attack with intent to knock them unconscious.

The Bridge. Read the following when the characters reach the wooden bridge:

> *The rickety bridge swings back and forth, creaking in the wind. Some planks are missing, others dangle from the bridge's sides, held only by a thread.*

The bridge supports one creature of Medium size or two Small creatures at a time. If more or larger creatures walk the bridge, the ropes tear apart. Creatures standing on the bridge must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, or fall and take 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage.

Level 1

Read the following when the characters enter the first floor, be it through the door or one of the windows:

> *Two statues greet you when you enter the room. Their contorted faces tell of an unspeakable horror, but their mouths stand forever still. While the rest of the room is covered in dust and debris, the statues are well maintained.*

A *greater restoration* or *wish* spell reverts the statues to their original form.

While the characters explore the first floor, they encounter more statues and the blinded Vele'thuil (chaotic good male elf **acolyte**). He acts friendly towards the characters, explains the situation, but urges them to leave. If the characters offer help, Vele'thuil states:

> *"Unless you have powers to break a divine curse, there is nothing you can do—at least here. However, if you find information or a powerful being who is willing to help, please return. Although I have hundreds of years left, I fear what will become of Thena after my death."*

If the characters do nothing to arouse Thena's ire, like fighting against Vele'thuil or reverting or destroying the statues, she remains on the second floor and continues her experiments.

Level 2

Vele'thuil's Rooms. Vele'thuil uses the western rooms as his living space, including a kitchen and a writing room. In the latter, the elf chronicles Thena's struggles in several journals. Despite his blindness, Vele'thuil writes in a legible Elvish, but his writing grows worse over the years since he slowly forgets the letters' shapes.

Thena's Room. In the eastern room, Thena maintains a grotesque laboratory. Summoning circles and arcane symbols cover floor, walls, and ceiling. Various censers spread colorful smoke in the room. Stacked and opened books lie strewn about on the floor and desks. In between sits Thena, muttering incantations and rites. On the windowsills stand dozens of petrified birds that watch in eternal wonder.

Interacting with Thena. The medusa does not care for the characters, and ignores them as long as they remain peaceful. If the characters offer to help her, Thena scoffs at them, maybe underestimating their powers. A character can end her curse with a *wish* or *remove curse* spell cast at 8th level or higher.

"How droll. A band of fearless adventurers, armed to the teeth, ready to slay whatever doesn't look at least distantly related to themselves.
Begone now, I have more important matters to see to."

Ending the Gargoyles' Threat

The characters can intervene and stop the gargoyles in the following ways:

- Killing the gargoyles or Thena.
- Ending Thena's curse.
- Convincing Thena that the gargoyles will bring mischief to her temple by succeeding on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check.
- Convincing Thena that the gargoyles are detrimental to her condition or otherwise helpful in a ritual by succeeding on a DC 22 Charisma (Deception) check.

Thena

Medium monstrosity, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +9
Skills Deception +6, Insight +8, Perception +8, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Thena fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Petrifying Gaze. When a creature that can see the medusa's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the medusa, the medusa can force it to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw if the medusa isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.
Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the medusa until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the medusa in the meantime, it must immediately make the save. If the medusa sees itself reflected on a polished surface within 30 feet of it and in an area of bright light, the medusa is, due to its curse, affected by its own gaze.

Spellcasting. Thena is a 13th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16; +8 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, command, guiding bolt, inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability, hold person, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *meld into stone, remove curse, spirit guardians*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, stone shape*

5th level (2 slots): *flame strike, planar binding*

6th level (1 slot): *blade barrier, heal*

7th level (1 slot): *conjure celestial*

Actions

Multiattack. Thena makes three melee attacks: one with her snake hair and two with her shortsword.

Snake Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) poison damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Chapter 2: Encounters

Eeri Phenomena & Giant Warmachines

The following encounters fill the hinterlands with life. They introduce new friends and enemies, or force the characters to confront, or flee from, strange phenomena. For simple combat encounters, see chapter 2 of *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* which contains extensive tables. Rest encounters should occur during a long rest, preferably at night, since some flavor text specifically refers to the time of day.

Rest Encounters

d20	Rest Encounter
1	Eldritch procession
2	Xorbosh's war-wagon
3	Tarnun's visit
4	Buried golem
5	Transmuting grifter
6	Vagabond
7	Onentei's visit
8	Order of the Valiant Heart
9	Starving xorn
10	The Seeker
11	Forgotten cellar
12	Split Jagwen
13	Lurker Wollymor
14	Tongue Twister's visit
15	Jahar's Magic Carriage
16	Drifting grelloon
17	Odiri's visit
18	Hirdgrimm's visit
19	Scartrunk's visit
20	Tyr's Emissary

I will go ahead and add a few thoughts and stories to this chapter. I have traveled the hinterlands for many years. My insights should help you make heads and tails of it!

Furion the Adventurer

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Tyr's Emissary 49
Vagabond 49
Xorbosh's War-Wagon 50

Buried Golem

You have just leaned back to relax your eyes, when the stone behind you shifts and cracks. You dart around and see a crude face in the brittle rock. It regards you with stoic eyes.

The characters stumble upon a discarded **clay golem**. A machine of war, imbued with life by the clerics of Tempus to bring ruin and destruction to their enemies. To this day, the golem follows its original purpose, but cannot continue its war before somebody unearths it. Therefore, it only crushes rodents with its mouth when they come too near.

If the characters decide to dig up the golem, it remains motionless until it is completely freed before attacking the characters. If the characters only uncover its arms, the golem waits for an opportune moment to attempt a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. On a success, it breaks free and attacks.

Drifting Grelloon

Silhouetted against the moon and stars, you see a strange contraption float by. A tortured wailing accompanies the apparition, sending shivers down your spine.

The characters spot something like a hot air balloon at a height of 900 feet, but with four **grells** strapped to the large wicker basket. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check recognizes the contraption as a grotesque vehicle for air travel. A character who succeeds on a subsequent DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check also recognizes the monsters as grells. The mad gnome wizard Silly Putty, who built the abhorrent thing, let it fly away while being distracted by a different experiment.

The characters must kill two of the **grells** to down the balloon, or fly up to the contraption to examine it. Inside the wicker basket, the characters find a small chest containing a *wand of wonders* and *robe of useful items*.

Eldritch Procession

The wind shifts and carries gruesome tones to your ears. The mixture of moans, flutes, and fiddles tingles primeval fears that seep into your mind like black tar. With every passing second, the music grows louder, and louder!

A procession of fifty **skeletons**, led by a **skeleton** riding a **warhorse skeleton**, slowly shambles through the mist. Each of the skeletons carries a musical instrument. The sounds these instruments produce are haunting, like a moribund mockery of their true tones. Four **banshees** hover above the cluster and accompany the instruments with their deadly voices.

A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (History) check remembers reading about this apparition. It is called the Eternal March, and is a deadly omen for whomever witnesses it.

Unless the characters attack the procession, it passes by their camp, disregarding the living. An undead being that comes within 120 feet of the procession must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw or is compelled to join the eternal march. The skeleton on the warhorse carries a *nine lives stealer greatsword* on its back.

I have witnessed the Eternal March with my own eyes. Not only that. I followed it for several days, documenting its path, keeping track of its growth. What I learned haunts me to this day.

Forgotten Cellar

While on guard duty, you walk the perimeter to keep the camp secure. Suddenly, the ground beneath your foot cracks, gives way, and one of your legs is stuck in brittle wood up to your knee.

The character walked over a rotten trap door that partially collapsed under their weight. After removing a few inches of grass and moss, the characters can see the trap door. It leads into a 15-foot-cube cellar, filled with rows and rows of bottles. The cellar once belonged to a house that was razed and its stones were carried off as building material.

After searching the cellar, the characters find forty bottles of wine and ten bottles filled with different spirits. Additionally, the characters find a *potion of stone giant strength*, labeled as "Ofloo's Toe Spirit."

Hirdgrimm's Visit

You savor a short time of serenity, listening to eagle owls and crickets, watching the crackling fire. Alas, it lasts but a moment. A series of small earthquakes disturbs the peace. The rumbling is accompanied by a booming voice, echoing over the treetops: "Well met, small folk! Make room for me by your fire!" Slowly but surely, a giant stomps toward you!

Hirdgrimm (neutral male **frost giant**) is a traveling explorer and trader. He carries a large sack, filled only with a myriad of weapons. When the giant arrives in the characters' camp, he nonchalantly sits down as close to the fire as he can get. He skewers a stag he caught on a young tree, and sticks it into the ground to roast over the fire.

Hirdgrimm is old and frail, showing signs of a long life filled with hardships. Despite such a troubled past, he is talkative and sociable. He asks the characters if they are interested in upgrading their arsenal, looking like the adventurers they are. If they agree, Hirdgrimm pours the contents of his sack onto the ground. It contains all weapons found in the Weapons table in Chapter 1 of the *Player's Handbook*, up to a rarity of +2. A weapon +1 costs 1,000 gp and a weapon +2 goes for 2,500 gp. Hirdgrimm can tell a story about each of the weapons as if they were old friends.

Jahar's Magic Carriage

Without seeing a source nearby, you hear an infernal screeching that rapidly intensifies. Rhythmic, rumbling detonations join the chorus, seemingly originating from all around. Finally, only seconds after the phenomena started, the air rips open as a ragged portal peels itself from the dimensions. A burning carriage springs forth, spreading blue flames in its wake. Close behind it, skulls and bones wash from the portal carried in by a riptide of blood. A standing stone stops the carriage with violent finality. However, one of the wheels comes off and continues on its way, still burning, completely unphased by recent events. It is pandemonium; until the portal finally closes with a sloshing whimper.

The carriage originated in Nessus and barely made it out intact. At the helm sits the owner Jahar (**rakshasa**), and Maz'gamar (**erinyes**) awaits the terminus in the carriage's compartment. By chance, the fiends' destination wound up to be the characters' camp. Jahar is a renowned chauffeur and transports people, or other beings, to their destination (normally). Shortly after the carriage stops, Jahar leaps down, and opens the door to the compartment. Maz'gamar exits, thanks the rakshasa for their service, and vanishes in a puff of smoke and sulphur.

I was just enjoying a roasted rabbit, steeling myself before entering a promising tomb, when a carriage shot from a nearby lake, followed by a humongous worm. Luckily, it was only half of a worm, and it died soon after!

Afterward, Jahar asks the characters if they would be so kind as to help him repair his carriage. As a reward, the fiend promises them one free ride to a plane of their choice.

Lurker Wollymor

It is a cold night, and you huddle close to the fire to keep warm. The flames are captivating, especially their roots, which oscillate in green and blue. Time becomes irrelevant as you lose yourself in the flickering light. You start to wonder if you are dreaming, when you notice a set of eyes within the flames, staring back at you.

The person watching the character from the fire is a bored **archmage** called Wollymor, using the equivalent of a *scrying* spell. If the character starts speaking with the apparition in the fire, Wollymor pretends to have scryed on the wrong camp and apologizes for the mixup. However, seeing that he cast the spell anyway, Wollymor says that he is interested in some small talk.

The elderly archmage tells the character about his flesh-eating plant Jorvy, who ate a servant the other day, complains that his clone children never send him any messages, and that he is working on a new type of guard orc that requires only half of the usual amount of food and sleep. If the characters politely listen, Wollymor offers to scry for the characters a few times, if they are in need of information. The characters can call on Wollymor by saying his name three times near a fire. The characters can sever the connection at any time by dousing the flames.

Odiri's Visit

Out of the darkness steps a hefty mastiff. On its back, you see a graying halfling with a wide grin. She waves her arm in a greeting, and shouts, "Am I glad to find a few friendly faces out here. Do you mind some company?"

Odiri (neutral good female halfling **guard**) is a messenger and merchant. For her official position as messenger, she carries a leather bag containing dozens of missives and letters. For her unofficial business as a merchant, she carries a different bag that contains mind altering herbs. She happily shares small samples with the characters, and sells varieties according to the Odiri's Goods table. She also accepts letters from the characters, which she carries to the nearest town or city for 1 gp.

Odiri's Goods

Name	Price (per dose)	Effect
Holy Smoke	5 gp	As an action, you stuff your pipe, inhale, and gain 1d4 temporary hit points.
Black Mamba	10 gp	As an action, you stuff your pipe, inhale, and gain advantage on your next Wisdom saving throw.
Mind File	100 gp	As an action, you stuff your pipe, inhale, and gain resistance to psychic damage for 1 minute.

Important!
1) Start with a small portion
2) Have friends nearby
3) Don't overdo it
4) Have a good time!

Onentei's Visit

A ferocious bird call rips through the darkness. You raise your head and see a winged beast flying in wide circles around the camp. A voice from above proclaims: "Do not fret, I am no enemy of yours!" Slowly, the beast descends, and a dragonesque person dexterously slides down its side.

Onentei (neutral evil female **half-red dragon veteran**), riding her tame **griffon** Cutter, lands in the characters' camp. She is a mercenary in name, but really only an opportunist that looks out for herself without any semblance of honor. Onentei offers to work for the characters for a rate of 50 gp per day, with an additional cost of 50 gp if the day's work involves a fight.

Onentei abandons the characters without a second thought if her life is in danger. If the characters attempt to hold back a portion of her pay after it is due, she agrees in pretence. At an opportune moment, she steals a valuable item from the characters and flies off. If dragonborn are among the characters, Onentei ignores them, believing them to be lesser dragonkin.

Order of the Valiant Heart

A half-orc in blackened, crumbling plate armor staggers into the camp. In his arms he carries a young woman. Blood drips from the motionless form, and tears stream down the armored fighter's face: "Help her!" With these closing words, he falls to his knees, and loses consciousness.

Atrash (neutral good male half-orc **knight**) carries the mortally wounded Lara (neutral good female half-elf **acolyte**) into camp.

They are what remains of the Order of the Valiant Heart. All other members died fighting their former captain, Rubin d'Iver, who became a **death knight**.

Lara is on death's door. Her stomach lies bare, and her entrails are visible among crusted blood. Only a heal or regeneration spell can save her life. If the characters do not act within 10 minutes, Lara dies, but will return if resurrected. Atrash is also wounded, but recovers and regains consciousness after a long rest. Since the knights were ultimately unsuccessful, Rubin d'Iver still stalks the lands.

Scartrunk's Visit

It is an otherwise calm night, when you suddenly hear something whooshing through the air. Before you know it, a pile of mud lands on the campfire, dousing the flames with an angry hiss. A creaking voice from the darkness adds to your confusion: "Too dangerous—it has not rained in days! Do you know no courtesy or prudence?"

The voice is that of Scartrunk (chaotic good **treant**). The treant has just awoken from a long nap and remains motionless 30 feet away from the characters' camp. A ghastly wound, dealt to it by lightning, runs across Scartrunk's stem. It is the reason Scartrunk carries its name, which it received by a travelling band of adventurers. Scartrunk felt honored to receive something as valuable as a name, and carries it with pride.

If the characters treat Scartrunk with respect, and do not light a new fire, it responds to questions. It knows the surrounding lands very well and helps with directions if the characters are searching for anything specific. As a parting gift, Scartrunk sends an **awakened tree** along with the characters. It follows the characters' orders and remains with them for 7 days before returning to its former life as a simple plant.

Split Jagwen

While sitting by the fire and roasting a small meal, you hear a call from the darkness: "Hello there! I see your fire; are you friendly or blood-thirsty brigands?"

The man calling out to the characters is Jagwen (neutral good male half-elf **acolyte**). Jagwen suffers from a curse that changes him completely every day at dawn. One day, he is in his human form but he changes into his elven form the following day. To make matters worse, each of them cannot recall what the other did the previous day. The human and elven halves cannot communicate with each other directly, only via letters they write. However, due to a falling out, they are giving each other the silent treatment for now. Because of this, Jagwen has been walking in circles for days, and is now out of supplies.

When Jagwen steps into the light of the fire, he appears human. He asks for food, and for a favor. Jagwen asks the characters to tie him up before the morrow comes, and take him to the nearest settlement. As per usual, the next day Jagwen wakes up in his elven form, and is less than pleased with the characters if they decided to oblige the human form's wishes.

Starving Xorn

You hear a suspicious scraping when suddenly, a part of your equipment vanishes into a hole in the ground!

A starving **xorn** found its way to the characters' camp and scrounges for food. For a xorn, this involves precious metals, like gold coins or mithril armor, and gems. If the characters try to protect their equipment, the xorn gets angry and attacks.

If the characters part with some of their precious metals or gems worth 500 gp peaceably, they save the xorn's life. The xorn follows the characters for a time, and as long as they continuously feed it, it supports them in battle.

Tarnun's Visit

A noble-looking woman walks into the camp with heavy feet. Her travel clothes are stained, but you can still tell that they are worth a hefty sum. The woman raises her hand in greeting and speaks: "I hope there is a place for me by your fire, friend. I am weary of spending the night alone."

Tarnun (**oni**) elected the characters' camp to find a delicious meal. Tarnun prefers small humanoids, like gnomes or halflings, but settles for others if none are available. Exotic humanoids, like tieflings or dragonborn, also water Tarnun's mouth.

Disguised as a strikingly beautiful woman, Tarnun flirts with a character who might be interested and attempts to lure them away from the group. If successful, Tarnun reverts back to its oni form, attempts to grapple with the character, and then flies away to consume the catch in safety.

The local halflings tell their children a curious poem before bedtime.

On dark silent wings,
wearing your family's guise
tasty death it brings.

Run, little one, run!
It carries fork, knife, and spoon.
Loud smacking. Bone, grease!

I am not ashamed to admit that the Seeker earned a part of my soul. For years, I searched for the Blessed Spawning Pool of Xirox. With the Seeker as my guide, we arrived in a matter of days.

The Seeker

While listening to a pair of singing nightingales, you witness white fluffs falling from the sky. What appeared like snow at first, turns out to be nothing more than ash—curious. An aggressive neigh interrupts your thoughts. Only now do you realize that a burning horse stands in the middle of your camp. On its back sits an oily mist, loosely resembling a humanoid. You shiver as it speaks with a piercing, hollow voice: "I am the Seeker."

The Seeker has the statistics of a **wraith** and rides on a **nightmare**. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check knows what the Seeker is: a cursed being that helps anyone searching for a specific item or person in exchange for a part of their soul. The legend says that when the Seeker has collected sufficient pieces, its curse is finally lifted.

The characters have the following options:

- By speaking the words "I am seeking", followed by whatever they desire, they can enlist the Seeker's help. Using the nightmare's Ethereal Stride action as often as necessary, the Seeker takes the characters into the Ethereal Plane. From there, it guides the characters to their destination without fail or detour. Once the characters acquire what they desired, they take 1d6 necrotic damage and lose a tiny part of their soul to the Seeker.
- By attacking and killing the Seeker and its steed, the characters can end the apparition, but only for a time. After 666 days, it returns to the realm of the living and continues on its journey.

Tongue Twister's Visit

While the stars slowly wander across the firmament, a suspicious sound reaches your ear. A periodic thump that grows louder every other second. Finally, a giant frog lands in the middle of your camp, gracefully recovering after after a long jump. A smaller frog jumps from its back and starts rummaging around in your supplies! "Inferior quality supplies; stale. What's that sour smell, good gods, is that mold?" it shouts. The small frog angrily wags an old loaf of bread in your general direction.

Tongue Twister (neutral **bullywug**) graces the characters with a visit. The renowned chef travels the world on the back of its trusted **giant frog** mount, Glub. The bullywug assesses the characters' supplies, adds some ingredients found around the camp, and prepares a great meal from whatever is available. The bullywug's name, Tongue Twister, stems from its ingenious dishes that surprise the eater with unexpected flavors. Characters who eat from Tongue Twister's food gain 2d6 temporary hit points after finishing the long rest.

Transmuting Grifter

A grinding sound and loud wheezing announces the presence of an approaching traveler.

Approaching the characters' camp is Harper (chaotic neutral female **cult fanatic**). She has access to the 2nd-level ability of the wizard's School of Transmutation (Minor Alchemy); she uses the ability to trick hapless victims, often quite successfully. Harper is pulling a heavy chest into the characters' camp as part of her con. Unless the characters help her carry it, she pulls the chest next to the fire and sits down with a heavy thud, covered in genuine sweat.

After recovering, Harper begins to weave her lies. She explains that her horse ran off, forcing her to leave her cart behind. She decided to pull the chest, which contains a valuable statue, to the next village. If the characters are interested, Harper would sell them the silver statue for 50 gp, which is worth at least double, if not more. A character who inspects the statue and succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence check knows that this statue sells for 250 gp. In reality, the statue is made of wood, but Harper transmuted it into silver. It reverts to its original form in 30 minutes. If the characters agree, Harper pockets their money with a defeated look, and departs. Once out of the characters' view, she runs.

Tyr's Emissary

After checking the perimeter, you return to the camp for a small meal before your well-earned rest. On the way, your foot gets caught in some sort of metal pot. Checking to see what nearly brought about your downfall, you spot a discarded helmet. A surging, blue glow radiating from the inside of the helm peaks your interest. A reverberating voice calls out: "Mortal! Assemble me!"

The character stumbled on a sentient *plate armor +1*, known as *Tyr's Emissary*. The armor is half buried, and still protects the skeleton of its late wearer and companion. If the characters oblige and unearth the armor, it requests that the characters collect the bones and return them to the nearest temple of Tyr. Meanwhile, *Tyr's Emissary* allows an interested character to wear it. If the characters return the bones, and if *Tyr's Emissary* is pleased with the characters' decisions and convictions, it elects to stay with the characters. Otherwise it doffs itself and remains within the temple.

Sentience. Tyr's Emissary is a lawful good suit of armor with an Intelligence of 12, a Wisdom of 10, and a Charisma of 18. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. The weapon can speak, read, and understand Common, and can communicate with its wearer telepathically.

Personality. Tyr's Emissary speaks with a heavenly, reverberating voice. Its only purpose is to smite evil and uphold the law. If the character wearing Tyr's Emissary commits a crime or abides evil, a conflict between them occurs at the next sunset.

Vagabond

The thick clouds were already a bad omen, but now the rain begins in earnest. Lest the fire goes out, you throw a few more pieces of wood into the flames. Sparks flitter through the cold night and happily dance for the few seconds of life they have. Focusing on the pretty display, you spot something odd. A patch of grass near the fire appears to remain dry, and small pools of water form in midair!

A character has spotted Orgorim (neutral evil **duergar**), a vagabond, grifter, and an escapee from the Underdark. Using his Invisibility action, the duergar huddled next to the fire for some warmth. If the character talks to the invisible figure, or makes any other move that tips Orgorim off, the duergar runs away.

If the characters capture Orgorim, he tells them about his arduous journey through the Underdark and misadventures on the surface. If the characters leave him unattended, Orgorim attempts to steal food and flees. If the characters capture him again, or encounter Orgorim later, he offers to work for them as a spy and scout for 1 gp a day. He runs away with the gold immediately.

Xorbosh's War-Wagon

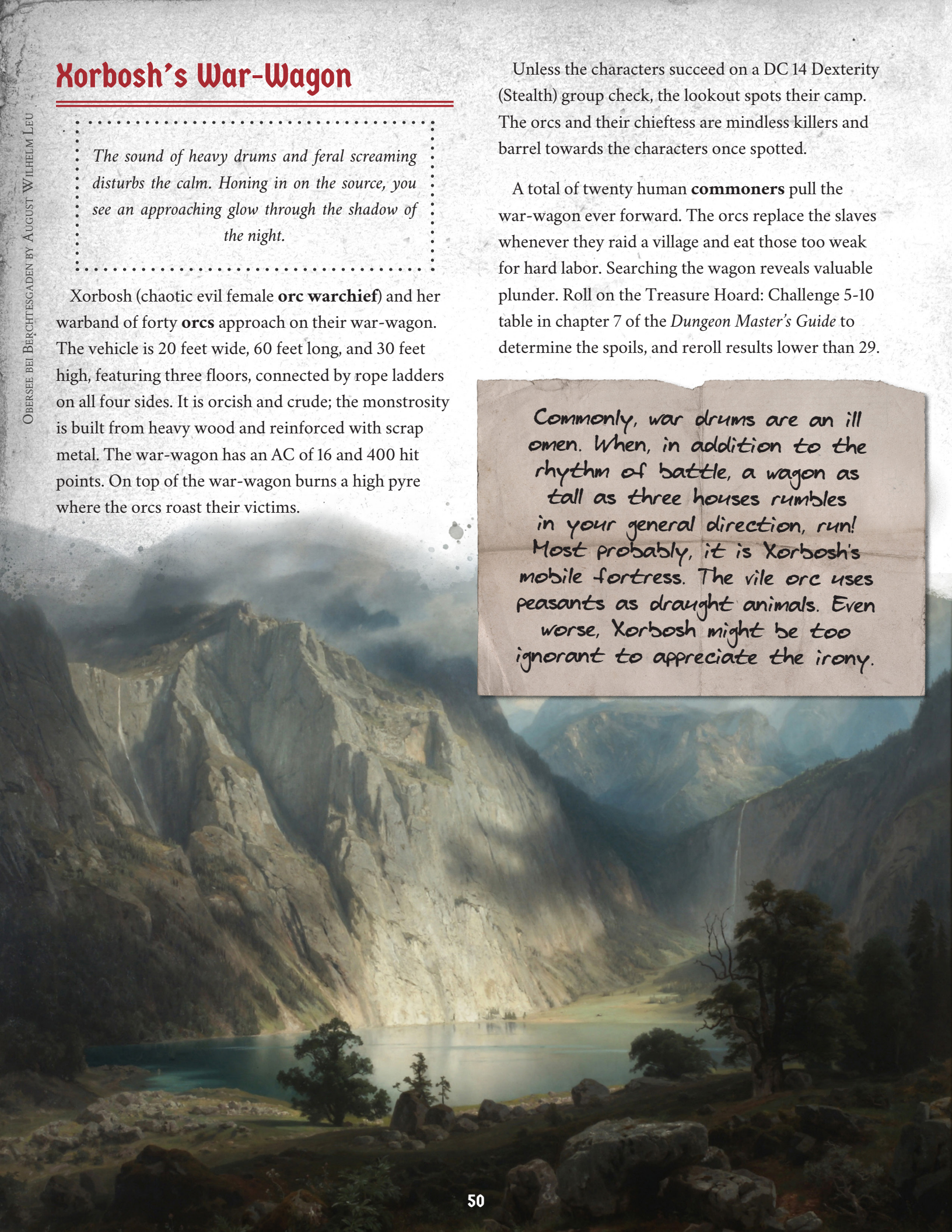
The sound of heavy drums and feral screaming disturbs the calm. Honing in on the source, you see an approaching glow through the shadow of the night.

Xorbosh (chaotic evil female **orc warchief**) and her warband of forty **orcs** approach on their war-wagon. The vehicle is 20 feet wide, 60 feet long, and 30 feet high, featuring three floors, connected by rope ladders on all four sides. It is orcish and crude; the monstrosity is built from heavy wood and reinforced with scrap metal. The war-wagon has an AC of 16 and 400 hit points. On top of the war-wagon burns a high pyre where the orcs roast their victims.

Unless the characters succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) group check, the lookout spots their camp. The orcs and their chieftess are mindless killers and barrel towards the characters once spotted.

A total of twenty human **commoners** pull the war-wagon ever forward. The orcs replace the slaves whenever they raid a village and eat those too weak for hard labor. Searching the wagon reveals valuable plunder. Roll on the Treasure Hoard: Challenge 5-10 table in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine the spoils, and reroll results lower than 29.

Commonly, war drums are an ill omen. When, in addition to the rhythm of battle, a wagon as tall as three houses rumbles in your general direction, run! Most probably, it is Xorbosh's mobile fortress. The vile orc uses peasants as draught animals. Even worse, Xorbosh might be too ignorant to appreciate the irony.



Obersee bei Berchtesgaden by August Wilhelm Leu

Chapter 3: Bounty Hunts

Ruthless Killers & Hungry Badgers

This chapter contains information about four dangerous foes. They may serve as mere bounty hunts or play a larger role in an ongoing campaign. The individual descriptions include tactics, motivation, and statistics of the bounties. The Bounties table offers an overview of the various targets.

Bounties

d4	Name	CR
1	Aubriana Fernar	14
2	Linette Headtaker	16
3	Orwoholon the Beast Prophet	18
4	Merellien the Hunter	20

Aubriana Fernar

History

Aubriana grew up in a rich household, which she destroyed during one of her failed experiments. As a result, her parents built Aubriana an underground laboratory to prevent future catastrophes. Eventually, experiments weren't enough to keep Aubriana entertained, and she set out to adventure. In contrast to what most people assume, the inventress didn't lose her arm in an accident of her own making, but to a hungry bulette.

However, the bounty on her head did indeed result from an out-of-control experiment that saw an entire village turn into grotesque monsters.

Location & Encounter

Aubriana hides in a small tower in the countryside, where she is occupied with yet another project of uncertain outcome. Yellow plumes rise sky high, making it easy to find the location. The colorful smoke is accentuated by small explosions that echo through the woods. The characters can be alerted to the presence of some sort of alchemist or poisoner by flying kettles that impact into the ground in their vicinity.

Tactics

Aubriana concentrates on taking out one character, while disabling others to deal with later. She is not interested in killing anybody: she only wants to be left alone. If she is victorious, Aubriana checks if the characters are still alive and then flees.

"I would not touch that if I were you. Best case scenario, you lose an arm. Worst case, you turn into a mutated, unstoppable killing machine."

Aubriana Fernar

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 18 (chain shirt +1)
Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Int +10, Wis +9
Skills Arcana +10, History +10, Investigation +10, Medicine +9, Nature +10, Perception +9
Senses passive Perception 19
Languages Common
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If Aubriana fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Vials. Aubriana has a limited supply of vials. She can use each option listed under Throw Vial three times. Aubriana regains all expended vials after finishing a long rest.

Actions

Multiattack. Aubriana makes two shortsword attacks and throws one vial.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Throw Vial. Aubriana throws a vial at a creature within 30 feet that she can see, choosing from the following options:

❖ The target must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 28 (8d6) fire damage and 28 (8d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

❖ The target must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. A target takes 28 (8d6) radiant damage and is blinded for 1 minute on a failed save, or is not blinded on a successful one. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself on a success.

❖ The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or take 61 (6d6 + 40) poison damage and is paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

❖ The target must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw or is turned into a frog for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Legendary Actions

Aubriana can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Aubriana regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Psychoactive Miasma. Aubriana opens a small hatch in her mechanical arm, releasing a murky haze, and forces a creature within 5 feet of her to make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target is frightened of Aubriana until the end of its next turn.

Electrocute. Aubriana charges her mechanical arm and touches a creature within 5 feet of her. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or takes 14 (4d6) lightning damage and is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Linette Headtaker

History

Linette grew up in an orphanage and was bought by a dubious philanthropist at the age of seven. Her subsequent education involved poisons, blades, dark rituals, and the art of shadows. Six years later, Linette killed her first target with a deadly needle and brutal cut. Head in tow, she returned to her master and received appropriate praise. Several years later, Linette also took the head of her adoptive father, and began working for herself.

Currently, Linette spends some time in the hinterlands to let things cool off in the city. There is also good work in this sparsely populated area, if you have the right contacts.

Location & Encounter

Linette loiters around in different inns and taverns, never staying in one place for too long. She has a network of informants she meets up with in different locations to take on new jobs and earn some coin. Most of her targets are rich merchants who pass through, or sometimes even other people with bounties on their heads. If the characters have wronged a comparatively rich person, they might become Linette's next target.

Tactics

Linette opens combat by drinking her *potion of speed*. She uses her Shadow Bind against a character that appears weakly armored and concentrates her attacks on this target. If Linette falls below 30 hit points, she uses her Shadow Step to retreat. If Linette is tasked to kill the characters, she makes sure to behead the targets. Otherwise, if she is only defending herself, she knocks the characters unconscious and flees.

"Better dead than sorry!"

Linette Headtaker

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (studded leather +1)
Hit Points 180 (24d8 + 72)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +9
Skills Acrobatics +9, Deception +9, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +14
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Linette fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Reactive Armor. Linette's armor has 10 charges and offers the following benefits:

- ❖ When Linette is hit with a weapon attack, the armor triggers a *mirror image* spell (1 charge).
- ❖ When Linette is the target of an enchantment spell, the armor casts *counterspell*, adding a +5 bonus to any required roll (2 charges).

Potions. Linette carries a *potion of speed* and a *potion of superior healing*, which she can drink as an action.

Actions

Multiattack. Linette makes three shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Legendary Actions

Linette can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Linette regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Shadow Daggers. Linette throws shadowy daggers at a creature within 60 feet of her that she can see. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 15 (6d4) piercing damage.

Shadow Bind (Costs 2 Actions). A creature within 120 feet of Linette which stands in bright or dim light must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or is restrained by its shadow. The target can use an action to repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

Shadow Step (Costs 3 Actions). When Linette is in dim light or darkness, she can teleport up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space she can see that is also in dim light or darkness. Linette then makes one shortsword attack against a creature in reach.

Orwoholon the Beast Prophet

History

Orwoholon was a dotty hermit, until one day he had a great revelation: unless he set out to destroy civilization in its entirety, the world would fall to ruin after a millennia of rampant progress. Orwoholon burned down his hut and destroyed all his worldly possessions, other than the clothes he was wearing, and began his grand tour of devastation.

He levels entire villages and eats their inhabitants, destroys cities by hollowing out the ground below, and settles displaced beasts in their stead. Many beasts see Orwoholon as their god and savior, supporting him when and wherever they can. Stampeding herds follow Orwoholon in his wake and giant vultures circle above him in the sky.

After such a long time spent in the company and shape of beasts, Orwoholon has almost forgotten that he himself is a human. He only reverts to his humanoid form during rest, and changes shape immediately after he awakes.

Location & Encounter

Orwoholon seldom stops and is constantly on the move. He has no plan or direction and lets chance or nature decide where to head next.

In his huge beast forms, Orwoholon is hard to miss. The characters can encounter him during travel, or while staying in a settlement. No village or town is safe from Orwoholon and his rampaging hordes. Therefore, the characters might find themselves in his crosshairs sooner or later.

Tactics

Orwoholon likes to grapple targets in his crocodile or badger form and then changes into his frog form to swallow his victim. When Orwoholon faces a large number of enemies, he grapples one in his badger form, and starts burrowing to lose some of the attackers. Orwoholon changes shape every turn to gain temporary hit points, unless he has 6 or more left.

If possible, Orwoholon kills characters outright since he is always hungry and consumes whatever he gets his paws on.

Orwoholon the Beast Prophet

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 in humanoid form, 18 (natural armor) in any beast form
Hit Points 299 (26d8 + 182)
Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. in any beast form), burrow 30 ft. (in badger form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +13, Wis +11
Skills Animal Handling +11, Perception +11, Survival +11
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Common (can't speak in any beast form)
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Orwoholon fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Shapechanger. Orwoholon can use his bonus action to polymorph into a Huge crocodile, a Huge snake, a Huge toad, a Huge badger, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his size and AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. Orwoholon reverts to his true form if he dies.

Might of the Beasts. When Orwoholon changes shape, he gains 1d10 temporary hit points and maintains the swallowed or grappled conditions on targets.

Actions

Unarmed Strike (Human Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 bludgeoning damage.

Bite and Spin (Crocodile Form Only). Orwoholon bites a creature within 10 feet and spins it around. The target must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. The target takes 36 (8d8) piercing damage and an extra 36 (8d8) bludgeoning damage and is grappled (escape DC 19) on a failed save, or half as much damage and is not grappled on a successful one. The creature is restrained until the grapple ends.. When he has a target grappled, Orwoholon can only attack the grappled creature.

Bite and Poison (Snake Form Only). Orwoholon bites a creature within 10 feet. The target must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. The target takes 18 (4d8) piercing damage and an extra 90 (20d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Bite and Swallow (Toad Form Only). Orwoholon bites a creature within 10 feet. The target must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. The target takes 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage and is swallowed on a failed save, or takes half damage and is not swallowed on a successful one. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside of Orwoholon, and it takes 39 (6d12) acid damage at the start of each of Orwoholon's turns. Orwoholon can have only one Medium or smaller target swallowed at a time and can't revert to his humanoid form as long as the target is alive.

Bite (Badger Form Only). Orwoholon bites a creature within 10 feet. The target must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. The target takes 36 (8d8) piercing damage damage and is grappled (escape DC 19) on a failed save, or half as much damage and is not grappled on a successful one. The creature is restrained until the grapple ends, and Orwoholon can only attack the grappled creature.

Merellien the Hunter

History

Merellien is an indiscriminate hunter whose only joy in life is stalking and killing powerful prey. She led a normal life in a wild elf settlement, counting the seasons, not days, in tune with nature. Merellien's first encounter with civilization was an army cutting through the forest, attempting to mount a surprise attack on an enemy city. Hundreds of foragers and logging units ravaged the forest, angering the gods and spirits. Merellien was one of the elves who took up arms and whittled down the enemy's numbers, forcing them to withdraw.

After the victory, the elves returned to their settlements and placid lives. However, Merellien was restless and bored in her old role. She felt out of place, felt as if she was wasting her life away. The killing gave her purpose and the desperate screams of intelligent prey gave her satisfaction. After a short time of hesitation, Merellien left her forest and life behind, to set out into the world. Decades on the hunt edged her senses and increased her thirst for ever more powerful takes. Without realizing at first, she caught the eye of Malar, who made her his Chosen.

Location & Encounter

Merellien either rests deep in the woods in a temple she is building for Malar, or prowls the roads in search of prey. The temple is a bizarre arrangement of bones and salvaged equipment, taken from her victims. Merellien braids items like weapons, bits and pieces of armor, jewelry, and other personal belongings into a canopy and the walls, using ropes, roots, and lianas. Merellien has built many such temples over the decades, bleeding a region dry of worthy targets, and moving on when the temple is finished.

Since Merellien is constantly on the lookout for strong opponents, the characters can encounter her during their travels. Merellien stalks the characters for a long time before making an attack, assessing their prowess. Killing weaklings is beneath Merellien, and she enjoys following travelers without them ever realizing. Merellien will not attack while the characters are weakened or engaged with other targets — she waits for her attack until they are at their best.

Tactics

Merellien opens combat by casting *greater invisibility* on herself. If possible, she makes the first attack within 150 feet of the characters to use her Arrow of Malar. During her second turn, Merellien casts *swift quiver*. Whenever a character comes too close, she casts *hold person* or uses her Nail Down legendary action. Merellien does not fight to the death, and attempts to escape after falling below 30 hit points. Merellien attempts to take the characters alive, to sacrifice them to Malar in the temple she is building.

Merellien the Hunter

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (leather +2)
Hit Points 247 (26d8 + 130)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	24(+7)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Con +11, Wis +13
Skills Acrobatics +12, Animal Handling +13, Perception +13, Stealth +18, Survival +19
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. Merellien has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Merellien fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Innate Spellcasting. Merellien's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 21). Merellien can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *hold person, hunter's mark*

3/day each: *greater invisibility, swift quiver*

Malar's Blessing. At the end of Merellien's turn, if she hit at least two longbow attacks on her turn, she gains 10 hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. Merellien makes two longbow attacks.

Longbow +2. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 8) piercing damage.

Arrow of Malar (Recharge 3-6). Merellien chooses a creature within 150 feet of her that she can see to shoot with a blessed arrow. The target must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 86 (8d8 + 50) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Additionally, on a failed save, the target is pushed back 20 feet, lands prone, and is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Legendary Actions

Merellien can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Merellien regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Overdraw. Merellien rolls 21 (3d8 + 8) damage for her next longbow attack.

Reposition. Merellien moves up to 15 feet and makes a longbow attack against a target within 150 feet of her.

Nail Down. Merellien rams an arrow through a creature's foot. A target within 5 feet of Merellien must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target's speed is reduced to 0 until the arrow is removed. On its turn, the target can use a bonus action and spend half of its movement to dislodge the arrow.

Chapter 4: Sidekicks

Armed & Dangerous Followers

General Information

Sidekicks can be anything from a faceless set of statistics in armor to a fully fleshed out character with their own convictions, motivations, and secrets. The three options in this chapter fall into the latter category. Although the players may decide in a limited fashion how the sidekicks advance in level and take control over them in battle, they have their own mind and may decide to disregard certain orders. Either out of selfish reasons, self preservation, or love for the characters. Although sidekicks should start out as friends or loose acquaintances, that dynamic may change during an adventure. They may become trusted companions, lovers, estranged rivals, or bitter enemies.

Pitfalls

Introducing a sidekick into a campaign can be tricky. The players' expectations and possibly false assumptions or the Dungeon Master's handling can ruin the experience.

Players must be aware that the sidekick acts on their knowledge and convictions. They are not a tool of the Dungeon Master to steer the characters through a campaign. Interpreting their words and actions as that of the Dungeon Master can lead to ruin.

Dungeon Masters must be aware that sidekicks aren't their characters. They are the players' tools. The Dungeon Master merely brings them to life, introduces their plot elements, and prevents the players from handling them incorrectly.

Separation

Over the course of an adventure, sidekicks may leave the group for a multitude of reasons. Some lie in the characters' responsibility, others result from the sidekick's particular backstory. Separations can be character defining, for the sidekick and characters alike. Such crucial moments should be planned out and the culmination of foreshadowing and roleplay, to leave a lasting impression. The following information helps facilitate this.

Conflicts

Sidekicks have an alignment and a personality. Unless, by chance, the characters' and sidekick's convictions align perfectly, a conflict or difference in opinion is bound to occur. Some sidekicks might express their dissatisfaction immediately, getting angrier over time if the characters continue to act in an intolerable way. Other sidekicks may suppress their true feelings until they snap and confront the characters in a storm of emotions.

The sidekicks feature a section detailing things they like and dislike. Depending on the characters' actions, an individual sidekick's affection for the group or dissatisfaction grows. Or it may remain neutral. When a sidekick's dissatisfaction reaches a breaking point, the sidekick gives the characters an ultimatum. If they do not promise to change their ways, the sidekick soon leaves the group when circumstances allow.

The sidekicks also feature a section explaining what they are fundamentally opposed to. No good deed can outweigh violating these principles. After the first transgression, the sidekick gives the characters an ultimatum. On the second transgression, the sidekick leaves immediately, unless it puts them in mortal danger.

As a last resort to keep a sidekick in line, the characters can attempt an opposed Charisma check. Unless they fundamentally change their ways, this is but a temporary measure and can not be attempted a second time.

Terror

The sidekicks feature information about their fears and terrors. Fears offer roleplaying potential, whereas terrors can make a sidekick break and abandon the group. When sidekicks are confronted with one or more of their terrors, they must make a Charisma saving throw. The DC is at the DM's discretion but should depend on the potential threat. Features or abilities that give advantage on saving throws against the frightened condition apply to this saving throw. On a failed save, the sidekick retreats to a—from their perspective—safe distance, and attempts to rejoin the group after the threat is dealt with.

Ulterior Motives

Most sidekicks join the characters to advance their own goals—even friends do not always cooperate for friendship's sake. Sidekicks may want to grow stronger to fulfill their own desires or distract themselves from the ghosts of the past. During the adventure, there comes a point when sidekicks have learned enough, in their view, or the ghosts finally catch up with them. This may result in the sidekick's departure, depending on how the sidekick views the group. If the sidekick is dissatisfied with the group, it is the end of the line and the sidekick gives their last farewell. However, if the sidekick and characters grew close, the sidekick may ask for the group's help. This occurrence is explored in more detail under Loyalty Quests.

Death

The death of a sidekick may be abrupt and feel senseless and unfulfilling. Luckily, death is not the final outcome of any characters' story in the Forgotten Realms. A sidekick's soul will always be willing to return to the realm of the living, unless the characters were the murderers and attempt to revive their former companion for evil reasons.

Bringing a sidekick back from the dead is a character-defining moment. The sidekick will never forget the characters' generosity, seeing them as true friends. Like iron, this reforged bond is stronger.

Loyalty Quests

When a sidekick's past finally catches up to them, they make their desire to leave the group known. Depending on the sidekick's personality and satisfaction with the group, they may ask for help outright, beat about the bush, or decline any offer for help.

Each sidekick features a section about their unresolved past or reason for adventuring, and a proposal for a time when their loyalty quest might occur. Naturally, this should not occur in the midst of an ongoing adventure, giving the characters a chance to accompany the sidekick. The characters can attempt an opposed Charisma check to convince the sidekick to postpone the quest for one last adventure with the group, before going their separate ways or tackling the problem together.

Loyalty quests can be dealt with in a single session, or become their own great adventure. Depending on the type and outcome, a sidekick might rejoin the characters after solving their quest or assume an important role and leave for good. Should the characters be unwilling to help the sidekick, their story is resolved nevertheless. Roll for an outcome of the story, and let the characters know what has become of their sidekick, one way or the other.

Level Up!

Rules

Apply the following rules to level up sidekicks:

❖ A sidekick's level is equal to the group's average level rounded down. When the character with the lowest level gains a level, the sidekick does too.

❖ A sidekick receives 1 Hit Die per level. To determine the sidekick's hit points, either roll a Hit Die and add the sidekick's Constitution modifier, or use the Hit Die's average rounded up. It gains a minimum of 1 hit point per level.

❖ In all other regards, a sidekick follows the rules of normal character advancement.

Growth

When a sidekick gains a new level, their abilities grow. The sidekick uses this moment to reflect upon their deeds and accomplishments. Therefore, conflicts primarily occur during a level up, for example because a sidekick's Intelligence or Wisdom might increase. Likewise, a sidekick might also express their satisfaction with the group's deeds.

Strength

Sidekicks are, by design, weaker than regular classes. This is necessary to keep the spotlight on the characters, to avoid stealing their thunder. If the characters want to increase a sidekick's strength, they can do so deliberately by outfitting them with magic items.

Mountain Landscape with Banditti by Elias Martin

Frogs Drak

History and Motives

Frogs Drak is a goblin shaman, the sole survivor of his tribe. A wandering group of adventurers slew his parents, friends, and children for sport and treasure. Before its eradication, the Gold Creek tribe flourished in a remote dale, surrounded by snow-tipped mountains on all sides. They traded with dwellers of the deep, like duergar and svirfneblin, or rode into battle on giant bats to plunder far-flung villages. But everything changed when the Swift Avengers attacked. They brought fire and destruction, which only Frogs Drak miraculously survived, buried beneath the corpses of his brethren.

Now, Frogs Drak dreams of revenge and wants to retrieve the tribe's sacred artifact: an alchemy jug that fed many generations of goblins. This loyalty quest may occur after Frog Drak reaches 5th level. Consider an encounter with the Swift Avengers while traveling, in a dungeon, or prompt the quest by Frogs Drak asking the group for help in finding his family's killers and delivering frontier justice.

Ideals, Bonds, and Flaws

Ideals. I must hone my skills to prevent another tragedy like that which befell my tribe. In the end, I hope to surpass the greatest goblin shamans of legend!

Bonds. I must recover my tribe's sacred artifact to restore our dignity. In the beginning, it will feed myself and my friends, and later a new generation of Gold Creek goblins.

Flaws. I like to play pranks on people, which often backfires.

Likes and Dislikes

Likes. I like good food, a trustworthy ally keeping watch while I rest, and well-considered plans. I also enjoy a quick game of Sticks & Stones—a crude goblin chess variant.

Dislikes. I dislike headless actions, a wasteful lifestyle, and tight-lipped fellows.

Fundamental Opposition. I will not tolerate the senseless slaughter of sentient beings out of greed or boredom.

Fears and Terrors

Fears. I fear big cities, although I have only heard of them. I fear being abandoned by my friends because they won't stand with a goblin.

Terrors. Gargantuan or larger creatures terrify me. Although it pains me, I might have to run or be smashed like a fly.

Frogs Drak

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 8 (2d6 + 1)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16(+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +5
Skills Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Goblin

Nimble Escape. Frogs Drak can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Fury of the Small. When Frogs Drak damages a creature with an attack or a spell and the creature's size is larger than his, he can cause the attack or spell to deal extra damage to the creature. The extra damage equals his level. Once he uses this trait, he can't use it again until he finishes a short or long rest.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Sling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

"The spirits of my dead brethren follow me every step of the way. They help me, haunt me, pressure me. I will have to pacify them sooner or later, or I'll go mad! Well, madder."

The Shaman

Shamans walk a thin line between the Prime Material and the Ethereal Planes. Their insight into the realm of the spirits grants them a modicum of power, especially regarding the transition between life and death. Rumors often paint shamans in a less-than-favorable light. People malign that they converse with vengeful spirits, summon ghosts, and offer curses for a price. The hearsay is true. However, not all shamans use their powers for evil.

Most shamans discover their talents during their youth. If nobody can educate and guide them, there is a chance that they descend into madness. In rare cases, a shaman finds their mentor among the spirits, for example, a long-dead practitioner.

The Shaman

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features
1st	+2	Bonus Proficiencies, Shaman Circles, 1st Shaman Circle
2nd	+2	—
3rd	+2	2nd Shaman Circle
4th	+2	Feat: Observant
5th	+3	3rd Shaman Circle
6th	+3	Improved Defenses
7th	+3	4th Shaman Circle
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement
9th	+4	5th Shaman Circle
10th	+4	—
11th	+4	Call Spirits
12th	+4	Feat: Warcaster
13th	+5	Walk the Ether
14th	+5	—
15th	+5	Anchored
16th	+5	Feat: Alert
17th	+6	—
18th	+6	At Call
19th	+6	—
20th	+6	Ability Score Improvement

Bonus Proficiencies

At 1st level, the sidekick gains proficiency with daggers, darts, and quarterstaffs, as well as the herbalism kit and four skills of your choice from the following list: Acrobatics, Arcana, History, Medicine, Nature, Perception, Sleight of Hand, Survival.

Shaman Circles

Shamans draw power from the Ethereal Plane, the realm of ghosts and spirits. Their strong connection to these otherworldly beings grants them unique powers. See chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook* for the general rules of spellcasting and chapter 11 for spells in general.

Cantrips

At 1st level, the sidekick knows the *spare the dying* and *thaumaturgy* cantrip. The sidekick learns an additional cantrip of your choice from the sorcerer spell list on 6th and again at 10th level.

Shaman Spells

The sidekick knows spells according to the Shaman Circles table, gaining access to new spells after unlocking new shaman circles. The sidekick can cast each of the spells once per short rest.

Shaman Circles

Circle	Spells
1st	*dissonant whispers, healing word, hex*
2nd	*augury, invisibility, warding bond*
3rd	*bestow curse, clairvoyance, speak with dead*
4th	*confusion, death ward, phantasmal killer*
5th	*contact other plane, mass cure wounds, raise dead*

Spellcasting Ability

Wisdom is the sidekick's spellcasting ability for its spells, since its magic depends on its perception of the Ethereal Plane. The sidekick uses its Wisdom whenever a spell refers to its spellcasting ability. In addition, it uses its Wisdom ability modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a spell it casts and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC =
8 + sidekick's proficiency bonus + Wisdom modifier

Spell attack modifier =
sidekick's proficiency bonus + Wisdom modifier

Shamanic Focus

The sidekick uses an arcane or druidic focus for its spells.

Feats

At 4th, and again at 12th and 16th level, the sidekick gains a specific feat according to the Shaman table, as explained in chapter 6 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Improved Defenses

At 6th level, the sidekick gains proficiency with light armor.

Ability Score Improvement

When the sidekick reaches 8th level, and again at 20th level, its Wisdom score increases by 2.

Call Spirits

Beginning at 11th level, the sidekick can summon allies from the Ethereal Plane. As an action, the sidekick summons a **specter** in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of it. The specter disappears after 10 minutes or when it drops to 0 hit points.

The specter is friendly to the sidekick and its companions for the duration. Roll initiative for the specter, which has its own turns. It obeys any verbal commands that the sidekick issues to it (no action required). If the sidekick doesn't issue any commands to the specter, it defends itself from hostile creatures but otherwise takes no actions.

The sidekick can't use this feature again until it finishes a long rest.

Walk the Ether

At 13th level, the sidekick learns to shed its material tethers. As a bonus action, the sidekick can cast *etherealness*. The sidekick can't use this feature again until it finishes a long rest.

Anchored

Starting at 15th level, the sidekick clings to life more than others. The sidekick can reroll a death saving throw that it fails, but it must use the new roll.

The sidekick can use this feature a number of times equal to its Wisdom modifier (a minimum of once). It regains all expended uses when it finishes a long rest.

At Call

At 18th level, the sidekick can cast *raise dead* without the need for material components. Additionally, the sidekick can be revived with an appropriate spell without the need for material components.

After disturbing a haunted crypt, I found myself at odds with a clingy poltergeist. Just to mess with me, it would push me into pitfall traps or alert monsters to my presence. I was almost ready to give up and join the ghost when an old shaman crossed my path. She took the poltergeist to the side, explained that I learned my lesson, and made it go away. Unfortunately, the bill was worse than the haunting ever was!

Sonnenuntergang am Hintersee by Albert Zimmermann

Puddles

History and Motives

Puddles is a tortle scholar who lost her true name in an ancient tomb. As far as Puddles can remember, she was a wild child and clambered into any unexplored crevice. When she set out to adventure, Puddles traded crevices for haunted ruins and sunken temples. From each of her excursions she brought back knowledge long thought lost, and curious artifacts. Up until Puddles freed a sealed evil, she was exceptionally lucky. However, as a cruel reward for Puddles's involuntary service, the evil ripped away a part of her soul, and took off with her true name. Puddles cannot remember how her parents called her, and neither do her parents, nor anyone. Unceremoniously, she assumed her current name—Puddles—and continued on her adventures.

Puddles's loyalty mission involves slaying the escaped evil and retrieving her name. This loyalty mission may occur after Puddles reaches 10th level. The quest can begin with Puddles meeting an old friend, who cannot name her, or Puddles feeling anxious when the group reaches the sea, after which Puddles confides in them and asks for their help. The ancient evil could be a demon with an appropriate CR or a new, more sinister creation.

Ideals, Bonds, and Flaws

Ideals. I want to uncover forgotten knowledge to help the world prosper.

Bonds. One day, when I am strong enough, I must recover my name and seal the evil I set free.

Flaws. I love to help people, but sometimes I help the wrong kind.

Likes and Dislikes

Likes. I like drinking hot tea on rainy days while studying my scrolls. However, my favorite past time is scouring through crypts and crumbled temples to discover more texts to study. Receiving a spell scroll as a gift always brings a smile to my face.

Dislikes. I hate pigheaded, backwards people who refuse to learn and revel in their ignorance. I also hate cruelty and mercilessness.

Fundamental Opposition. I will not tolerate torture or murder, no matter how justified the ends appear.

Fears and Terrors

Fears. I am afraid of all things that breathe fire. I also fear growing old, since I will lose my faculties and inevitably die before I have visited every secret place in the Realms.

Terrors. The ancient evil I freed terrifies me. Although I know that I must face it one day, I fear that I will waver standing before it.

Puddles

Medium humanoid (tortle), lawful good

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	15(+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +5
Skills Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Aquan, Common

Hold Breath. Puddles can hold her breath for up to 30 minutes.

Actions

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shell Defense. Puddles retreats into her shell, giving her a +4 bonus to AC. Additionally, she has advantage on Strength and Constitution saving throws, disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws, her speed is 0, and she can't take any actions, bonus actions, or reactions. Puddles can leave her shell as a free action at the end of her turn.

"Look at this here! Could this be? No, surely not. Or may it? I think it is. Incredible, what a discovery. Where is my quill? I have to document this immediately!"

The Scholar

True scholars are not afraid to get down and dirty when it comes to uncovering long lost knowledge. Instead of relying on untrained mercenaries or adventurers, who might damage a delicate artifact with their grubby hands, they hurry ahead to preserve whatever possible.

Some basic training is needed, of course, before a scholar can delve into dungeons. Dodging traps, fighting off rabid goblins, and the secret arts of arcana are covered by the introductory course "Spelunking for Bookworms."

The Scholar

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Spell Slots
1st	+2	Bonus Proficiencies, Scholarly Magic	3
2nd	+2	—	3
3rd	+2	Power Nap	3
4th	+2	Feat: Dungeon Delver or Linguist	3
5th	+3	—	4
6th	+3	Experienced Spelunker	4
7th	+3	—	4
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	4
9th	+4	—	5
10th	+4	Write a Paper	5
11th	+4	—	5
12th	+4	Feat: Lucky or Skilled	5
13th	+5	—	6
14th	+5	Arcane Cartograph	6
15th	+5	—	6
16th	+5	Feat: Alert or Spell Sniper	6
17th	+6	—	7
18th	+6	Organized Thoughts	7
19th	+6	—	7
20th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	7

Bonus Proficiencies

At 1st level, the sidekick gains proficiency with simple weapons and light armor as well as cartographer's and calligrapher's tools and four skills of your choice from the following list: Arcana, Athletics, History, Investigation, Nature, Perception, Religion, Survival.

Scholarly Magic

Scholars collect ancient knowledge and employ their skills to uncover yet more secrets. See chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook* for the general rules of spellcasting and chapter 11 for spells in general.

A Scholar's Scrolls

Scholars cast spells directly from spell scrolls, which they do not consume in the process. The Scholar table shows how many spell slots the sidekick has to cast spells. To cast a spell, the sidekick must expend a spell slot. It regains all expended spell slots when it finishes a long rest. The level at which the sidekick casts the spell depends on the level of the individual spell scroll in its possession.

The sidekick prepares a number of spell scrolls that are available for it to cast. To do so, choose a number of spell scrolls in the sidekick's possession equal to its Intelligence modifier. If the spell scroll's level is higher than half of the sidekick's level (rounded up), it cannot prepare the spell scroll. For example, at 1st level, the sidekick can prepare a spell scroll of color spray (1st level) or identify, but not color spray (2nd level), hold person, or wish.

The sidekick can change the type of prepared spell scroll after finishing a short or long rest. The sidekick must spend at least 1 minute per changed spell scroll to memorize the incantations and gestures of the new scroll.

Starting Scrolls

At 1st level, the sidekick has a comprehend languages, detect magic, identify, and magic missile (1st level) spell scroll in its possession and a 1st-level spell scroll of your choice.

Spellcasting Ability

Intelligence is the sidekick's spellcasting ability for its spells, since it unlocks secrets through pure reasoning. The sidekick uses its Intelligence whenever a spell refers to its spellcasting ability. In addition, it uses its Intelligence ability modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a spell it casts and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC =
8 + sidekick's proficiency bonus + Intelligence modifier

Spell attack modifier =
sidekick's proficiency bonus + Intelligence modifier

Focus

Scholars do not require an arcane focus. They do not require material components to cast spells, unless the component has a gold value associated with it. These spells follow the regular rules.

Power Nap

Starting at 3rd level, the sidekick benefits from a power nap. It recovers one spell slot after finishing a short rest. Once the sidekick uses this feature, it can't use it again until it finishes a long rest.

Feats

At 4th, and again at 12th and 16th level, the sidekick gains one of the two feats on the Scholar table, as explained in chapter 6 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Experienced Spelunker

At 6th level, a lifetime of dodging traps pays dividends. The sidekick can reroll a saving throw against the effects of a trap, but it must use the new roll.

The sidekick can use this feature a number of times equal to its Intelligence modifier (a minimum of once). It regains all expended uses when it finishes a long rest.

Ability Score Improvement

When the sidekick reaches 8th level, and again at 20th level, its Constitution or Intelligence score increases by 2 (your choice).

Write a Paper

Beginning at 10th level, the scholar has learned enough to write a paper about their discoveries. After finding a magic item or returning from an adventure, the sidekick can spend 8 hour to write a paper and send it to a nearby college.

To determine the accuracy and value of the paper, the sidekick must make a DC 15 Intelligence check using calligrapher's tools. On a success, the sidekick receives a care package via an animal messenger owl 1d4 + 2 days after the college receives the paper. The DM rules on the package's content, which might contain gold pieces, spell scrolls, potions, or magic items.

The sidekick may not write more than one paper per week.

Arcane Cartograph

At 14th level, the sidekick learns to quickly map places like dungeons or buildings using magic. Over the course of 10 minutes, the sidekick remains motionless and sends its senses outwards to collect information about its environment. A three dimensional, hovering map slowly appears before the sidekick.

The map displays the layout of corridors and rooms within 1,000 feet of the sidekick's location but not creatures. The map is static, and does not update if the layout changes or the sidekick moves. If the layout changed while the sidekick used this feature, it appears blurred. The sidekick can dismiss the map as a bonus action, or let it reappear at will.

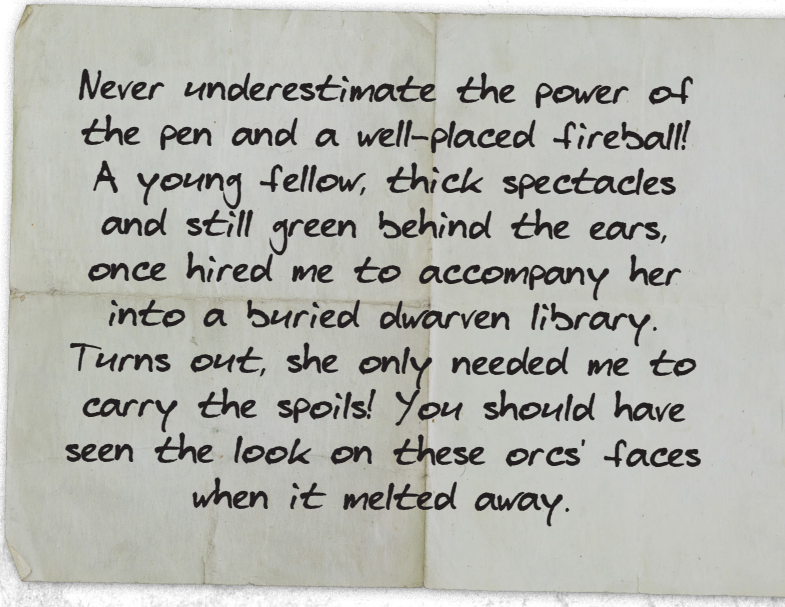
This ability cannot penetrate 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, 3 feet of wood, or running water. Therefore, it can penetrate secret doors or walls, if they are thin enough.

Once it uses this feature, the sidekick must finish a long rest before it can use it again.

Organized Thoughts

At 18th level, the sidekick learns a special technique to collect its thoughts. After finishing a long rest, it can spend 10 minutes writing down the experiences of the previous day. Make an Intelligence check using calligrapher's tools; the result equals the sidekick's pool of inspiration.

Whenever the sidekick makes an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw, before knowing the result of the roll, the sidekick can add any number to the roll, drawing from its pool of inspiration. The pool of inspiration is emptied when the sidekick begins a long rest, or is reduced to 0 hit points.



Kor'tar

History and Motives

Around four years ago, Kor'tar was still part of a centaur herd that roamed the grasslands in the south. After the death of his father, Kor'tar became the leader, following age old tradition: a tournament pitting all pretenders against each other. His reign did not last long, however. His younger brother Jirgal spread rumors that Kor'tar poisoned their father to fulfill his ambitions and acquire a suitable mate. Confronted by the tribe, Kor'tar chose to let the gods decide his fate and challenged his brother to a trial by combat. Kor'tar buried his spear in Jirgal's heart with ease, and put the allegations to rest, or so he thought. The constant whispers and strange looks gnawed on Kor'tar, and finally, he snapped. During a black night, when nightmares of his dead brother plagued him, Kor'tar awoke, grabbed his few possessions, and fled.

Kor'tar's loyalty quest involves him returning to his herd to make amends for his cowardice and disloyalty. This quest may occur after Kor'tar reaches 5th level. If Kor'tar likes the group, especially after they stayed true to a difficult promise or vow, he confides in the characters, detailing his past. If the characters push Kor'tar, he agrees to return to the herd, if only for a short time. The situation the herd finds itself in determines Kor'tar's future disposition. For example, if the herd was annihilated, Kor'tar blames himself and seeks revenge. If the herd prospers under the new leadership, Kor'tar is free to pursue his own goals. If Kor'tar finds that the herd is led by an unworthy centaur, he decides to take up the reins once more and challenges the leader to a duel.

Ideals, Bonds, and Flaws

Ideals. I must stop running from my problems and face them head on. It is the only way to redeem myself.

Bonds. My herd is my life, I must return one day, but I have disgraced myself. I fear I am not welcome.

Flaws. I hold others to high standards because I overcompensate my own failure.

Likes and Dislikes

Likes. I like galloping across windswept hills with the sun on my back. I also like hunting; there is nothing more exhilarating than the thrill of a good chase!

Dislikes. I do not like when people assume they are allowed to ride on my back without a proper request. I also dislike rainy days and dogs, especially when combined.

Fundamental Opposition. I will not tolerate breaking an oath or vow, unless you are honorbound by a conflicting oath.

Fears and Terrors

Fears. I have a fear of heights and confined, underground spaces.

Terrors. There is nothing that could break me.

Playing with Kor'tar

Other than Frogs Drak and Puddles, Kortar brings special disadvantages because of his build. He suffers from the same drawbacks any mount would. Crossing mountainous terrain can be extremely dangerous, and crawling through narrow shafts is outright impossible.

To make up for his unwieldy proportions, Kor'tar receives certain bonuses to his statistics. In some situations, he will excel. In others, he will weigh the group down or not be available at all.

"I hope you are not talking about that cramped den of kobolds. Wild horses couldn't drag me there! That was a joke; you are allowed to laugh."

Kor'tar

Medium humanoid and monstrosity (centaur), lawful neutral

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 15 (2d10 + 4)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14(+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +6
Skills Athletics +6, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Sylvan

Charge. If Kor'tar moves at least 30 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a melee attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 1d6 damage.

Equine Build. Kor'tar counts as one size larger when determining his carrying capacity and what size of creature is able to ride on his back.

Actions

Pike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Bariaur Centaur by Daniel Comerci

The Leader

Leading warriors into battle or making decisions that affect an entire people is a heavy burden. Some leaders are born, some are made, and others break. Leaders who fight at the frontlines must excel in combat, be able to rally their soldiers, and keep a cool mind at all times.

The Leader

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features
1st	+2	Bonus Proficiencies
2nd	+2	Rally
3rd	+2	Coordinated Defense
4th	+2	Feat: Inspiring Leader
5th	+3	Coordinated Attack
6th	+3	—
7th	+3	Extra Attack (1 extra)
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement
9th	+4	—
10th	+4	Action Surge (one use)
11th	+4	—
12th	+4	Feat: Keen Mind
13th	+5	Extra Attack (2 extra)
14th	+5	Nerves of Steel
15th	+5	—
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement
17th	+6	Action Surge (two uses)
18th	+6	Second Wind
19th	+6	—
20th	+6	Extra Attack (3 extra)

Bonus Proficiencies

At 1st level, the sidekick gains proficiency with martial and simple weapons, light and medium armor as well as two skills of your choice from the following list: Animal Handling, Athletics, History, Intimidation, Perception, Performance, Persuasion, Survival.

Rally

At 2nd level, the sidekick learns to rally its allies to keep them in the fight. It has a pool of healing power equal to two times its level that replenishes when it finishes a short or long rest.

As a bonus action, the sidekick screams encouraging words and draws power from the pool to restore a number of hit points to a creature within 30 feet of it that can hear the sidekick, up to the maximum amount remaining in its pool.

Coordinated Defense

At 3rd level, the sidekick learns to guide its allies in close combat. As a reaction, the sidekick allows an ally within 5 feet of the sidekick to use their reaction, to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within reach. The creature must have attacked the ally.

At 6th level, the range of this feature increases to 10 feet.

Feats

At 4th level, and again at 12th and 16th, the sidekick gains a specific feat according to the Leader table, as explained in chapter 6 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Coordinated Attack

Starting at 5th level, friendly creatures within 5 feet of the sidekick gain a +1 bonus to their weapon attack rolls.

At 9th level, the range of this aura increases to 10 feet, and at 19th level to 30 feet.

Extra Attack

Beginning at 7th level, the sidekick can attack twice, instead of once, whenever it takes the Attack action on its turn. The number of attacks increases to three when it reaches 13th level and to four when it reaches 20th level.

Ability Score Improvement

When the sidekick reaches 8th level, and again at 16th level, its Strength or Charisma score increases by 2 (your choice).

Action Surge

Starting at 10th level, the sidekick can push itself beyond its normal limits for a moment. On its turn, it can take one additional action on top of its regular action and a possible bonus action.

Once it uses this feature, it must finish a short or long rest before it can use it again. Starting at 17th level, you can use it twice before a rest, but only once on the same turn

Nerves of Steel

Starting at 14th level, the sidekick can reroll an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw that it fails but it must use the new roll.

The sidekick can use this feature a number of times equal to its Charisma modifier (a minimum of once). It regains all expended uses when it finishes a long rest.

Second Wind

Starting at 18th level, the sidekick can use a bonus action on its turn to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + its level in this class. Once it uses this feature, it must finish a short or long rest before it can use it again.

Winged Sheep Thieves!

Some vile, winged beasts carried away my flock during the night! They also snatched up my puppy wrangler and vanished with him never to return. I want to you to tear out their limbs and burn their nests, then I will piss on their remains. Visit me on Orod's farm!

House of Treasure!

Explorers, spelunkers, and adventurers rejoice! We have reclaimed Auril's derelict temple and converted it to a house of treasure. If you search for magical trinkets, or want to have yours appraised for sale, visit the old mountain temple!

-- The Disciples of Mystra

Aubriana Fernar

WANTED

7,500 GP

Missing Husband!

My dear husband Bobling went adventuring a tenday ago and hasn't returned yet. Usually, he is home by supper, and now I am starting to worry. Please, if you have a kind heart, visit me across from the Old Well in the Underfoot-hole. A hot meal and spirited drink await you!

— Kuni Underfoot —

HAUNTED CRYPT!

I HAD TO LEAVE MY BROTHERS BEHIND IN AN OLD RUIN IN THE MOUNTAINS.

I WILL TELL YOU THE LOCATION, IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN TREASURE, BUT PLEASE BRING THE CORPSES BACK WITH YOU, IF YOU MAKE IT OUT.

I AM STAYING IN THE LOCAL WATERING HOLE. ASK FOR ROGAR.

Column of Light!

I was out and about recently, collecting mushrooms and berries. When it grew late and dark, I saw a column of light erupting far to the east! It burns ever since and might be worth checking out, for you adventuring types!

~ Galinda Kowa

WANTED

ORWOHOLON

BE CAREFUL, EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!

15,000 GP

WANTED!

Dead or Alive

Linette Headtaker

10,000 GP

The Dead Stir!

We have received troubling news about razed villages, emptied graveyards, and an undead dragon that ravages the land. Beware of these foul creatures, and if you can, flee as far as your feet can bear! Brave heroes who seek gold and renown, visit the parish center to support those who want to remain and fight.

The Skullband!

A band of masquerading riders troubles the settlements and travelers in these regions. They are brutal marauders who stop at nothing to line their purses; charged with arsony, pillagery, abduction, and murder. Each head is valued at 100 gold coins, collectible as bonds at official custom stations and town halls.

MERELLIEN
the Hunter

BOUNTY

20.000 GP

Dwarven Poachers!

A nasty band of dwarves recently started roaming the woods, killing any animal they could get their grubby hands on. Pregnant deer, shoats, and now the woodlanders tell me of a dead unicorn; they stop at nothing. When I confronted them, they shot at me, and I ran.

Pay me a visit if you are interested in helping.

-- Forest Ranger Kilé