



G A Z E T T E E R

SITHICUS

ROSES OF THE BLACK MOON



BY CATHERINE EVANS
& OLIVER CLEGG



Ravenloft GAZETTEER

SITHICUS

*In a twisted castle shattered by cataclysm
a dark knight sits on a throne of black roses.
In his hall of mirrors, crack'd from side to side
eyes of fire blaze to life, reflected thousandfold*

The Lord of Sithicus has returned

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WELCOME TO THIS EDITION OF THE RAVENLOFT GAZETTEER, WHERE YOU WILL FIND MORE THAN TWICE THE MISERY THAN YOU EXPECTED, BUT LESS THAN HALF AS MUCH AS YOU DESERVE. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS DOCUMENT, MY IDENTITY MUST REMAIN A SECRET, AND SO I GO BY THE MONOGRAM "S". THE GAZETTEER IS A TOPOGRAPHICAL ATLAS - THE MOST AMBITIOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT OF ITS KIND EVER TO BE ATTEMPTED IN THE LAND OF MISTS. I HAVE TRAVELED THE MISTWAYS AT GREAT PERSONAL PERIL, TAKING GREAT RISKS TO BRING THIS INFORMATION TO YOU, AND TO WORLDS BEYOND. OF COURSE ACADEMIA REQUIRES FUNDING, AND I ENJOY THE LARGESSE OF A MYSTERIOUS PATRON WHO WISHES HIS IDENTITY TO REMAIN CONCEALED, PRESUMABLY FOR SIMILAR REASONS TO MY OWN.

WHETHER YOU BELIEVE MY WORK IS UP TO YOU, AND THERE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY HORRORS LURKING IN THE SHADOWS I HAVE BARELY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE OF. THE DARK POWERS WHICH RULE OVER THE DOMAINS OF DREAD ARE FICKLE, AND COMPLACENCY IS A SURE WAY TO END UP IN AN EARLY GRAVE (OR PERHAPS CLAWING YOUR WAY OUT OF ONE). THE MISTS ARE A STRANGER PLACE THAN THEY USED TO BE SINCE THE GRAND CONJUNCTION THREW RAVENLOFT INTO CHAOS, AND THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE THUS PRESUMED TRUE FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE GAZETTEER:

THE MISTWAYS ARE CLOSED, AND TRAVEL BETWEEN DOMAINS OF DREAD IS POSSIBLE ONLY TO THOSE WHO KNOW THE SECRET PATHS. EVEN DARKLORDS DO NOT (AT PRESENT) POSSESS THE POWER TO OPEN OR CLOSE THEIR BORDERS AT-WILL.

THE VISTANI HAVE SEEN A GREAT EVENT YET TO COME, A DARK TRAGEDY VISIBLE ONLY TO THOSE GIFTED WITH THE POWER OF SIGHT. THEY HAVE RETREATED INTO SOME HIDDEN SANCTUM BEYOND THE REACH OF THE DARK POWERS, AND FEW OF THEM HAVE CHOSEN TO REMAIN BEHIND.

OLD HORRORS HAVE RETURNED, AND EVEN DARKLORDS LONG THOUGHT BANISHED HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR CASTLES, BRINGING WITH THEM THEIR DIRE SERVANTS AND AGELESS MALICE.

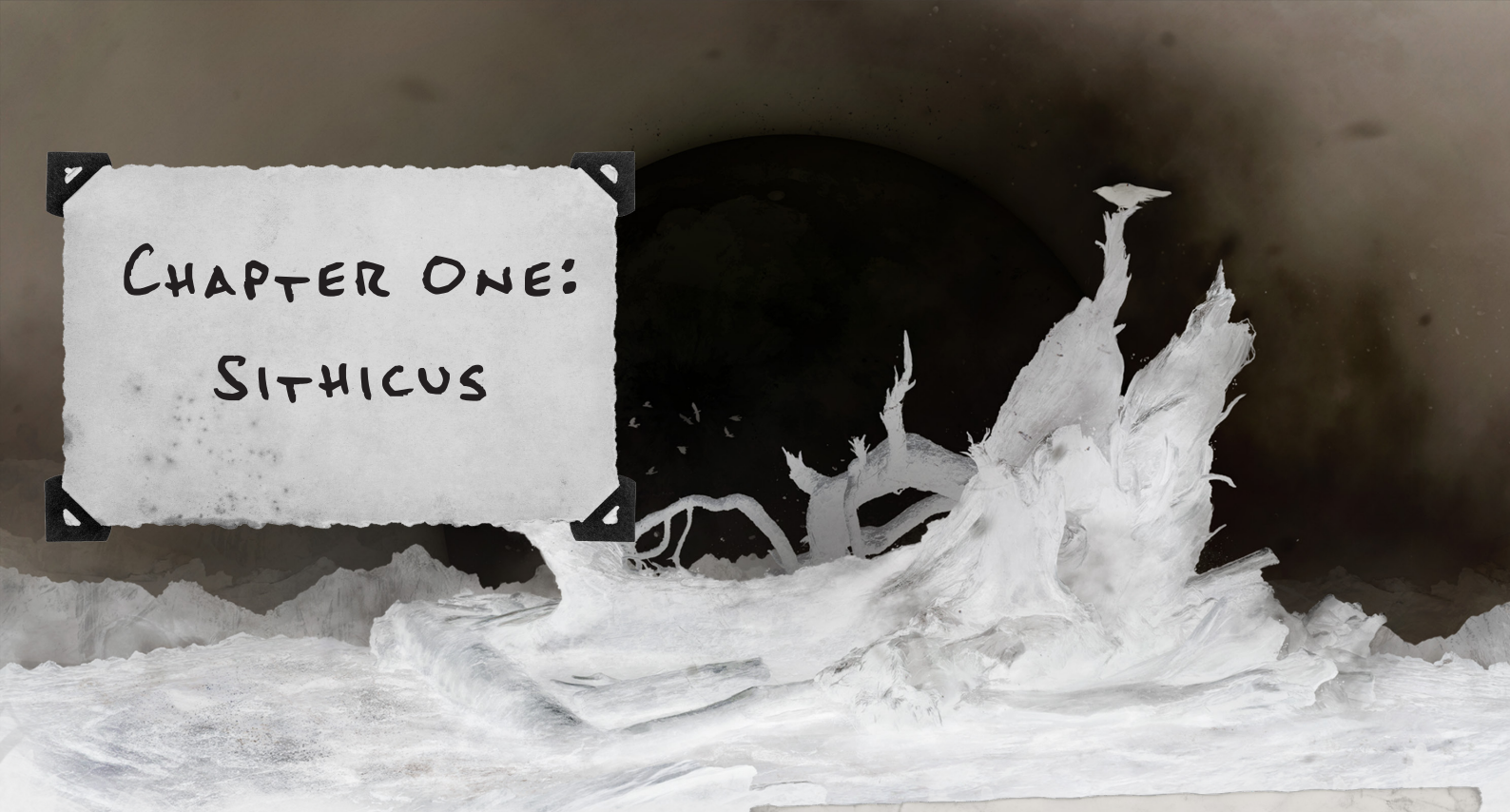
SOME DOMAINS HAVE CHANGED, OR SO I HAVE COME TO FIND. THESE CHANGES ARE ALMOST ALWAYS FOR THE WORSE, AND ARE UNITED IN THEIR INIMICABLE HOSTILITY TOWARDS LIGHT, LIFE AND GOODNESS.

YOU SHOULD AVOID WALKING THE MISTS AT ALL COSTS.

BUT IF YOU FIND YOURSELF DOING SO, KEEP THIS GUIDE CLOSE TO YOUR CHEST.

AND MAY THE DARK POWERS WATCH OVER YOU.

S



CHAPTER ONE: SITHICUS

Sithicus is a land that stares forever into its warped and tarnished reflection. Nested within the mists of Ravenloft, Sithicus and all its people were wrested from their homeland by evil forces and trapped in a hellscape wrought in the image of its dark master. No one can leave Sithicus without the permission of the Darklord, and he rarely stirs from his throne. Sithicus is cut off from other lands and people by the roiling mists that surround it. It is a land of broken mirrors, disturbed reflections showing truth in the light of the single black moon that watches over it.

DARKLORD: LORD SOTH

In the wreckage of Nedragard Keep, a dark knight sits on a throne carved with black roses. His armour is charred from some forgotten cataclysm, and his eyes burn like fire through his helmet's visor. A Death Knight rules Sithicus, and through enchanted mirrors he walks the halls of his memories. Around his throne, the spirits of those he wronged in life mock his folly, whispering the litany of his sins.

YOU'LL FIND SOME OF MY NOTES
THROUGHOUT. THEY'LL LOOK A LITTLE LIKE
THIS, THOUGH I DO TEND TO WRITE ON
WHATEVER COMES TO HAND.

PAY ATTENTION.

I MIGHT JUST SAVE YOUR LIFE.

THE CATACLYSM

Lord Soth was once a paladin on a distant world. He fell to darkness by betraying his holy vows thrice over, and in turning from his lone chance at redemption, damned an entire plane of existence. Soth was cursed then to live a thousand lives for each life his folly ended that day. He wandered his home as a monster for untold centuries before he came across something which stirred his frozen heart to life. Kitiara, a general of evil, became Soth's obsession. He sought to acquire her, to add her to his dead minions as a trophy. Soth's life—defined by selfishness and greed—was epitomized by the craven betrayal of Kitiara, and he engineered her death through means both subtle and magical. With this final evil act, Soth's reality shattered and the mists snatched Kitiara's spirit away to places unknown.

MOTIVATIONS OF LORD SOTH

As the Darklord of Sithicus, Lord Soth is driven by the following desires:

Find Kitiara

Beyond all else, Lord Soth rages silently at his failure to acquire Kitiara. In all his long years as a holy man, and his endless afterlife, Soth acquired everything he wanted until now. He doesn't care for Kitiara, or even desire her physically. Instead, he wants to simply possess her with a burning, terrible greed that consumes his every waking moment. He stretches his resources to the borders of his domain, seeking rumours of a woman clad in blue armour, with a crooked smile, who vanishes into the mists before anyone can catch her.

Relive His Past

When he is waiting for news on his eternal hunt, Soth spends his time brooding on his throne. Magical artefacts, known as *memory mirrors*, allow him to gaze back into his own past, which he does constantly. This only serves to convince Soth that he was unjustly punished for things he had no control over. Soth feigns apathy on this matter to anyone he meets. In reality, Soth has never taken any responsibility for his actions. It has never crossed Soth's mind to make amends to those he has wronged.

Find a Thief

Recently, a thief broke into Nedragaard Keep under Soth's very nose and tricked Soth into shattering one of his precious *memory mirrors*, before stealing a shard and fleeing into the night. Soth's cold rage at this theft grows with each waking moment, and his mind turns to ways in which he might recover the missing fragment.

ALTERATIONS TO MAGIC

History, memory, and truth are complicated concepts in Sithicus. All of them are mutable, and any spells that deliver information are less reliable than usual. Spells that are sympathetic to the domain's overwhelming sense of weariness and mutability are somewhat more powerful.

The following spells work differently in Sithicus:

Augury. The first casting of the spell carries a 25% chance of a random result. This increases to 50% for subsequent castings before taking a long rest.

Commune. The DM can only ever answer yes, no, or unclear. No short phrases are permitted.

Confusion. Roll 1d8 instead of 1d10 for the effects of this spell (ignore the 9-10 result).

Detect thoughts. This spell has no effect.

Divination. The first casting of the spell carries a 25% chance of a random result. This increases to 50% for subsequent castings before taking a long rest.

Enemies abound. Creatures are still affected even if they are otherwise immune to being Frightened.

Hallucinatory terrain. All terrain created slowly (over the course of one minute) warps to reflect Sithicus's own terrain: trees become gnarled, rocks become jagged and mossy, and grass grows dark, coarse, and thick with weeds.

Locate creature, locate object. These spells only locate creatures/objects to a range of 500 feet, instead of the usual 1,000 feet.

Mirage arcane. See *hallucinatory terrain*.

Modify memory. Creatures that have advantage on saving throws against being Charmed do not have advantage against this spell. Creatures that are immune to

being Charmed have advantage on the saving throw, but are not immune.

Moonbeam. Instead of the usual silvery column of light, this spell draws on the light of the Black Moon, Nuitari. It can only be cast by someone of evil alignment.

Sleep. This spell affects an additional 2d8 hit points of creatures.

Weird. Creatures are still affected even if they are otherwise immune to being Frightened.

Zone of truth. The caster must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check to determine which creatures are affected and which are unaffected.

Cosmetic Spell Alterations

Magic in Sithicus is transient and mutable. Nothing created by magic seems fully real—though it is easier to trick the mind into believing in illusions.

Conjured objects, animals, or creatures never appear fully solid, though they function exactly as per individual spell descriptions. In addition, there is a distinctly Sithican look to them: they are black with white markings or ornaments, and bear skull or rose motifs (all conjured plants are roses). When the spell that summoned or created them ends, they disappear into swirling mist.

Except where otherwise indicated, divination spells always offer multiple perspectives: several possible future outcomes, of which one seems most likely but not necessarily guaranteed; or multiple visions or voices where one seems stronger than the others. There is no such thing as certainty. Minor details of illusion magic shift of their own accord. An illusory wall might slowly become overgrown with ivy, or might start to decay and crumble. The colours of an image might shift slightly, or appear differently to different viewers. These cosmetic changes never affect saving throws, or otherwise prevent subjects from believing an illusion.

Necromantic magic is always accompanied by the faint smell of rotting roses.

Nuitari - The Black Moon

The Black Moon is the only moon in the Sithican sky. Characters of evil alignment see it clearly, and it sheds light as strong as normal moonlight. To others, Nuitari is visible only by its absence: the stars it blocks out as it passes. The black moon has an eight day cycle, with each phase lasting 24 hours.

When characters enter Sithicus, roll 1d8 to determine Nuitari's phase:



Nuitari's phases directly influence the magic of wizards, sorcerers, and bards. Evil spellcasters become stronger, and others weaker, as the moon waxes in power.

Waxing moon: Evil spellcasters' spell attack rolls and saving throw DCs are increased by 1. Other spellcasters' spell attack rolls and saving throw DCs are reduced by 1.

Full moon: Evil spellcasters' spell attack rolls and saving throw DCs are increased by 2. Other spellcasters' spell attack rolls and saving throw DCs are reduced by 2.

Only wizard, sorcerer, and bard spells are affected by the Black Moon. Multiclassed characters who have any normal (not Pact Magic) spell slots from one or more of those classes are affected just like single classed wizards, sorcerers, and bards.

AREAS OF SITHICUS

The domain of Sithicus is damp and chilly. Fog rolls off the many rivers and filters through the dense forests and thorny thickets. There is life here: creatures live, hunt, and die in the dense undergrowth. The mournful songs of lone birds can be heard, but the forests are generally quiet and hard to see through. A profound sense of loneliness pervades the domain, in the cities as much as the wilderness.

The following areas correspond to labels on the map of Sithicus below.

A. Endless River

WAVES THRASH THE ROCKY BANKS OF THIS RIVER, THE WATER FROTHING AND RAGING. MOST OF THE JAGGED, LETHAL PEAKS THAT JUT FROM THE RIVERBED ARE ROCKS. OTHERS ARE THE REMAINS OF BOATS THAT HAVE BEEN SMASHED AGAINST THEM.

The southernmost of Sithicus' rivers curves around the western slopes of the Misttop Mountains. It rushes, in a tumult of white water around jagged boulders and over a waterfall that terminates somewhere in the Mists—or whatever land lies beyond them.

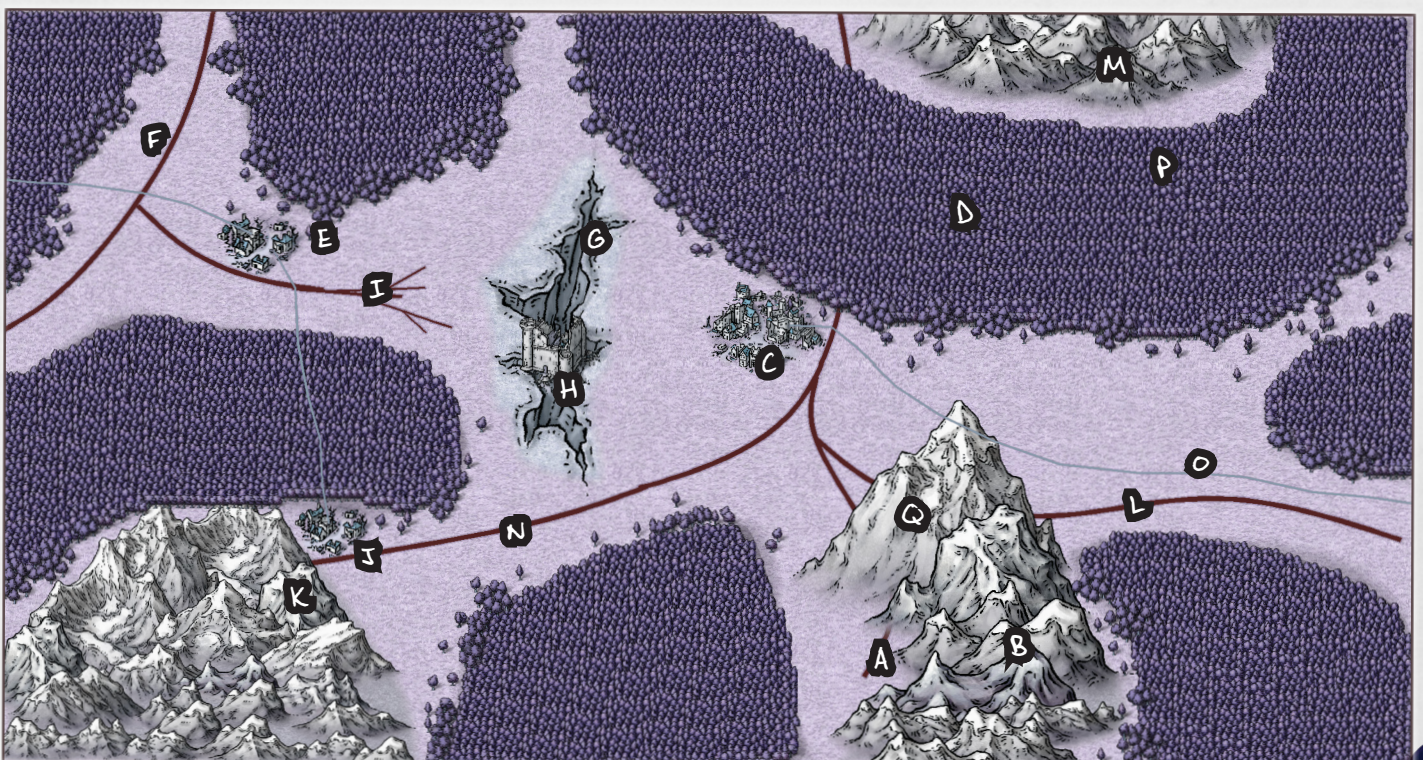
The east bank cuts close to the mountains, and the west offers a few hundred feet of rough, spiky, grass before giving way to dense forest. Lean, hungry **wolves** wait amongst the trees, ready to feast on whatever the river washes up.

B. Misttop Mountains

THE BITTER COLD MIGHT FREEZE YOUR BONES BEFORE YOU EVER PIERCE THE RING OF CLOUDS THAT WRAPS THE HIGHEST PEAKS OF THIS MOUNTAIN RANGE.

The elves of Sithicus claim there is something wondrous at the summit of the highest peak of the Misttop Mountains—perhaps a way back to the homeland they were violently wrenched from. The mile-high mountain is a brutal climb: its bare, rocky slopes turn to ice halfway up, and its exposed sides offer no shelter from the cutting wind and bitter cold.

There is, however, something at the top: a view of the night sky unlike any other in Sithicus. From the barren plateau at the crown of Misttop, the view of Nuitari is breathtaking. And up there, it is visible to anyone—not only those with evil inclinations. Or perhaps, alone up there, everyone is forced to acknowledge the evil in their heart. Those who sleep on Misttop



Mountain inevitably relive their worst moments in their dreams. Every dream ends in a choice: to give in to their worst impulses, or rise above them.

If you are using Dark Powers Checks in your campaign, a dream in which a character surrenders to their base nature reduces their honour by four points, but allows them to gain a level in any class in which they already have at least one level. If you are not using Dark Powers Checks, the Misttop Mountains are merely a cold, harrowing place to spend the night.

C. Har-Thelen

A RUN-DOWN, SPRAWLING METROPOLIS, RICH IN MAGIC BRIGHT AND DARK.

Har-Thelen is the largest city in Sithicus and its de facto capital. It produces powerful mages, has the most contact with realms beyond Sithicus (in the form of occasional Vistani visitors), and is the breeding ground for the luminesti who infest the Iron Hills.

IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO LOOK AT SITHICUS THROUGH ROSE-TINTED LENSES, BECAUSE THE ENTIRE PLACE HAS A STRANGE GREY-RED HUE TO IT. AFTER A WHILE, YOU STOP NOTICING, BUT AFTER YOU LEAVE, EVERYWHERE ELSE LOOKS ODD BY COMPARISON. I STILL FIND MYSELF DREAMING OF SITHICUS, AND THE SMELL OF BLACK ROSES IN THE MOONLIGHT.

D. Fumewood

A TREACHEROUS WILDERNESS WHERE BLACK ROSES BLOOM AND NO WISE ELF DARES TO TREAD.

The Fumewood is the name given to the densely forested, eastern half of Sithicus. Occasional hilltops emerge above the treeline, but for the most part this region is dense and impassable. Plant life grows unchecked here; thickets of thorns, tangles of trees, and groves of luscious black roses mingle and vie for every shaft of sunlight.

The forest is named for the overpowering aroma of roses, some fresh, but many more decayed. The scent is intoxicating and nauseating all at once, and inhaling it for too long promotes both sleep and confusion.

Creatures who sleep in the Fumewood are guaranteed a Long Rest. They sleep solidly for eight hours, and nothing disturbs them—not sound, not touch, not even violence. At the end of every full hour a creature spends in the Fumewood, they must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, they become confused, disoriented, and lost. Creatures can find their way back to their original path with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check.

E. Mal-Erek

THE CITY OF MAL-EREK SITS BETWEEN THE HAUNTED LITTLE ARDEN RIVER AND THE DEEP SPIDER-INFESTED, FOREST. HOME TO MORE GIANT STAG BEETLES THAN PEOPLE, THIS INSULAR COMMUNITY WELCOMES OUTSIDERS ONLY FOR TRADE.

Mal-Erek is where most of Sithicus' giant stag beetles are reared and trained. It's also where the elves of Sithicus are closest to nature and where their lives feel most purposeful. For those who lose that motivation, the river always offers an escape.

F. Arden River

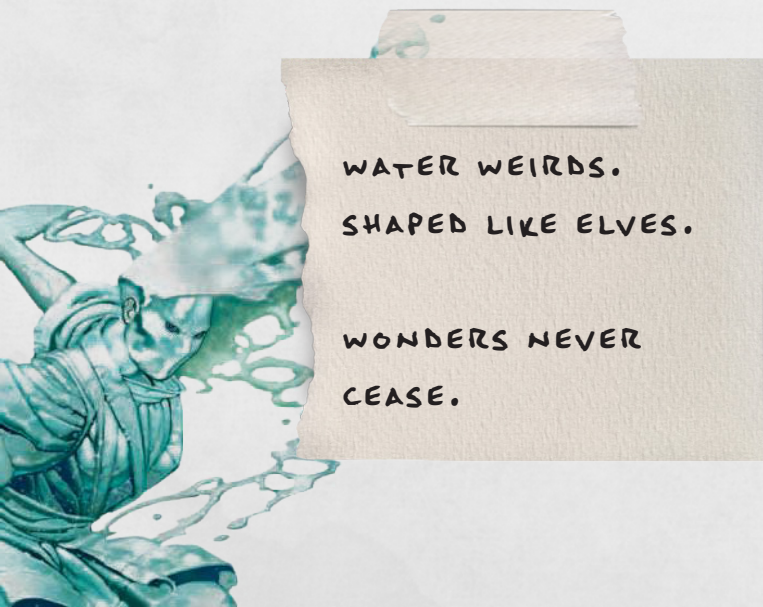
THE ARDEN MEANDERS UNHURRIED TOWARDS THE MISTS AND THEY TEASE THE WATER WITH BECKONING TENDRILS. DOES THE WATER EVER LEAVE SITHICUS? OR IS THAT TOO A LIE, LIKE THE TWISTED IMAGININGS THAT TEASE THE MIND AFTER DRINKING THE RIVER'S WATER?

Less frantic than the Little Arden that feeds into it, the Arden is an entirely normal river: it swells and floods when it rains, and the fishing is good. But the water, if consumed without boiling it, warps drinkers' memories. When a creature consumes unpurified Arden Water, it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or suffer an effect from the table below. Roll 1d6 for the effects of Arden Water:

G. The Great Chasm

THE CHASM IS DEEPER THAN SILENCE, MORE STILL THAN DEATH. BUT IT IS NOT EMPTY.

The Great Chasm runs for miles through the middle of Sithicus, a mile wide at the ends and five times that at its widest point. A mountain rises up from its depths and Nedragaard Keep perches on the peak. Those who look too long into the chasm start to hear things: soft echoes of their own voice, saying things they said a day, a month, or a year ago... but subtly different. Apologies become defensive, and professions of love become claims of ownership.



WATER WEIRDS.
SHAPED LIKE ELVES.
WONDERS NEVER
CEASE.

H. Nedragaard Keep

A LONELY TOWER FOR A SILENT LORD.

Lord Soth rules from Nedragaard, but he is never seen. His seneschal, the dwarven werebadger Azrael Dak, manages the domain's day-to-day affairs. He is almost as uninterested in doing so as his liege. Like Soth, Azrael's main concern is finding the Dragon Highlord Kitiara Uth Matar, as his continued failure to do so has begun to displease the death knight, and Azrael fears being replaced. Azrael seeks to prevent any disruption in the realm, while Soth privately hopes for some threat that would challenge him. Except for Azrael, Nedragaard is home only to the dead. As Lord Soth sits upon his black rose throne, a chorus of elven banshees haunt the chilly corridors.

I. Little Arden

THIS BABBLING RIVER IS TEEMING, THOUGH NOT WITH LIFE. THERE ARE NO FISH, NO FROGS, JUST THE CHOKING, WEEPING SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.

Northwest of the Great Chasm, a number of streams race together and combine to form the Little Arden. The fast flowing waters are a favourite spot for those who choose drowning over the miserable life of Sithicus. Their bodies wash downstream to join the Arden, but their spirits linger on in the Little Arden as **water weirds**. (See page 23)

d6	Effect
1-2	Choose one person the drinker previously felt close to. For the next day, the drinker believes that person despises or detests them.
3-4	One of the drinker's memories of success or satisfaction is polluted, converted into a scenario of failure, defeat, or pain. The drinker believes this version absolutely for one day.
5-6	No effect.

J. Hroth

NESTLED IN THE SHADOW OF THE
DISAPPEARING HILLS, HROTH GROWS FAT AS
IT EATS AWAY AT ITS SURROUNDINGS.

Hroth is built out of the stone its citizens quarry from the nearby hills. No one rules Hroth. No council oversees public works. No one registers comings or goings. Taxes are sent to Nedregaard purely out of habit. It is a silent city. When the elves who live here are not working, or doing the bare minimum to keep up their homes, they are in trance. Some spend most, or all, of their days in reverie, their minds somewhere better than the here-and-now.

K. Disappearing Hills

THE HILLSIDE IS ROTTEN, EATEN AWAY BY
PICKAXES AND HAMMERS, RIPPED OPEN TO
PROVIDE STONE FOR SITHICUS' THREE CITIES.
THE QUARRIES LOOK LIKE BURST SORES WHICH
LEAVE UGLY SCARS.

Riddled with quarries from the stone-cutting operations of Hroth, the Disappearing Hills are a brutal expression of how little love and respect the elves of Hroth hold for their surroundings. These quarries have gutted the hillside, removing any worthwhile deposit of stone, no matter how much of an eyesore the process creates.

The elves of their home world would be horrified at what Sithicus' Grey Elves have done to the landscape: the destruction is anathema to them. The elves of Hroth have never felt any connection to this alien land, and they have no love for it.

L. Musarde River

THE MUSARDE RIVER BARELY FLOWS. CHOKED
WITH ALGAE AND WEEDS, WHEN ITS SLUGGISH
CURRENT INFREQUENTLY PARTS THE FLORA,
HINTS OF SHIMMERING, OPALESCENT SCALES
AND BLACK EYES GLINT BELOW THE SURFACE.

The Musarde River is rarely travelled, since the road known as Merchants' Slash was hewn through the forest. With no need, and therefore no effort, to clear it, the water is choked with sediment and weeds and is home to a thriving population of amphibious, extremely **poisonous snakes**.

Disturbing the water even briefly attracts the attention of 1d4+4 serpents, one of which is a **giant poisonous snake**. They are aggressive, and leave the water to pursue their prey.

Musarde water snakes are known for their distinctive markings: pearly scales, with a black pattern on their heads reminiscent of a skull.



SNAKES...

WHY DOES IT ALWAYS
HAVE TO BE SNAKES?

M. Iron Hills

THE IRON HILLS JUT UP FROM THE FUMEWOOD LIKE A LINE OF ROTTEN TEETH. HOME TO NOTHING BUT WILD BEASTS AND OSTRACISED ELVES, FEW FIND CAUSE TO EXPLORE THEM.

Most of the elves of Sithicus continue to worship the Gods of Light they remember from their homeland. Though some grew frustrated with this wilful refusal to accept their new reality. The Gods of Light are far from Sithicus, so these elves send their prayers to darker powers instead.

Around one hundred elves live in the Iron Hills, all of them exiled from the three cities of the domain. They worship Nuitari and in return, it blesses them with power and a new perspective.

The elves of the Iron Hills, who are called the *luminesti*, tattoo themselves with constellations and phases of the Black Moon, and induce ecstasy and altered states through potions and philtres brewed from the black roses of the Fumewood. Unnatural, perhaps, but better than the unrewarding lives most of the city elves are resigned to. The *luminesti's* potions and rituals induce frenzy, and while in its grasp they hunt through the hills, chasing whatever prey is nearby. Intelligent creatures, they have found, provide the best sport.

N. Krellin River

THIS WELL-TRAVELLED WATERWAY IS THE LIVELIEST PLACE IN SITHICUS. OARS SPLASH, MASTS CREAK, AND CREWS SHOUT TO ONE ANOTHER FROM THE DECKS OF BOATS AS THEY PASS ON THE WIDE, SILVER RIVER.

The Krellin runs from Har-Thelen to the south-eastern city of Hroth, before going belowground at the Disappearing Mountains. Almost all travel between Har-Thelen and Hroth happens via the river. Barges make their way in both directions, laden with stone and coal from the mountains going to Har-Thelen, and cloth and food to Hroth. People wishing to travel the Krellin can buy passage on a merchant ship (25 sp, or work aboard the boat), book a berth on the passenger services that run about once a week (5 gp), or charter an entire small vessel (25 gp).

Something about the Krellin breathes life into the elves who travel it. Maybe it's as simple as the constant activity on board a boat. Something always needs to be operated or mended, and dull wits make for low life expectancies while travelling a waterway that is littered with boulders and spates of white water. Or maybe it's the futile hope that where they go will be better than where they came from. Whatever the reason, the elves met on the Krellin are a little more open, a little more prone to talk or even smile, than their cousins in the cities.



O. Merchants' Slash

A ROAD TO NOWHERE. A SCAR. A BAD JOKE. THAT'S WHAT THIS ARROW-STRAIGHT ROAD HAS BECOME, WHATEVER GRAND INTENTIONS LED TO ITS CREATION.

This road is a newer addition to Sithicus. It runs from Har-Thelen to the eastern border of the domain—a grand project commissioned by a Sithican architect called Mason in the hope of finding something beyond the Mists. The name is a sad irony: conceived as a trade route, the road goes to the dense mists, and no farther. The forest constantly strives to reclaim the land, vines crawl across the earth and plants spring up through the hard-packed dirt. And yet Mason keeps it maintained, with a number of elves employed year-round to keep it clear and ready to travel, as if one day the mists will part and reveal someone for Har-Thelen to trade with.



P. Kendralind

THERE AREN'T ANY KENDER LEFT. BUT IF THERE WERE, YOU'D KNOW THEIR TERRITORY BY THE ELVEN HEADS ON SPIKES.

Most of the kender in Sithicus perished in Lord Soth's experiments, or so legend has it. A few remain: grisly mockeries of the cheerful, innocent kleptomaniacs from their homeland. These kender are chirpy, irrepressably curious vampires who feed on elven—or any other—blood. They struggle with the concept of ownership in all the usual ways for kender, but now also consider your blood to be up for grabs too.

Q. Veidrava Salt Mines

A ROTTEN SIGN OUTSIDE THIS DARK CAVE ENTRANCE READS "VEIDRAVA SALT MINE." MINE CART TRACKS LEAD INTO THE SHADOWS, WHICH WAIT PATIENTLY FOR YOU TO ENTER.

The Veidrava Salt Mines were abandoned after a terrible series of magical disasters caused them to collapse, burying dark secrets under a mountain of stone. But the shadows awakened in the Veidrava Salt Mines did not perish. Occasionally, a salt shadow creeps out to possess and lure innocent passers-by down into the depths. Secret tunnels plunge down to a hidden chamber far below Sithicus where a reflection of a memory with green eyes sleeps.

I TRIED TO CALL ON THE VEIDRAVA SALT MINES, BUT THE VISTANI DENIED ME ENTRY. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW SITHICUS STILL HAD VISTANI, BUT I WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE EXCUSE TO LEAVE. THERE WAS SOMETHING HORRIBLE DOWN THERE IN THE DARK. I COULD FEEL IT.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Sithicus is a dangerous place. Check for a random encounter after every 30 minutes the adventurers spend on the roads or in the wilderness (don't check if they have already had 2 random outdoor encounters in the past 24 hours):

If the characters are on a road, an encounter occurs on a roll of 18 or higher on a d20.

If the characters are in the wilderness, an encounter occurs on a roll of 13 or higher on a d20.

For an encounter, roll on either the daytime or night-time encounter table.

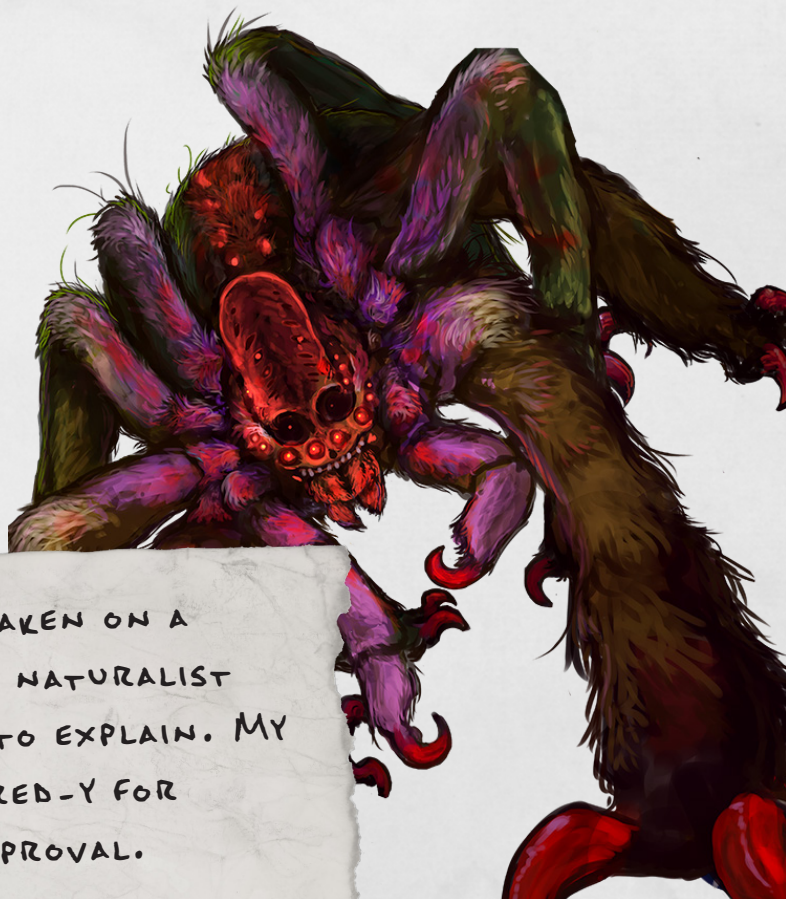
Daytime Random Encounters in Sithicus

d12+d8	Encounter
2	Tindafulus
3	Reverie Statue
4	Shambling Mound
5	Wild Stag Beetles
6	Black Roses Blooming
7	Phantasmal Warriors
8	Giant Spiders
9	Salt Golem
10	Masons
11	Hunting Party
12	Illusory Prey
13	Shadowfell Despair
14	Assassin Vine
15	Corpse Flower
16	Balhannoth
17	Vampiric Kender
18	Oblex Spawn
19	Sithican Wolves
20	Azrael Dak

Night-time Random Encounters in Sithicus

d12+d8	Encounter
2	The Crooked Lady
3	The Bloody Cobbler
4	Wild Elves
5	Banshee
6	Phantasmal Warriors
7	Ghost
8	Vampiric Kender
9	Salt Shadows
10	Shadows
11	Illusory Hunter
12	Displacer Beast
13	Darklings
14	Shadowfell Despair
15	1 The Lonely , looking for compassion or forgiveness
16	1 The Lost , wandering in search of meaning
17	Nagpa
18	Balhannoth
19	Oni
20	Lord Soth

Use the descriptions that follow to help run each random encounter. The table entries are presented in alphabetical order.



SITHICAN GIANT SPIDERS HAVE TAKEN ON A STRANGE CRIMSON HUE THAT NO NATURALIST I'VE SPOKEN TO HAS BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN. MY SUGGESTION THAT THEY WERE "RED-Y FOR ANYTHING" WAS MET WITH DISAPPROVAL.

Azrael Dak

SOMEONE TRUDGES DOWN THE ROAD TOWARDS YOU: A DWARF, FACE RIDDLED WITH CRAGGY WRINKLES AND A SPITEFUL EXPRESSION. YOU SMELL HIM FROM A DISTANCE: AN EARTHY, FECAL SCENT WHICH IS QUITE OVERPOWERING. HE FIXES ON YOU WITH YELLOW-TOOTHED DISDAIN.

This is **Azrael Dak** (See Appendices) who is out investigating a rumour of the Crooked Lady (a task that inevitably comes to nothing). He is forced to walk, as Nedragaard keep has no horses that will carry him, nor servants to bear him anywhere. He is grumpy, and distrustful.

Balhannoth

YOU CATCH A GLIMPSE OF SANCTUARY IN THE NEAR DISTANCE. A WHIFF OF FRESH GRASS, LAUGHTER, AND SONG, SOMEWHERE TO REST YOUR HEAD, AND FORGET THE HORRORS OF THE DAY. IT BECKONS.

The **balhannoth** are no stranger to Sithicus as a species—something about the tricksome nature of the domain calls them from the Shadowfell to take up residence among the roses. Used to luring elves into their gullets, the balhannoths of Sithicus usually project images of idyllic glades and adorable forest critters.

Banshee

A HAUNTING CRY OUT IN THE NIGHT SENDS A CHILL DOWN YOUR SPINE.

Sithicus' **banshees** are unpredictable and dangerous. Using their ability to sense life, the banshee tracks down the characters as quickly as they can, focused on destroying the character who reminds them most of Lord Soth.

Black Roses Blooming

BLACK ROSES SPRAWL ACROSS YOUR PATH, BRINGING WITH THEM A PUNGENT SCENT THAT BEGUILDES YOUR THOUGHTS.

Sithicus' Black Roses are a strange phenomenon. The petals of the flower are pure white until they bloom, whence they become black as ebony. The flowers exude an alluring scent, but the thorns are sharp. A character proficient in Herbalism Kits can harvest 1d6 doses of Black Rose Petals from the bush. A single dose of Black Rose Petals can be substituted for 25 gp of spell components for any spell cast in Sithicus. After being used in this manner, the petals are consumed. Any spell cast using Black Rose Petals takes on particularly acute cosmetic alterations (see Alterations to Magic).



YOU GET USED TO GRAY ELVES AFTER A WHILE. THE ONES STUCK IN TRANCE ARE PARTICULARLY USEFUL AS HATSTANDS OR FOOTSTOOLS.



Corpse Flower

A BULBOUS MASS OF BLACK FLOWERS AND THORNS LIFTS FROM THE EARTH AND BEGINS TO DRIFT TOWARDS YOU. THE SCENT OF FLOWERS IS OVERPOWERED BY THE RANK STENCH OF DEATH FROM SOMEWHERE INSIDE THE PLANTS.

This corpse flower is looking for something to eat. As a corpse flower of Sithicus, it has the following additional traits:

- It can cast the *major image* spell (DC11) at will.
- Any undead animated by its Corpses trait are skeletons rather than zombies.

Darklings

THE FIRST THING YOU NOTICE IS THE SWISH OF A TINY CAPE. THEN, SEVERAL MORE APPEAR. TINY FIGURES IN DARK CLOAKS ARE ALL AROUND YOU.

These 2d6 **darklings** and 1 **darkling elder** are secretive inhabitants of Sithicus, and devout worshippers of Nuitari. They don't remember how they came to Sithicus, and ask every traveller who passes if they know how to get home. Whatever answer they receive, they seem mournful.

Displacer Beast

THE PURRING IS QUIET AT FIRST, THEN GROWS LOUDER BY THE MINUTE. BY THE TIME YOU PINPOINT THE SHIFTING, BLURRING SOURCE OF THE NOISE, IT IS ALREADY POISED TO SPRING AT YOU.

This **displacer beast** is looking for someone to play with, and springs at a victim to bat them around and chew on them a bit. It is desperately lonely.

IT MUST BE REALLY INCONVENIENT FOR SOTH, BEING SURROUNDED BY UNHAPPY GHOSTS ALL THE TIME.

ALSO, HIS SING, WHICH PROBABLY MAKES THEM EVEN MORE IRRITATING.

Giant Spiders

THE SKITTERING IS UNNERVING, BUT NOT AS MUCH AS THE DEADLY QUIET WITH WHICH THE GIANT SPIDERS APPROACH YOU. THEIR EYES ARE ALIGHT WITH CURIOSITY.

These 2d4 **giant spiders** are looking for someone to be their new leader. They attack any suitable candidate, disable their companions, and drag the new king or queen back to their nest in the woods to fawn over their paralysed body.

Ghost

IT LOOKS LIKE A PERSON AT FIRST, BUT FADED AND GREY, LIKE THE LIFE HAS LEECHED OUT OF THEM. THEN THEY TURN, AND YOU REALIZE YOU CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH THEM.

This elven **ghost** has been dead for a very long time, but has lost all comprehension of this. It smiles faintly and waves at passers-by, though it cannot speak.

Hunting Party

ELVES, LITHE AND GRACEFUL, ARE TRACKING SOMETHING THROUGH THE WILDERNESS. THEY MOVE LIKE A FADED DREAM, WHICH WENDS AROUND YOUR SENSES BEFORE PASSING INTO NOTHINGNESS.

This party of five elven **scouts** are hunting for food in the Sithican wilderness. They are grim and tired-looking, disinclined to give away their secrets to strangers.

Illusory Hunter

SOMETHING IS HUNTING YOU - SOMETHING LARGE, AND HUNGRY. IT KEEPS PACE WITH YOU AT A DISTANCE, A SHADOW IN THE TREES, A PRESENCE UNDER THE STONES.

This hunter is a reflection of Sithicus' deceitful nature. It doesn't exist, but it remains a convincing illusion. The illusion defies attempts to look at it directly, aside from glimpses of something large and shadowy keeping watch from a distance. A character who succeeds on a DC15 Intelligence (Survival) check is able to see through the illusion.

Illusory Prey

A NOBLE FIGURE CATCHES YOUR EYE IN THE DISTANCE, ALONG WITH THE GLEAM OF A PEARLESCENT HORN, WHICH SHINES EVEN UNDER SKIES AS GREY AS THESE. YOU SEE A HORSE OF PURE ALABASTER, SHROUDED IN MAGIC AND MYSTERY.

This **unicorn** is a reflection of Sithicus' deceitful nature, and doesn't really exist. Any spell directed at the unicorn fails to affect it, and any physical contact passes through it. The unicorn always remains just at the edge of sight, regardless of attempts to catch up with it. Eventually it retreats into the mists at the edge of the domain.



WHEN I WAS A YOUNG, I WANTED A PET UNICORN.
NOW THAT I'M GROWN I STILL WANT A PET
UNICORN. SOME THINGS DON'T CHANGE.

Lord Soth

BEFORE YOU APPEARS A KNIGHT IN ARMOUR, STAINED BLACK WITH SIN, AND FLAMING EYES IN A SEA OF SHADOWS SMOULDER BEHIND THE VISOR. THEY BEAR A SWORD ENGRAVED WITH A SINGLE ROSE, CHARRED BY TRAGEDY. COLD FLOODS YOUR SENSES, AND EVIL THREATENS TO BLOCK OUT THE MOON. HE SALUTES YOU WITH A GRACEFUL SWEEP OF HIS SWORD.

Lord Soth is out on one of his rare walks, taking in the light of the black moon. Perhaps he lets the characters be. Perhaps he slays them all in a methodical manner. It's hard to say what whims might move the lord of Sithicus.

Masons

A CART FILLED WITH STONE BRICKS TRUNDLES TOWARDS YOU, PULLED BY LARGE BEETLES.

Two sithican elves are accompanying this card of stone mined from the hills, tugged by **giant stag beetles**. The elves are masons by trade, and are heading back to a city with their spoils.

Nagpa

AN ELDERLY CREATURE SHUFFLES ALONG IN THE DIRT, CLAD IN A FINE ROBE WORN WITH AGE AND LEANING ON A CANE. A VULTURE-LIKE HEAD PEEKS OUT FROM UNDER THE HOOD, AND THE CREATURE BECKONS TO YOU WITH A TALONED HAND.

This **nagpa** is on its way to Nedragaard Keep. All nagpa are cursed to only be able to learn magical secrets from the sites of great disasters, and this one is keen to investigate the lair of the multiverse's most infamous death knight. It asks people to call it Daddy Nagnag, and works to finagle itself into the group by wheedling, gifts, and flattery.

Oblex Spawn

THERE'S GOOP ON YOUR CLOTHES. GREEN AND VISCOUS, IT BUBBLES A HAPPY SIGH AND SETTLES DOWN TO SLEEP.

This **oblex spawn** is looking for a host to protect it until it grows big enough to be a threat. Until then, it acts like the perfect playmate, occasionally devouring the psyche of nearby animals.

Oni

Sithicus is a place of strange wonders and peculiar happenings. The group attracts the attention of an **oni**, which begins to follow them from a distance. The oni uses its considerable guile and magical shapechanging abilities to appear to the characters in many different forms, always offering bad or contradictory advice. It harasses them in this way until its identity is uncovered, whereupon it turns violent and begins a guerrilla campaign from the shadows.

Phantasmal Warriors

A PHALANX OF GHOSTLY WARRIORS MARCHES ACROSS YOUR PATH, CALLING ORDERS AND READYING THEMSELVES FOR AN ENEMY YOU CANNOT SEE.

These 4d4 **phantom warriors** are preoccupied with their unseen foe, fighting a battle against evil that never was. If they are forced to acknowledge the characters, they treat them as extensions of the enemy.



Reverie Statue

YOU SEE AN ELVEN FIGURE, COVERED IN MOSS AND ANKLE DEEP IN THE LOAM. IT LOOKS LIKE A STATUE AT FIRST GLANCE, BUT AS YOU GET CLOSER, YOU REALIZE IT'S ALIVE...

This elf was out wandering when they fell victim to the Reveries and never emerged. Alive, but in a permanent trance, their body has remained here ever since, eventually developing a camouflage from accumulated natural debris. The elf can be awoken only by magic that touches their dreams or memories, such as the *dream* spell or the *modify memory* spell. If revived, the elf is reduced to a regressed state, as if they were under the effects of a *feeblemind* spell.

Salt Golem

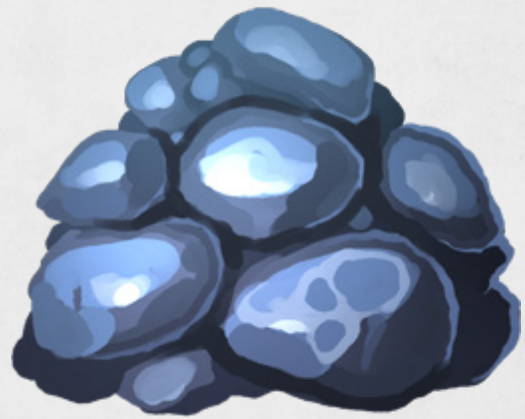
A LARGE BOULDER OF DARK SALT ROCK BLOCKS YOUR PATH. IT'S HUGE, AND SEEMS TO ABSORB THE LIGHT.

The **salt golem** is slumbering. If it is disturbed, it grumbles to life irritably, and begins to destroy any living creature it can sense with extreme prejudice. If destroyed, it leaves behind 3d6 lbs. of Black Salt (see sidebar).

Salt Shadows

RUSTLING AND HISSING, SHARDS OF DARK SALT SEEP THROUGH THE GROUND AROUND YOU, FORMING HUMANOID SHAPES. THEY RASP AND RATTLE AS THEY DEVIATE IN SHAPE AND SIZE, ALL OF WHICH EXUDE MALEVOLENCE.

These **salt shadows** are looking for victims, and are driven by hunger. They attempt to possess or destroy any living creatures they encounter. Destroying a salt shadow leaves behind 1 lb. of Black Salt (See sidebar).



BLACK SALT

Creatures from the Sithican salt mines leave black salt behind upon their destruction. This can be collected and used to ward off evil spirits. 1 lb. of black salt can be used to create a line 10 feet long, or a circle 5 feet in diameter. Ghosts, specters, shadows, and other incorporeal or amorphous undead cannot willingly cross a line of black salt.

Shadows

IT STARTS WITH A VAGUE SENSE OF UNEASE. SOON ENOUGH, IN THE INVISIBLE LIGHT OF THE BLACK MOON, YOU SEE THEM: SHADOWS.

These **shadows** are the remnants of other explorers who met grisly ends within Sithicus' borders. They are curious at first, drifting closer and burbling fragments of questions. Then they become angry at their inability to be understood.

Shadowfell Despair

AS YOU TRUDGE THROUGH THE DARKNESS, A SONG CREEPS ACROSS THE LAND. IT IS A SONG WITHOUT WORDS, A SONG OF BLACK ROSES AND A BLACK MOON, A SONG OF BETRAYAL, AND LUST, AND MURDER. IT ASKS YOU A SIMPLE QUESTION, A QUESTION THAT COILS AROUND YOUR HEART LIKE STRANGLING BRIARS. "LOOK IN THE MIRROR," IT SAYS. "WHAT DO YOU SEE?"

Refer to the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for rules on Shadowfell Despair.

Shambling Mound

A FETID SMELL WAFTS PAST YOU FIRST, FOLLOWED BY A SQUELCHING "POOT." SHAMBLING SLOWLY TOWARDS YOU FROM THE SIDE, A STRANGE CONGLOMERATION OF BIOMASS AND BLACK ROSES IS ADVANCING ON YOUR PARTY.

This **shambling mound** is delighted at having found food to fuel its various excrescences. While slow, it is patient and willing to follow prey for as long as it takes.

Sithican Wolves

THE HOWLING OF WOLVES IN THE NEAR DISTANCE DRAWS YOUR ATTENTION. THEY HOWL IN HARMONY, WEAVING A TALE OF LOSS AND SHADOW. IT IS BEAUTIFUL AND TRAGIC, BUT PERHAPS NOT AS TRAGIC AS BECOMING WOLF FOOD.

These 2d6 **wolves** and 1d4 **dire wolves** are hunting as a pack. Each dire wolf has the following additional ability:

Luring Song. The wolf sings a magical melody. Every humanoid within 300 feet of the wolf that can hear the song must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the song ends. The wolf must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue singing. It can stop singing at any time. The song ends if the wolf is incapacitated.

While charmed by the wolf, a target is incapacitated and ignores the songs of other wolves. If the charmed target is more than 5 feet away from the wolf, the target must move on its turn toward the wolf by the most direct route. It doesn't avoid opportunity attacks, but before moving into damaging terrain, such as lava or a pit, and whenever it takes damage from a source other than the wolf, the target can repeat the saving throw. A charmed target can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If the saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it. A target that successfully saves is immune to this wolf's song for the next 24 hours.

The Bloody Cobbler

A TRAVELING MERCHANT TIPS HIS HAT TO YOU AS HE COMES INTO VIEW. HE WEARS A LARGE LEATHERY MASK WITH A HOOKED NOSE, BEHIND WHICH CRUEL EYES GLEAM. HIS ROBES ARE DARK RED, AND HE CARRIES COBBLING GEAR.

This is the **Bloody Cobbler** (see Appendices). He happily stops to chat, and makes small talk. If pressed, he may even give away a set of red dancing shoes to someone who amuses him. Characters with a passive Medicine score of 14 or higher notices the blood spatters dried onto his robes.

The Crooked Lady

IN THE DISTANCE, YOU SEE THE HOVERING SPECTRE OF A WOMAN. SHE IS TALL, WITH HER DARK HAIR CUT SHORT AND CURLING AROUND A FACE GOVERNED BY DARK EYES AND A CROOKED SMILE.

This spectre is the dream Lord Soth chases day and night. She appears only for a moment, before vanishing. Whether this apparition is a real ghost, or another illusion of the dark powers, is unknown.

Tindafulus

THE SWIRL OF A CLOAK AND A DAZZLING LIGHT PRESAGE THE APPEARANCE OF A BIZARRE FELLOW CLAD IN NIGHT-BLUE ROBES AND A TOP HAT. HIS FACE IS WAN AND PALE AND HIS EYES ARE WIDE WITH INTEREST.

This is Tindafulus, the **illusionist**. He claims to have been trapped in a mirror by his reflection (for more information on the veracity of Tindafulus's claims, see Ravenloft Gazetteer: Carnival). In the meantime, he is as helpful as he can be without contradicting the wishes of Lord Soth (by whose forbearance Tindafulus still draws breath).

Vampiric Kender

FROM NOWHERE, A VOICE PIPES UP AT YOUR KNEE, AS A TINY HAND TUGS ON YOUR SLEEVE. "HEY, THAT'S AN AWFUL INTERESTING BAG YOU GOT THERE. I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND I TOOK A LOOK INSID-OH WOW YOU'RE FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE, RIGHT? YOU'VE GOT TO TELL ME MORE, I WANNA KNOW, OH THIS REMINDS ME OF THAT TIME I STOLE A RING FROM AN EVIL WIZARD..."

The party have the misfortune to encounter a **vampiric kender** (see Appendices). This evil creature steals, lies, and generally causes absolute mayhem while presenting any inconvenience it causes as completely unintentional. See Kendralind later in this document for more information on vampiric kender.

I ATE A SITHICAN APPLE ONCE.
IT WAS JUST HANGING THERE,
AND I THOUGHT TO MYSELF, IT
PROBABLY ISN'T POISONED, WHAT
ARE THE CHANCES?

AND IT WASN'T POISONED.

SO THERE YOU HAVE IT.

LOOK, NOT EVERY TALE IS GOING
TO END IN A MURDER, OK?

Luminesti


AN ARROW SLAMS INTO THE GROUND IN FRONT OF YOU, SENDING DIRT FLYING. FROM YOUR FLANKS, THREE ELVEN FORMS GRACEFULLY EMERGE FROM CAMOUFLAGE WITH BOWS RAISED.

These 3 **luminesti elves** (see Appendices) are hunting not for food or sustenance, but for the sport of it. They delight in the panic and suffering of their prey, but retreat sulkily if any of their company are killed.

Wild Stag Beetles

THE INITIAL RUSTLING IN THE UNDERGROWTH IS ALARMING, UNTIL YOU DISCERN THE SOURCE: A GIANT STAG BEETLE LEADING A LINE OF TINY STAG BEETLES BEHIND IT IN A BIZARRE PARADE. THEY PAY YOU LITTLE MIND.

This **giant stag beetle** (see Appendices) is leading 3d6 noncombatant baby giant stag beetles behind it. The mother or father defends their children angrily and violently, but is otherwise happy to pass by unmolested.



CHAPTER TWO: MAL-EREK

Mal-Erek is the farthest city from Nedragaard Keep. Accessible only through a swathe of deep, dark forest, or down the Little Arden river, it's known for two things: breeding and training the gigantic stag beetles the House Royal and House Military ride throughout Sithicus, and the style of music known as *alinsa quar*.

Mal-Erek is not a lively town, but the elves here have purpose. The presence of living creatures who need them gives them something to focus on. They haven't mastered the forest, but they co-exist with it, gathering silk from the giant spiders that dwell within and brewing potions and perfumes out of the black roses that are so very common.

The town is governed by Salisander Moonfeather, along with his husband and wife, Arenthalas and Carreisa. They divide duties between them, Salisander performing most civic functions, such as presiding over public gatherings. Arenthalas oversees administration and Carreisa deals with trade and contact with other settlements. Carreisa is also stubbornly sure that something exists beyond the Mists and has cultivated a small cadre of explorers willing to push into them, knowing full well they will probably never return.

For those who don't find purpose, or choose not to walk into the Mists, the Little Arden awaits, teeming with the spirits of the hopeless drowned.

Approaching the Town

When the player characters arrive at Mal-Erek, read or summarize the following:

BETWEEN THE DENSE, DARK FOREST AND THE RUSHING WATER OF THE LITTLE ARDEN LIES A CURVED STRETCH OF CULTIVATED GROUND. ORCHARDS, HEDGEROWS, FLOWER GARDENS, AND LOOSE, TURNED EARTH SUPPORT SMALL BUILDINGS THAT RISE UP BETWEEN TREE-TRUNKS OR NESTLE IN BRANCHES. THE PLANTS ARE VAST, WITH FLOWERS THE SIZE OF A HUMAN'S FACE AND TREES REACHING UP TO THE SKY. THE COTTAGES AND VINE-WRAPPED SHOPS ARE TINY BY COMPARISON AND ARRANGED IN A SPIRAL THAT LEADS TO A GROVE OF COLOSSAL, SILVER-GREY TREES. THERE ARE ELVES, YES, THE WAN, ASH-GREY, FIGURES ARE EVERYWHERE, BUT IT'S CLEAR WHAT THIS HABITAT IS REALLY FOR: STAG BEETLES THE SIZE OF HORSES. THEIR BLACK CARAPACES SHINE IN THE SUN, SHIELDING SOFT, CHESTNUT-COLOURED WINGS AS DELICATE AND TRANSLUCENT AS SILK. THEY CRAWL UP AND DOWN MASSIVE TREES, FEAST UNHINDERED ON RIPE FRUITS, AND BURY THEIR EGGS IN LOOSE DIRT. THE ELVES SHOW THEM AN AFFECTIONATE DEFERENCE THAT THEY DO NOT EXTEND TO YOU.

House Occupants

If the characters explore a residence, roll a d20 and consult the following table.

d20	Occupant
1-3	A family of 1d3 adult elf commoners
4-5	One elf commoner and their stag beetle mount
6-18	A family of 1d3 adult elf commoners , and 0-2 (1d3-1) juvenile elves (noncombatants)
19-20	A group of 1d6 unrelated adult elf commoners

Elven Households

Houses in Mal-Erek tend to be little more than shelters from the weather: simply places to rest and spend time with one's nearest and dearest. They are almost unfurnished, containing only necessities, and friends and family come and go freely at all hours.

Some houses in Mal-Erek aren't owned by anyone in particular. They serve as shelters for anyone who needs them. Residents change regularly, and people often simply stay there for a night or two because these buildings are convenient for their daytime activities. Folk in these houses are cordial and even friendly to one another.

SILVANESTI HOUSES

Silvanesti society is divided into Houses, roughly descending in order of power from the House Royal to the House Servitor. Not all houses are represented in Sithicus (House Cleric and House Recorder, for example, have dwindled to nothingness) and others are more powerful than they were in the elves' home world. The prominent houses in Sithicus are:

House Mason (Hroth)

House Gardener (Mal-Erek)

House Woodshaper (Mal-Erek)

House Merchant (Har-Thelen)

Encounters on the Street

d8	Encounter (Mal Erek)
1	A pair of House Military guards , armed with spears, patrolling on stag beetles
2	A musician (CE elven bard) strumming a melancholy tune on a lyre
3	A huge stag beetle mount , unaccompanied, which follows you for 2d10 minutes.
4	A gardener (LE elf commoner) tending fruit trees
5	Two elven children uncovering a nest of fat, squirming beetle larvae and observing them (i.e. prodding them with sticks)
6	A funeral procession, carrying a silk-shrouded body into the forest
7	A member of House Woodshaper, whispering to an oak tree and coaxing it to grow
8	A team of drovers rounding up three dozen stag beetle mounts to drive to Har-Thelen for sale

d6	Rumours (Mal Erek)
1	Carreisa Moonfeather's Arrows of the Mist have found something: a land beyond Sithicus
2	The water of the Little Arden is entirely composed of rushing spirits of the dead
3	There are tunnels beneath Mal-Erek and within them a colossal, malevolent stag beetle
4	Sithicus is the afterlife; those who die are reborn anew in their homeland
5	The Moonfeathers are seeking to add another spouse or lover to their household
6	If prepared correctly, the black roses of the forest can keep away most of the monsters that dwell within it



Er: The Plunge

THIS ROCKY OUTCROP HIGH ABOVE THE FAST-FLOWING LITTLE ARDEN IS THE LAST PLACE MANY ELVES' FEET TOUCH SOLID GROUND. SILDARETH BRIGHTLEAF WAS THE FIRST TO LEAP TO HIS DEATH INTO THE RIVER BELOW, BUT MANY MORE FOLLOWED. THEIR NAMES ARE INSCRIBED IN THE ROCK, FORMING AN EVER-EXTENDING ROAD TO THE PRECIPICE.

Elven lives are long, and Sithicus offers little to make them full. Many elves have ended their lives by leaping into the Little Arden and letting the waters carry them away. Their bodies move on, but their spirits do not: the rushing waters are choked with restless spirits. Travelling on the Little Arden is dangerous: every hour, there is a 50% chance that a vessel attracts 1d4 **water weirds** (change their creature type to undead), which attempt to sink the boat and pull its passengers and

crew down to join them. Swimming in the Little Arden always attracts water weirds, within 1d10 minutes of entering the water. Fishing on its banks is inadvisable for the same reasons.

E2: Sel-Quaro (Entertainment District)

THIS GROVE OF FRUIT TREES COMES ALIVE WHEN THE SUN SINKS. STRONG WINE FLOWS FREELY AND SPIRITS LIFT. ELVES GATHER HERE TO LISTEN TO THE MELANCHOLY STRAINS OF ALINSA QUAR. THEY LAUGH, CRY, AND FEEL MORE KEENLY THAN THEY DARE TO DURING THE DAYLIGHT HOURS.

In the Silvanesti tongue, *alinsa quar* means "a sense that our lives were fated to be here." It has been adopted as the name of the style of music played in Mal-Erek. Played on lyres and flutes and only occasionally accompanied by singing, *alinsa quar* is an acknowledgement of fate, an acceptance of life as it is, and also

heart-rendingly beautiful. To elves and others with Fey Ancestry, the music is merely emotional. To others, listening to it requires a DC 12 Charisma saving throw. Those who fail can do nothing but listen for the next hour. The saving throw is made with disadvantage if the listener is drunk.

Sel-Quaro is where the residents of Mal-Erek come to let their emotions run unchecked. Usually the elves are reserved and unlikely to speak openly to outsiders, but in this entertainment district, under the canopies of fruit trees and drunk on strong wine, rumours and gossip spill freely and all kinds of deals might be struck.

E3: Carreisa's Quiver

THE QUIVER IS THE TALLEST OF THE SLENDER STRUCTURES IN THE CENTRE OF MAL-EREK. IT STANDS HIGH ENOUGH TO LOOK OUT ABOVE THE FORESTS, OVER THE RIVERS, AND DIRECTLY INTO THE MISTS THAT SEAL AWAY SITHICUS. HOME TO CARREISA MOONFEATHER AND HER ARROWS, IT IS A PROFOUNDLY LONELY PLACE.

Carreisa's Quiver is the home of Mal-Erek's queen and the two-score elves she has gathered around her under the name 'Carreisa's Arrows.' Sithicus suffers from a surfeit of elves without purpose or connection to the world; Mal-Erek has fewer than some other settlements, but still enough to make one weep for them. Many end their lives at The Plunge, but some find their way to the Arrows, driven by one last meagre shred of hope.

Carreisa believes there is something beyond the Mists. Perhaps a way home, perhaps simply more places like Sithicus, but whatever is out there, it must be better than this neglected, miserable place. Every few months, she sends out expeditions of half a dozen elves ready to leave Mal-Erek behind. Most die, and their bodies return

via one of Sithicus' many waterways. Some do not return—and this is enough to keep hope alive.

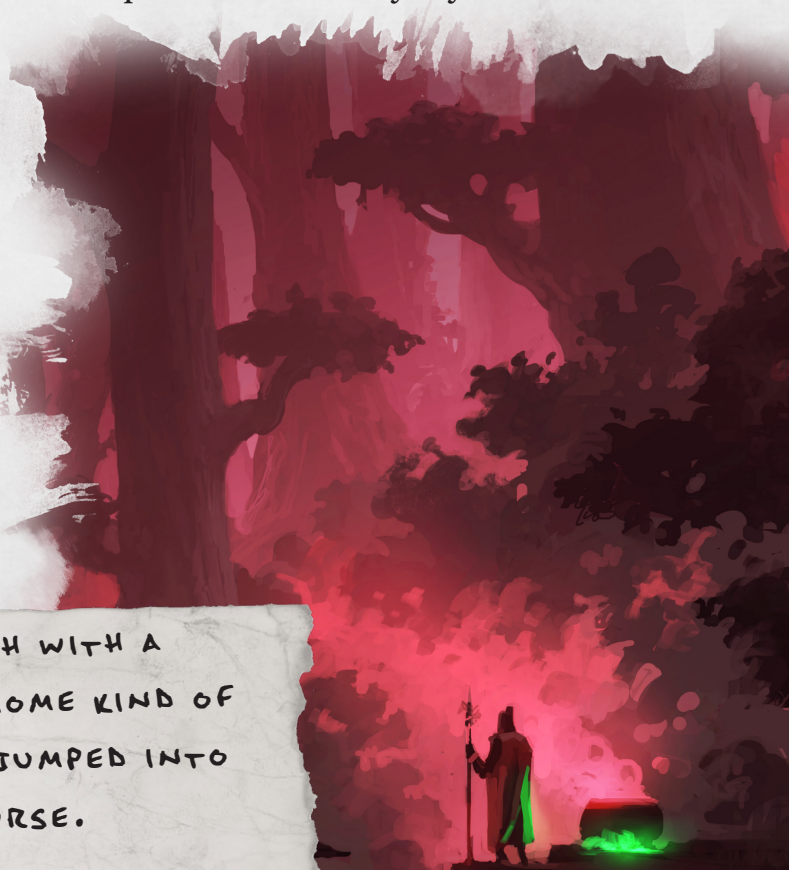
E4: The Gardens

ALL OF MAL-EREK TEEMS WITH BEETLES, BUT THIS STRETCH OF THICK HEDGEROWS AND TURNED EARTH IS BLACK WITH THEM. THEY MEANDER, MATE, AND FIGHT RENDING EACH OTHER WITH WICKED PRONGS. SOME SIMPLY STAND PEACEABLY WHILE ELVES FEED THEM SAP OR FRUIT JUICE, OR LEAN THEIR HEADS AGAINST THE BEASTS IN SILENT COMMUNION.

The Gardens is not one location, but many. Throughout the city there are places where the elves tend their cherished livestock. Here beetles are bred, their larvae hatched underground, and their young trained as pack animals and mounts.

Every elf in Mal-Erek has the ability to 'hear' the beetles. Through a simple mental bond, they sense the creatures' moods and their rudimentary thoughts. The bond goes both ways and forming a rapport is a significant part of training a beetle and they are never fully obedient to anyone they cannot understand. Each beetle, when it matures, bonds itself to one elf for the rest of its life, bestowing on its chosen one its complete trust and loyalty.

ONCE I MADE A SITHICAN ELF LAUGH WITH A JOKE, AND THEY THOUGHT IT WAS SOMEKIND OF SPELL. IT WAS FUNNY UNTIL THEY JUMPED INTO THE RIVER SCREAMING ABOUT A CURSE.



E5: The Spider Market

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY, WHERE THE SCENT OF ROSES WAFTS ON BREEZES FROM THE WOODS, THE SPIDER MARKET AWAITS YOUR CUSTOM. BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON, QUIET ELVES TRADE SPUN SILK AND FRAGRANT POTIONS FOR COIN, OR STRANGER CURRENCY.

Food and necessities are free in Mal-Erek. Fruit and vegetables are grown for everyone and it is expected that every citizen or visitor takes what they need and nothing more. Likewise, wood is plentiful and freely available. The only things for sale in Mal-Erek are luxuries: armour made from beetle carapaces or tools and weapons made from their pincers, or the many goods crafted from the treasures of the forest.


Some of the city's elves spend their days foraging in the forest or converting what they find into trade goods. Then spend the nights selling their wares at the collection of stalls known as the Spider Market.

The Spider Market sells, among other things:

- Spider silk
- Meat, cooked and raw (giant spider legs are a particular delicacy)
- Magical components, alchemical supplies, or supplies for healers' and herbalists' kits
- Potions crafted from local ingredients. Each has a chance of being currently in stock, rolled on 1d6 as detailed below:
- *potions of healing* (4 in 6 chance) and *potions of vitality* (1 in 6 chance) brewed from the ubiquitous black roses
- *potions of animal friendship* (4 in 6 chance) crafted from the powdered shells of stag beetles
- *potions of growth* (3 in 6 chance) refined from the leaves and flowers of Mal-Erek's giant trees



IF I'VE SAID IT ONCE, I'LL SAY IT A THOUSAND TIMES: NEVER DRINK ANYTHING GIVEN TO YOU BY AN ELF RIDING A GIANT STAG BEETLE. IT ONLY ENDS IN A FLIGHT THROUGH THE WOODS AT MIDNIGHT WONDERING WHERE YOU LEFT YOUR BANJO.



CHAPTER THREE: HROTH

The town of Hroth sprawls next to the Disappearing Hills, built from the local stone the residents quarry from the region. Little happens in Hroth except for mining. Hunting and kitchen gardens provide food, and a council of nobles oversees the running of the town, ensuring water continues to flow and refuse to be collected, but other than these basic functions the town barely stirs.

An epidemic of apathy has swept through the elves of Hroth. Life here, disconnected from the natural world they came from, is meaningless and their meditative trances provide a welcome escape. An increasing number of elves find solace in their reverie, while the town crumbles around them.

The regular flow of merchants from Har-Thelen injects a certain amount of life into the town. Around the river at least, there are places to find lodging and a mild flicker of interest in outsiders.

Approaching the Town

When the player characters arrive at Hroth, read or summarize the following:

THE POCK-MARKS OF QUARRIES MAKE THE DISAPPEARING HILLS LOOK UGLY AND UNFINISHED, AND HROTH HAS A SIMILAR FEEL. THE WHOLE TOWN IS BUILT FROM THE GREY STONE, AND ITS STREETS FORM SLOPPY, IMPRECISE CONCENTRIC CIRCLES. BUILDINGS STAND SCAFFOLDED AND UNFINISHED, PAVED STREETS GIVE WAY SUDDENLY TO DIRT TRACKS, AND BRIARS CLIMB WALLS AND CRAWL THROUGH WINDOWS.

DAY OR NIGHT, THE STREETS ARE EMPTY AND IT WOULD BE SEDUCTIVELY EASY TO BELIEVE HROTH IS A GHOST TOWN.

House Occupants

If the characters explore a residence, roll a d20 and consult the following table.

d20	Occupant
1-3	A family of 1d3 adult elves commoners , and one juvenile elf
4-5	Empty
6-18	A family of 1d3 adult elf commoners
19-20	A group of 1d3 elf commoners in Trance (see The Reverie)

Elven Families

Most houses contain elven families, in one of the many forms they commonly take (see sidebar, under Har-Thelen). Homes in Hroth are relatively luxurious, furnished thoughtfully and with finely crafted goods. The elves of Hroth spend most of their time when they are not working in their homes,

but they are quiet places, displaying little entertainment or laughter, or even much sense of affection.

The Reverie

In households where the occupants have given way to the Reverie (the unending Trance some elves fall into), the home is run-down and uncared for. Dust is thick and possessions are strewn untidily around. The elves in these homes do not rouse themselves simply because visitors are present. They may stir due to prolonged, loud noise or activity around them (a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw, roll with +4 modifier), and wake if touched for more than the briefest of moments. (See the Sidebar on Elven Family Structure on page 33).



Encounters on the Street

d8	Encounters (Hroth)
1	A pack of stray cats that have taken over an abandoned, half-finished house
2	A procession of eerily quiet workers, grey with dust, making their way home from the quarries
3	A pair of armed guards on patrol
4	A smiling woman in bright clothes, painting vivid forest scenes on the back wall of a derelict building
5	A member of the House Royal riding out of town, accompanied by guards and servants, all mounted on stag beetles
6	A group of sailors and merchants from Har-Thelen, getting loudly drunk
7	A pair of adolescent elves casting <i>minor illusions</i> on the statue of a city official
8	A single elf sitting on the doorstep of a building, in trance

Rumours

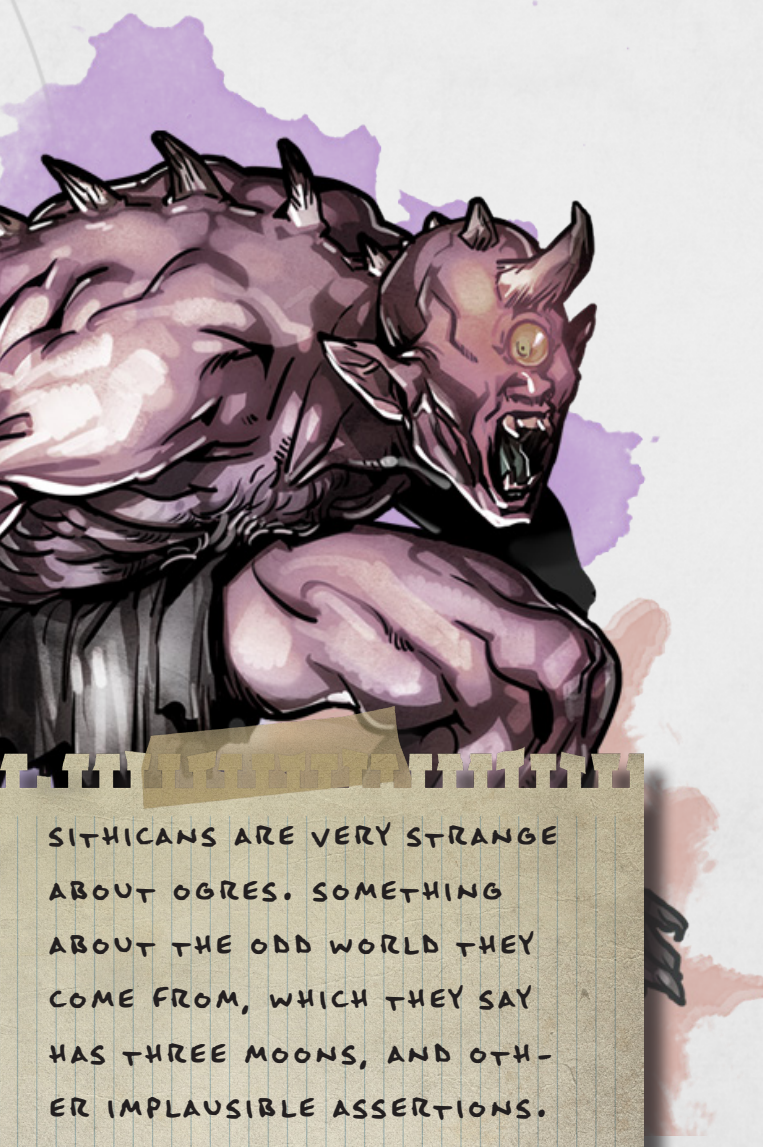
d6	Rumours (Hroth)
1	Everyone in House Royal has succumbed to Reverie: no one is running Hroth
2	Merchants from Hal-Theren have brought a sickness along with their cargo
3	Lord Soth will visit Hroth soon; something there must displease him
4	Ogres have been seen roaming the Disappearing Hills
5	A party of wandering Vistani is on its way to town
6	The Disappearing Hills are alive and feel pain and resentment from the elven stone-cutting

Like all Silvanesti settlements, Hroth is divided by caste: the House Royal lives in the centre of the town, with the House Arcane and the House Militant in the second circle, and the Trade Houses in the outermost circle.

Jr: The Royal Circle

THIS INNERMOST RING OF HROTH IS BUILT OF SLENDER TOWERS AND GRACEFUL ARCHES AND GIVES THE SENSE THAT EVERY STONE WAS PLACED ACCORDING TO SOME GRAND PLAN. IN SOME SECTIONS, A WALL SEPARATES IT FROM THE REST OF THE CITY, BUT IN OTHERS THAT PLAN NEVER CAME TO FRUITION.

The Royal Circle contains all of the apparatus of government in Hroth. The courthouse is here, the council house, and the home of every noble family in Hroth. These noble compounds are far larger than the homes of common elves, often having spacious, untended gardens and containing few enough people that they feel empty and haunted. Cases of Reverie—the long, uninterrupted periods of trance to which many elves succumb—are common here and often go unnoticed until someone disappears for weeks at a time. The city guard patrol regularly, but they are often the only people on the streets.



SITHICANS ARE VERY STRANGE ABOUT OGRES. SOMETHING ABOUT THE ODD WORLD THEY COME FROM, WHICH THEY SAY HAS THREE MOONS, AND OTHER IMPLAUSIBLE ASSERTIONS.

J2: Riverside

HROTH COMES ALIVE AT RIVERSIDE. WOODEN DOCKS EXTEND INTO THE RUSHING WATER OF THE KRELLIN RIVER AND CREWS SWARM OVER THE BOATS, LOADING AND UNLOADING, CALLING TO OLD FRIENDS, AND CRACKING JOKES. THERE ARE INNS AND TAVERNS HERE, MARKETS, AND SOMETIMES MUSIC.

The area around the river is the most bustling part of the city. It's crowded, and the faces change regularly. Sailors head upriver to Har-Thelen, and new crews arrive in a constant dance. This part of Hroth welcomes strangers who have money to spend. The locals aren't necessarily more cheerful than in other parts of the city, but they're better at putting on a smile and there is enough activity here that cases of Reverie are less common than elsewhere.

J3: Songbrook Green

HERE YOU SEE A SWATHE OF OVERGROWN GRASSLAND, WITH STREAMS CHOKED WITH WEEDS AND TREES AND PLANTS IN DIRE NEED OF MANAGEMENT. THE LUSH, BLACK ROSES OF SITHICUS DOMINATE EVERY OTHER BLOOM, AND THE SHADOWS OF MASSIVE OAK TREES STRETCH LONG AND DARK ACROSS THE PARK.

Planned as a beautiful wilderness in the middle of the town, a harmonious blending of nature and craft, Songbrook Green has grown wild from disinterest. Rather than the festivals and celebrations that were optimistically planned, dark deeds are done here: violence, blackmail, and any other ill that occurs in Hroth.

J4: The Ogre Stone


IN A DISUSED QUARRY IN THE DISAPPEARING HILLS, A TOWERING PILLAR OF ROCK RISES UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WASTELAND. WIND AND RAIN HAVE ROUNDED OUT ROUGH EDGES, SMOOTHING IT INTO GROTESQUE SHAPES THAT SUGGEST, IN THE RIGHT LIGHT, THE LUMPY FORM OF AN OGRE.

In their homeland, the elves are ancient enemies of ogres. When mining revealed a deposit of brown stone in the midst of the more common grey, it was a curiosity. When, after it was fully chipped away, someone observed that it was ugly enough to be an ogre, it was mildly amusing. Working next to the monster every day, however, turned the joke sour.

It's unclear when the rumour began that the rock was an elf who'd visited the quarry alone at night and been transformed into a monster, but it's fully taken hold now—along with the belief that looking too long at the stone, or touching it, turns you into an ogre.

It isn't true, of course, but it's also not entirely false. Being near the stone for too long doesn't change a person, but it does change how others see them. Specifically, their friends and family fail to recognise them, seeing them instead as something monstrous and 'other.' A handful of elves live in the hills who have been cursed in this way, doomed to wander alone unless some former loved one raises a hunting party to slay the hideous "ogre."





CHAPTER FOUR:

KENDRALIND

Ripped from Krynn and woven into Sithicus by the cruel whimsy of dark powers, Kendralind is a town of vampires. Alas, this is not the worst blight afflicting it, for Kendralind's main dangers are not the result of its association with the living dead as much as they are with a creature far more hated: Kender.

Bitterkinder

On their homeworld, the Kender are a diminutive race that might at first glance remind the casual planar traveller of halflings or gnomes. Alas, this could not be further from the truth. Krynn's kender, also known as Bitterkinder, are defined by two salient traits:

1. A frankly sociopathic disregard for the notion of personal property, which manifests in the constant and unrelenting theft of items that the rightful owner never sees again
2. A blighted, unshakeable and suicidal optimism that is proof against intimidation, threats of incarceration, or the looming spectre of death

These traits were passed directly to the Sithican kender, entirely unaltered and merely augmented with the considerable advantages that vampirism offers the enterprising criminal. The local histories

blame Lord Soth for this blight, claiming he tortured and experimented on normal kender to produce these abominations, though the likelihood of Lord Soth spending any amount of time in a room with kender without burning Sithicus to the ground seems implausible.

Perhaps the only sliver of mercy granted by the dark powers is in the size of Kendralind. Perhaps 50 kender were swept into the mist, of which 25 are accounted for in today's Sithicus. Where the others vanished to is unknown.

Approaching the Town

When the player characters arrive at Kendralind, read or summarize the following:

YOUR FIRST CLUE THAT THIS PLACE IS INHABITED IS SKEWERED THROUGH: AN ELVEN HEAD ON A SPIKE SIGNALLING THAT YOU MAY NOT BE WELCOME HERE. LITTLE HOUSES ARE VISIBLE THROUGH THE TREES, SOME OF WHICH ARE BOARDED UP. MORE HEADS ON SPIKES ARE DOTTED ABOUT, SOME WITHERED AND ROTTED WITH AGE.

Vampiric Kender

The population of Kendralind is so small, each and every kender is known in Sithicus.

1d25	Name		Name
[Idk how to roll randomly out of 25, I won't lie.]		13	Catching Plaguefoot
1	Squicky Darkeyes	14	Neddy Wanderspike
2	Knifey Bramblehair	15	Gash Thundergore
3	Trouble Thumbslicer	16	Priscilla Puncturevein
4	Belladona Thistlerammer	17	Scratchy Jabstab
5	Mansy Facebane	18	Violet Kidneyfilch
6	Stabby Organlooter	19	Jagged Butcherface
7	Feral Heartswitcher	20	Friendly Lopitoff
8	Softly Kidseater	21	Foxy Lungscroaker
9	Stool Crowswing	22	Mimsy Badtouch
10	Knobbly Fangsankle	23	Bloody Nuisance
11	Bones Magoo	24	Buzzard Wrecksplatter
12	Bother Bellbrush	25	Tickelmop Toothfang

Not Like Other Places

Kendralind is not like other towns. Its infestation of kender vampires isn't large enough to support a robust rumour mill. Instead, each kender is accounted for individually, with traits that are exemplified in their given names.

Roleplaying Vampiric Kender


When roleplaying vampiric kender, keep the following in mind:

- Vampiric kender are outrageously cheerful and optimistic, a disarming tactic that often catches strangers by surprise, particularly when the kender proceeds to tear out their liver.
- Vampiric kender are curious, and one of their Vampiric Weaknesses is the inability to see something new without thoroughly investigating it. This can be manipulated by canny adventurers.

- Vampiric kender are slaves to their kleptomania, and steal anything they can get their grubby hands on. These items are then mislaid or forgotten, sometimes found by another vampiric kender.
- Vampiric kender love strangers, because of the bounty of food and shiny things they tend to supply. They love strangers so much they often stake the heads of particularly "generous" donors to the ground around the village.
- The undead kender are pithy and witty, inadvertently seeing to the core of someone's personality and pinpointing with glee the insecurity most likely to drive that person into an incoherent rage. They deliver these insults with either beaming innocent smiles or deadpan expressions.
- Kender do not believe themselves to be thieves, and the insinuation is enough to bring out their violent side. Instead, they believe that they "borrow" items with the full intent to return them to their rightful owner in the future.
- The kender have exactly the same attitude toward organs and other organic effluvia as they do toward shinies and geegaws. Which is to say, they take whatever they find interesting.

Areas of Kendralind

Unlike most towns, Kendralind has no fixed locations. This is due to the larcenous nature of the kender, who are simply unable to leave anything that isn't nailed to the floor (and even then the nails might end up repurposed). At any one time there are ten cottages in Kendralind, all of which recycle the same worn out old furniture between them continually. Even the location of the cottages changes over time as bricks, windows, doors and roofing all change hands between kender who can't remember where they found them.



CHAPTER FIVE:

HAR-THELEN

By Sithican standards, Har-Thelen is a metropolis. The largest of the domain's three elven cities, Har-Thelen is also closest to Nedragaard Keep. If the domain's lord were more invested in his lands and his people, that proximity might stop Har-Thelen from falling victim to regular waves of paranoid rumour-mongering and producing an endless stream of cultists who worship the black moon. Despite its size, the city is no more sophisticated than the other settlements of Sithicus. Buildings stand unfinished, refuse piles up, and plants—especially the black roses that bloom everywhere in the domain—take over abandoned buildings.

Har-Thelen has the greatest concentration of mages in Sithicus, including the enchanter Dalyor Gilvasi—although most are unaware of his presence. Dalyor smashed one of Soth's *memory mirrors*, and absconded with a shard of the glass. He harbours a scheme to overthrow Soth and shake Sithicus out of its apathy.

The city is the spawning ground for members of the cult known as the *luminesti*. Its members have turned their faces from hope, and put their faith in the black moon and its powers of illusion. They hide in the shadows of Har-Thelen, stealing folk away to sacrifice to the dark power that whispers to them from the sky and hunted down whenever rumours of them arise. When their numbers grow to more than a handful, the House Militant chase them out of the city to join the growing number of *luminesti* in the Iron Hills.

Har-Thelen has another, lesser known cult: the *inenwahb*. The word is difficult to translate, but it means something like 'the hopeful elves.' This small group is no more than a rumour to most, but occasionally an elf leaves their family to join the *inenwahb*. They are happy, but never return.

Har-Thelen has magic aplenty. What it doesn't have is a ruler. Queen Ornthala died under mysterious circumstances within weeks of arriving in Sithicus. Her administration has been hiding that fact from the citizens ever since. They are, however, fighting a losing battle. Rumours of a banshee who haunts the palace have started to spread.

Approaching the Town

When the player characters arrive at Har-Thelen, read or summarize the following:

GRAND PLANS WERE CONCEIVED OF FOR THIS CITY, BUT NONE HAVE BEEN FULLY EXECUTED. BUILDINGS STAND WHOLE BUT UNDECORATED, OR HAVE BEEN ABANDONED IN THE MIDST OF CONSTRUCTION. EMPTY PEDESTALS FOR STATUES FORM THE CENTREPOINTS OF GRAND PLAZAS. WHITE STONES WERE LAID TO FORM BROAD STREETS, BUT ARE NOW CHOKED WITH WEEDS, AND THE MAGICAL LIGHTS THAT WERE INTENDED TO KEEP THE CITY BRIGHTLY LIT FLICKER, OR HAVE FADED ENTIRELY.

House Occupants

If the characters explore a residence, roll a d20 and consult the following table.

d20	Occupant
1-3	A family of 1d3 adult elves
4-5	Mage's Workshop
6-18	A family of 1d3 adult elf commoners and 0-2 (1d3-1) juvenline elves
19-20	Luminesti Cult

ELVEN FAMILY STRUCTURES

Elven families seldom resemble a human nuclear family. A few elves form monogamous partnerships, but many form triads or share lovers. Others flit between romantic and/or platonic partners while some prefer a solitary life. In addition, the Silvanesti range across the full breadth of the gender spectrum, with varying degrees of fluidity. The idea of a monogamous, lifelong, opposite-sex partnership is simply inconceivable to most elves.

Elves mature at a similar rate to humans. Almost every elf appears adult, to human eyes. In Silvanesti society, however, a child becomes an adolescent at 40 and an adult at 80. In Sithicus this has little practical impact, but does explain the tendency of some elves to treat middle-aged humans like infants.

Elven Families

Most houses contain elven families, in one of the many forms they commonly take (see sidebar). Homes in Hroth are relatively luxurious, furnished thoughtfully and with finely crafted goods. The elves of Hroth spend most time when they are not working in their homes, but they are quiet places: there is little entertainment or laughter, or even much sense of affection.

Mages Workshop

These narrow towers are usually three to five floors tall, containing living quarters, workrooms, laboratories, and storerooms for one elven **mage** and two **apprentice mages** (all Lawful Neutral) and their familiars, in the form of the white bats that are so numerous in Har-Thelen.

Luminesti Cult

Luminesti are the elves who have found solace in worship of the black moon. They bind their eyes with black fabric or—in extreme cases—blind themselves and carry out dark rituals, spilling blood in service of the black moon in the hope it will grant them extraordinary power.

The cults gather primarily for rituals, and do so secretly as membership is punished by banishment or execution. Blundering in on a ritual is extremely dangerous. The dwellings they use are often open to the sky, so that the un-light of nuitari shines down upon them. As well as 1d6+4 luminesti and one cult leader, there are usually 1d4 prisoners present, awaiting sacrifice.

Encounters on the Street

d8	Encounters (Har-Thelen)
1	A handsome pickpocket, plying their trade
2	A Vistani woman playing lively music on a fiddle
3	An old, blind elven woman selling potions
4	Five city guard, mounted on stag beetles, dragging a tattooed luminesti cultist to jail
5	An elf under attack by a flock of small, white bats
6	A corpse dumped in an alleyway, in which luscious black roses bloom
7	Two elves about to commence a magical duel over a trivial slight
8	A couple desperately looking for their child, who they believe has been taken by the luminesti

Rumours

d6	Rumours (Har-Thelen)
1	Lord Soth is dead—fully, completely, dead—and Azrael Dak now rules Sithicus
2	There is a powerful, living thing in the depths of the Great Chasm
3	A luminesti cult plans to assassinate [leader] and take control of the town
4	A secret faction plans to move against Lord Soth
5	The small, white bats that infest the town feed on memories that won't be missed
6	A killer called The Bloody Cobbler walks the streets of Har-Thelen; he slices off the soles of his victims' feet and they dance themselves to death

AREAS OF THE TOWN

C1: The Royal Circle

MAGICAL WARDS GLOW ON EVERY INCH OF THE WALLS ENCIRCLING THIS GRAND COLLECTION OF SPIRES. NO ONE COMES OR GOES, AND THE GATES ARE SEALED AND GUARDED AT ALL HOURS... BUT RUMOURS ABOUND OF SCREECHING IN THE STILL NIGHT, AND ECHOING SONGS ON THE WIND.

The queen is dead, long live the queen. Queen Ornthala passed away in her sleep mere weeks after arriving in Sithicus. It's said that her heart failed, but the servants who found her body have never forgotten the expression of pure terror on her contorted face. No one in Har-Thelen knows that Ornthala's daughter, a banshee usually residing in Nedragaard with Soth, visited her that night and begged the queen to free her from her undeath.

The outcome was quite the opposite: Ornthala died of fright, and her restless spirit haunts Har-Thelen's Royal Circle, desperate for revenge against Soth for her daughter's death, but powerless to enact it.

Meanwhile, House Royal and their servants keep news of the queen's death from leaking out. She is said to be gravely ill, but living. The rest of the House fear what the citizens would do if they learned they were leaderless and alone in this strange domain.

C2: Magda Suleivich's Home

THIS THATCHED HOUSE ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE GRAND MARKET IS REMARKABLE. IT'S CRAFTED FROM WOOD, NOT STONE, AND COSY, ESCHEWING THE CHILLING ELEGANCE OF THE ELVEN STRUCTURES AROUND IT. A FIRE BURNS BRIGHT IN THE HEARTH BEYOND THE OPEN DOOR AND THE SMELL OF TEAS AND DRYING HERBS WELCOMES YOU INSIDE

People make a lot of assumptions about Magda Suleivich, the first being that she is Vistani. She is not, though her father was. Her mother is an elven woman who prefers to pretend her half-elf daughter doesn't exist.

Magda runs an inn and apothecary on the edge of the Grand Market and because of this, many also assume she's a witch. The elves don't deliberately make her feel unwelcome, but she is nineteen years old—an infant to them and they treat her as such.

She chooses not to share what she knows: there are indeed other realms like Sithicus and the Vistani cross between them freely. Her father visits occasionally, as do other Vistani traders. They never admit to being from anywhere other than the untamed, unexplored forests of Sithicus.

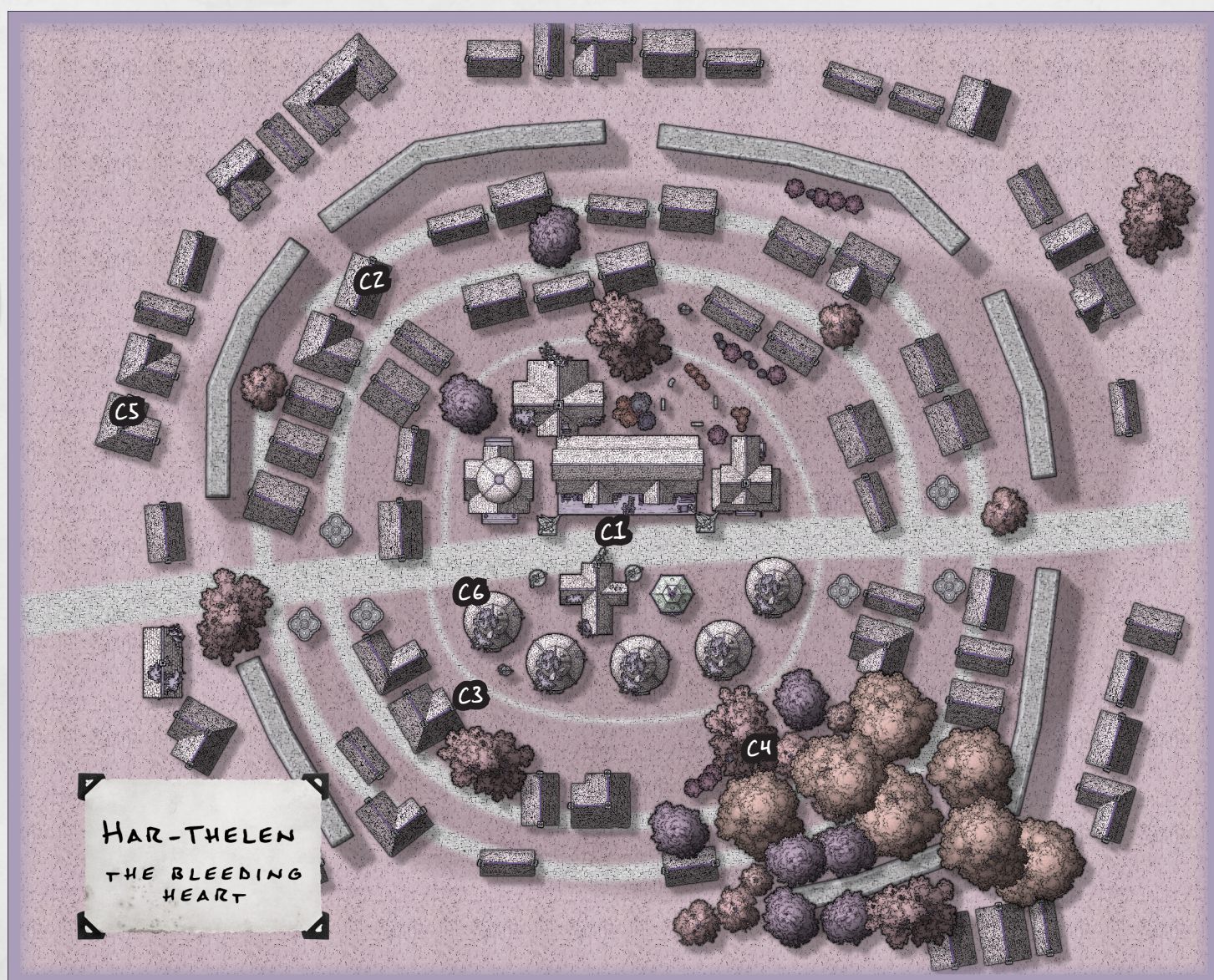
C3: The Grand Market

THE GRAND MARKET SPRAWLS ALONG THE RIVERSIDE, THE LOCAL BATS FLITTING BETWEEN STALLS, SWOOPING DOWN TO STEAL PRODUCE, OR DOGFIGHTING IN THE AIR IN ELEGANT SPIRALS. BOATS ARE LOADED AND UNLOADED CONSTANTLY, PREPARING TO EMBARK FOR HROTH WITH WOOD AND FOOD, OR RETURNING WITH STONE. THE CRIES OF VENDORS, SONGS OF MINSTRELS, AND ALL THE CHATTER OF A MARKETPLACE MAKE THIS THE BEATING HEART OF SITHICUS.

Hal-Theren's Grand Market is a social centre, transport hub, and one of the most vivacious places in the domain of Sithicus. A few hours here is almost enough to shake off the dread and weariness so pervasive elsewhere.

All manner of mundane goods are readily available here, as well as a small number of magical items. Mundane goods are almost all fine examples of elven craftsmanship. If they were ever sold outside Sithicus, they would fetch 25% more than the listed price in the *PH*. There is a 40% chance that there are 3 Common magical items for sale and a 20% chance of 1 Uncommon item (use the Magic Item lists in *XGtE*).

In addition, characters can book passage or charter a ship from Har-Thelen to Hroth.



C4: Forest of the Dead

HERE STANDS ONE TREE FOR EVERY FALLEN
ELF - ONE MONUMENT, ONE MEMORY, ONE
PROMISE TO REST EASY FOR ALL OF TIME.
BUT NOTHING IS PERMANENT IN SITHICUS.
NOTHING LASTS. NOT EVEN THE SLEEP OF
THE DEAD.

Har-Thelen buries its dead. Atop each body, the city plants a tree and names it for the deceased. The roots reach down and wind through the flesh and bone beneath, drawing nutrients from the body as well as the soil. Trees mature almost as slowly as elves and only in the last few seasons have they grown from weak saplings to slender trees that sway and sigh in the wind with rose bushes at their base.

Every single tree is haunted and home to a tree-wight (a **dryad**; change the creature type to undead, and alignment to CE), restless and angry and ready to take its frustrations out on the living. Har-Thelen has not yet learned this. A few people have gone missing, walking in the grove late at night. The city guard blames luminesti and their regular witch-hunts have intensified.

C5: The Hopeful Elves

DOWN AN ALLEY WITHOUT A NAME, THROUGH
A GAP IN A CRUMBLING WALL, THE *INENWAHB*
AREN'T EASY TO FIND. BUT ONCE YOU'RE
CLOSE, YOU CAN FOLLOW THE SOUND OF
LAUGHTER.

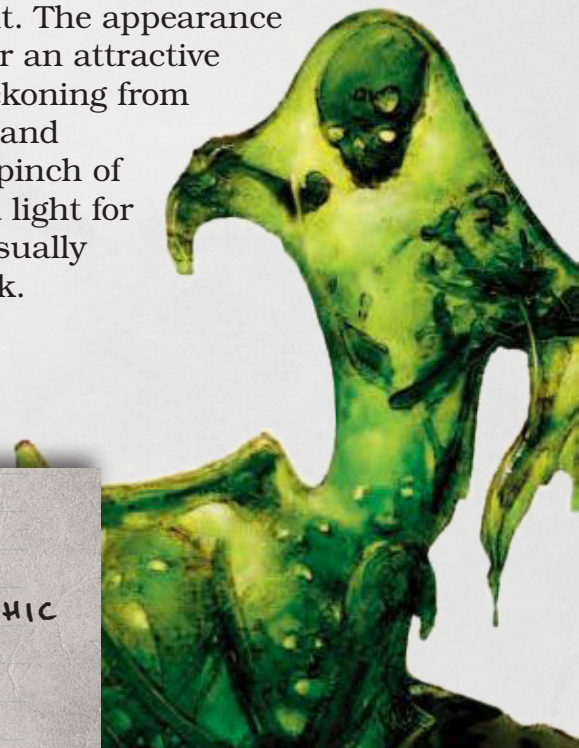
Every elf in Sithicus is looking for hope. Hope that they'll find purpose, or a way home, or a way to understand the strange land they're in. Or even hope that the fool who rules them will rouse himself from apathy and take an interest in his kingdom. The *inenwahn*, it is said, have found hope.

They're a small group—three dozen or so in number—and they live in a half-finished temple in the northernmost part of Har-Thelen. The sounds of their songs and rejoicing can be heard from a block away. Most of the townsfolk are too bound to their duty and families to simply walk away and join this cult of joy, but every single one who has heard the song has considered it.

When encountered in their home, the *inenwahn* are happy and smiling, but this happiness comes at a price. They forget pieces of their old lives—nothing important, just details like a favourite food or the name of a beloved pet—and they don't mind. They have each other... and a purpose they do not speak of. They don't welcome outsiders into their homes, meeting family members only at dusk in the outer vestibule of the temple where most conversations revolve around asking their loved ones to join them.

They cannot leave. The *inenwahn* are no longer themselves, only the simulacrum projected by the **elder oblex**, Hope, who inhabits the temple. Hope has realised that stalking the streets of Har-Thelen is an inefficient way to obtain prey. With the promise of companionship and happiness, its food comes to it. Occasionally, it still leaves the temple, slipping through the shadowed backstreets, using its simulacra as lures to call other elves—preferably wizards, or those who look like wizards—to it. The appearance of a friend, or an attractive stranger, beckoning from a side street and asking for a pinch of tobacco, or a light for their pipe, usually does the trick.

WHY CAN'T IT EVER
JUST BE A BUNCH OF HAPPY PEOPLE?
IT'S ALWAYS A CULT OF MADMEN, OR SOCIOPATHIC
MONSTERS, OR AN INFERNAL BOOK CLUB.



C6: Dalyor's Tower

CLOUDS PART, AND WEAK STARLIGHT SHINES DOWN UPON A BUILDING THAT WAS NOT THERE BEFORE. YOU SEE A TOWER THAT BOTH IS, AND IS NOT; ONE WHOSE DOOR IS EITHER OPEN OR NONEXISTENT, BASED ON HOW THE LIGHT HITS IT. LIGHT GLOWS BEHIND THE MANY SMALL WINDOWS, AND WISPS OF SMOKE RISE UP FROM THE TALL CHIMNEY IN THE ROOF. WHEN THE TOWER IS THERE, IT IS OCCUPIED.

Dalyor's tower is visible only at the new moon. For the rest of the lunar cycle it is there, on a side street close to the centre of Har-Thelen, but it resists all attempts to locate it. Of course, since most people believe Dalyor never returned from Nedragaard Keep, few go looking. Many of the mages of Har-Thelen suspect the master enchanter has returned, or that someone else is using his sanctum. Someone is buying components for powerful magics, through a network of charmed elves (and reliably charming elves is quite a challenge).

The best informed and most erudite of the mages suspect that, whether this mysterious enchanter is Dalyor or someone else, they are attempting the construction of a powerful magical artefact. One capable of clairvoyance, or dreamwalking—a mirror, perhaps.

They're right.

Young for an elf, no more than two centuries old, Dalyor is precocious, ambitious, and revolted by Lord Soth's self-indulgent lassitude. After discovering on a visit to Nedragaard Keep that Soth was using the set of *memory mirrors* to dwell in his own fantasies of times past, Dalyor resolved to shake the death knight back to his senses.

Using trickery to confound Soth's senses, he caused the death knight to smash a mirror with an ill-timed blow. When that didn't serve to bring Lord Soth back to reality, he stole a shard of it. He's spent the years since manipulating the enchantment on the glass, twisting it so that whatever Soth tries to look at, it only lets him see the situation it presents as worse, never better. He's almost finished with the enchantment. When he's done, he'll let the shard of mirror be found and returned to Nedragaard—he might even let some brave adventurers 'defeat' him, and 'claim' it.

Dalyor hopes that interrupting Lord Soth's fantasies will make him focus on his current situation and that, if he does, he might find a way to return himself, and by extension all of Sithicus, to their original worlds. Otherwise, he might just lapse so deeply into self-pity that it clears the way for someone else to rule, and Dalyor hopes that might have the same effect.



I DIDN'T DISLIKE DALYOR AT ALL. HE WAS QUITE THE GENTLEMAN - AT LEAST UNTIL THE MOON CAME UP, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

CHAPTER SIX: NEDRAGAARD KEEP

NEDRAGAARD KEEP

The keep which rises from the Great Chasm lances into the sky like a dark spear, towering over Sithicus and visible from almost anywhere in the domain. A twisted memory of Lord Soth's ancestral home—Dargaard Keep—its location makes it highly defensible, not that any force born within Sithicus' border could ever hope to mount an assault against its crumbling walls.



AH, THE TWIN MUSES:
WINE AND DEPRESSION.
I KNOW THEM WELL.

General Features

The keep is constructed of black stone with a mirror-like sheen to it. The stone walls are several feet thick, varying throughout the keep.

Ceilings. Most of the hallways have 20-foot ceilings. Some rooms have ceilings of 20 to 40 feet in height.

Doors. Doors are made of wood, which has rotted away in many cases. They can be opened without a check unless otherwise noted.

Unsafe Stonework. In some places, the stonework supporting the ceiling isn't structurally sound. As a result, some spells might have unfortunate repercussions. A spell like fireball (an explosion) or thunderwave (an area of thunder damage) has a 25% chance to cause a ceiling collapse within the spell's effect, dealing 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage to creatures in the area. This collapse might block or bury objects or exits.

Gloom. Nedragaard keep is infected with Soth's dark ennui. Consider employing the Shadowfell Despair rules from the Dungeon Master's Guide.



Random Encounters

The first time the characters enter a keep area that isn't otherwise occupied, check for a random encounter. Also check for a random encounter every 10 minutes the characters spend resting in the castle.

In most circumstances, a random encounter occurs on a roll of 18 or higher on a d20. To determine what the characters encounter, consult the table below.

d12+d8	Encounter
2	A Memory of Fire Falling
3	Otherworldly Groaning
4	3d4 skeletons and 50% chance of 1 wight
5	2d4 ghouls and 2 ghasts
6	1 wraith
7	Seneschal
8	2d4 shadows
9	Wailing Prophetess
10	1d4+2 phantom warriors
11	Remembrance
12	1d4 sword wraith warriors and 1 sword wraith commander
13	Plaintiff
14	A Memory of Battles Past
15	A Memory of Ice and Light
16	A Memory of Living Death
17	A Memory of Broken Vows
18	A Memory of Mounting Despair
19	A Memory of Soul's Betrayal
20	Lord Soth

Use the descriptions that follow to run each encounter.

A Memory of Battles Past

YOU ARE CAUGHT IN THE SUDDEN WHIRL OF HORSES AND SCREAMS. A SPECTRAL BATTLEFIELD, TINGED IN GREEN, RISES BEFORE YOU FROM NOTHING. KNIGHTLY FIGURES CROSS SWORDS WITH UNSEEN FOES.

This memory of battle recalls Soth's days as a knight, pushing back against evil. 1d4 **sword wraith warriors** engage the characters, led by a **sword wraith commander**.

A Memory of Broken Vows

GHOSTLY TREES LEAN FORWARD FROM THE WALLS, ENCASING YOU IN A MEMORY OF LONG AGO. BIRDS TRILL IN THE TREES AND A KNIGHT STANDS BEFORE YOU, HIS HAND ON HIS BLADE. HE SPEAKS, BUT YOU CAN'T HEAR THE WORDS.

The **knight** appears only for a brief moment or two before vanishing. A character who wishes to try to discern his words may attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) ability check, success revealing the knight is accusing you of murdering your wife.

A Memory of Fire Falling

ETHEREAL FLAMES BURST THROUGH THE WALLS, SHOWERING YOU IN HARMLESS SPARKS AND SMOKE THAT FADES TO REVEAL A MEMORY WROUGHT IN SPECTRAL HUES. AN ELF MAID STANDS BEFORE YOU, AS FLAMES SURROUND YOU BOTH. SHE OFFERS YOU A BABY, SILENTLY BEGGING YOU TO TAKE IT.

The elf maid and her child are ephemeral, and intangible. They flicker for a few moments in the ghostly fires, then vanish.

LORD SOTH IS PLAGUED BY WARPED VERSIONS OF HIS MEMORIES AND HE FINDS IT HARD TO TELL TRUTH FROM FICTION. I SUPPOSE WE CAN ALL EMPATHISE WITH THAT THESE DAYS.

A Memory of Ice and Light

BEFORE YOU, GHOSTLY FROST BEGINS TO CREEP ALONG THE FLOORS AND WALLS. FRAGMENTS OF THE PAST JITTER AND CRACKLE BEFORE YOU, MEMORIES OF TIME SPENT IN MOURNING AND DESPAIR. CENTURIES WHIRL BY BEFORE FADING INTO NOTHINGNESS.

Each non-undead creature that can see the phenomena must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or age $1d4 \times 10$ years.

A Memory of Living Death

THE FLOOR AND WALLS OF THE KEEP SHINE IN THE SHADOWS, DARK STONE MIRRORING ITSELF ENDLESSLY INTO THE PAST. YOUR REFLECTION STARES BACK AT YOU FROM THE DARKNESS AND ITS FORM WITHERS BEFORE YOUR EYES, UNDEATH CONSUMING AND RAVAGING YOUR FEATURES.

Creatures that glimpse their own reflection are faced with a taste of their own mortality, and the horror that entails. All affected creatures must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature drops to 0 hit points. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to lose energy and is poisoned. The exhausted creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, dropping to 0 hit points on a failure or ending the effect on a success.

A Memory of Mounting Despair

A SONG WENDS ITS WAY TO YOU THROUGH THE CASTLE, A SONG OF GRIEF AND LOSS. ITS WORDS ARE COMPLEX, AND LACED WITH BARBS THAT SINK INTO YOUR MIND, REMINDING YOU OF MISTAKES MADE, AND ATONEMENTS STYMIED BY THE CRUEL HAND OF FATE.

This song is a snippet of banshee song from Lord Soth's throne room, which drags unfortunate listeners into the afterlife. This song has no effect on constructs or undead. All other creatures that can hear the song must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, a creature takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

A Memory of Soul's Betrayal

THE CEILING ABOVE YOU, ONCE DARK STONE, IS SUDDENLY TRANSFORMED INTO A STARRY SKYSCAPE OF THE DISTANT PAST, EMERALD FLAMES ILLUMINATING WHAT ONCE WAS. HIGH ABOVE YOU, A STAR FALLS, BRINGING WITH IT FIRE AND DEATH. IT STRIKES THE EARTH, AND THE WORLD CHANGES FOREVER. THE IMPACT CARRIES WITH IT A DREADFUL RESONANCE, A DIVINE THUNDER THAT RIPPLES THROUGH THE WORLD, BREAKING AND BURNING IT. YOU WATCH IT ALL, AS IT FLASHES PAST YOUR EYES.

This memory of the Cataclysm, which devastated Soth's home world due to his treachery, is a shocking and disturbing scene.



I HAVE OFTEN FOUND IN MY TRAVELS THAT DOMAINS OF DREAD MIRROR THEIR DARKLORDS IN THE SMALL WAYS AS WELL AS THE LARGE ONES. IN SITHICUS, FOR INSTANCE, MANY OF THE LIVING DEAD HAVE THE SAME BURNING EYES AS LORD SOTH.

Ghouls

CREEPING AROUND A CORNER, RAGGED-LOOKING AND SALLOW SERVANTS WITH YELLOW CLAWS WATCH YOU CAREFULLY. THEY WEAR LIVERY EMBLAZED WITH A BLACK ROSE, AND DON'T SEEM TO WANT TO COME CLOSER.

These **ghouls** are part of Soth's household, but mostly spend their time avoiding him. They are opportunists and carrion eaters, but don't engage in combat unless they have no choice.

Lord Soth

Lord Soth makes a surprise appearance.

A CHILL WAIL BREEZES PAST YOU, AND TWO BURNING EYES OF FLAME WATCH YOU FROM THE SHADOWS. "TO WHAT DO I OWE THE PLEASURE?" CHIDES A HOLLOW VOICE, WITH NO HINT OF AMUSEMENT.

See **Lord Soth's** statblock in the Appendices for his tactics.

Otherworldly Groaning

THE AIR GROWS COLDER, BITING AND CLAWING AT YOUR THROAT. SOUNDS TRAVEL ON THE WISPS OF FOG THAT DRIFT THROUGH THE KEEP, MURMURS FROM TIMES LONG FORGOTTEN.

This invisible **allip** follows the characters as far as it can, touching their minds with distorted truths and secret fictions whenever it gets the chance.

Phantom Warriors

A GROUP OF SOLDIERS LEANS AGAINST ONE WALL, LAUGHING AND CHATTING IN STARK CONTRAST TO THEIR SURROUNDINGS. THEIR ARMOUR GLEAMS FROM A DIM PHOSPHORESCENCE SHIMMERING FROM INSIDE THEIR TRANSLUCENT BODIES. THEY DON'T SEEM TO NOTICE YOU.

These warriors are the spectral imprints of Soth's erstwhile knights. The **phantom warriors** don't respond unless they are actively disturbed, and are friendly enough to anyone who engages them. They don't remember anything after the Cataclysm that killed them, and get angry or confused if they are pushed for answers they don't remember. They can't leave the room they are found in, and dissipate after 10 minutes.

Plaintiff

A NERVOUS LOOKING ELF STUMBLES AWAY FROM YOU. THEY SEEM HALF-DELIRIOUS FROM THE COLD, AND THEIR LANTERN GUTTERED OUT LONG AGO. THEIR SKIN IS ICE-WHITE.

This elf **commoner** came to beg a boon from Lord Soth, but fell foul of the evil of Nedragaard keep. They have four levels of exhaustion and are barely coherent.

Remembrance

AS YOU WALK THE DARK PLACES OF NEDRAGAARD KEEP, THE OPPRESSIVE SHADE OF THE CASTLE SEEMS TO DRAW OUT YOUR OWN MEMORIES-MOMENTS OF LIGHT, MOMENTS OF LAUGHTER. ANYTHING TO FIGHT OFF THE EVER-PRESENT CHILL OF STONE AND MORTAR.

Allow each character to recount a moment that made them happy or content. Any character that does so gains Inspiration.



Seneschal

A SNUFFLING, GRUNTING SOUND ECHOES DOWN THE CORRIDOR AS A ROTUND FELLOW IN A TABARD AND HOLDING A CANDLE BUSTLES TOWARDS YOU. HE STOPS NEARBY, AND SNIFFS THE AIR. "HERE TO THE SEE THE MASTER, ARE YOU?" HE SNEERS. "VERY WELL, THEN. COME ALONG. HE DOESN'T HAVE ALL DAY." HE BARKS A LAUGH.

This is **Azrael Dak**, a werebadger (see appendices) who acts as Lord Soth's seneschal, administrator, and general busybody. He eagerly directs and guides strangers to Lord Soth's throne room. If he is refused in this, he leaves to inform Soth of the new arrivals.

In the recent past, Azrael attempted a coup against Lord Soth, which may have been successful, or it may not have. Azrael remembers it succeeding, but cannot reconcile this with his current position as seneschal. Close inspection of the dwarf reveals that he no longer possesses a shadow. He finds it hard to answer any questions, but often burbles about hidden mines somewhere in Sithicus which hold a secret.



IN MY TIME AS A CARTOGRAPHER I HAVE VISITED MANY FOUL CASTLES AND DANK DUNGEONS WITHOUT FLINCHING. BUT I WOULD NOT RETURN TO NEDRAGAARD KEEP, NOT FOR ANYTHING.

Shadows

NEDRAGAARD IS STEEPED IN A GREY DULLNESS, AN EVER-PRESENT GLOOM THAT SEEPS INTO YOUR SOUL. AS YOU WANDER FOR WHAT SEEMS LIKE ETERNITY, THAT DULLNESS SEEMS TO MOVE, CREEPING UP BEHIND YOU IN A SUDDEN TORRENT OF DESPAIR.

These **shadows** are all that remains of civilians who Soth once knew. They grasp for the smell and taste of life, and must be destroyed or driven back with force.

Skeletons

THE CLANKING OF BONES AND WEAPONS HITS YOUR EARS AS A GROUP OF SKELETAL WARRIORS CLANK IN YOUR DIRECTION. THEY DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE YOU.

These **skeleton** warriors have orders to patrol the keep, but nothing else. As a result, they ignore any intruders except in self-defence.

Sword Wraith Warriors

ARMoured WARRIORS CHARGE THROUGH ONE WALL, FACES RIDDLED WITH SCARS AND BONES MELTED FROM THEIR FLESH. THEY BEAR A ROSE INSIGNIA ON THEIR ARMS, AND ARE TRANSLUCENT. THEY CHANT IN AN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE.

These spectral warriors are dreamlike figures from Soth's musings. A character able to understand the dead language the knights are speaking can hear their battle cry translates to, "My honor is my life."

Wailing Prophetess

THE IMAGE OF A BURNING ELF DRIFTS PAST YOU, HER EYES BOUND IN GAUZE-LIKE MIST. "I SEE YOUR FUTURE," SHE CROAKS, BITTERLY. "YOU WILL DIE A THOUSAND TIMES FOR EACH LIFE YOUR FOLLY HAS ENDED THIS DAY."

The burning elf only repeats herself, and drifts through anyone who blocks her path.

Wraith

SOMETHING BLEAK PEELS ITSELF FROM THE WALLS AND CREEPS CLOSER TO YOU. IT CHITTERS TO ITSELF OF TIME GONE BY, AND PROMISES BROKEN. IT BUBBLES ABOUT FIRE AND STARS FALLING FROM THE SKY. IT REEKS OF DEATH.

This **wraith** is beyond saving and remembers only the little it needs to drive a remorseless, unceasing hunger for the life force of the living.

AREAS OF NEDRAGAARD KEEP

H1 Bridge

THIS STONE LOOKS INCREDIBLY UNSAFE. MADE OF CRUMBLING STONE AND HELD TOGETHER BY HOPE, IT SPANS 60 FEET CONNECTING THE BASE OF THE KEEP TO THE EDGE OF THE CHASM. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE, A RUSTED METAL PORTCULLIS BLOCKS ENTRANCE TO THE MAIN COURTYARD OF THE KEEP.

Each time a creature crosses the drawbridge, there is a 5% chance the bridge crumbles under the creature. If so, the creature must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the chasm, disappearing into the darkness forever. If a companion is within 5 feet of the creature and reaches out to grab it, the creature has advantage on the save.

Set into the wall on the other side of the bridge is a heavy iron portcullis that can be raised and lowered using the winch in Area 2. Although the portcullis is too sturdy to be damaged by weapons, casting a *knock* spell on the portcullis raises it. A character can also lift the portcullis with a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check, and a Small character can squeeze between the portcullis bars with a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

H2 Gatehouse

A ROTTEN WOODEN DOOR OPENS INTO A TINY GATEHOUSE, WHICH CONTAINS LITTLE EXCEPT FOR A LARGE WINCH BY WHICH TO RAISE THE PORTCULLIS, AND ANOTHER BROKEN WHEEL BY WHICH TO RAISE THE DRAWBRIDGE.

A creature can attempt a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to raise the portcullis by turning one of the wheels here.

H3 Courtyard

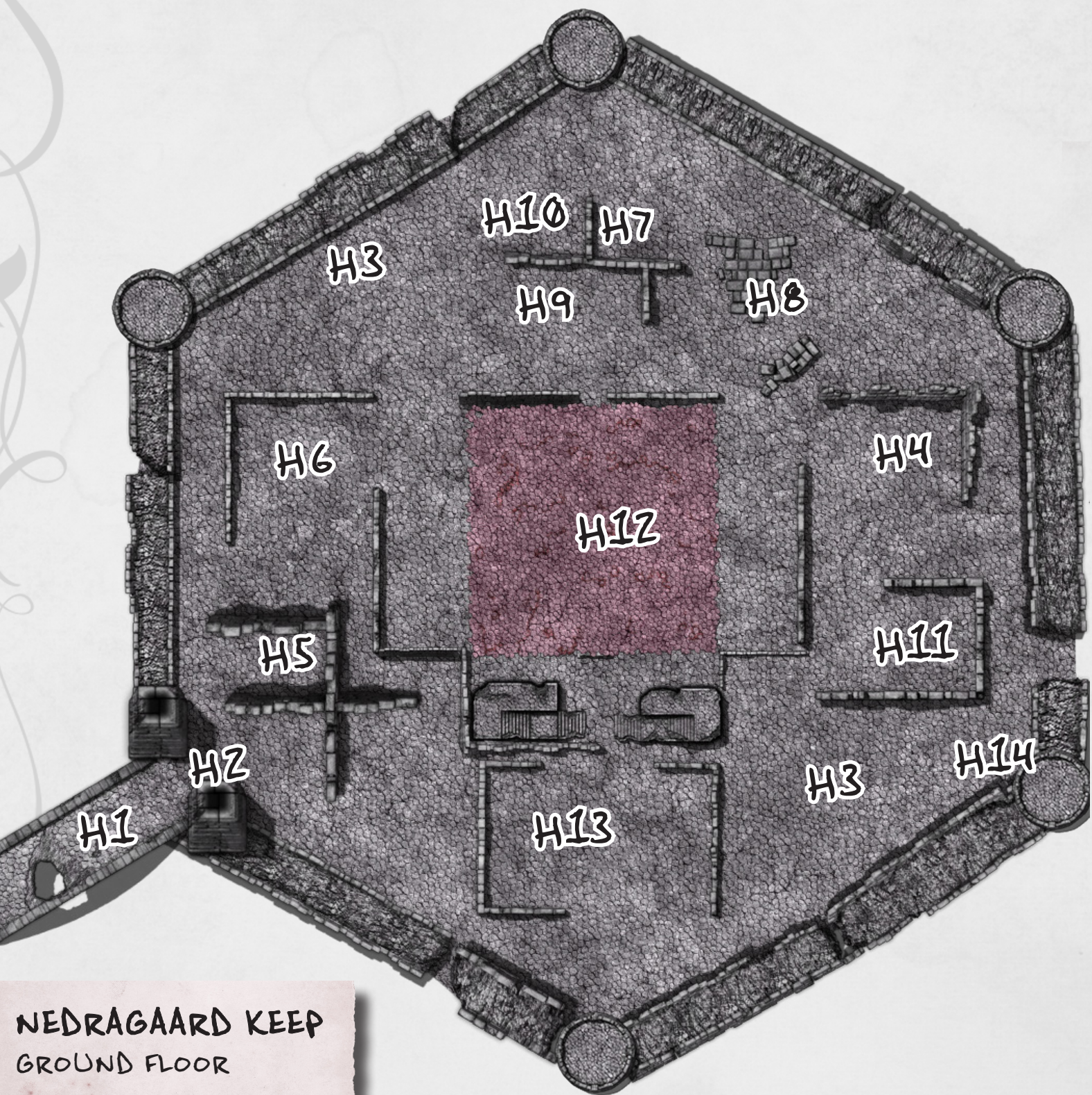
THIS COURTYARD EXTENDS IN A CIRCLE AROUND THE KEEP PROPER, GREY FLAGSTONES BATHED IN SILVERY MIST. THERE ARE MANY DOORS INTO THE KEEP FROM HERE.

Check for a random encounter each time the characters enter area H3.

H4 Armory

THIS ROOM IS FILLED WITH RUSTED ARMOUR AND BROKEN SWORDS. EACH ITEM IS ENGRAVED WITH A DELICATE ROSE PATTERN, TARNISHED AND BLACKENED AS IF COVERED IN SOOT.

The armour and weapons in this room once belonged to Soth's personal troops. They have lain here for uncounted centuries, untouched, and are of little use to anyone in their current state. Any mundane armour or martial weapon can be found here, made functional by the use of a *mending* spell over the course of a short or long rest, or through smith's tools.



I SUPPOSE THERE'S A CERTAIN IRONY TO CALLING IT THE "GROUND FLOOR" WHEN THE ENTIRE KEEP IS SUSPENDED ABOVE AN INFINITE CHASM OF DARKNESS AND DESPAIR, BUT YOU MUST ALLOW ME THE OCCASIONAL FLIGHT OF FANCY.

H5 Wine Cellar

SHARDS OF GLASS LIE AMONG SHATTERED WINE RACKS, WHICH LITTER THE FLOOR. SOME KIND OF ACCIDENT BROKE ALL THE BOTTLES IN THIS ROOM, AND NO-ONE EVER CLEANED UP THE MESS.

Soth has no use for wine in his current state, and neither do the vast majority of his dead servants.

H6 Kitchen

THIS MODEST KITCHEN LOOKS LIKE IT WAS ONCE USED TO PREPARE A LARGE NUMBER OF MEALS AT ONCE, WITH FAR MORE HOOKS, TABLES AND IMPLEMENTS THAN WOULD BE STRICTLY NECESSARY FOR ONE HOUSEHOLD.

The **ghost** of Soth's chef lurks in the kitchen. He doesn't remember much, other than his skills are wasted here. If possible, he attempts to possess anyone who strays into the room, and takes their body for a joyride around the kitchen, searching in vain for fresh ingredients.

H7 Cloak Room

THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN TO REVEAL A ROOM STUFFED WITH SHELVES AND HOOKS, ON WHICH HANG A DOUR SELECTION OF FURRED CLOAKS.

Amid the gloomy finery, a **trapper** is waiting patiently for someone careless to wander by.

H8 Room Collapse

THE PILE OF STONES TUMBLING AGAINST THIS CORNER OF THE KEEP SUGGEST THE STRUCTURE IS NOT AS SOUND AS IT MIGHT APPEAR FROM THE OUTSIDE.

This room was destroyed in an attack on the keep many years ago, and Soth has never bothered to have it repaired.

H9 Sitting Room

SHEETS COVER FURNITURE IN THIS ROOM, AND A LAYER OF DUST RESTS ON THE SHEETS. AN ARRAY OF WINDOWS STARE OUT INTO THE MISTY COURTYARD, BATHED IN THE HALF-LIGHT. IT DOESN'T SEEM ANYONE COMES HERE OFTEN.

This room bears no utility for Soth, but was a favoured haunt of his first wife before she was slain in suspicious circumstances. Most of the covered furniture pieces are long, cushioned seats or small tables on which to rest drinks. One of the sofas is a **mimic**, which attempts to slip into someone's gear masquerading as one of their items. Characters with a passive Perception of 15 or higher notice the absence of one sofa as they leave the room.

H10 Privy

A LONG WOODEN BENCH LIES AGAINST ONE WALL, WITH SEVERAL CIRCULAR HOLES CARVED IN IT, PRESUMABLY FOR ENGAGING IN UNMENTIONABLE ACTIVITIES.

The carved-out space under the privy is deep, and leads down almost 100 feet into the bedrock of the keep. At the bottom can be found a sea of calcified filth. Undeath comes with some advantages, one of which is reprieve from the tyranny of defecation, so the privy has gone unused for some time. Hidden in the darkness, a single **the hungry** waits patiently for food to fall down into the hole.



H11 Music Room

THIS ROOM IS FURNISHED WITH MOULD-STAINED COUCHES, ARRANGED AROUND A SERIES OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. A LARGE HARP IN ONE CORNER LIES NEGLECTED, A LUTE HAS BEEN SHATTERED ACROSS THE FLOOR, AND A LOPSIDED HARPSICHORD IS SHOVED UP AGAINST ONE WALL. NOISES STRUM FROM WITHIN IT.

This room is sentimental to Soth, who is displeased if he discovers anyone has intruded upon it. Two swarms of rats have taken up residence inside the harpsichord, and are aggressive towards those who disturb them. The harp is an *instrument of the bards* (Ollamh Harp) but is much larger than the average example and weighs close to 1000 lbs.

H12 Grand Hall

THIS HUGE ROOM SEEMS ALL THE MORE VAST FOR HOW EMPTY IT IS. THE ROOF SPIRALS UP ABOVE YOU INTO CRISS-CROSSING BEAMS THAT CONFUSE AND BEDEVIL THE ONLOOKER. MANY DOORS LEAD INTO THIS ROOM ON THE GROUND FLOOR, AND AT THE BACK OF THE ROOM TWO STAIRCASES LEAD UP TO THE FIRST FLOOR.

This room was once a throne room of sorts, but Soth rarely frequented it, and death did not change his apathy towards it. Over the years the fixtures were removed, leaving it bare. For a time, it was the home of an intelligent mimic, but that creature has since moved to area H9.

H13 Stables

THIS LARGE CHAMBER HAS DRIED, WITHERED HAY SCATTERED ACROSS THE FLOOR. NINE WOODEN STALLS HAVE BEEN BUILT HERE, ALL BUT ONE OF WHICH ARE EMPTY. SCORCH MARKS ACROSS THE CEILING AND FLOOR OF THE ROOM, AND THE OCCASIONAL FLICKER OF LIGHT FROM INSIDE THE OCCUPIED STALL, SUGGEST THE CURRENT INHABITANT IS NOT YOUR CONVENTIONAL MOUNT.

The final stall is occupied by a **nightmare**, which answers to no one but Soth himself. Soth keeps the nightmare cooped up here, frustrating and angering the creature, which can't understand why it isn't being ridden out to pillage and maim innocents. The grumpy nightmare sees visitors as a chance to make up for lost time.

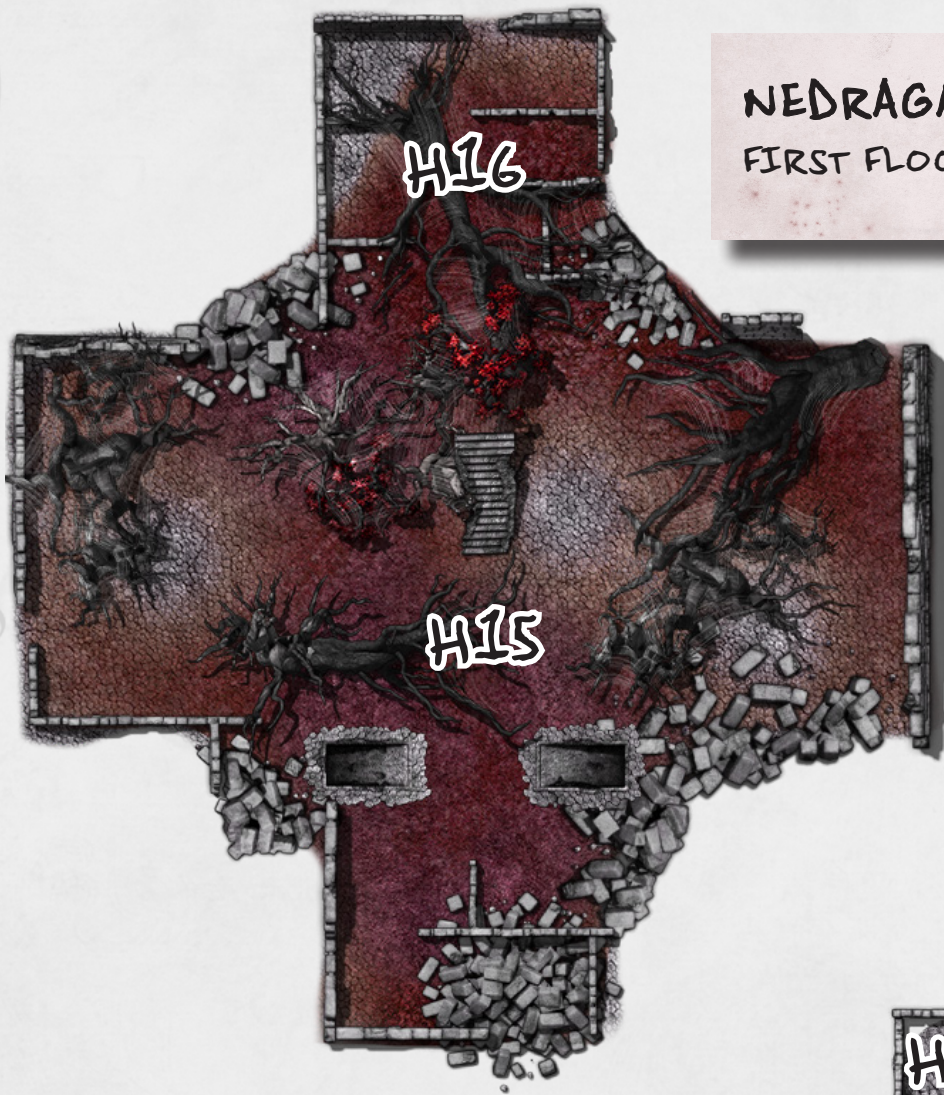
H14 Psionic Breach

THERE'S A STRANGE SHIMMERING AROUND THIS AREA OF THE KEEP - A GLIMMERING VIOLET HAZE THAT CALLS TO YOU.

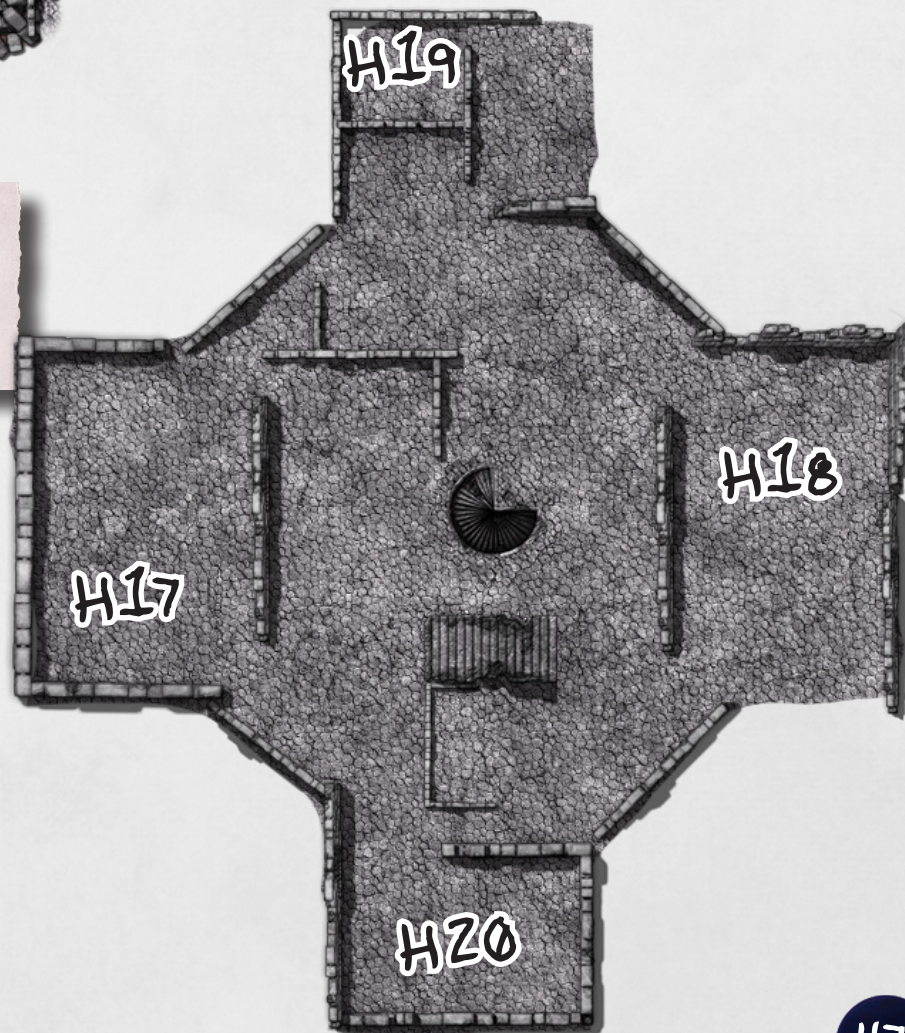
This wall of the keep has been penetrated by a psionic tether from the domain of Bluetspur, where the evil God Brain is attempting to breach its prison. If a creature approaches, there is a 10% chance that the God Brain uses that creature as a tether to transport a mind flayer into Nedragaard Keep. The **mind flayer** is confused and bewildered at the successful transfer, but has no way to travel back. Cut off from the hive mind, it quickly falls to despondency and wanders off to die somewhere alone out of loneliness.



NEDRAGAARD KEEP
FIRST FLOOR



NEDRAGAARD KEEP
SECOND FLOOR



H15 Gardens

THIS GARDEN OF BLACK ROSE BUSHES IS SNARLED, TANGLED AND OVERGROWN WITH VICIOUS THORNS. IN THE MIDST OF THE BUSHES, BARELY VISIBLE THROUGH THE FLOWERS, A SPIRAL STAIRCASE LEADS UPWARDS.

This garden was once regularly tended, but no longer. The black rose is a tenacious plant, and it dominates this entire floor, having rooted itself into the stone throughout the level. The entire level acts as if it were under the effects of a *plant growth* spell, though it is not truthfully a spell and cannot be dispelled. The plants grow to a height of 5 feet, and provide heavy cover to any creature immersed in them. Moving through 5 feet of roses deals 4d4 piercing damage to the creature attempting it. Worse, hidden in the brambles and thorns are a slew of **thorn spitters**, **mantraps**, and **assassin vines**.

The garden is blessed with a vague sentience, and moves out of the way for the following creatures, allowing them a path through the garden:

- Lord Soth, and any guests he has formally granted leave to wander the castle
- Azrael Dak and anyone accompanying him
- Undead creatures
- Creatures carrying large fires (a torch or larger) that succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) ability check to threaten the recalcitrant roses

NOTE TO SELF:
ALWAYS, ALWAYS
PREPARE A FIRE
SPELL. YOU'LL END UP
NEEDING IT.

H16 Guardian of the Obsidian Bloom

NESTLED IN THE DEEP HEART OF THE GARDEN, THE BRAMBLES AND BLACK ROSES SEEM TO TAKE ON A LIFE OF THEIR OWN.

This garden is the beating heart of Sithicus' black rose infestation, and it has a terrible guardian. Should the adventurers wander too far into the undergrowth (or attempt to harm the flowers with fire), it awakens to destroy them. The guardian is wrought entirely from flowers and vines, and has the statblock of a **hydra** with the following changes:

- It is a plant rather than a monstrosity
- Instead of heads, it has black rose blooms
- Instead of bite attacks, it pierces foes with thorns

If the guardian is destroyed, the plants in areas H15 and H16 wither and become dormant. As long as Lord Soth remains Lord of Sithicus, the plants regrow at dusk. Similarly, the Guardian resurrects each day at dusk.



Hr7 Temple of Mishakal

THIS ROOM ONCE POSSESSED A STAINED GLASS WINDOW, WHICH NOW LIES IN TWISTED PIECES ON THE FLOOR. DAMAGED, CRUMBLING FRESCOES HINT AT IMAGES OF THE SUN AND LIFE, NO LONGER CLEARLY DISCERNIBLE. A LARGE STATUE HAS BEEN DASHED ACROSS THE ROOM, THE HEAD OF WHICH STARES SIGHTLESSLY AT THE CEILING. "HEAL ME," THE ROOM SEEMS TO WHISPER. "HEAL ME."

This temple was dedicated to a goddess of healing, sacred to Soth's knightly order before his fall. The statue was ruined in the cataclysm that damned Soth, and has lain here ever since. The statue can be repaired over the course of an hour by repeated use of the *mending* spell, by a character with sovereign glue, or by a character with proficiency in mason's tools who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence check.

If pieced back together, the character who performed the deed feels little, but discovers themselves holding a wooden staff. The staff carried by the statue has vanished, and the statue is now standing with its hands clasped in silent contemplation instead. This is the *blue crystal staff* (see Appendices).



ONLY A GOD OF EVIL WOULD BE NEGLECTFUL ENOUGH TO LEAVE USEFUL ARTEFACTS HANGING AROUND TEMPLES WHERE ANY OLD HERO MIGHT STUMBLE INTO THEM AND GET UP TO MISCHIEF

Hr8 Temple of Paladine

THIS ROOM'S FLOOR IS RENT DOWN THE MIDDLE, AS IF BY GIGANTIC CLAWS SHARP ENOUGH TO PIERCE STONE. THE WALLS ARE WARPED, MELTED LONG AGO BY AN INTENSE HEAT. ON A DAIS, A 10-FOOT-LONG SILVER STATUE OF A DRAGON SEEMS THE FOCAL POINT OF THE ROOM, BLACKENED WITH SOOT AND GRIME. IN ITS CLAWS, IT HOLDS A LONGSWORD.

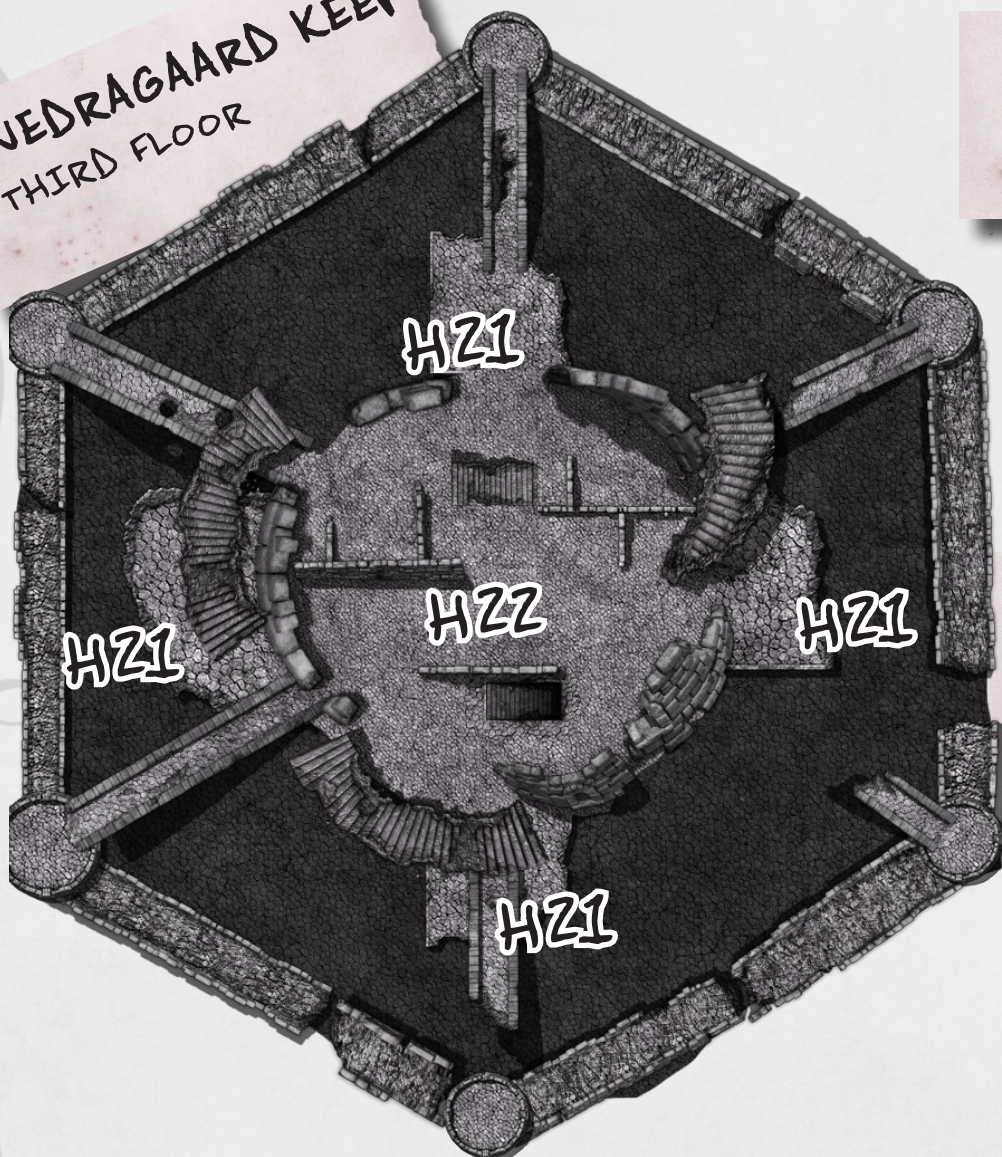
This temple was dedicated to a god of good and law, from whom Soth's knightly order drew their power. Paladine turned his face from here long ago and the sword is fused to the statue in a ceremonial fashion. Any paladin committed to an Oath of Devotion, the Crown or Redemption (you may also accept another oath roleplayed to comply with broader principles of good and law) can place their hand on the blade to draw forth a *holy avenger*. This holy avenger is called Oathmaker, and it has the following additional benefit:

- While holding Oathmaker, the bearer is immune to the spellcasting of Lord Soth.



ONLY A GOD OF GOOD WOULD DECIDE THAT PUTTING SANCTIMONIOUS SWORDS EVERYWHERE IS THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO GET THINGS DONE.

NEDRAGAARD KEEP
THIRD FLOOR



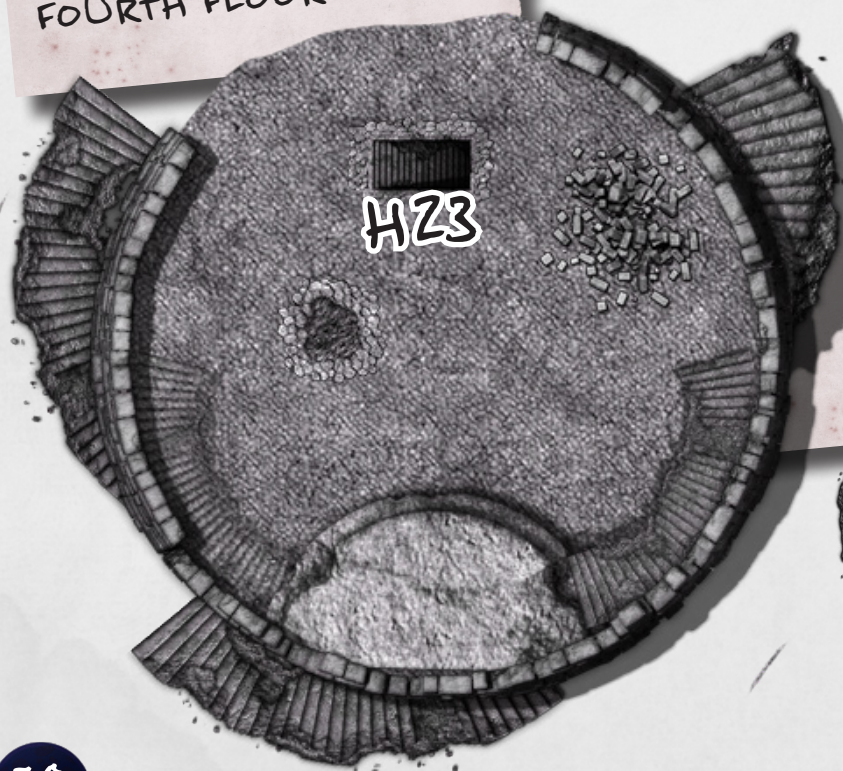
FIFTH FLOOR



SIXTH FLOOR



NEDRAGAARD KEEP
FOURTH FLOOR



SEVENTH FLOOR



EIGHTH FLOOR



NINTH FLOOR



H19 Library

THE WALLS HERE ARE LINED FLOOR TO CEILING WITH WOODEN BOOKCASES, TO WHICH BOOKS ARE CHAINED IN LARGE NUMBERS. A RAVEN RESTING ON A LECTERN GIVES YOU A RESENTFUL LOOK AS YOU ENTER, THEN FLUTTERS OFF TOWARDS AN OPEN WINDOW.

The books here were almost all ruined in the fire that swept through Soth's home on the night of the Cataclysm. The vast majority are charcoal husks with no discernible text remaining on them. A few books, however, remain unscathed by the fire, enchanted by a powerful wizard to resist harm.

- **The Libram of Ineffable Damnation.** A tome bound in dark leather, with a screaming face embossed onto it. It describes in agonizing detail the effects of the Black Moon upon magic. The book is only legible under the light of the Black Moon. It is also a spellbook containing the following wizard spells: *animate dead*, *circle of death*, *danse macabre*, *finger of death*.
- *A tome of leadership and influence*
- *A manual of flesh golems*

H20 Baths

THIS ROOM IS TILED WITH CERAMICS, MOST OF WHICH ARE BROKEN AND BATTERED, LEAVING HOLES EVERYWHERE IN THE DECOR. SEVERAL SUBSTANTIAL, EMPTY METAL BATHTUBS ARE PLACED CONVENIENTLY AROUND THE ROOM.

Much like the other conveniences of mortal life, the baths hold little attraction to Soth or his minions. Characters can rest here for up to 4 hours without the threat of random encounters.

H21 Balcony

THIS BALCONY ALLOWS A VIEW OF SITHICUS FROM ABOVE, SHADES OF GREY BLENDING INTO EACH OTHER AND THE GLIMMER OF LIGHTS FROM NEARBY TOWNS THE ONLY SIGN OF LIFE IN A DEAD LANDSCAPE. THE COLD WIND BRUSHES AGAINST YOU, TEASING YOU WITH THOUGHTS OF TOPPLING TO YOUR DOOM INTO THE COURTYARD BELOW.

The balcony is windy, and connects to the outer balconies by thin 5-foot passages, none of which have the benefit of railings or supports. Two out of the three balconies on this level connect to staircases A and C respectively, which wind around the outside of the tower going forward.

H22 Desolation

THIS FLOOR IS A STRUCTURAL DISASTER, WITH WALLS CRUMBLING INTO PILES OF ROCK EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK, LEAVING ONLY A SKELETAL EDIFICE TO KEEP THE ENTIRE BUILDING IN ONE PIECE.

This wretched level of the keep is in a dire state, and is kept aloft by some unknown providence. Hidden in the rubble and wreckage, a colony of **stone cursed** hide in plain sight from the guardians of the keep, preying on those who would come to pay homage to Soth. At any one time, 6d6 **stone cursed** are hiding in the desolation, though they seldom reveal themselves in greater number than groups of two or three.



H23 Throne Room

AT THE BACK OF THIS CIRCULAR ROOM LIES AN INTIMIDATING THRONE WROUGHT FROM BLACK MARBLE AND STUDDED WITH BLOOD RED GEMSTONES. BEHIND AND ABOVE THE THRONE, DUAL STAIRCASES CLIMB THE INSIDE WALL TO A BALCONY OVERLOOKING THE CHAMBER. LIKELY ONCE OVERBEARINGLY DECORATED, THERE IS EVIDENCE OF A BLAZING FIRE THAT HAS LEFT THE ROOM IN ASHEN TATTERS. A CHANDELIER LIES SHATTERED ON THE FLOOR. ON THE WALLS OF THE ROOM, SIX TALL MIRRORS ARE PLACED AT EYE LEVEL, ALMOST LIKE DOORWAYS INTO OTHER TIMES AND PLACES. WROUGHT-IRON BLACK ROSES FRAME SILVERY WHITE GLASS WHICH CONJURE FAINT IMAGES - ALL BUT THE LAST, WHICH IS BROKEN, A LARGE SHARD MISSING FROM THE PANE.

Lord Soth is almost always found here on his throne.

ON THE THRONE, A FIGURE IN BLACKENED CEREMONIAL ARMOUR SITS PATIENTLY AND STILL AS STONE. FLAMING EYES BURN INSIDE A SHADOWY VISOR, AS THE FALLEN KNIGHT OBSERVES YOU CALMLY.

Lord Soth does not appreciate visitors, and neither does he appreciate those who would waste his time. Anyone presumptuous enough to stand before him without invitation is likely to meet a swift end by his sword.

Quick thinking characters who tempt Soth with one of his desires might hold his attention long enough to bargain. In battle, Soth is quick and decisive. (See the appendices for more information on Soth's tactics and abilities.)

I WISH I COULD SAY THAT LORD SOTH AND I ENJOYED A NICE QUIET CHAT ABOUT HIS TIME AS DARKLORD. ALAS, I'M AFRAID TO SAY HE'S AS HOSTILE AS EVER.

STRAHD GAVE ME DINNER AT LEAST BEFORE TRYING TO EAT ME, BUT SOTH JUST UNLEASHED HIS BANSHEES.

GODS BLESS EXPEDITIOUS RETREAT.



If Soth perishes, he reforms upon his throne at midnight under the next full moon.

Throne. Soth's throne is a place of dark power, and holds some part of his dominion over Sithicus. While seated on his throne, Soth is immune to spells of 6th-level or lower unless he wishes to be affected.

Banshees. It is also haunted by the **banshees** of the thirteen elven women who abetted Soth's fall into evil. The banshees arise to defend Soth should he be attacked. Destroying a banshee is temporary—they reform at dusk each evening. From dusk until dawn, the banshees sing a deadly chorus known as “A Dark Knight's Tale.” This chorus is audible to anyone inside area H22. The song lasts until sunrise, and any creature which can hear the music at the start of their turn must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or fall to 0 hit points. A creature which successfully saves against this effect is immune to it until the next dawn.

H24 Vaults

THIS CIRCULAR ROOM CONTAINS A SERIES OF GARGOYLES THAT CROUCH MENACINGLY FROM THEIR PERCHES AROUND THE EDGES. THE WOODEN DOORS LEADING INTO THESE ROOMS WERE ONCE STURDY, BUT NOW ARE BROKEN, SOME LEAVING ONLY HINGES BEHIND TO TELL OF THEIR EXISTENCE. THE VAULTS BEYOND ARE EMPTY, SAVE FOR SOME STRAY COINS LEFT BEHIND FROM THE PILLAGE.

Five **gargoyles** guard this room, though in truth there is little to guard here. Azrael Dak has been siphoning money from this finite source in order to fuel his many habits (and sow discord) but the well has finally run dry. Soth knows nothing of this, but might care little even if he did.

INSIDE THE MEMORY MIRRORS

Inside the mirrors, which Soth can walk into whenever he pleases, are scenes from his history, twisted to show Soth as the hero of the narrative. In five of the mirrors, these scenes play out to his whims, but the sixth broken mirror shows nothing. This was the mirror in which Soth had warped the memory of Kitiara to reflect her accepting him and throwing herself at his feet, and now that vision is lost to him until he can find the missing shard. In recent days, Soth has rarely entered the mirrors at all, too caught up in plots of vengeance against the thief who would steal his most precious memory from him.

Alas, as per the terms of the Dungeon Master's Guild license, we are not allowed to directly replicate earlier modules, and nor are we allowed to explore non-approved settings. Soth's visions inside the memory mirrors are explicitly covered in the 1995 Advanced Dungeons & Dragons module “When Black Roses Bloom” and relate directly to the Dragonlance campaign setting, which is not permitted for use by Guild authors at the time of writing.



H25 Caradoc's Prison

THIS DANK AND DARK CHAMBER IS FILLED WITH A SENSE OF REGRET. A SHUFFLING NOISE, AND THE SMELL OF OBSEQUIOUS MUFFLINGS, INDICATES YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

This chamber is the prison of a **ghost** called Caradoc, who once served as Lord Soth's seneschal, eventually killing Soth's first wife to advance his own interests. Alas, Caradoc's fell from favour when he kept information on Kitiara's spirit from Lord Soth, and he was slain in the ensuing disagreement. Attempts to banish the ghost have proved entirely unsuccessful, as the ghost simply re-materialises inside the room to which he is bound. The ghost knows a great deal about Soth's history, which it eagerly trades in exchange for news on the outside world. Caradoc also wishes to see Soth humiliated (this hobby is one of his few remaining joys) and has an incentive to provide adventurers with information that might drive them to attack Soth.

H26 Seneschal's Chambers

THESE ROOMS SMELL OF FUR, MUSK, AND BLOOD. PILES OF MESSY CLOTHING, WICKER CONTAINERS, AND SOILED FURNITURE ARE SPREAD AROUND NEGLIGENTLY.

These chambers are where **Azrael Dak** rests when he is not occupied with his own affairs. When he feeds, he often drags the victim back here to eat. Searching these chambers reveals the following:

- A journal in scrawled dwarven script detailing how Tindafulus came to grant Soth the *memory mirrors*, and the slow entrancement of the knight by said artefacts. The journal also admits to Azrael's sustained embezzlement from the treasury.
- A ragged scrap of paper containing an incantation in deep speech called the Ritual of Screaming Shadows (see Sidebar).

H27 Soth's Study

DARKNESS, SHEER AND OPPRESSIVE, BLANKETS THIS ROOM. THE SOUND OF SHUFFLING AND TENEBOUS GROWLING EMANATES FROM WITHIN.

This chamber is Soth's private study, but having read the books herein hundreds of times, he no longer frequents it. It is cloaked in a magical darkness, cast by the illusionist Tindafulus, in which hide Soth's three **shadow mastiffs**. The dogs are starved for attention, and far from being aggressive, desire someone to play with more than anything. The desk and bookshelves in this room are filled with accounts ledgers burned and blackened from a fire. Soth's spellbooks are also here, in a deep maroon binding and containing all the spells he has prepared.

RITUAL OF SCREAMING SHADOWS

This ritual taps into a primal corruption in the lowest parts of Sithicus, calling on the same strange powers that taint the domain known now as the Shadow Rift. The ritual must be inscribed into a ritual book or a spellbook before it can be used.

The ritual itself takes 1 hour to perform, and can only be cast under the full black moon. During the ritual, the caster tears their shadow from themselves and offers it as a sacrifice to the dark powers. The caster must perform a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) ability check to cast the ritual. On a success, the dark powers grant the caster control of all the **shadows** in Sithicus until the sun rises. On a failed check, the caster is consumed by the shadows, and is never seen again. Regardless of the result, use of this ritual always triggers a Dark Powers check, on which the caster has disadvantage, and the caster's shadow separates from them permanently, to pursue its own sinister agenda.

APPENDIX A:

CREATURES AND NPCs

AZRAEL DAK

Azrael appears to be a hunched dwarf with furry mutton-chops that meet as a moustache. His face is slightly scarred from old burns and his fingers seem particularly stubby, almost like paws. He often wears a silk overcoat, emblazoned with a black rose, and nasty brown boots shod with iron spikes.

Seneschal and Dogsboddy. Azrael takes care of the day to day business of ruling Sithicus while Soth travels his memories, but this amounts to very little in actuality. In fact, much of Sithicus' wealth has passed from Azrael into the hands of Sithican elves, in trade for wine, magical soporifics, and other ways for Azrael to nullify his boredom.



AZRAEL DAK

Medium humanoid (dwarf, shapechanger), lawful evil

Armour Class 10 in humanoid form, 13 in badger or hybrid form

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft. in badger or hybrid forms

STR 17 (+3) **DEX** 10 (+0) **CON** 15 (+2)
INT 10 (+0) **WIS** 11 (+0) **CHA** 8 (-1)

Saving Throws DEX +2, WIS +2

Skills Athletics +5, Deception +1, Perception +2, Stealth +2

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 120ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Elvish, Dwarvish (can't speak in badger form)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Shapechanger. Azrael Dak can use his action to polymorph into a badger-human hybrid or into badger, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Keen Smell. Azrael Dak has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid form Only). Azrael makes two attacks, one with his bite and one with his claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werebadger lycanthropy.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage.

DALYOR THE ENCHANTER

The elven enchanter, Dalyor, is determined to be Soth's downfall. Young, precocious, and revolted by the ennui that has overcome Soth, Dalyor has stolen a shard from one of the *memory mirrors*, and is working on re-enchanting it to show a memory that Soth can only make worse, never better.

The theft was a simple one – disguising himself as Azrael Dak, Dalyor snuck into the keep and worked Soth into a rage, causing Soth to accidentally break one of the mirrors with a mistimed blow aimed at Daylor. Snatching up the shard, Daylor broke his disguise and fled into the night.

Dalyor is in hiding. He fears guests, but he is also devastatingly lonely. It's been a long time since he's seen a face other than his own reflection. He intends to use adventurers to return his finished mirror to Soth, if he can, but ironically, he craves companionship and affection so much, if someone were to get past his deep mistrust of others, they could use Dalyor instead.

Dalyor the Enchanter

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armour Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 110 (17d8 + 34)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 8 (+0)	DEX 16 (+3)	CON 14 (+2)
INT 20 (+5)	WIS 13 (+1)	CHA 14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +10, Deception +7, History +10, Persuasion +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elven

Challenge 10

Fey Ancestry. Dalyor has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

Split Enchantment. When Dalyor casts an enchantment spell of 1st level or higher that targets only one creature, he can have it target a second creature.

Alter Memories. When Dalyor casts an enchantment spell to charm one or more creatures, he can alter one creature's understanding so that it remains unaware of being charmed.

Additionally, once before the spell expires, he can use his action to try to make the chosen creature forget some of the time it spent charmed. The creature must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or lose 3 hours of its memories. He can make the creature forget less time, and the amount of time can't exceed the duration of his enchantment spell.

I'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY PEOPLE AREN'T MORE AFRAID OF ENCHANTERS. SURE, A FIREBALL MIGHT KILL YOU, BUT AN ENCHANTER CAN MAKE YOU KILL YOUR OWN FAMILY WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT.



Special Equipment. Two small stones orbit Dalyor's head: a round, white *stone of reserve*, and an irregularly shaped, deep red *stone of greater absorption* (see Ioun Stones), which are called **The Missing Moons**. He also carries a slender staff carved from silver birch, called the **Birch Staff**, inset with reflective pieces of silvery glass which is a *staff of charming*.

Spellcasting. Dalyor is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following wizard spells:

Cantrips (at will): *firebolt, friends, light, mage hand, message*

1st level (4 slots): *absorb elements, disguise self, charm person*, hideous laughter*, mage armor, magic missile, shield, sleep**

2nd level (3 slots): *acid arrow, alter self, crown of madness*, locate object, shatter, suggestion*, web*

3rd level (3 slots): *catnap*, counterspell, dispel magic, enemies abound*, fear, hypnotic pattern, lightning bolt, magic circle, protection from energy*

4th level (3 slots): *charm monster*, confusion*, fabricate, resilient sphere, phantasmal killer*, stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *dominate person*, hold monster*, mislead, modify memory*, synaptic static**

6th level (1 slots): *arcane gate, mass suggestion*, mental prison, programmed illusion*

7th level (1 slots): *mirage arcane, power word pain**

8th level (1 slot): *feeblemind**

* enchantment spell of first level or higher

Actions

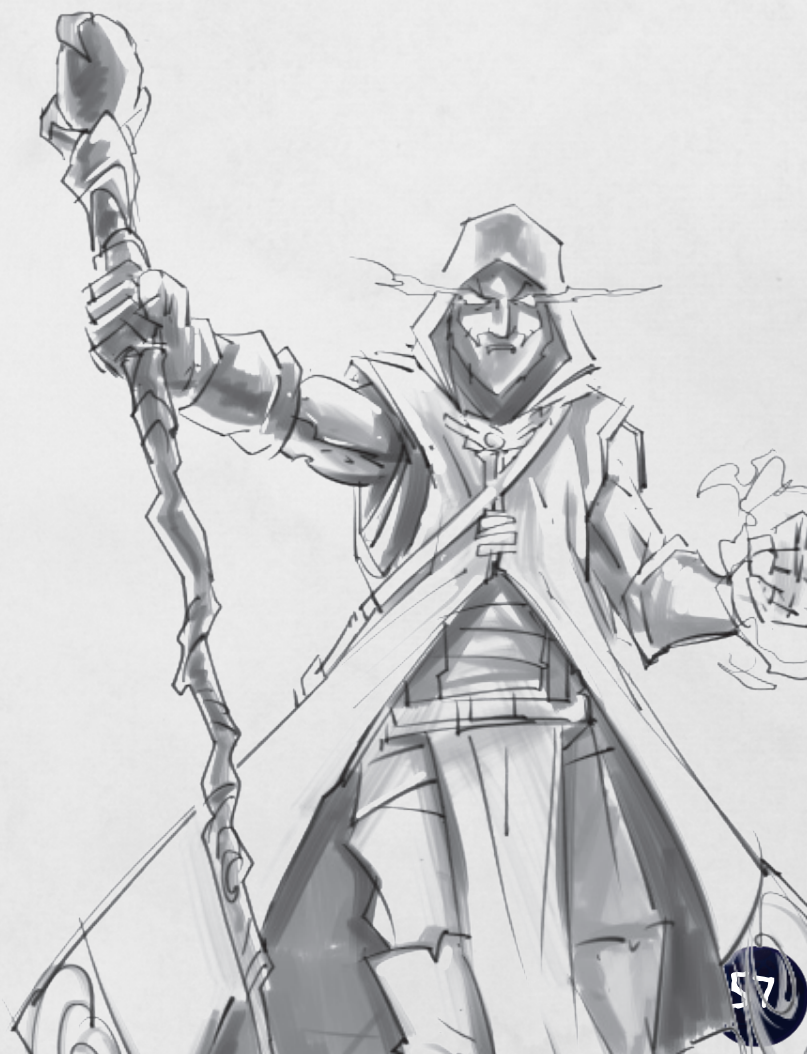
Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d6 – 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8 – 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Instinctive Charm (Recharges after the Enchanter Casts an Enchantment Spell of 1st Level or Higher). Dalyor tries to magically divert an attack made against him, provided that the attacker is within 30 feet and visible to him. Dalyor must decide to do so before the attack hits or misses.

The attacker must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker targets the creature closest to it, other than Dalyor or itself. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target.



LORD SOTH

Clad in blackened and soot-covered plate mail, Soth is an imposing figure. He stands nearly seven feet tall. His armour typically covers every stitch of his scorched, blistered flesh. Only two red, flaming orbs can be seen through the eye-slit of his helm. On rare occasions, when Soth removes a gauntlet or his helmet, the full extent of his burns become clear, broken and weeping flesh charred down to the bone.

Despite his over reliance on the *memory mirrors*, Lord Soth is a formidable opponent. Undeath has only honed his destructive skills, and he is a powerful magician as much as he remains a skilled swordsman.



SOTH'S TACTICS

Lord Soth retains a glimmer or two of his knightly honor, and prefers to engage his foes in a way that satisfies his ego.

- A fight against a weakened or surprised enemy holds no satisfaction for Soth. He does not strike from the shadows, and he does not lift his weapon against an unarmed foe. He does, however, strike unarmed magicians if they defy him, considering their magic weapon enough to constitute a threat.
- If a foe is clearly outmatched, Soth offers them the choice of surrender or an "honourable death." If they choose surrender, they forever lower themselves in his eyes, but he allows them to leave his sight with their tails between their legs. If they choose death, he grants it swiftly. An enemy that continues to fight after he offers them the chance to surrender is afforded no further quarter.
- If formally challenged, Soth will accept a duel in single combat, and keep to the terms agreed thereupon. If facing multiple opponents, he summons the thirteen banshees that haunt his throne room, or his skeletal servants, and lays waste about him with no fear (he knows he cannot perish in any meaningful way). In a situation where he is outmatched, Soth acts with underhanded and brutal pragmatism, dispatching spellcasters first and moving to more heavily armoured foes last.

LORD SOTH HAILS FROM A WORLD IN WHICH MAGIC OF THE SEVENTH CIRCLE OR HIGHER IS ALL BUT UNKNOWN. HE MIGHT BE A TERROR IN THIS REALM, BUT IN HIS HOME PLANE HE IS ALL BUT A GOD.

Lord Soth

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armour Class 20 (+3 plate)

Hit Points 247 (26d8 + 130)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 20 (+5) **DEX** 11 (+0) **CON** 20 (+5)

INT 22 (+6) **WIS** 20 (+5) **CHA** 22 (+6)

Saving Throws DEX +6, WIS +11, CHA +12

Skills Arcana +12, Insight +11, Intimidation +18, Perception +17

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Deep Speech, Dwarvish, Elven, Infernal

Challenge 19 (XP 22,000)

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

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

Special Equipment. Lord Soth wears magical +3 plate mail, which he never removes. In addition, he wields a longsword of wounding.

Improved Turn Immunity. Lord Soth is immune to effects that turn undead. In addition, unless Lord Soth is incapacitated, undead creatures of his choice within 60 feet of him share this immunity.

Spellcasting. Lord Soth is a 19th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *compelled duel*, *cause fear*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *blindness/deafness*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *fear*

4th level (3 slots): *shadow of moil*

5th level (2 slots): *danse macabre*

6th level (1 slot): *wall of ice*, *cone of cold*

7th level (1 slot): *power word pain*

8th level (1 slot): *power word stun*

9th level (1 slot): *power word kill*

Actions

Multiattack. Soth makes three longsword of wounding attacks.

Longsword of Wounding. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (1d8 + 10) slashing damage, or 15 (1d10 + 10) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. Hit points lost to this weapon's damage can be regained only through a short or long rest, rather than by regeneration, magic, or any other means.

Once per turn, when Soth hits a creature with an attack using this magic weapon, he can wound the target. At the start of each of the wounded creature's turns, it takes 1d4 necrotic damage for each time Soth has wounded it, and it then must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, ending the effect of all such wounds on itself on a success. Alternatively, the wounded creature, or a creature within 5 feet of it, can use an action to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, ending the effect of such wounds on it on a success.

Hellfire Orb (1/Day). Soth hurls a magical ball of fire that explodes at a point he can see within 120 feet of him. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centred on that point must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. The sphere spreads around corners. A creature takes 35 (10d6) fire damage and 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Undead Legions (1/Day). Lord Soth magically calls 2d4 **skeletons**, provided that the sun isn't up. In his throne room, Soth can call thirteen **banshees** instead. The called creatures manifest immediately, acting as allies of Soth and obeying his spoken commands. The undead remain for 1 hour, until Soth dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

Reactions

Parry. Lord Soth adds 6 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Lord Soth must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Legendary Actions

Lord Soth 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. Soth regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. Soth moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Longsword. Soth makes one attack with his longsword of wounding.

Cast a Spell (2 actions). Soth casts a spell from his Spellcasting feature.

Lair Actions

While Soth is in Nedraggaard Keep, he can take lair actions as long as he isn't incapacitated.

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Soth can take one of the following lair action options, or forgo using any of them in that round:

- Soth targets any number of doors and windows that he can see, causing each one to either open or close as he wishes. Closed doors can be magically locked (needing a successful DC 20 Strength check to force open) until Soth chooses to end the effect, or until Soth uses this lair action again.

- Soth summons one of the banshees of Nedraggaard Keep to fight at his behest. The apparition appears next to a hostile creature that Soth can see, makes an attack against that creature, and then disappears. The apparition has the statistics of a banshee.

- Soth targets a visible corpse of medium size or smaller which he can see. That corpse rises as a zombie under Soth's control, acting on Soth's initiative.



LUMINESTI

Luminesti means, in the elven language, “people of the light.” The light, in this case, is the light of the black moon nuitari, visible only to the most evil of creatures. The luminesti have turned their face from the sun and any hope of a return to their old life, and look instead to nuitari for guidance.

Unfortunately, the black moon is not especially forthcoming with insights or instructions, so the luminesti do what they can to please it and themselves, taking out their rage and fear on other living creatures that cross their path. Sacrifices of flesh and blood, frenzied hunts under the new and full moon, and dark magics that other creatures imagine only in their nightmares are the hallmarks of the luminesti.

In Har-Thelen, they are a constant fear and the cause of frequent witch hunts. Further west, they are almost unknown—though that doesn’t mean they are not present.

Many luminesti look like the other elves of Sithicus: grey and wan. Some, once they flee from civilisation to join their fellows in the Iron Hills, mark themselves with intricate black tattoos of the stars, the black moon, and the phases of the heavens.

Luminesti Elf

Medium humanoid (elf), any evil alignment

Armour Class 14 (leather armour)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 13 (+1)

INT 12 (+1) **WIS** 14 (+2) **CHA** 14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +4, Intimidation +4, Perception +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elven

Challenge 2 (XP 450)

Fey Ancestry. The luminesti has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can’t put them to sleep.

Dark Devotion. The luminesti has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Spellcasting. The luminesti is a 4th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, **+4** to hit with spell attacks). The luminesti has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *resistance, thaumaturgy, toll the dead*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, cause fear, inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, darkness, invisibility*

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.



LUMINESTI TEXTS ARE HARD TO COME BY. I SUPPOSE THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME FOR WRITING BOOKS WHAT WITH ALL THAT PARTYING AND FRENZING.

Luminesti Seer

Medium humanoid (elf), any evil alignment

Armour Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 14 (+2)

INT 15 (+2) **WIS** 14 (+2) **CHA** 19 (+4)

Skills Arcana +5, Deception +7, History +5, Intimidation +7, Perception +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks (at night only)

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elven

Challenge 7 (XP 2,900)

Fey Ancestry. The luminesti has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

Dark Devotion. The luminesti has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Friend of Shadows. The luminesti seer is *invisible* as per the spell, as long as they are in full darkness. The invisibility ends when they move or take an action.

Innate Spellcasting. The luminesti seer's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:

At will: *cause fear*, *darkness*, *disguise self*, *mage armor* (self only), *see invisibility*

1/day each: *eyebite*, *finger of death*, *true seeing*

Spellcasting. The luminesti seer is a 17th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

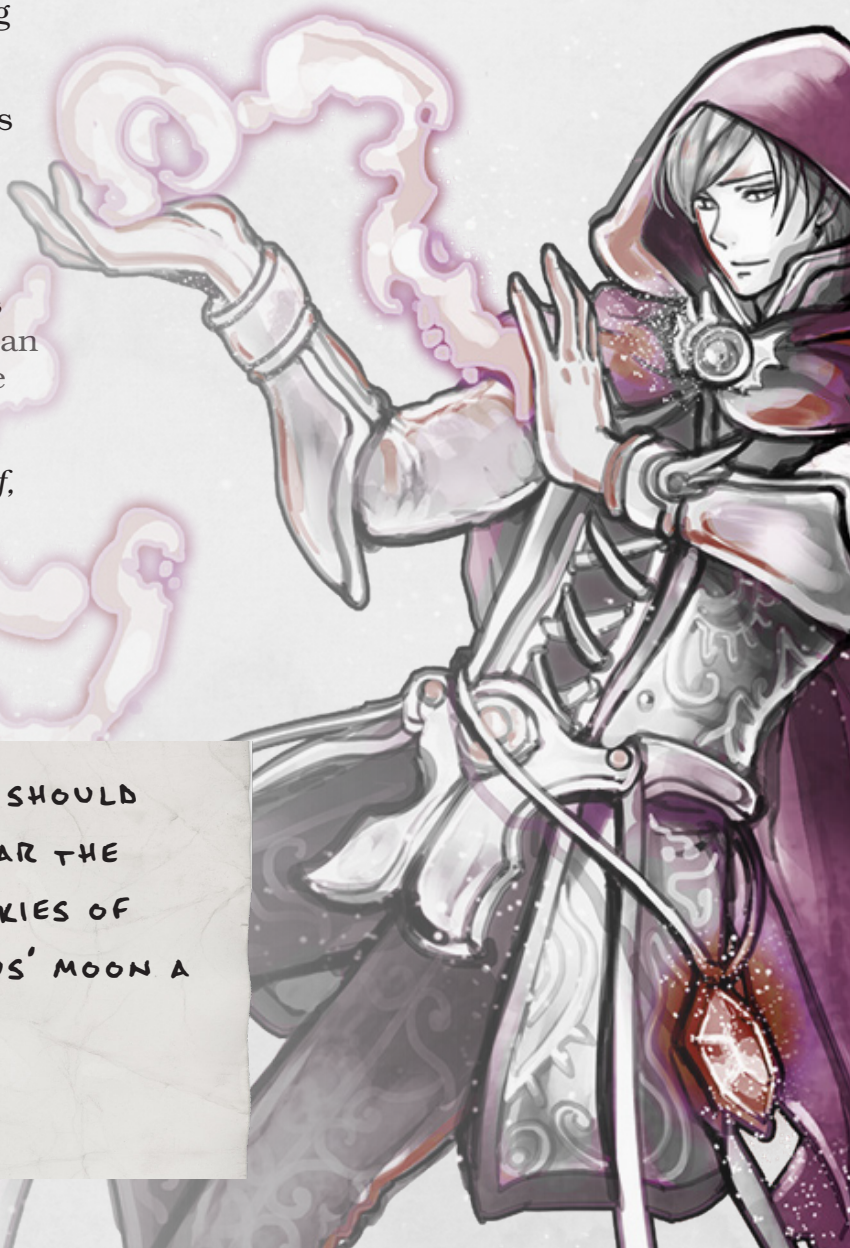
Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *frostbite*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *toll the dead*

1st–5th level (4 5th-level slots): *arms of hadar*, *blight*, *cause fear*, *counterspell*, *fly*, *hunger of hadar*, *mind spike*, *misty step*, *negative energy flood*, *shadow of moil*

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

THE POWER OF THE BLACK MOON SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. I HEAR THE ORIGINAL STILL HANGS IN THE SKIES OF SOTH'S HOMEWORLD - IS SITHICUS' MOON A DARKER MOCKERY OF IT? DARKER THAN BLACK?



SALT GOLEM

Animated by that same strange presence that lurks deep in the Veidrava Salt Mines, the Salt Golem is an unfriendly creature that wanders the breadth of Sithicus looking for something to ruin. Bitter and vicious by nature, they exist only to cause harm to others, taking great delight in punishing those unable to defend themselves.

Watery Grave. Salt Golems are susceptible to liquids, which cause them to dissolve into piles of sludge. They fear large bodies of water and do not cross them willingly.

Salt Golem

Huge construct, chaotic evil

Armour Class 17 (natural armour)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 22 (+6) **DEX** 9 (-1) **CON** 20 (+5)

INT 3 (-4) **WIS** 11 (+0) **CHA** 1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands primordial and deep speech but cannot speak

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Water Susceptibility. For every 5 feet the construct moves in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 acid damage.

Amorphous. The salt golem can dissolve into a pile of crystals and can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Actions

Multiattack. The elemental makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT DARK FORCE ANIMATES THE SALT MINES UNDER SITHICUS, BUT RUMOURS SAY THAT A CREATURE WITH GREEN EYES AND A CRUEL LAUGH HIDES UNDER THE EARTH. A PAST RULER OF SITHICUS SOME SAY, THOUGH I DON'T KNOW HOW CREDIBLE THAT IS. EITHER WAY, THEIR MINIONS HOUNDED ME ACROSS SITHICUS, AND MADE THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE ALL THE MORE UNPLEASANT FOR IT.



SALT SHADOW

Wisps of evil that drift up from the Veidrava Salt Mines, Salt Shadows are strange and crystalline predators inhabited by dark spirits. They can squeeze their powdery forms through small gaps, and have the insidious power to inhabit the minds of others.

Salt Shadow

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 40 ft.

STR 6 (-2) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 13 (+1)

INT 6 (-2) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 2 (100 XP)

Water Susceptibility. For every 5 feet the shadow moves in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 acid damage.

Amorphous. The shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing

Actions.

Personality Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Charisma score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Charisma to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new salt shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the shadow can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the shadow; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The shadow now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The shadow can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the shadow ends it as a bonus action, or the shadow is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, the shadow reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this shadow's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.



STAG BEETLE MOUNTS

In their homeland, the silvanesti elves rode horses or deer—noble, beautiful beasts straight out of legend. Sithicus has a different sort of beauty. Here, elven knights and hunters ride giant stag beetles with shining black chitin and delicate, translucent, chestnut-coloured wings.

The beetles are relatively intelligent, and closely bonded with their rider. They're fiercely loyal, and they have a low-grade, empathic bond with 'their' elf. Unfortunately, only creatures with fey ancestry are capable of forming that bond. To all others, the beetles are fierce and aggressive, and have to be handled very firmly indeed.

Stag Beetle Mounts

Large beast, unaligned

Armour Class 13 (natural armour)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR 17 (+3) **DEX** 11 (+0)

CON 15 (+2) **INT** 5 (-3)

WIS 12 (+1) **CHA** 4 (-3)

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 1

Empathic Bond. Creatures with the Fey Ancestry trait who spend one hour a day with a beetle, each day for a week, form a bond with it. Once a bond is formed, the creature has advantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks made to influence this beetle. Characters who do not have Fey Ancestry make all Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks against stag beetles with disadvantage.

Dive Bomb. If the stag beetle flies at least 20 feet downwards toward a creature and then hits it with a pincer attack on the same turn, the beetle's rider may use their Reaction to make an attack of opportunity against the target.

Actions

Pincers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage. A target hit by the stag beetle's pincers must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be grappled.

RIDING A GIGANTIC STAG
BEETLE IS A BIT LIKE RIDING
A HORSE, EXCEPT ALSO NOT AT
ALL.



VAMPIRIC KENDER

The strange, halfling-like vampiric kender of Sithicus are an eerie sight. Tiny and curious, they are as gleeful about murder and sadism as they might have been in life about less grisly sports. Twenty-five of these miniature horrors plague Sithicus, occasionally returning to the hidden village of Kendralind with victims or spoils.

Vampiric Kender

Small undead, chaotic evil

Armour Class 16 (natural armour)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 25 ft.

STR 10 (+0) **DEX** 18 (+4) **CON** 16 (+3)

INT 10 (+0) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 16 (+3)

Saving Throws DEX +7, WIS +3

Skills Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +10

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish
Challenge 5

Shapechanger. If the vampire kender isn't in sunlight or running water, it can use its action to polymorph into a Tiny rat, or back into its true form.

While in rat form, the vampire kender can't speak and its walking speed is 20 feet. Its statistics, other than its size and speed, are unchanged. Anything it is wearing transforms with it, but nothing it is carrying does. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Regeneration. The vampire kender regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the vampire kender takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire kender's next turn.

Spider Climb. The vampire kender can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. The vampire kender has the following flaws:

Curiosity. If the vampire kender sees something it hasn't seen before, it feels an overwhelming compulsion to investigate it, either by direct tactile contact or by interrogating a witness.

Mirrors. The vampire kender is frightened of mirrors, though it has no reflection.

Hoopak to the Heart. If the vampire kender's hoopak is driven into its heart while the vampire kender is restrained or incapacitated, the vampire kender is destroyed.

Innate Spellcasting. The vampire kender's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At-will: *enthrall*, *friends*, *vicious mockery*

Actions

Multiattack. The vampire kender makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire kender can grapple the target (escape DC 13).

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire kender, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire kender regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

THE BLOODY COBBLER

An echo of Sithicus' phantasmal, perverse sense of justice, the Bloody Cobbler is a dark reminder that no good need goes unpunished. A hooded stranger, he walks the roads of Sithicus asking strangers for help - alas, those who stop to aid the peddler find their soles carved from their feet and made into cursed dancing shoes.

Cursed Shoes. The cobbler fashions little red dancing shoes from the soles he harvests, and leaves them in places he thinks people might find them. Anyone who dons such a pair of shoes is cursed to dance until they die of exhaustion. The shoes are unable to be removed without the aid of a *remove curse* spell or more powerful magic.

The cobbler can be slain, but merely vanishes into the aether. He returns to the roads of Sithicus at dusk the next day.



Bloody Cobbler

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armour Class 13 (natural armour)

Hit Points 45 (6d6 + 24)

Speed 25 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 13 (+1) **CON** 18 (+4)

INT 10 (+0) **WIS** 10 (+1) **CHA** 9 (-1)

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +3

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish
Challenge 5

Outsize Strength. While grappling, the Bloody Cobbler is considered to be Large.

Innate Spellcasting. The cobbler's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 10). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

3/day each: *otto's irresistible dance*

1/day each: *feblemind*

Actions

Straight Razor. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

I TRIED SEVEN
DIFFERENT
BANISHMENTS ON
THAT WRETCHED
COBBLER. NONE OF
THEM STUCK.

APPENDIX B: MAGIC ITEMS

Memory Mirrors

Wondrous item, legendary, requires attunement (special - see below)

The illusionist Tindafulus crafted six memory mirrors for Lord Soth, distracting him from the stifling boredom of his domain by offering an escape into fantasy. These full-length mirrors have black iron frames, wrought in the shapes of intertwined black roses with wickedly sharp thorns.

The mirrors let an attuned user walk within their own memories, interacting with them—even modifying them, until they match what the user wishes had happened. Each mirror holds a single stored memory, a glimpse of which is revealed by close inspection of the silvered glass. Individuals cannot choose which memories are displayed, and they are never pleasant ones. The mirrors show the owner's greatest failures, regrets, and humiliations. Use of the memory mirrors is seductive: over time, it becomes impossible to separate original memories from the reworked, 'perfected' versions.

Once attuned to an individual, the mirrors remain linked to them until their death. Only two things can damage the memory mirrors – the attuned owner themselves, and the death of the owner. A mirror broken or shattered in any way becomes non-functional until the mirror is repaired by casting of a mending spell (or similar magic) upon the broken shards – if any shards are missing, the mirror cannot be repaired in this manner. The frames can be damaged like any other piece of wrought iron and the glass can be removed from the frames. If the 'owner' of the mirrors dies, each of the mirrors explodes in a shower of glass, dealing 7 (2d6) points of piercing damage and 18 (4d8) points of psychic damage.

Using the Mirrors

A creature who gazes into a mirror and imagines stepping into the scene displayed there, they enter the world beyond the glass. Most creatures can only enter one mirror at a time, but with practice some, like Lord Soth, can walk among all of their memories simultaneously. The creature's physical form enters the mirror and appears in the glass until it moves out of the area shown in the mirror, but a ghostly remnant of them remains behind in the material world. No sound carries between the mirror and the real world, and no objects can be passed between the two. Only creatures, and whatever they are wearing or carrying, can cross the threshold.

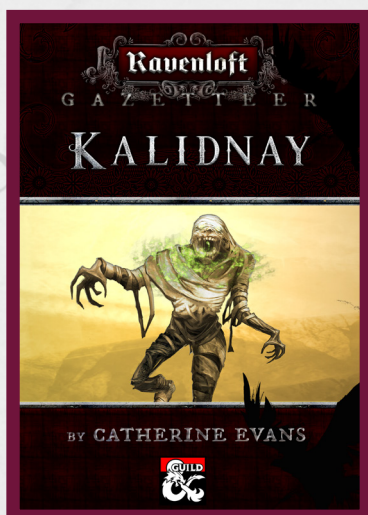
Any creature, attuned or not, may interact freely with the people, places, and objects in the memory, altering the way the scenario plays out for better or worse.

Creatures who enter a memory mirror, other than the attuned person, retain all of their skills and abilities, but are 'cast' as a character who has a role in the mirror's memory—usually, but not always, a bystander or other minor character. Over time, however, people become the role which they have taken on. Each full day a character spends inside a memory mirror, they must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw, or lose some part of themselves: treasured memories like the names of loved ones, skills or weapon proficiencies that do not suit their role, and eventually any recollection that they are not who they currently appear to be. After three failed saving throws, the character forgets the real world entirely.

Creatures can only exit the mirror at the exact same point at which they entered, by physically stepping into the mirror-shaped black void that awaits them there.

Ravenloft

GAZETTEER



RAVENLOFT GAZETTEER: KALIDNAY

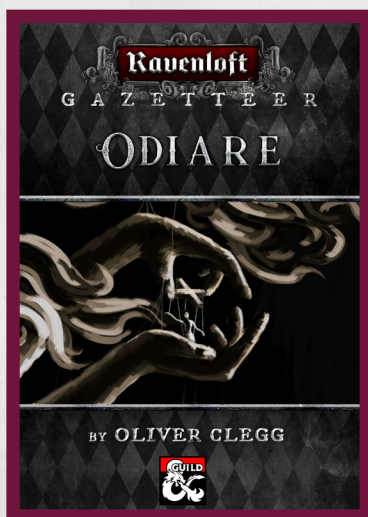
by Catherine Evans

a 54 page campaign guide to a corrupt ecological hellscape of ash, bones and sand. Water is scarcer than gold. Iron is more precious than diamonds. Arcanists are feared and labelled Defilers - criminals to be hunted down without mercy. The sorcerer king Kalid-Ma sleeps endlessly under stone, and his advisor Thakok-An rules with an iron fist in his stead.

RAVENLOFT GAZETTEER: VERBREK

by Jason Miscia

a 24 page campaign guide to a grim forest world ruled by claw and curse. No path is safe from the ravages of the wolf pack, and travelers must be wary lest they find themselves inducted into the way of the wolf- willingly or otherwise.



RAVENLOFT GAZETTEER: ODIARE

by Oliver Clegg

This supplement revises and expands upon material from module RM2 - "The Created", bringing the dark domain of Odiare into 5th edition, for a grim fairy tale that will make sure you never look at a teddy bear in the same way again.