

WARLOCK

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REDTOWER

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LOST LORE OF REDTOWER & THE SCARLET CITADEL

by Wolfgang Baur

Some dungeons are dug out with precision by massive hordes of undead workers or tribes of goblins, built in great chaos and energy to the plan of some cunning mind. The Scarlet Citadel is more of a peculiar growth of layer upon layer of tunnels, defensive halls, hidden crypts and labs, and many secrets buried deep below the surface.

Human settlement of the White Forest started very modestly indeed at the nearby river village of Redtower. However, over time, both the village and the castle deeper in the woods became a site of importance to dungeoneers, arcane seekers, geomancers, and a certain breed of dwarven mystic. Read on and know the truth of its founding, its blood-soaked history, and its current odd decay.

Early Construction: House von Holzanger

The castle now called the Scarlet Citadel sits on the site of an ancient elven hunting lodge in the White Forest, claimed by a noble family after the Great Retreat 400-some years ago. The land was thus owned by House von Holzanger who owed fealty at various times to Illyria, to the Republic

of Triolo, to the Canton of Melana, and (most often) to the Magdar Kingdom. Always rather deft in politics and inclined to an unambitious policy of, “Just leave us alone with our books and hawks and hunting,” House von Holzanger might have remained a footnote if it were not for their control of the Scarlet Crow ley line and their willingness to annoy the fey lords and ladies of the forest.

Originally, the pretty lodge was visited each summer and fall for boar hunts, chasing deer in the White Forest, and fish-hawking along the Templine riverbanks. The family realized that the road to the lodge could also be utilized for timber transport, so the lodge became the manor for a new lumber village along the river. The lodge itself remained a place of blissful seclusion, though with some ability to gather servitors, various goods, and skilled craftsman from the village.

This village was named Redleaf. At first, they sold their finest oak, ash, and rowan either east to the city Melana or north to the Magdar merchants for barrels, barge masts, and much else. The trade was not without problems (the forest fey included some alseid and bothersome druids), but in

all, it was a worthwhile little fiefdom for the Holzangers. Over time, the village grew, and then Gerhardt von Holzanger came along, the first of the Holzanger sorcerers.

The Wandering Crow

About 250 years ago, the young von Holzanger discovered a rich ley line tributary nearby, connecting easily to the White Road to the south and (with only modest arcane rituals) also to the shadow road to the northwest and even (with rather more strenuous and blood-soaked rituals) to the ancient Pontoretto ley line of Valera and its elven lords. The ley line itself seemed to pool and gather strength near the hunting lodge more than the village itself, and the isolated lodge was a good place for experiments that often involved chanting, arcane lights, and the strange smells of alchemical enhancements and distillations.

Gerhardt kept his secret for almost 10 years until he took an apprentice who later ran away to Schio and told his tale. A ley line that might connect other ley lines! Ley line philters and encasements that reacted to void power, to radiant magic, and to shadow! Ley line distillations that gave his cruel master much added strength of body and mind! The tales were wild and had the effect that the apprentice Waldmer intended—the privacy of the White Forest Lodge was a thing of the past.

With the wider understanding of the discovery, the area was suddenly of interest to geomancers, the shadow fey, and darker forces who wished to travel the fey roads between the three lines, to plumb the mysteries of why this backwater might connect ley lines in this way and how this strong ley line might be harnessed. The first few visitors were greeted politely and told to go away. Later visitors were treated as foes. Over the years, the hunting lodge—at the ley line's strongest point—was rebuilt with

the red stone common to the area, first as a single tower and then as a small keep.

Arcane secrets were under frequent investigation. Gerhardt von Holzanger grew rich taking on various comely, cunning, and willing apprentices (some believe Arshin the Enchanter—see *Warlock #2*—was one of them, more long-lived than most) and having built his redstone castle on the site of the ley line's greatest resonance and generally making the most of it. He bound himself to the ley line, giving himself and his children greater strength in using its magic but also making it difficult to wander far from the Wandering Crow. At first, he could travel as far as Zigistad, Melana, and Triolo itself, but over time, this narrowed to Peltzenheim and the town of Erdovar (before its ruin) and Schio. Some believe this same ritual binds the master of Demon Mountain to his own domicile, granting him great power in a highly limited space.

House Holzanger Thrives

Despite the lack of travel, Gerhardt's private ley line offered strength and the seemingly boundless ability to study, learn, and tinker, delighting first Gerhardt and then his progeny (his wife was one Edelfrieda the Golden, said to be a druid, a sorceress, or an elfmarked petty noble of Dornig—some insist on all three). Within the reach of the White Forest, first Gerhardt the Elder and then Gerhardt the Younger and then Gertruda and Gunthar and Gerhardt III all had control over the ley lines, countering any foe or assassin skillfully, inventing new ways to charm a friend or turn an enemy into a bug. Over generations, their interests delved deep into newts and amphibians and then the family was obsessed with horology and celestial mechanics and then with flotation and levitation and then with night creatures and then angelic languages and on and on. Always seeking knowledge

purely to possess it, rarely using it to better their small barony or even to enrich themselves or their peasantry.

For a fairly brief period, the area was quasi-independent, and each von Holzanger sorcerer styled himself the “Baron of Citarossa, Lord of the White Forest, and Master of the Scarlet Citadel.” So it went for nigh 200 years: always a tiny power, always independent, though sometimes paying tribute to one power or another, and always a strange little oddity known mostly to merchants, timberfolk, and the southern Magdar towns.

However, their overweening pride and their power drew attention, and in time, an unexpected arrival ended the first age of the citadel roughly 150 years ago.

The Dwarven Era

The dwarves of the cantons and of the city-state of Melana are makers, forgers of steel, imbuing weapons with the power of Mavros and Svarog—and even Ninkash and Rava—and durable armor, enchanted barrels and wondrous works in gold, steel, and stone. A few dwarves though, especially those of Nordmansch and Alpentor, still hew to the older ways, forging rings of surpassing power and loveliness, alive with the circling strength of runes, binding raw arcane might and turning it to fire and shadow, to glammers as durable as stone.

These dwarves, the ring wardens and the ring mystics, are the keepers of lore said to have been handed down by bearded Wotan himself. Their understanding of embodying

Scarlet Citadel and Redtower Timeline

- **600 years ago:** Elves built hunting lodge and used it for centuries.
- **482 years ago:** Great Retreat, elves depart.
- **450 years ago:** Holzangers claim White Forest lands under Gerhardt the Elder.
- **400 years ago:** Lodge becomes a manor house for Redleaf village.
- **250 years ago:** Gerhardt the Elder discovers linking ley line.
- **240 years ago:** Waldmer the Apprentice tells others about it.
- **230 years ago:** Lodge replaced by stone keep and outbuildings.
- **227 years ago:** Death of Gerhardt the Elder in a hunting accident, succeeded by Gerhardt the Younger.
- **202 years ago:** Death of Gerhardt the Younger by the plague, succeeded by Gertruda.
- **185 years ago:** Death of Gertruda the Weaver of old age, succeeded by Gunthar the Blind.
- **169 years ago:** Death of Gunthar the Blind by poison, succeeded by Gerhardt III.
- **150 years ago:** Dwarves arrive in Redleaf, ally with Gerhardt III.
- **145 years ago:** Dwarf Hall burns to the ground, dwarves build citadel.
- **140 years ago:** Owlbear breeding yields the dire owlbear.
- **139 years ago:** Death of Gerhardt III by owlbear mishap.
- **130 years ago:** Dwarves and Gerhardt IV turn to banditry.
- **110 years ago:** Faithful Knights of Khors burn out the keep, falls to ruin, owlbeats released to White Forest, death of Gerhardt IV, disappearance of his children.
- **105 years ago:** Villagers discover red tower mysteriously built overnight, rename the village.
- **103 years ago:** The True Cult of Charun arrives, and Quendreth establishes temple, expanding the cult's influence from

magic in physical form is rarely surpassed, and they took a keen interest in House von Holzanger. When the human house was weak, they showed up one day, told Gerhardt III that they would be his new soldiers and providers, and somehow either charmed him (some say the gift of an enchanted ring secured Gerhardt III's cooperation) or won him through bribery (others say that the ring mystics shared their secrets of binding arcane essences into circular form and that Gerhardt himself forged dozens of powerful rings in this manner).

In either case, suddenly there was a company of 100 dwarves and a half-dozen ring mages in the village of Redleaf—and many arguments with the locals over the paucity of ale and proper sausages. The

dwarves chased down and tamed owlbears as hunting animals and guardians for the newly built Dwarf Hall in the village, a fine dwarven-style structure with a lookout tower. A palisade was raised to protect the village from woodland raiders. And relations between villagers and dwarves never improved. The dwarves followed Ninkash a bit too closely, often drunk and pissing in the streets or singing their endless songs late at night. The dwarven hall was a bit too fine and too imposing. Brawls were common, though the humans had much the worst of it. Complaints to Baron Gerhardt went unheeded. The owlbears ate local goats and chickens and once a beloved dog.

One night while most of the dwarves were digging at the old Scarlet Manor Hall,

the Septime cities into the cantons and connecting it with temples in Achillon and Harkesh.

- **92 years ago:** The people of Zobeck gain their freedom. A gearforged priestess comes to Redtower following dark void cultists of House Stross.
- **88 years ago:** Priestess Miskra al-Vellec drives Quendreth and the boat cult away, opens void portal.
- **80 years ago:** Gerhardt the Changeling returns to the Citadel, quietly on the Black River, a mature and steady arcanist with deep understanding of the Shadow Realm. He speaks Void Speech and Umbral fluently and is accompanied by shadow fey servitors. The satarre are nowhere to be found.
- **70 years ago:** Gerhardt the Changeling marries Melanchia of Raguza, and the two gather apprentices and restore a few owlbears to the citadel as part of the family tradition.
- **65 years ago:** Gellert the Gruesome is born in the Citadel and anointed in the Black River. Melanchia dies in childbirth.
- **42 years ago:** Gerhardt the Changeling departs for the Shadow Realm's Corremel and never returns.
- **41 years ago:** Gellert restarts his father's experiments, seeks to open connections between void cults, Wandering Crow ley line, and the satarre and others.
- **33 years ago:** Mother Floressima, a priestess of the Charun cult, gives Gellert the Gruesome a son and daughter. The twins are said to live in the Shadow Realm with nobles of the shadow fey or bearfolk or with their grandfather.
- **Present Day:** Gellert the Gruesome rules and tinkers in isolation, rarely leaving the dungeons to visit Redtower.

the Dwarf Hall burned to the ground. The streets of Redleaf glowed very bright, and the humans sang their own songs of Khors. Some of the Redleaf druids and doughtier men-at-arms mused about throwing the dwarves out entirely and “rescuing” Baron Gerhardt from their evil influences.

Baron Gerhardt finally saw the danger of further strife between the humans and dwarves. He called the dwarves to stay at the manor house and keep and told them to build it into a finer citadel with a new name: the Scarlet Citadel. The owlbears left the village of Redleaf to live with the dwarves, coming to the riverside village only occasionally when the baron’s dwarves came calling. These grim-faced dwarves came twice a year to collect taxes or gather up barrels of ale from Peltzenheim or to send furs to their dwarven brothers in Melana and Brescia. The dungeons beneath the Scarlet Citadel were vastly expanded and improved to include owlbear stables, barracks, shrines to dwarven gods, and a vast library and workspace carved out for the von Holzangers.

The dwarves brought more than rings and owlbears to the Scarlet Citadel. They also brought the faith of Charun the Boatman with them from Melana, and over time, they connected some elements of the citadel with the Black River of Tears, sacred to Charun and said to be a source of

connection between the mortal world and Yggdrasil or between Midgard and the many realms of the outer planes.

Banditry and the Sack of the Citadel

About 130 years ago, the dwarves of the Scarlet Citadel grew impatient with what seemed like plentiful coin and ale, plus the fine magical treasures they occasionally gained from the von Holzangers. Tired of hunting and guarding and drinking, and led by the canny Captain Chansar the Pale, they began to take empty carts



pulled by enormous tamed owlbears out to the Schio-Wagenstein Road where they plundered merchants and rolled away with fine steel from Melana, copper bars, leather hides from Trombei, spices from Triolo, barrels of salt fish from Friula, and strings of Septime coin. This banditry was small at first, a trader here, a lone peddler there, but it quickly grew into a business of serious danger for trade between the Seven Cities and the Crossroads.

Trade is always dangerous of course, especially among the Septime cities, so the usual precautions were taken. Merchants hired guards, which slowed the banditry but made some trade quite difficult; the price of salt fish won't support a squadron of lancers. Rewards were posted.

For years, various cantonal dwarves and the dwarves of Melana were blamed, for the canny dwarves of the Scarlet Citadel displayed shields and banners of Tijino, Juralt, and Melana or of famous mercenary companies within the Seven Cities. In time, however, it became clear that these dwarves lived to the east of the road, and that they operated from some stronghold in the White Forest. Given the notorious strength of the forest's owlbears and the well-known dangers of the sorcerers of the Scarlet Citadel taking offense at trespassers, the merchants all agreed that someone else should seek out the bandit stronghold and put a stop to the whole mess. The rewards grew larger.

The end of the bandit era came in a different way when canny Captain Chansar bragged a bit too loudly at Redleaf's tavern, the Cage. A young squire of the Faithful Knights of Khors was visiting the village as part of a simple devotional journey to the shrine there, and she overheard this boasting about pillaging a full mule train, so Squire Emmalyn told her sergeant of the bragging dwarven bandit. The paladins and faithful knights of Khors had recently had one of their own wine shipments from the

Smolten Hills plundered by bandits, and the order's commander was incensed. A wing of knights, a squad of the Wands of Khors battle mages, and the high priest of Khors in Zigistad himself all followed the young squire Emmalyn into the White Forest to Redleaf village and then to the citadel.

When the dwarves refused to hand over Captain Chansar and his accomplices to the king's justice and the mercy of Khors, the knights laid siege to the citadel for a month. In time, owlbears within the citadel ate all there was to eat, and canny Chansar sent the starving beasts out the citadel gate, expecting to make short work of the knights. He was quite mistaken; High Priest Tadeas Toller struck the owlbears with holy fire, the Wands of Khors unleashed lightning, and the countercharge carried the knights into the citadel courtyard.

The battle might yet have gone to the dwarves with their crossbows firing into the courtyard from well-built arrow slits if not for the fine timbers of the keep catching fire when a lucky fireball went through an arrow slit into the interior. The Scarlet Citadel floors, stairs, rafters, and tapestries burned bright and strong, and the conflagration quickly poured smoke into the buildings, the dungeons, and the courtyard. It became impossible to shoot through the smoke and soon to breath within the tower. The smoke and flames drove a few dwarves into the deeper tunnels, though most were forced to surrender to the waiting company of knights. Captain Chansar's body was never found, and his ring mystic lieutenant Valence Hellhand is known to have survived and fled to Nordmansch. The citadel walls still stood, blackened with smoke, and the dungeons below were no longer home to dozens of owlbears.

But the age of the Scarlet Citadel as a functional fortress were over and done, and the cracked, blackened mortar and missing rafters meant that the walls themselves were

weakened. Soon other inhabitants came to the citadel, and the villagers of Redleaf came to gather up useful stone blocks and take them by wagon to reinforce their own keep and palisade. Their scarlet stones, carried for miles and used with care. And one morning, a mysterious red tower was erected, making such a fine impression overlooking the village, which was soon renamed Redtower, and it has kept that name ever since.

The Followers of Charun & the Void

The sack of the Scarlet Citadel affected the village of Redtower very little indeed. Timber was still cut, some logs rafted down to Triolo to build the fleets, many of the finest timbers going north to the Magdar plain for houses, barrels, all the things one wants stout oak and maple and ash for. A few arcanists came to sniff around at the ruins, though most left quickly once they met the feral owlbears or were vexed by the sprites and pixies and alseid who guarded the forest paths against intruders.

However, one group came not by forest path but by shadow road, powered by the Wandering Crow ley line. These were the cultists of Charun, the boatman between the living and the dead, whose followers took a pilgrimage from Kammae-Straboli along the Black River (as they call their temples' shadow roads) and wound up underneath the citadel. The whole company of pilgrims was quite confused at first, but the shadow fey wizard Quendreth the Wise immediately saw the power and strange geomantic convergence of the site. He insisted that a shrine be built immediately, and he brought in shadow fey guards and mages to embed it with power and bind the ley line.

The small community could not find its way back to Kammae via the river, but with Quendreth's help, they did establish shadow river connections far and wide,

both deep into the Shadow Realm and to the three titanic ley lines to the west, north, and south-east. Sometimes the Black River flowed south, powered the Wandering Crow to the White Road and thus to Revskaya, Raguza, Achillon, and occasionally Harkesh. Other seasons brought connections west and north to Brescia and even St. Mischau along the shadow road, once even to Zobeck. The most difficult connections were those along the Pontoretto, sometimes to Trombei and sometimes as far as Capleon. Charun's faithful used the Black River connection quietly and without fuss, retaining it as a secret of the deeper initiates of the Temple of Charun. And even to those who never traveled the shadow rivers, it knit the community together with a physical embodiment of their faith, though only Quendreth truly seemed to understand how to pilot a vessel to connect the shadow roads, a secret he shared with no others. Or at least with no humans.

With the cult of Charun ensconced in the lower levels of the citadel, trading with inhabitants of the underworld and using the ley line to strengthen its presence from the Seven Cities to the heart of the Dragon Empire, things changed. The arcane power of the von Holzangers was passed to the Boatman's followers. Quendreth was suddenly held in very high esteem among the congregants who had once made their pilgrimages entirely on the surface world, and he was granted the title of Ferryman within the church. A period of 15 years kept him at the forefront of Charun's works over a vast territory.

Alas, Quendreth was as susceptible to hubris and arrogance as many of the shadow fey, and he dabbled in void magic, opening portals to other planes entirely, speaking to demons and devils and inviting the satarre priestess Miskra ai-Vellec to advise him. This went about as well as you might expect, for even a less zealous priestess such as Miskra

was delighted to have such power in her hands—a tool for her own plans—though she also shared much lore with Quendreth, and the two were allies of convenience for a decade. In time though, the satarre void cultists and the true believers of Charun fell out with each other but not before Miskra realized that she could use the waters of the Black River for certain dark rituals and malign enchantments. In time, the void cult arrived in force, and Quendreth was forced to leave quickly.

When the shadow fey wizard departed, he did... something to the ley line that entirely removed its ability to easily connect to the Pontoretto or the shadow road, and its connection to the White Road remained flickering at best. At the same time, Quendreth brought one of the von Holzangers back to the Scarlet Citadel, the child of Gerhardt IV, to hold the place and the White Forest in perpetuity (more precisely until their return). He was called Gerhardt the Changeling and had a definite elfmarked look to him. He lived for 100 years, and at 70, he took a human wife from Raguza, said to be a pirate captain and certainly a hellraiser. Her name was Melanchia the Reaver, and Gellert the Gruesome is her son.

The Present Day

In the current age, Gellert the Gruesome is a man of years and deep experience, certainly an older sorcerer, though still full of wild energy and fanciful plans, always striving to learn something new and to keep the power of the citadel close. He is frankly too forgetful to always remember to chase away some of the Charun River cultists or to seal the void portal when he's done with it, and horrible things creep into the citadel without him really paying attention. His son and daughter—Garent and Vespertina—are said to await the



day he dies and his personal bond to the Wandering Crow ends, giving them power to use ley line energies for their friends among the fey and the cults.

The decaying dungeons, crypts, and stones of the old Scarlet Citadel remain to be explored, their many years of rich magic interwoven with blood and betrayal. Surely some great treasures still remain, and a few of the inhabitants of Redtower, perhaps those who remember when it was Redleaf, can point a daring soul in the right direction or warn of some of its better-known dangers.

REDTOWER

by Victoria Jaczko

The village of Redtower has grown somewhat since its days as Redleaf, adjusting to and even taking advantage of the new influx of adventurers, but it still has much of the same rustic, self-determined earnestness that it always had. Located on a tributary of the Templine River in southern Magdar between Peltzenheim and Schio, Redtower is an unremarkable logging settlement by itself but is better known as a launching point for adventuring expeditions into the infamous ruined castle and cave complex nearby—the Scarlet Citadel.

Population: 550 humans, 25 riverfolk halflings, 10 dwarves, 5 elfmarked, and 10 of other races.

Government: Reeve Wislaw Broz leads Redtower by virtue of being supported by many of the village's most notable and wealthy citizens.

Defense: Constable Roch heads Redtower's law enforcement and defense with a small militia of 20 volunteers and the battlemage Kondrad of Runkelstad in reserve.

Commerce: Redtower's primary export is lumber, but it sustains itself on the patronage of adventurers.

Organizations: Temple of Rava.

Approaching Redtower from the northwest goes through lowland prairie toward the White Forest where Redtower is nestled within the tree line. A wooden palisade surrounds most of the village with platforms and small watchtowers attached to the palisade at each entrance. On the far southeastern corner of the village, a curious redstone tower rises over the wall, itself connected to the wall via rampart. A small tributary of the Templine flows from the southwest to the northeast on the far side of the village.

Redtower's principal export is lumber, but the residents have adopted an entrepreneurial spirit around its status as an adventurers' destination. While many of the villagers are honest, pioneering people, it also houses plenty of opportunists, looking to take advantage of adventurers flush with coin. Redtower thrives off this sort of "adventure tourism," simultaneously warning travelers away from the Scarlet Citadel while peddling wares guaranteed to—supposedly—allow them to survive it. While predatory, these adventure peddlers are not lying about the dangers of the citadel: everyone in Redtower knows that few who venture into the citadel ever return.



Coming to Redtower

There are more than one reason why the party might venture to Redtower:

- The Scarlet Citadel is nearby and is a primary point of interest for adventurers visiting the village.
- Ley lines abound in the area, many weak and uncharted. Investigating these ley lines or the inert shadow gate nearby could be a reason for the party's interest.
- Goblins and bandits are common around Redtower, particularly along the roads where they harass traveling merchants. The party could be working to quell these attacks.

Locations in Redtower

The village of Redtower welcomes you.

R1. THE STABLES

Redtower's stables stretch along the northwest palisade just outside the front gate. They are of simple, sturdy construction but larger than typically needed for a settlement of Redtower's size due to the village's attraction to adventurers. At any given time, there are 1d6 of the village's adolescents (**commoners**) here, maintaining and cleaning the stables but mostly gossiping. If the party spends time here chatting, roll on the **Gossip Table**.

R2. MANOR HOUSE AND CONSTABLE

A cluster of stately buildings embraces travelers coming from the northwest into Redtower, of which the manor house is the largest. It is built in a U-shape, facing east, made from sturdy wood-and-stone construction. Both the reeve and the constable have their offices here, larger and better furnished than either of them needs for a village of Redtower's size.

Reeve Wislaw Broz (**noble**) is often here and more than happy to receive visitors. He is a glib, rosy-cheeked human with a notable paunch under stylish clothing imported from Zobeck.

The Reeve's Authorization. If the party doesn't visit the manor house on their own, Wislaw sends them an invitation within a day of their arrival to Redtower. When they arrive, he's eager to make the acquaintance of these new adventurers in the village; he makes pleasant conversation, plies them with food and drink, and welcomes their expedition. He plays up the threat of the Scarlet Citadel and the dangers roaming the woods but assures them they're in the best place to get equipped to face it. He claims to be so impressed that he authorizes them to use his name at the local merchants for a "special" discount.



Dropping Wislaw's name among the merchants is actually a signal that the characters are promising marks, and the merchant raises their prices accordingly and gives the reeve a cut. Raise the cost of goods and services by 10% whenever the PCs use the reeve's name; if they inquire, merchants explain that demand is too high in Redtower, and without the reeve's go-ahead, prices would be higher. Otherwise, goods and services are priced as normal.

The only merchant who doesn't respond to the reeve's authorization is the smith, Agnieszka (**R8**), who scoffs if he is mentioned and doesn't alter her price from the standard.

The other wing of the manor house rests the constabulary. Constable Roch is a suspicious and taciturn middle-aged human who constantly smells like smoke from his frequent pipe use. He has little to say to the party, preferring to watch for adventurers who slip up in the village for him to arrest. (See "Arrested" under the **Random Social Encounter Table**).

R3. RUINED TEMPLE OF KHORS

Between the Cage Tavern (**R4**) and manor house (**R2**) is a prominent landmark in the village's center: a disused temple of Khors. The octagonal walls of the temple remain strong as do the stoic-faced knightly statues flanking the doors on the temple's northwest face. Once inside, the temple's neglect is obvious: the elements have partially eroded the roof, leading to a section of collapse just beyond the door. Despite the added debris, the stone pews and large frescoes inside the temple are mostly intact as is the altar standing at the southeast wall. The temple sits on a large patch of cleared, flat land intended for use as a training ground, but nature is reclaiming it with patches of grass and wildflowers.

There hasn't been a priest in residence at the temple in decades, so its upkeep has waned. Nonetheless, some faithful still

attend on high holy days, and the temple has, for the most part, been shown respect, but some of the walls have evidence of stone taken for use elsewhere in Redtower.

R4. THE CAGE TAVERN & INN

The Cage is the most visibly imposing structure upon entering Redtower by virtue of its unique construction and namesake: a row of curved bones, much like some massive ribcage, protrude from the ground in a corridor to the tavern's southern-facing wall and side entrance. The last few ribs are incorporated into the inn's construction, acting as supporting rafters visible on the inside of the building. The rest of the Cage's construction is eclectic with the older parts of the inn—the space immediately connected to the enormous ribcage—of the wood-and-stone construction typical of the region but with newer elements showing more distant touches: sweeping iron gables from Zobeck, a dwarven-style hearth from the Ironcrags, Perunalian motifs in the columns, and so on.

Considering Redtower's small size and populace, the Cage is surprisingly full-featured: it boasts several rooms from comfortable to aristocratic in quality, though it has only one aristocratic suite. Owing to its adventurous—and often wealthy—patronage, travelers can find lodgings and fare suitable for up to a wealthy lifestyle.

The Cage's name—and unique construction element—supposedly dates back to the village's earliest days as Redleaf when the proprietors' ancestors, Milena and Henrik Gjorski, slew a mighty giant on the spot the inn now rests. The toll of the fight would mean the end of their adventuring career, but they returned to this site of their last great battle to retire. They found the giant withered and scavenged to little more than a massive ribcage and decided to build an inn around it, preserving it as their final—and biggest—trophy.



This story is told and retold on command by their descendants, sister and brother Ariadna and Ambrozy Gjorski. They are adventurers of a sort (human **scouts**), as most of their family has been, but found they prefer the company of adventurers more than the escapade itself. The family business continues to appeal to adventuring types as evidenced by the monster-hunting trophies on the walls—the stories of which erupt if anyone asks about them—and the *very* sturdy construction of the tables and chairs.

The Cage is the best place in the village to gather gossip. Every hour spent carousing here allows two rolls on the **Gossip Table**, at least until it gets too late for the locals.

R5. WAREHOUSES

Behind the Cage Tavern (**R4**) is a row of three long warehouses, only populated during prime trading seasons and otherwise only accessed for stored foodstuffs.

R6. SWEET SAP BREWERY

Next door to the tavern, an enterprising, happily drunk riverfolk commoner couple—Remy Argentford and Mags Halfbottle—run the local brewery. Casks of Sweet Sap brews have reached as far as Peltzenheim, but true success eludes them. The pair arrived in Redtower as boat workers, wound up overdrinking at the Cage with some adventurers, and missed their boat to leave.

Deciding to put their vice to good use, the two brewed up some concoctions that won over visiting adventurers and took over the brewery, naming it the Sweet Sap. Not being forest folk, they insist the name was a nod to Redtower's livelihood and nothing to do with the ingredients. As their savings grow, they've sent for more of their kin, and now there's barely a halfling in the village that isn't related to them somehow.

R7. LUMBER MILL

The mill is on the far eastern side of Redtower, up against the Templine River where logs go downriver on barges. The huge waterwheel powering the sawmill churns on the river's edge and fills the area with enough racket to impose disadvantage on sound-based Perception checks. Away from the riverbank, a long building is used for processing timber, and north of that is a lumber yard stacked with logs.

R8. SMITHY

The local smith, Agnieszka, is a stocky woman in her fifties from Cronepish where she once maintained and traveled on Magdar war wagons in battle against the Dragon Empire. Her arms are thick and covered in scars—some from the forge but many from her experience in war. She ended up in Redtower after retiring, thinking it would be somewhere quiet to practice her trade for adventurers that would appreciate her skill. While the latter is true, Redtower turned out to be more dramatic and beset with difficulties than she imagined, a fact she grumbles about regularly.

Agnieszka's shop is function over form, littered with tools and scrap metal she's argued over with the Rava priestesses. She's most often at her forge, busy with commissions or perfecting her own style.

Agnieszka dislikes getting involved with the village drama, but a skilled character could impress her with a DC 10

Intelligence (artisan's tools) check if related to blacksmithing or a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If successful, she cautions them about the charlatans in the village—and suggests, if they tried dropping the reeve's name for a discount, to not.

R9. FURRIER AND TANNER

A series of buildings set against the edge of the forest just up a trail off the southeast road is home to the furrier and tanner, Witek, and his hapless apprentice, Hubert. The main building has an awning adorned with token wards and charms, and an outbuilding with an unbearable stench contains Witek's tools and tanning chemicals.

Witek is a superstitious human **commoner** fond of protection and luck charms; he'll offer to sell characters one of the rabbit's feet he makes for 2d4 + 2 gp each.

R10. THE RED TOWER

South of Agnieszka's smithy (R8), past the gate over the southeast road, a squat stone tower sits on a little hillock where it connects to the village's timber palisade. It is a defensive fortification but also the village's namesake: the stones of the tower are somewhat faded but still a deep crimson. Even Ariadna and Ambrozy at the Cage don't know how the tower was constructed. Theories and rumors abound however and can be heard on the **Gossip Table**.

R11. TEMPLE OF RAVA

The temple of the Gear Goddess is an odd, circular building in the southeast of the village. Eight double windows protrude at even spaces around the temple, and its center is a small clearing, giving it a cog-like appearance from above. The building itself is a blend of wood and stone construction that, unlike the temple of Khors, has been well maintained. Reaching the temple of Rava from the road requires wading through a collection the Spinner's "sacred" scrap:

broken things, metal bits, and discarded items are given places of honor here.

The interior of the temple opens into a large chamber that circles to the left and right. An archway ahead leads into the courtyard, containing an altar and doorways to the temple's looms and quarters. Junk, again, is given a place of honor along the walls and shelves alongside masterfully created tapestries of spiders, clockworks, and gears.

Cecylia, a human **priest**, and Norneth, an elfmarked **spy**, maintain the temple. Cecylia handles any questions and duties of the temple while Norneth is a fresh acolyte who brings her stealth skills to the temple; originally from Dornig, Norneth left under some unmentioned disgrace. Cecylia is helpful but serious and studious; she prefers to devote her attention to her work and goddess. Norneth does not speak to the party unless spoken to and occupies herself evaluating the temple's latest junk arrivals.

A perceptive character succeeding at a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices her surreptitiously studying them—or more precisely their equipment. When adventurers fail to return to Redtower, Norneth is the one who scavenges whatever remains. If confronted, she blithely plays off her interest and tells them they need better gear to survive the citadel and invokes Rava to bless them.

Cecylia will cast spells for the party at a fee of 50 gp per level of the spell and sells scrolls for triple the cost of the charge to cast it. She also offers to buy any interesting “junk” the party recovers from the Scarlet Citadel. Cecylia offers 2d4 gp for any unusual scrap or trinkets the party brings back, but truly exotic material could fetch up to 50–100 gp.

R12. KONRAD'S HOME

This L-shaped home sprawls over a generous lot next to the southwest road out of Redtower. Flourishes adorn the joints and

arches of the house's doors and windows in spiraling, arcane motifs, and a crown of silvery wands surmount the home's prow-shaped roof. The home beyond those luxurious, glass-paned doors has five rooms on the bottom and a staircase to a second-floor loft with a study and bedroom.

Konrad of Runkelstad lives here, a retired battlemage who made a tidy fortune first in service to his kingdom and then as a mercenary (human **mage**). His last assignment came from a group of noble thrill seekers from Cronepish, looking to conquer the Scarlet Citadel; some sinister trap unleashed waves of undead on them before they made it far, and Konrad barely escaped with his own life—and what treasures they'd found before the end. He chose a long life against an adventurous one and settled in Redtower, pursuing the entrepreneurial opportunity he saw in appealing to an adventurer's greed for power.

He keeps to himself, paying for his privacy with the good graces he's purchased from the reeve. On occasion, he'll send personal invitations to new adventurers in the village—or welcome them if they come to visit of their own accord—and sweep them into his parlor. The large room is decorated with fine couches and surfaces bearing a wealth of trinkets he has made or acquired in his career. Dominating the room is a massive painting, depicting the towers of Runkelstad, which something characters can't miss wherever they sit in the room.

If the characters visit Konrad on their own, initiate the “battlemage bargain” encounter from the **Random Social Encounter Table**.

R13. ORCHARD

Redtower's orchard is just outside the southwest wall, consisting of several neat, well-maintained rows of apple trees surrounded by protective hedgerows. A small house and storage shed nestle close to the wall where Cibor and Eva live with their

son, Gabe. They maintain the orchards and hedges and, in the winter, produce cider with the Sweet Sap Brewery (R6).

Cibor seldom goes into the village, preferring to stay around the orchard or venture into the forest outskirts to gather food and visit with the alseids at the temple to Yarila and Porevit nearby (see E2 under “Beyond Redtower”). His wife and son however are more social: Eva is often one of the forces behind Redtower’s festive gatherings, and Gabe is something of a leader to the adolescents in the village.

Eva doesn’t hesitate to welcome in the party if they visit and treats them with ciders, apple pies, and nosy questions. She is an excellent source of gossip about Redtower; whenever the PCs spend at least an hour visiting Eva, roll twice on the **Gossip Table**, limiting the rumors to locals only. Of course, being the village’s greatest gossip, anything told to Eva is spread around the village within a day or two.

Gabe’s Nightmares. With a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, the party notices Gabe lurking about the orchard. He’s alone and rubbing his temples, muttering to himself. If they engage him, he plays it off with a confident, teenage swagger as nothing being wrong, but a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals he’s exhausted. If pressed, he admits he went to the arch at the lifeless clearing (see E3 in “Beyond

Redtower”) and spent the night there on a dare; he’d done it a year ago and nothing happened, but this time, he had awful nightmares, and he hasn’t slept well since. He begs the party not to tell his parents since he’s not supposed to be going there.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS AROUND REDTOWER

Adventurers are a source of excitement in Redtower, drawing the attention of those hoping to profit from them or those who could use their help. Check for a random social encounter once per day when the PCs are in Redtower.

RANDOM SOCIAL ENCOUNTER TABLE

d8	ENCOUNTER
1	no encounter
2	ailing villager
3	argument
4	arrested
5	battlemage’s bargain
6	brewery sample
7	contest
8	stuck travelers

Ailing Villager. A villager, most likely a woodsman, hunter, or trader, has fallen victim to tainted food or water or one of several mundane toxins in the environs. Suffering obvious effects, the villager stumbles into the party. A DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check is enough to diagnose and treat the malady. If the party does so or pays to have them treated at Rava’s temple (R11), they are warned about one of the hazards around Redtower. Roll on the **Terrain Encounter Table** to determine which hazard the villager knows about; if the party encounters that hazard in the future, they have advantage on rolls to notice or avoid it.

Argument. The party witnesses an argument happening in the street between villagers, merchants, or even a different



REDTOWER

The map shows a river flowing from the top right towards the bottom left. A large lake is situated in the center. Buildings are scattered throughout the area, with some labeled with 'R' and others with 'E'. The map is drawn in a simple, schematic style with black lines and grey shading for water and some buildings.

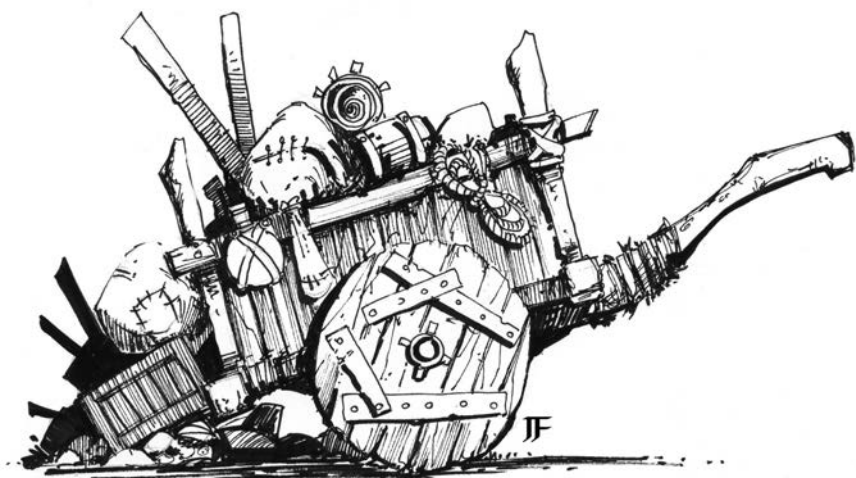
adventuring band threatening to split up. They don't have to get involved, but if they do, have them make a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check to mediate the situation. On a success, they win over some of the villagers who then spread the word for merchants to stop fleecing the party. This won't end all predatory behavior, but merchants won't charge the party more than standard prices anymore.

Arrested. When this encounter is rolled, see if any of the characters are unconscious or very inebriated outside an inn room or have been involved in an argument, altercation, or other activity that Constable Roch can construe as “disturbing the peace.” If not, reroll the encounter. Otherwise, the constable has the offending character arrested; if they were unconscious or inebriated, they wake up in the jail cell attached to the manor house but are “generously” offered release if they pay a 25 gp fine. For other transgressions, they get the option to spend the night in jail or pay the fine there.

Battlemage's Bargain. An invitation to Konrad's home (R12) always results in food, drink, being regaled by Konrad's memories of military service and mercenary

adventuring—and a sales pitch to buy one of his “treasures.” Konrad dabbles in magic item creation in his spare time now and loves offloading them onto adventurers since they are—not that he tells them—imperfect. The first time the party visits Konrad and every time this encounter occurs thereafter, he has a new “treasure” he offers them: either choose or randomly determine uncommon magic items. The result is what Konrad *claims* the item is, and he charges 100 gp. He'll allow the party to haggle him down as much as 50% with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, letting them feel like they got the better end.

Every item he sells is faulty: the item fails after 1d4 uses, the enchantment on it fading (if the item was a container, it ejects anything that was in it) and the item reverts to a mundane object, and additionally decrease any numeric-based effects of the item by half. Konrad doesn't expect the party to survive future encounters long enough to complain to him, but if they do, he feigns surprise at any item's faultiness and acts contrite, claiming he needs perhaps to refine his enchanting skills—but no *other* adventurers had complained (being dead and all).



Brewery Sample. Remy and Mags are standing outside the Sweet Sap Brewery (**R6**), offering samples of their newest concoction. The characters can choose to try it. If any do, they must succeed a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain the poisoned condition for 1 minute from the faulty brew. Otherwise, the brew tastes

awful but has no ill effects. The halflings are embarrassed and give the party 1d4 gp for the trouble. If any of the characters agree to try the sample again the next time they receive this encounter, the brew works and is delicious—the grateful halflings allow the characters to name the new drink.

d8 RUMOR	
1–5	Give the characters some gossip about a random villager: choose or randomly determine which person the party gains a bit of information about.
6	There's a witch in the woods nearby who sells potions and healing remedies, but no one in the village likes to visit her. While she acts friendly, the dead animals on her porch are very off-putting.
7	There's an old man living by himself on the outskirts of the village. Sometimes he comes screaming into the village when an owlbear knocks down his hut again, but for the most part, he seems to dislike everybody.
8	Gellert the Gruesome has a small army of monsters and bandits at his command, and they roam the woods and roads looking for easy marks. Redtower rarely comes under attack, but travelers aren't so lucky.
9	Alseids (see <i>Tome of Beasts</i>) tend to the temple of Yarila and Porevit outside of the village, near the orchard. Only Cibor talks to them much, but the produce he brings back from trading with them is enormous.
10	Constable Roch is suspicious of adventurers, and it's best not to get caught being drunk or difficult around the village.
11	The red tower (R10) was made from the bones and teeth of the fallen giant that Milena and Henrik slew, and his blood soaked the stones placed there forever.
12	Each time an adventurer perishes in the Scarlet Citadel, an unknown artist slips out by nightfall and paints a stone red at the red tower (R10) in their honor. Over time, the stones of the tower have been painted red many, many times.
13	The stones to build the red tower (R10) came from the ruins submerged beneath the pond to the north. Before they were covered in water and moss, there was a property to them that makes them red—possibly even some strange magical energy protecting them from the ravages of time.
14–15	Give the party information to warn them of one of the villagers who will try to take advantage of them. Either choose or randomly determine who they are warned about: Reeve Broz, Constable Roch, Konrad, Witek, Eva, or the merchants.
16–19	The party gets warning about one of the hazards from the Terrain Encounter Table . Randomly determine which one they hear about; if that hazard is encountered, they receive advantage on rolls to spot or avoid it.
20	The party is alerted to the existence of the lifeless clearing in E2 and the suspicion that Gabe from the orchard (R12) snuck out there recently and has been acting strangely since. Additionally, Gellert's henchmen have been spotted in the area more often.

Contest. Some sort of competition erupts at the Cage (**R4**) and everyone is invited. Whether darts, knife juggling, or guessing where the monster trophies on the wall came from, there's drink and food flowing and gold to be won. The type of competition determines the check, such as Dexterity (Acrobatics) for darts or Intelligence (Nature) to guess the monsters. Set the DC to a moderate difficulty, 14–16; the character wins 1d6 gp for every point the DC is exceeded. If more than one PC is competing, the highest of the successful results wins the entire pot.

Stuck Travelers. A few travelers come into the village, distressed their cart got stuck in the muck when it came too close to the swampy pond to the north (**E5**). Rescuing the cart could require pushing it out of the muck with brute force or using ropes or animals to pull it clear. It is a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check with brute force alone, but the party can reduce the DC by 1 for each additional measure they take to make it easier. If they succeed, the grateful travelers give the group 1d10 + 3 gp. If this encounter is rolled again, the circumstances can change: a trader cart ready to leave breaks a wheel or a storm rolls in that gets a wagon stuck outside.

Gossip

Gathering village gossip not only allows the party to get familiar with Redtower and its occupants but also to be forewarned about some of the dangers awaiting them.

Beyond Redtower

Outside of Redtower, the tame prairie grasslands to the northwest give way to the thick woodland of the White Forest to the south of the settlement. A tributary of the Templine River feeds the village, and the road southeast out of the village leads to the Scarlet Citadel deeper within the woods.

Although Redtower has carved out a niche of relative safety on the borders of the White Forest, the area is plenty dangerous even without the citadel. The flora and fauna here are changed by the influence of magic and Gellert the Gruesome, and some mysteries here might be better left buried. The looming presence of the citadel itself also can't be ignored as Gellert's henchmen and experiments do not always stay contained.

The area around Redtower can be a place for adventure all on its own, though many of the locales and encounters point to the Scarlet Citadel for further exploration.

E1. TOBIASZ'S HUT

A small hut cobbled together from loose stone and reclaimed wood perches on the opposite side of the riverbank northeast of Redtower. The hut looks like it's been knocked down and rebuilt multiple times, evidenced by the scattering of half-buried debris around it. On the south side of the hut is a large, gnarled tree with a sturdy, covered platform nestled in its branches. It is of much better construction than the hut below.

This is the home of Tobiasz, an elderly human **commoner** hermit that once lived in Redtower but grew horrified by the complicity of the villagers in letting adventurers run to their slaughter in the Scarlet Citadel. He takes it upon himself now to warn people away, which is why he hasn't left yet; he goes into Redtower only for supplies and to shame the villagers and otherwise spends his time writing letters to Queen Dorytta to bring an army to raze the citadel once and for all. Tobiasz's trade is carpentry, and he built both the hut and tree stand, which is where he flees to when monsters inevitably attack. The hut on the other hand has been ransacked so much he only bothers with "good enough."

The party may sometimes run into Tobiasz shouting for help from a monster attack and in need of rescue. See "Tobiasz the Hermit" under the **Creature Encounter Table**.



E2. YARILA AND POREVIT TEMPLE

Set in a small clearing in the woods southwest of Redtower is an airy temple to the Twin Gods, Yarila and Porevit, Mother Field and Father Harvest. The temple itself is a roomy structure with few walls and has archways instead of doors. The roof supports come from wooden posts wrapped in ivy and vines, most of them in perpetual bloom. An altar to the Twin Gods is set before the temple structure, an elevated stone block skirted by flowers and bountiful

fruits and vegetables. In a rectangular periphery around the altar is a “fence” of stakes in the ground, marking growth stands of tomatoes, berries, grapes, and other seasonal crops.

A group of four alseid **druids**, Synnana, Bellenor, Ammanis, and Kashyna, maintain the temple here and are friendly to visitors. They do most of their business with Redtower through Cibor of the orchard (R12) but are glad to trade. If the party is friendly, the alseids allow them to rest at

the temple whenever they wish, safe from harm; while they are aware of the forest's hazards, hostile creatures don't trouble them here, and they do not seek them out. Camping here does not prompt a random encounter check.

E3. THE LIFELESS CLEARING

A bizarre little clearing west of Redtower has a prominent place in local lore, primarily among the village's children as the place they should not go, but a rite of passage among Redtower adolescents is to spend the night here.

The clearing is abrupt, cutting into the surrounding trees as though the edge of the woods reached an invisible line. Nothing grows in the clearing. Birdsong and insect chittering are silenced, and no living animal willingly crosses into it. Mounts and animal companions must be coerced with a DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to enter the clearing where they remain nervous and ill-at-ease.

The focal point of the clearing is a weather-worn stone arch, lopsided and half-sunk into the ground, its engravings faded with the passing of eras. A withered black vine winds around both sides of the arch, never blooming but neither never crumbling. The vines are unyielding and cold as iron when touched, and the stone

itself imparts such a frigid sensation that, even in the hottest summers, the chill to the skin lingers for hours.

The strange arch once led to a shadow road that fed into the greater White Road nearby. At some point, the connection collapsed, and the arch went dormant. Recently, however, the archway has been showing signs of life, prompting interest from others in the region.

Roll a d6 when the party enters this area: on a 1–4, it is empty, and on a 5–6, they find 1d4 + 1 **bandits** serving Gellert the Gruesome, investigating the arch and complaining about their orders.

The bandits tell the party to go away and mind their own business. They attack if the characters don't comply.

If questioned, the bandits can't answer much about the archway. Orders came down to check the clearing and see if anyone else was looking into it and make sure they stopped—permanently. They don't know why there's any interest as it's supposed to have been dormant for decades if not centuries.

If the party lingers in the clearing long enough, they'll notice at sunset and at midnight the arch's engravings will briefly glow with pale blue light and fade erratically with a slight scent of electricity left behind in the air. Nothing else happens, and no detections or investigations reveal anything further.

Besides the unnatural coldness to the stone and the scheduled flare-ups of energy, nothing else happens in the clearing. Characters who sleep here however are afflicted with nightmares of a shadowy, desolate wasteland. If they don't succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, they wake up with a level of exhaustion.

If the party wants to delve further into the mystery around the resurgence of the arch, check out *Warlock Lair #50: The Light of Memoria*. The PCs find a strange relic curiously connected to the magical archway long thought dormant but quickly realize someone is trapped on the other side! The relic allows them to pass through, but to get home, they'll have to traverse a shadowy landscape permeated by the memories of a mage conclave long forgotten—and face the hungry shades eager for escape.



E4. ZULA'S COTTAGE

No path leads to Zula's cottage in the woods near the northwestern road into Redtower. The party might stumble into her cottage clearing or perhaps notice the trail of hearth smoke above the trees. Villagers in Redtower can also direct the PCs to her, though they seldom discuss her; no one visits Zula unless they need special potions

or healing and the Rava temple's fees are too steep.

The cottage is small, even quaint looking, with a white-painted porch and balustrade, walls and roof in good repair, and patches of bright wildflowers growing around it. The effect is diminished by the bodies of small animals dangling from the porch awning, ready to be gutted for entrail reading.

The witch, Zula (human **priest**), has a mutually beneficial arrangement with Gellert the Gruesome: in exchange for occasional deliveries of unusual reagents for use in her potion-making experiments, Zula uses her magic to contact Gellert about any unusual news in or around Redtower, including things like the arrival of new adventurers.

She does not have any personal stake in working with Gellert; she simply has flexible ethics when it comes to pursuing her research and livelihood. Zula is a cheerful, rosy-cheeked, wizened old woman constantly puttering about her cottage, and she offers the party slightly discounted (10%) *potions of healing* and access to her limited repertoire of healing magic in exchange for any news from the village.

E5. THE SUNKEN POND

Just south of the northwest road into Redtower is a large depression, sunken and filled with brackish water, the corpses of a few bare trees, and thriving colonies of fungi, weeds, and insects.

Beneath the algal muck, moss-covered stones protrude from the water, resembling the corners and angles of what might have been a stone structure at one time. Any carvings are long worn away, however, leaving just the shell of a large structure buried beneath the water.

The edges of the pond provide good harvesting for peat, planting soil, and certain plants and mushrooms, but it's hazardous as well. Immersion in the pond requires an immediate DC 12 Constitution saving throw to avoid developing an itchy, red rash and taking a level of exhaustion within the hour. A short rest alleviates the rash as does any effect that removes poison or a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check.

Under close inspection, the stones have a notable crimson hue beneath the moss. Touching the moss encrusts it on

the investigating character's skin, the spores attempting to take root within the character's body, inflicting 1 (1d3) poison damage every hour until a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw is made. The spores can also be removed via a remove poison effect or a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check.

Random Encounters

Each day the party spends exploring the outskirts of Redtower, check to see if they encounter anything unusual. If they make camp or take a long rest in the outskirts, unless they are in a safe location like the temple to Yarila and Porevit, make another check while they are resting. Characters might encounter special terrain, one or more creatures, or a combination of the two.

A random encounter while PCs are camped is automatically a creature encounter.

RANDOM SOCIAL ENCOUNTER TABLE

d20	ENCOUNTER
1–13	no encounter
14–15	terrain (roll once on the Terrain Encounter Table)
16–17	one or more creatures (roll once on the Creature Encounter Table)
18–20	terrain encounter featuring one or more creatures (roll once on the Terrain Encounter Table and once on the Creature Encounter Table)

Creature Encounters

Keep the party's level in mind when fleshing out these encounters. Characters should be able to retreat from or avoid an encounter that proves to be too difficult, even if at some sort of cost (abandoning supplies in camp for example).

Corpse with Swarm of Insects. The party stumbles across a dead body left in the wilderness. Identity and cause of death

are impossible to determine as it has been ravaged by elements and scavengers. It's easy to hear the buzzing of insects around it, but only a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the rippling bulges and swelling of a swarm inside the cadaver.

A swarm of insects explodes out of the body as soon as a creature comes within 5 feet, and the swarm makes a surprise attack against the closest target unless they succeeded on the Perception check.

There isn't much left to gather from the body, but a search of the area turns up 5d10 gp worth of coin and goods.

Giant Centipedes. The ley lines also have a bolstering effect on some local fauna, including these centipedes. They are hungrily consuming anything in its path, including the party when they come across them.

Human Commoners. The party comes across a small group of local woodsmen or hunters. If friendly, they're willing to share a camp for a rest; if the party accepts, don't check for a random encounter during that rest. They'll also warn the party of an area of the woods where things can be treacherous from sinkholes, tree falls, or poisonous plants. The next time the party would roll on the **Terrain Encounter Table**, it is negated.

Goblins. This small band of goblins proudly—or fearfully—serves Gellert the Gruesome. They wear his sigil, torn and tattered, on their flimsy armor. They are one of his patrols in the woods and attempt to kill anything that might be threatening, which to a goblin includes most things.

Bandits. These bandits also serve Gellert the Gruesome, though they operate with more independence than his monsters. They simply have a lucrative deal robbing traders and foolhardy adventurers and only occasionally needing to follow Gellert's orders. They are used to running the forest and decide everything the party has is rightfully theirs. The bandit groups can also be encountered being led by a bandit captain, notably tougher and getting orders more directly from Gellert.

Tobiasz the Hermit. This encounter occurs around sundown or at night. Tobiasz (E1) runs into the party, wild-eyed and shouting about an owlbear, and points frantically in the direction of his hut. If the party receives this encounter while already near his hut, he instead shouts for help at them from his tree stand.

An **owlbear** is in the process of knocking down Tobiasz's home, sniffing for food. It reacts slowly to the party's presence, giving

CREATURE ENCOUNTER TABLE

d12 + d8	ENCOUNTER
2–4	corpse with swarm of insects (reroll if the party is camped)
5–7	1d4 + 1 giant centipedes
8–10	1d3 + 1 human commoners
11–12	1d6 goblins
13–14	1d4 bandits
15	Tobiasz the hermit
16–17	1d6 + 1 wolves
18	1d3 bandits with bandit captain
19	1 gargoyle
20	1 owlbear

them a surprise round, but then it lumbers to attack them. If the battle is going poorly, Tobiasz shouts for them to climb the tree with him; there is no check needed to scale it, but only one character can go at a time. The stand has enough room for four Medium-sized creatures close together, and the other branches can hold up to two more. After a few rounds of growling and sniffing at the tree, the owlbear moves off into the woods in search of an easier meal.

He is grateful to the party for rescuing him but resigns himself to the knowledge it will happen again. Nonetheless, he sets right to rebuilding. If the party talks to him or helps him set up his hut, he can tell them a great deal about the creatures in the woods. The party gains advantage on their attack rolls during their next encounter from the **Creature Encounter Table**. Unfortunately for Tobiasz, this encounter can occur multiple times, requiring him to go running for help again.



Wolves. This wolf pack has had its game run off by larger predators in the forest lately and hungrily eyes the party. The wolves prefer to attack the party while at rest and attempt to stalk them to strike when they let their guard down.

Gargoyle. One of Gellert the Gruesome's creations, this **gargoyle** has wandered out of the Scarlet Citadel after a dry spell of interlopers to destroy, and now it roams the woods, seeking to slaughter anything that draws close to the citadel. When it thinks it is near people, the gargoyle will use its False Appearance ability to resemble a statue and encourage the party to come investigate it before it surprises them by attacking. If this would be a difficult encounter, allow the characters to attempt DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Arcana) checks to notice the statue looks very unnatural and gives them a bad feeling. Don't make the gargoyle pursue the party if they choose not to investigate it. If engaged, the gargoyle fights until destroyed but will not pursue characters who flee to Redtower or to the temple of Yarila and Porevit.

Owlbear. Owlbears are a persistent and dangerous nuisance in the White Forest, and Gellert the Gruesome bears the blame. Encounters with owlbears mostly happen at night when they hunt, and their hoots and screeches make them heard long before they are seen and can serve as a warning for the party to leave the area. Owlbears are relatively simple creatures as well, and the party might be able to draw it away or placate it with food to make it leave them alone should they prefer not to confront it.

Terrain Encounters

This area of the White Forest is home to some unusual terrain and hazards, potentially influenced by the nearby ley lines or perhaps the arcane experimentation overflowing into the environment from

the Scarlet Citadel. Special terrain rules are explained after the table. If the party received warning of particular encounters from villagers in Redtower, they gain advantage on their rolls to spot, identify, or avoid the negative effects for that encounter.

TERRAIN ENCOUNTER TABLE

d20	ENCOUNTER
1–3	briar growth
4–6	hidden cache
7–8	shelter
9–11	sinkhole
12–13	tangled canopy
14–17	toxic flora
18	tree fall
19–20	wild mists

Briar Growth. The bountiful magical energy in some areas of the forest have resulted in overgrown briar walls, blocking access to parts of the woods. Noticing the briar growths is easy: these walls can be several hundred feet wide, growing around trees and brush, and up to 3d10 feet thick. The party can move around them, but doing so adds 1d4 hours to their travel time toward a destination. Attempting to navigate the massive briars is difficult: reduce speed to a quarter of normal movement, and every square of movement requires a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to avoid taking 3 (1d6) piercing damage. Cutting through the briars with a slashing weapon provides advantage on this saving throw for every character that follows.

Hidden Cache. While in the woods, make DC 15 passive Perception checks for the characters. On a success, one of them notices a tree with part of its trunk or roots hollowed out artificially. On investigation, they find a hidden cache: there is a 50% chance they find 1d4 trinkets; otherwise, they find 2d10 gp worth of small gems.

Shelter. The party stumbles across a dug-out hollow or empty den with enough room for all of them to take a long rest. While in this shelter, they can rest without any chance of a random encounter.

Sinkhole. Noticing a place where the earth is depressed and unsettled, a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check spots the sinkhole, enabling the party to go around it. If not spotted, a random party member steps on and collapses the sinkhole and must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into a 20-foot-deep pit and taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. Climbing out of the pit requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

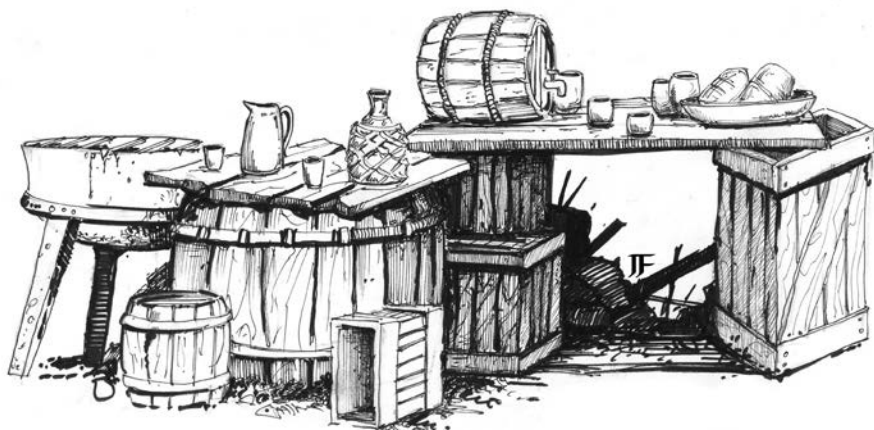
Tangled Canopy. In these areas, the trees grow so thickly together that light is one step dimmer than it should be, and orientation becomes difficult. To avoid getting turned around and lost requires a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check. Once lost, the party must attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to get back on course; on a failure, it takes 1d6 hours to attempt the check again. While the party is lost, roll on the **Random Encounter Table** every hour, ignoring friendly encounters.

Toxic Flora. The party runs afoul of some of the unusual flora around Redtower,

mutated by the proximity of ley lines and the Scarlet Citadel. Roll a d4 on the **Toxic Flora Table** to determine which one the party encounters.

Tree Fall. A hazard the lumberjacks of Redtower know well: trees fall in the forest without any help and sometimes without warning. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the telltale cracking and snapping of wood as a tree plummets toward the party. Those who succeed at this check receive advantage on the DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to dive out of the way. Those who fail take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and are pinned under the tree, as if grappled. A successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is enough to get out from under the tree, made with advantage if non-trapped creatures help. Make an immediate roll on the **Creature Encounter Table** to see what is attracted to the area within 1d10 minutes to investigate the noise.

Wild Mists. Some areas of the forest develop light mists of no apparent origin. These mists are harmless, but a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals they are unnatural. These mists are in fact side effects of the magical energy seeping from the surrounding ley lines. Spellcasting



characters may make DC 13 Intelligence (Arcane) checks to notice a strange feeling in the air as they pass through the mist as if their magical abilities are being affected. Casting a spell within the wild mists that expends a 1st-level or higher spell slot causes a surge: there is a 50% chance the

spell is cast as though one level higher, a 25% chance it fizzles, and a 25% chance it morphs into a different spell entirely, randomly determined from the character's spell list (while using the originally intended spell slot). Spellcasting returns to normal as soon as the characters leave the mist.

TOXIC FLORA TABLE

d4	FLORA
1	corrosive sap
2	poison blooms
3	sleeping fields
4	surprise berries

Corrosive Sap. A DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check indicates the sap oozing out of these sickly trees is responsible for their condition; something is wrong with it and touching it would be unwise. Moving through the trees requires a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to keep from touching the sap. On a failure, the character takes 1 (1d3) acid damage per minute for 2d6 minutes; spending 1 minute cleansing the affected area also ends the effect.

Poison Blooms. These vibrant-colored flowers bloom on the vines dangling from the trees and can exude toxic pollen when movement is nearby. Spotting the pollen bloom before walking through requires a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. To resist the toxin, the character must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. Affected characters develop a rapid-onset, dry, hacking cough, suffering a level of exhaustion and making a new saving throw each minute until they succeed or die from exhaustion. The poison can be either removed by an appropriate spell effect or treated with a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine)

check, which grants advantage on the affected creature's next saving throw to slough off the poison bloom.

Sleeping Fields. This pocket-meadow is blanketed with wildflowers and enchantment. A DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check notices something odd about these flowers as they don't resemble other blooms in the area. Moving through the fields carefully (no more than half speed) will not disturb the flowers. Moving through at a faster pace will stir up clouds of pollen. Those in the pollen must make DC 13 Wisdom saving throws or be overcome by *sleep* lasting one hour if not dispelled or removed sooner. The flowers also release pheromones into the air to attract wandering creatures to the meadow; roll or choose a creature from the **Creature Encounter Table** that is attracted to the meadow in 5d10 minutes.

Surprise Berries. These berries resemble an edible variety so strongly that the villagers nicknamed them and avoid picking either variety. A DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check differentiates them, but otherwise they look exactly like an edible species of berry. Upon consuming one, stomach pain and nausea set in within 10 minutes, giving the character a level of exhaustion that persists until their next long rest. It can also be cured by any effect that removes poison.

MY MONSTER: SCARLET CITADEL EDITION

by Mike Welham

In 2019, Kobold Press ran the My Monster contest on the Kobold Blog, in which contestants drafted the flavor text for some brand-new monster. The four finalists (John Burkett, Robert Fairbanks,

Jonathan McAnulty, and Adam Meredith) had their winning “monster flavors” crafted into the fully statted creatures below. Adventurers beware!

CECUM DEVIL

A tall, exquisitely robed figure glides silently forward, hand outstretched, beckoning. You’ve never seen anything so flawless, so sensuously beautiful, as that elegantly gesturing hand. You step forward, your comrades’ muffled warnings distant and childlike. There’s no horror when the hood falls back, only cold, reptilian perfection—six, jewel-eyed viper heads gleam and sway hypnotically atop writhing, serpentine necks. Blissfully you reach out your hand...

Personal Demesne. A cecum devil has access to a pocket dimension large enough to fit a mansion and a quarter acre of grounds outside the purview of Hell. The devil keeps its home away from home

well-appointed and stores its favorite treasures as well as its mortal captives here.

Hostage Takers. Usually at the behest of arch-devils, cecum devils use their coercive abilities to collect high-profile targets, granting their employers leverage on bargains with mortals. A few cecum devils quietly apply this kidnapping scheme to build their own power base.

Hydra Affinity. Cecum devils closely guard the secret of the physical similarities between them and hydras. They often entice lesser creatures to live in their pocket dimensions while allowing the hydras to hunt hostages who no longer have use or whatever prey the devils think might prove a challenge to their “pets.”

CECUM DEVIL

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 189 (18d8 + 108)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	23 (+6)	22 (+6)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Con +12, Cha +13

Skills Arcana +11, Deception +13, Insight +10, Perception +10, Persuasion +13, Stealth +12

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

Damage Immunities fire, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the cecum devil's darkvision.

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

Multiple Heads. The cecum devil has six heads. As long as it has more than one head, the devil has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Whenever the cecum devil takes 30 or more damage in a single turn, one of its heads dies. If all its heads die, the devil dies.

At the end of its turn, it grows one head for each of its heads that died since its last turn unless it has taken acid damage since its last turn. The devil regains 15 hit points for each head regrown in this way.

Personal Pocket Dimension. The cecum devil can move to and from its pocket dimension as a bonus action. While attacking from its pocket dimension, it has advantage on attack rolls, and other creatures have disadvantage on saving throws against spells and effects originating from it. If the devil dies, its pocket dimension collapses, instantly transporting each other creature to the location from which it originally accessed the dimension.

Innate Spellcasting. The cecum devil's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20). The devil can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person*, *enthrall*

1/day: *dominate person*



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cecum devil makes a bite attack with each of its heads. It can instead replace a bite attack with an eye beam attack with up to half of its heads (rounded down).

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the creature has disadvantage on saving throws against spells and abilities that inflict the charmed condition. The poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Dimensional Shunt (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The cecum devil opens a portal to its pocket dimension, and a willing creature or one charmed by the cecum devil uses its reaction to move through the portal. The portal remains open for 1 minute. A creature can find the entrance to the devil's pocket dimension with a successful DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

Eye Beam. The cecum devil fires a beam of energy at a creature it can see within 90 feet of it. The targeted creature must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) psychic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

The devil can use one of its eye beams to instead target a creature with a *charm person* spell.

JACK OF STRINGS

Clad in fine clothes of black and red, this tall, slim figure steps forward. With a clawed hand grasping a crossbar, it makes its eyeless marionette dance. A chuckle escapes its fanged maw as it turns its caprine head. Like jack-o-lanterns in the void, its eyes fall on you, gleaming with cruel delight.

Court Entertainers and Punishers.

A jack of strings uses its collection of marionettes to amuse shadow fey courts. It is adept at tailoring its performances to the crowd, switching effortlessly between charming plays to delight children, ribald

performances meant to titillate older audiences, satirical pantomimes making fun of court rivals, and terrifying tales intended as warnings or threats. Most horrifying, the jack of strings can take control of a creature to enact justice in the form of humiliation, torture, or even death, effectively self-inflicted by the controlled creature.

Uncanny Valley. When a jack of strings establishes a link between a marionette and another creature, the marionette becomes lifelike while the jack's victim takes on a wooden appearance. The puppet gains the victim's eyes, which disappear from the victim's face. Though the linked creature is effectively blind, this doesn't impact the jack's ability to manipulate the creature.

Masters of Puppets. Jacks of strings have several marionettes at their disposal. They painstakingly craft their first puppet, to which they establish a powerful psychic connection. Subsequent puppets derive from victims linked to their original creation and who perish while linked. To avoid retribution by powerful shadow fey, jacks of strings stalk mortal lands to add to their collections. They harvest their prey under the guise of traveling entertainment, either alone or in the company of carnivals or acting troupes. Jacks try to keep the disappearances in their wake to a minimum and to target creatures who won't be missed.

JACK OF STRINGS

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	23 (+6)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +9

Skills Acrobatics +9, Performance +8, Sleight of Hand +9

Damage Resistances

bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't made with cold iron

Condition Immunities

charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft.,

passive Perception 12

Languages Common,

Sylvan

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Create Puppet. Any creature that dies while linked to the jack's puppet becomes an inert puppet that the jack can animate with its Animate Puppet action.

Magic Resistance. The jack of strings has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 23 (6d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Animate Puppet (Recharge 4–6). For 1 minute, the jack of strings gives life to one of its puppets, which has the stats of a clockwork servant (see *Creature Codex*). It is a Small creature, but its statistics are otherwise unchanged. The jack of strings can command all puppets it has animated as a bonus action.

Puppet Link. A jack of strings can establish a telepathic link between its marionette and a target it can see within 90 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become linked to the marionette. A linked creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

While a target is linked, the jack of strings can control it as a reaction at the beginning of the target's turn. This allows the jack of strings to make the target move, manipulate objects, attack, or take other purely physical actions. The target moves awkwardly and has disadvantage on attacks and ability checks. If the jack of strings causes its target to take an obviously fatal action (walking off a cliff or making the target attack itself when below half its hit points for example), the linked creature immediately gains another saving throw, for which the creature has advantage, to overcome the effect.



KAFLIGKAAL

Long and thin, winged like some great, desiccated black mantis, this creature wears a ghastly mask fashioned from the dried and stretched face of a man. Black eyes glitter behind the empty eye sockets of its macabre mask. Its wings move slowly against one another, emitting a dry, keening moan.

Victims of Polymorph. Humanoids who die while unwillingly transformed into another creature and horrified by their transformation return as kafligkaals. Despite the circumstances of their change of shape or the actual shape they took when they died, kafligkaals have a uniform appearance. Scholars speculate that an insectoid demon lord with the ability to polymorph was responsible for the undead creatures' visage, a reflection of the demon lord's true form. If not for the kafligkaals' murderous nature, it might seem tragic that they remain locked in their gruesome shapes regardless of any magical attempts to revert them to their former appearances.

Homicidal Denial. A kafligkaal deludes itself in the belief it still retains its humanoid exterior and often attempts to comport itself as an ordinary member of society. A newly created kafligkaal that sees its reflection briefly realizes its horrific nature, which forces it to murder to maintain its facade. The kafligkaal doesn't care from what victim it harvests a face, and it often takes multiple faces in order to more effectively "blend in."

A Spreading Curse. Kafligkaals curse their victims with similar transformations, inadvertently at first but relishing the cruelty of the change once they understand the effects. Rather than kill their victims, the undead prefer to excise their prey's faces and turn their prey loose after conversion. Unable to speak due to their insectoid natures, these victims run afoul of villagers or adventurers seeking to dispatch what they see as horrific abominations.

Regrettably, this merely marks the genesis of more kafligkaals.

Undead Nature. The kafligkaal doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

KAFLIGKAAL

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 142 (15d10 + 60)

Speed 40 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	6 (–2)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Create Kafligkaal. Any humanoid that dies while transformed by a kafligkaal rises 1 hour later as an independent kafligkaal.

Immutable Form. The creature is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The kafligkaal makes one bite attack and two claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16).

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Despairing Drone (Recharge 5–6). Each creature within 60 feet of the kafligkaal must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or become unable to attack or target any creature with harmful abilities, spells, or other magical effects for 1 minute. An affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Face Removal. If the kafligkaal begins its turn grappling a creature, it cuts at the creature's face. The creature must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the

creature takes 22 (4d10) slashing damage, loses its face (reducing its hp maximum by an amount equal to the slashing damage taken until it receives a *regenerate* or similar spell), and permanently polymorphs into an insect creature of the kafligkaal's choice (as the *polymorph* spell; it can be reversed by a *polymorph* spell). On a success, the creature takes half as much damage, retains its face, and does not polymorph.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the kafligkaal that can see it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the kafligkaal's Horrific Visage for the next 24 hours.



LIMINAL DRAKE

A shadow drifts gently over the castle walls, quietly sliding over its faded banners as though cast by an unseen cloud in the midday sun. A faint shimmer traces through the shade, probing its corners before settling beneath the skull of a great beast. The shadows draw inward, learning from the old bone to forge a body of glimmering void.

Void Dragon Offspring. When an ancient void dragon (see *Tome of Beasts*) dies and imitates a collapsing star, some of the material composing the dragon cleaves from its body to produce liminal drakes. Though possible for the component drakes to recreate the void dragon, the fiercely independent drakes refuse to cooperate with each other to do so.

Portal-Filled Stomachs. As a side effect of their origins, liminal drakes are linked to multiple planes and worlds. They use these linkages to their advantage, swallowing pesky foes to divert them to other locations with little chance for their enemies to return. In an emergency, the drakes can turn themselves inside-out to pass through one of their own portals.

Ominous Aurora. The combination of starlight and void composing a liminal drake's body is repulsive to many observers. Madness cults relish a drake's appearance in the night sky as a sure sign their dark patrons will soon arrive.

LIMINAL DRAKE

Gargantuan dragon, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 297 (22d20 + 66)

Speed 0 ft., fly 90 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (–2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The liminal drake can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Nauseating Luminance. A creature that starts its turn within 120 feet of the liminal drake and is able to see the drake must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns with disadvantage if the drake is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the drake's Nauseating Luminance for the next 24 hours.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. Until the start of its next turn, a creature that averts its eyes has disadvantage on attack rolls against the drake.

Void Dweller. The liminal drake does not require air, food, drink, or sleep. It travels quickly through the void between stars, making immense journeys in impossibly short times.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The liminal drake makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and 28 (8d6) cold damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18).

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage, 18 (4d8) cold damage, and 18 (4d8) radiant damage.

Swallow. The liminal drake makes one bite attack against a Large or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target takes the bite's damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the drake, and it must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On the first attempt, the creature has advantage on the saving throw. On the second attempt, the creature no longer has



advantage on the saving throw. On the third and subsequent attempts, the creature has disadvantage on the saving throw. On a failure, the creature is affected by a *plane shift* spell and sent to a random plane. If the creature is sent to the plane currently occupied, the creature instead appears 5d100 miles away in a random direction.

Warp Space. The liminal drake can fold in on itself to travel to a different plane. This works like the *plane shift* spell, except the drake can only affect itself and not other creatures, and it can't use the effect to banish an unwilling creature to another plane. Creatures swallowed by the drake appear in a space of their choosing formerly occupied by the drake.

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