

WHISPERS *from the* VOID

An adventure for 4th level heroes

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AELMOR

VARDELL

SESTONE

TONDELL

JUDLAND CROSSING

YARSTONE

DARKSTONE PASS

MOONSTONE

RIVER FYRD

LAKE LOOMAH

LAKE DAHLMOOR

DAHLSTONE

DUSKTHORN FOREST

MONOSIS
SPIRIT
STONES

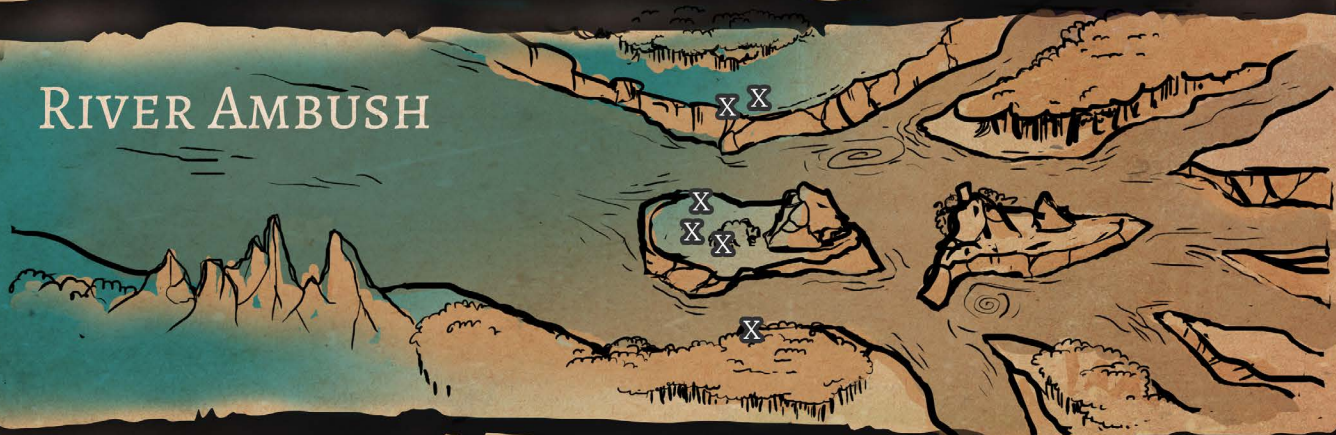
0 5 10 20 50 miles

- Forest
- Mountains
- Plains
- Road
- Path
- Town
- Hovel

MOONSTONE



RIVER AMBUSH



TONDELL



Introduction

Whispers from the Void is an adventure intended for a group of four 4th-level heroes. During the experience, they may advance to level 5 or 6 depending on your style of play. See the 5th Edition online System Reference Document (SRD) for more information.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After enjoying many long decades of peace, the small port town of Sestone has found itself at the heart of a mystery that could threaten the entire region – if not the world.

The troubles began when foul dog-faced pirates and bizarre monsters were spotted roaming through the seas and wilderness. Soon, townsfolk started disappearing without a trace; at least until their mutated bodies washed up on the beach.

A band of adventurers managed to trace the problems back to a mysterious Realm Rift (see Appendix) found beneath the ruined island monastery of Aelmor Island. They discovered that a corrupted wizard was the one abducting people for use in his experiments (see *The Claws of Madness* – LORE001).

Though the wizard had been dealt with, the Rift itself is still leaking eldritch magic into the world. While it exists, the land around Sestone will always be in danger. This fact has not escaped the attention of the local noble, Ulfwin the Fair. After the folk of Sestone held a memorial service to remember the fallen townsfolk, Ulfwin put out a call for brave adventurers willing to aid the town, and maybe, earn some coin in the process.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Ulfwin suggests seeking out the **Monosis**, a druid tribe that might know more about the Realm Rift. The Monosis, however, are reclusive and hard to find. Ulfwin has made contact with a past confidante in the town: Moonstone, who might be able to help once again.

When the heroes take on the task to seek out the Monosis, they'll discover that the druids are in distress. Their leader has been kidnapped by a cult calling themselves 'The Prophets of the Void,' who are also looking for information about Aelmor island and the Realm Rift. The nefarious group is trying to retrieve a powerful artifact named **The Hand of Narkul**, which is rumored to be trapped somewhere inside the planar rift. They are being aided by a group of marauding Gnolls, who agreed to kidnap and bring the Monosis' leader: Tarnillo to Aelmor Island for interrogation. The heroes must rush to get there first and bring him back alive.

Port town of Sestone

The adventure begins in Sestone on the night of a memorial service held to remember the fallen townsfolk. Here, they can gather supplies before heading south at the behest of Ulfwin the Fair. Alternatively, you can use any small to medium sized coastal town for this adventure.

Darkstone Pass

To get to the Monosis, the adventurers must travel through a small mountain range. Dangerous creatures lurk in the pass, waiting to ambush unwitting travelers.

Moonstone

The town of Moonstone offers the party a chance to rest and meet up with Ulfwin's contact to learn more about the Monosis' location. Unfortunately, all is not well in Moonstone. A gnoll by the name of Oduk the Reaver has a base of operations for inland trade. Hired by a mysterious cult calling themselves 'The Prophets of the Void,' Oduk has agreed to transport the kidnapped druidic leader to Aelmor Island. Oduk has readied a boat and crew, waiting to make their escape to open sea by the river Fyrd.

Duskthorn Forest

Once the heroes have learned the Monosis druids live in Duskthorn forest, they can travel there to continue their search. This woodland is bathed in natural magic, helping to hide the Monosis from the prying eyes of their enemies. 'The Prophets of the Void' have already entered Duskthorn in search of the Monosis leader.

Monosis Spirit Stones

In the heart of Duskthorn Forest are the Monosis Spirit Stones. This network of standing stones is the central meeting place for Monosis Druids from across the kingdom. Unfortunately, when the characters arrive, the druids are on high alert; the Prophets have succeeded in taking their leader Tarnillo the Elder.

Aelmor Island

To rescue Tarnillo, the heroes will have to chase the Prophets back to Moonstone where they discover a pack of Gnolls has taken the druid elder by boat to Aelmor Island. If the heroes also take the journey across the river Fyrd, they may run into a Prophets ambush as they camp out near the Tondell Delta. When they make it to Aelmor Island to confront the Prophets and rescue Tarnillo, the heroes witness the increasing destruction by the Realm Rift, as it swallows whole chunks of the island.

STORY HOOKS

Use one of the following plot hooks to put the story into motion or create one that fits your narrative.

Impending Doom

Having learned of the Realm Rift underneath Aelmor Monastery, Ulfwin the Fair, leader of Sestone, asks the party to seek out the Monosis Druids, a secretive circle of druids. He thinks they will know more about the dangers of the Realm Rift, and possibly, how to close it. This is the most straightforward hook to use if the party has not played through the Claws of Madness.

Zaharel's Redemption

Having been exiled from the Monosis Druids for putting them in the spotlight, Zaharel is eager to make amends with her former kin. Not only this, but she owes a high debt to Sestone and Ulfwin for helping Guthber terrorize the town. To redeem herself, she has decided to search out the Monosis, in the hope they will accept her back into the fold and help her atone for the wrongs which occurred on Aelmor Island.

Heleste's Gift

If the adventurers have played The Claws of Madness and managed to save Heleste and clear his name, he offers them a gift: the Monosis' Folio of the Sea (See Appendix Magic Items). This remarkable tome contains generations of knowledge of the flora and fauna of the coast and was compiled by Monosis Druids. Perhaps the party are eager to meet one of these fabled druids or wish to return the book to them.

Exploration

It may be that the heroes need a break from adventuring, and wish instead, to explore the world. If they choose to travel south, they might get caught up in the undercover plots of the criminals if Moonstone, hear great tales of the Monosis Druids, or have a foul encounter with some of 'The Prophets of the Void.'



Mourning In Sestone

Proceed to the first encounter: "A Memorial in Sestone".

A MEMORIAL IN SESTONE

If the heroes freshly arrive in town, they find the streets deserted and are drawn towards the beach by the sound of voices. Otherwise, they are invited to the ceremony along with the rest of the townsfolk.

A solemn, silent crowd has gathered on the yellow-brown sand of the beach as the sun begins to set to the west. They stand in a half-circle that faces the open ocean; the roar of crashing waves mingles with the soft sound of grief coming from a half-dozen tear-streaked men and women.

A handful of figures stand before the crowd, waiting at the very edge of the surf. Three of them are wearing religious robes, but the last is a handsome man with grey-streaked brown hair and a beautiful mustache. If his fine clothes didn't make it evident that he was born to the nobility, his air of confidence and poise certainly would.

"We have gathered here to bid farewell to those so cruelly taken from our community," says the man, running his eyes across the crowd, "And to pay tribute to their memories."

As the heroes watch, a handful of townsfolk step forward and share stories about lost friends and family, though they seem reluctant to talk about the circumstances in which they died. It takes around half an hour for the memorial to finish, and once the sun dips beneath the horizon, the crowd begins to break apart.

Before the bulk of the townsfolk have left, the nobleman - Ulfwin the Fair - steps forward once more, this time holding a kindled torch in his hand.

He explains that the ceremony should make it clear what dangers face the town, and what happens if they are not confronted. Ulfwin adds: "If any here think they can help, I would ask that they make themselves known to me - you will be rewarded for your efforts."

Should the heroes approach the noble, Ulfwin explains a terrible magical phenomenon called the 'Realm Rift' threatens Aelmor Island, which lies only a few miles off the shore. While he doesn't know how to deal with the problem, he hopes that a group of druids known as The Monosis - fabled to be the protectors of the region - will be able to shed some light on the situation.

He wants the heroes to find the druids and ask for their aid. If they are successful, he will reward them with 500gp and the prospect of more work in the future.

If they agree, Ulfwin will reveal that he has already contacted a woman named Hellina, who has offered to act as a guide and a go-between. She said she would meet them in the nearby town of Moonstone.

Ulfwin suggests the heroes leave in the morning and says that if they want to learn more about the Monosis before setting off, they should talk to Heleste Tormund, a local scholar. He adds that the North Call Inn may be a good source of local information, and to let Innkeeper Ared Norgin know that he'll cover their rooms for the night.

Should they ask any of the townsfolk about what happened, Ared himself will step in with a friendly smile before they ask any upsetting questions and offer to fill them in on the details over a drink.

GATHERING INFORMATION

By asking questions around town, the heroes can gain a little more information about Ulfwin's request, the Monosis druids, and the mysterious Realm Rift.

Note that if the party has played through **The Claws of Madness**, then some details about Sestone may have changed. For example, if Ared's daughter Solsta was killed, he will be much more dour and depressed than expected, or Guthber Tomund may still be alive.

A Memorial Service

The service held at the beach commemorated a handful of poor souls who were abducted and killed by a crazed wizard called Guthber Tomund. The mage, who still has a brother in town named Heleste, was experimenting with the Realm Rift when a band of adventurers discovered his evil plot and killed him.

The Realm Rift

Since the discovery of the Realm Rift only 10 miles or so off the coast, it has been the talk of the town. Many villagers are too scared to venture out to sea to fish, and thus, trade in the village is beginning to lull. Many of those brave or reckless enough to sail, come back with what the locals have started to call "Far Touched," their bodies strangely warped and mutated by otherworldly energies. At the local North Call Inn, townsfolk feverishly discuss what needs to be done and many consider leaving Sestone for safer climes.

Kronko, the local harbormaster, complains to Innkeeper Ared, that fewer and fewer ships are sailing past or through Sestone. Rumors of the Rift have spread amongst sailors and traders, scaring off most vessels and hurting the local economy.

Darkstone Pass

All the villagers in Sestone and the local region have either heard of or visited Darkstone Pass. This valley shelters the road which connects Sestone to Moonstone. Although the pass is well traveled, it is no less dangerous than you would expect. Not only are the surrounding mountains susceptible to rockslides, but the wildlife of the area has a deadly theme. Many villagers tell tales of a winged beast with the head of a man and the body of a wolf which attacks travelers making their way to and from Moonstone. If characters talk with Ulfwin the Fair about this, he is willing to give them Guthber Tomund's old home as a reward for bringing back the creature's head.

Moonstone

Many of the villagers from Sestone have visited Moonstone on at least one occasion. The town is about the same size as Sestone, but the locals claim that's where any similarities end. Many of the folk of Moonstone are guarded, short-tempered, and brash. The people of Sestone often trade with those of Moonstone, but the interactions tend to be quick. The leader of Moonstone is Taberta Blackworth, who is as fierce as she is wealthy. Kronko, also, has a cousin named Krassus who works as a shipwright here.

The Monosis

If Heleste Tomund or Zaharel (see *The Claws of Madness*) are still present in Sestone, players can seek out these characters to inquire about the Monosis.

Heleste knows that the Monosis are a group of druids devoted to the Circle of the Land. They are secretive protectors of Sestone and the local region who have a vast knowledge of local flora and fauna. They are extremely hard to find, as they believe themselves vulnerable to the influence of outsiders. Heleste knows the Monosis can be found in Duskthorn Forest.

Additionally, if Zaharel is still alive, she can provide first-hand knowledge of the Monosis druids. Zaharel explains the Monosis are incredibly secretive because many of their members are involved in the lore of ancient and far realm magic, which they keep hidden and safe from the ordinary people. Zaharel herself was outcast by the Monosis for meeting with outsiders, and thus, compromising the druidic circle. Zaharel knows the exact location of the Monosis camp, the Spirit Stones, and (at the GM's discretion) can act as a guide for the characters.

Oduk the Reaver

Kronko the harbormaster knows a little about the gnoll pirates that plague the north coast, specifically the pair of brothers: Turek and Oduk, who are notorious pirates. The younger of the two brothers, Turek, lost his lower right leg in a fearsome battle, and uses a metal pole as a crude prosthetic. Despite this, he is still a ferocious fighter and pirate. Oduk, known as The Reaver by many along the coast,

is well known as the more aggressive of the two brothers. Some say that he has contacts in Moonstone which allow him to smuggle stolen goods into the mainland and keep his pirate fleet afloat. The characters may have met Turek already, on Aelmor Island during “Claws of Madness”. As Kronko has a stake in the trade industry, he is willing to offer the characters 100gp for any information they can bring back from Moonstone about Oduk and his connections.

Duskthorn Forest

No one in Sestone has set foot in Duskthorn, and for what they tell you, no one has in decades. Rumor has it that this wood is filled with living shadows, dire beasts made from the forest itself, and dark enchantments which entrance folk so they can never leave. Some say that a circle of standing stones lies deep in the forest, and it is from here that the magic emanates.

1. THE NORTH CALL INN

The North Call Inn, run by Ared Norgin, is a local hub of both rumors and respite. The old stone building with white plastered walls sits near the docks overlooking the sea. Here, the adventurers can learn more about the events that have recently befallen the town, as well as pick up local information and rumors.

The old inn sits only a stone's throw away from the docks and has clearly been blasted by its fair share of storms, though that doesn't make the light and warmth coming from inside any less welcoming. When you step inside, the mood seems friendly but subdued – understandable considering the troubles Sestone seems to be going through. Many tables stand empty and little laughter rings out from the handful that are occupied, though an elderly, scholarly-looking fellow sitting alone with a glass of wine gives you a nervous smile. Still, a fire is crackling away in the hearth and the smell of hot food drifts in from a kitchen somewhere in the back.

Though there are maybe a dozen patrons in the North Call, only a couple of NPCs are likely to provide much useful information to the heroes.

Ared Norgin

The innkeeper at the North Call, Ared is hard looking but friendly natured and speaks with a raspy deep voice. He has red bristly hair, bold features, and is missing two fingers on his right hand.

If the heroes chat with him, Ared is happy to provide all sorts of useful local information, which includes news about the dangers facing Sestone. His own daughter, Solsta, was almost lost during the recent tragedy, so he's keen to help

out anybody willing to combat the Realm Rift. This extends to offering a free round of drinks to the party if they promise to take up Ulfwin on his offer - an act of generosity that all the locals will swear is unprecedented.

Dockmaster Kronko

After the heroes have been at the inn for a few minutes, a tall man with dark weather-beaten skin and a thick white beard stomps his way to the bar and orders a drink. This is Dockmaster Kronko, and he's more than happy to share his troubles with anybody who will listen.

His biggest complaint is that the trouble with the Realm Rift is scaring ships away from Sestone, and devastating the local economy. He is also worried about the reports of dog-faced pirates roaming the seas.

If the heroes are willing to help out with the problems, Kronko mentions that his cousin Krassus works as a shipwright in Moonstone and could be a useful contact for them if they pass by.

Heleste Tomund

For many years, the Tomund siblings paid little attention to the town where they lived, but after his brother Guthber was found to be the cause of the missing townsfolk, Heleste has been making an effort to get to know the locals. Many still look on him with suspicion, but Ared at least appreciates the effort.

Heleste is more than happy to help out by sharing whatever information he can (see ‘gathering information’) in the hope of redeeming his family name.

Zaharel

If the heroes have played through **The Claws of Madness** and saved Zaharel, the Druid will be sitting with Heleste. Like the scholar, she is seeking to redeem herself and is willing to provide whatever information she can.

If this is the heroes' first time in Sestone, it is assumed that Zaharel died on Aelmore Island.

Once characters are ready to depart from Sestone, move on to **Darkstone Pass**.

2. DARKSTONE PASS

Around two days south of Sestone stands an insurmountable mountain range. Though only lightly forested at the base, its higher reaches are covered in snow no matter the time of year.

Those who travel through the area know that the only clear route through the mountains is Darkstone Pass, and even this journey has its share of hazards.

A manticore hunts these lands, ambushing caravans as they slowly pick their way through the ravine. Also, the area is prone to rockslides, which have buried wagons and entombed unwary wanderers.

3. DEATH FROM ABOVE

As the heroes travel through Darkstone Pass, the manticore that makes its lair in a cave above the ravine will swoop down to attack them.

After several long hours of slow climbing, you finally reach the notorious Darkstone Pass, a winding, scree-filled ravine that twists its way through the mountains.

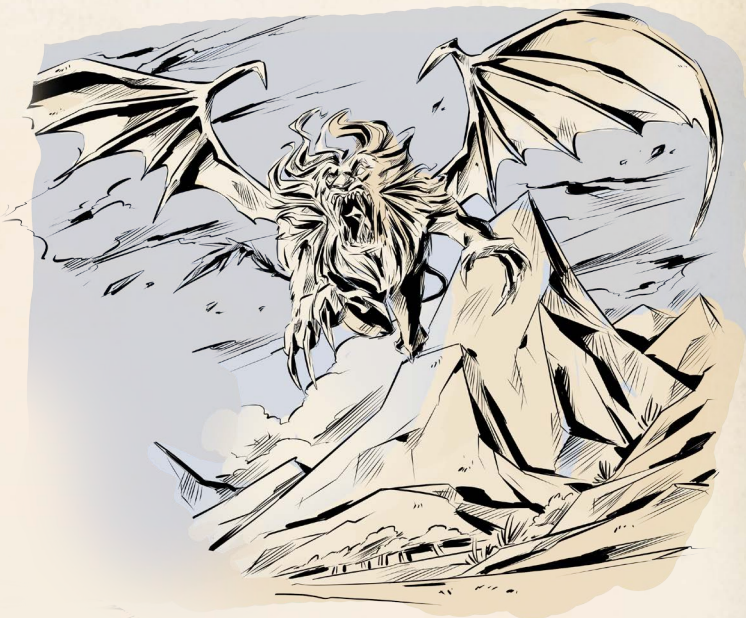
Though you're relieved to be on the flat ground for the first time in a while, the landscape around you is hardly welcoming. Here and there, you notice a half-buried cartwheel or the leg of an unfortunate goat poking out from between fallen rocks. As you begin picking your way across the unsteady ground, however, you catch sight of a cart sitting all alone in the center of the ravine. Perhaps landslides are not the only danger in Darkstone Pass.

The cart seems ordinary enough, though the presence of shredded, blood-stained harnesses tethered to the front suggest that the horses pulling it came to an untimely end. A tarp covers the bed of the cart, which at first glance seems to contain nothing but common trade goods: lumber, a sack of cloth, and a few pots and pans.

As the heroes either investigate or pass by the cart, the manticore (SRD p.332) will spot them and begin its attack.

♥ Manticore

Characters with a passive **Perception of 13** or higher notice a shadow swoop across the floor to one side of them. If they can, follow this with a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check and they spot a large monstrosity swooping above.



A winged monstrosity glides on the updrafts above you. It has the body of a lion, scaled wings and a mane of razor-sharp spines that terminate in pincushion tail. As it circles, you notice that it has the face of a snarling human.

If the heroes do not notice the manticore, it surprises them with its first volley of tail spikes. The manticore aims to stay around 100 feet above the characters in the ravine, firing its tail spikes onto the nearest foe. On initiative 20, roll a d20. On a roll of 10 or less, an event occurs. The following events occur sequentially:

1st	A low rumbling can be heard from the edge of the ravine high above.
2nd	Scree begins to trickle down from the side of the ravine. Characters within 15 feet of the ravine wall must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.
3d	Fist-sized rocks rain down into the ravine. Characters within 15 feet of the ravine wall must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and become stunned until the end of their next turn.
4th	2-foot-wide boulders come rolling off the edge of the ravine, crashing down in showers of rock and dust. Characters within 25-feet of the ravine wall must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Characters who fail the save are also stunned for 1d4+1 turns.

Investigating the Cart

If the heroes thoroughly investigate the cart, they will find a small sack hidden amongst the lumber.

Inside is a small collection of jewelry and gemstones, none of it particularly impressive, as well as a short note.

Tobin,

Apologies for the late delivery of this shipment, as well as its poor quality.

Oduk and his damned dogs have taken control of all the river trade so I've had to pass this off to a merchant taking the route through the mountains.

Not only that, but the blood-crazed swine have been driving off all the marks in the area. I've always said that dead merchants don't come back next year, but they don't seem to care.

You've been good to me and my boys over the years, but if someone doesn't do something soon we're off for pastures new.

*Yours,
Grazzhk Bloodclaw*

P.S. I promised the merchant five gold if he delivered this safely – take it out of my cut. If he doesn't deliver this safely and ends up reading this note, he should know that I'm going to find him one day and cut out his eyes.

❖ **Treasure:** The heroes estimate the haul of stolen goods is worth around 150gp.

Finding the Manticore's Lair

Characters who can leave the pass, such as those who can fly or climb, can attempt a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check to find the lair of the manticore. If successful, they discover a damp cavern covered in moss and littered with bones. The corpse of a half-decayed traveler lays slumped in the far corner.

❖ **Treasure:** The humanoid corpse is that of Gandig Hothgar, a dwarf merchant. Around his belt is a pouch that contains 135gp and five pearls (100gp each). He also wears a dwarf sized chain shirt (50gp) and wields a war pick (5gp).

Moonstone

Roughly one day's travel beyond Darkstone Pass, Moonstone lays cradled against the banks of river Fyrd. Once a hauntingly beautiful elven colony, Moonstone fell into the grips of several criminal organizations. The town slowly filled with unfriendly denizens, its beautiful buildings making way for rickety houses and crooked alleyways.

Moonstone is now a hub of clandestine trade in the Sestone region, its riverside location allowing unscrupulous merchants to ship out their illicit wares under cover of darkness. Traveling northwest down the River Fyrd brings traders and merchants to Tondell, Vardell, and Sestone with ease, where goods are quickly dispatched out into the open sea. This clandestine activity all happens under the nose of Taberta Blackworth, the Duchess of the town, who is happy to turn a blind eye as long as the city remains prosperous. The civilians themselves are either too scared or too smart to oppose Oduk and his cronies.

Gnoll Operations

Though the heroes are likely to have some idea that Moonstone has an unsavory reputation, they likely don't know that Moonstone is home to a black market of stolen goods. Gnoll raiders that operate on the north coast of the Sestone region travel down the River Fryd under cover of night to drop off their plunder for trade throughout the mainland. The gnoll gang is run by Oduk the Reaver (Appendix A), a ferocious gnoll whose brother is admiral of a small fleet of gnoll raider ships rumored to moor on Aelmor Island. They are a relatively new faction in Moonstone, but seem to be displacing other bandit rings and crime syndicates with ease.

Dark Residents

In recent times, a strange cult known as the Prophets of the Void have taken up residence in one of Moonstone's taverns; The Oarhouse Inn. These occultists have been meeting with Oduk to arrange a getaway boat, which they intend to use to kidnap Tarnillo the Elder, leader of the Monosis Druids.

BUILDINGS IN MOONSTONE

A: Fyrd Docks
B: The Oarhouse Inn
C: Oduk's Warehouse
D: Blackworth House
E: The Sail and Paddle (General Goods)
F: Fyrside Brewery
G: Krassus (Shipwright)
H: Saria Gurden (Healer)
I: Tobin's Travelers' Trove
J: Barracks
K: Temple
L: Tillie Brywin, Stonemason
M: Traveller's Lodge Inn

4. ENTERING MOONSTONE

Moonstone has three gates, still bearing elaborate elven wood knotting: Westgate, Eastgate, and Rivergate.

Weary from your long walk, you're glad to see the walls of Moonstone draw closer and closer. As you approach the town, you come to a beautifully carved gate, decorated with incredibly delicate knotting. The simplicity and sophistication of the gate is somewhat contrasted by the small group of guards leaning up against the walls. The five of them glare at you as you approach, narrowing their eyes and looking anything but welcoming. A large dog lifts itself up from its position at the leader's feet and starts barking. If it wasn't for the chain the man held, you're sure it would be leaping for your throats. "Whadda' you want?" shouts the unshaven man.

♥ Guards (4), Veteran, Mastiff

Each gate is manned by a group of four armed guards (**SRD p.394**) led by a veteran (**SRD p.398**) with a mastiff (**SRD p.379**).

The guards demand a toll of 1gp from each person if they wish to enter the town, claiming that the money goes into dock maintenance. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** check gives a character the impression that they are twisting the truth somewhat.

If pushed, the guards will drop the fee down to 2sp. A successful **DC13 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation)** check causes them to admit that the real toll is 1sp.

The heroes don't need to enter the town at all if they don't want to. It's simple enough for them to circle and head straight to Duskthorn Forest if they know or suspect that's where they'll find the Monosis.

You pass through the gate, and all of a sudden you find yourself in the bustling town of Moonstone. Although the streets are busy, you hear little in the way of idle conversation or laughter. It seems as though the rumors you've heard are correct, and from the foul looks shot in your direction, you realize that the locals of this trade hub must have a somewhat unsavory attitude to outsiders.

Indeed, the inhabitants of the crooked streets and narrow alleyways seem eager to get going, rarely stopping to chat even with their neighbors.

DISCOVERIES IN MOONSTONE

By spending time around town, the characters can learn more about the **Monosis Druids**, the **Prophets of the Void** and **Oduk the Reaver**. They can acquire the following information through roleplaying.



Guardians of the Forest

Travelers stopping over in Moonstone have always carried tales of the Monosis, and most people in the area know that they are a secretive circle of druids who aim to preserve the natural lands of the Sestone region.

Despite the mystery that surrounds them, the legends always claim that they are not dangerous or aggressive to those who are respectful of nature. Most stories involving them take place in the Duskthorn Forest, and locals will suggest that if the heroes are desperate to find the druids, that's where they should start looking.

Characters may accidentally, or purposefully, ask a member of the Prophets of the Void about the Monosis. If they do, they decline any knowledge of such people, and describe their existence as 'fanciful fairytales.'

Duskthorn Forest

All of the townsfolk know that Duskthorn Forest lies to the south of Moonstone, past Lake Loomah. Only one or two of the locals have ever set foot in the forest, and neither for more than an hour or two on the border.

They claim that the place is filled with dark magic; giant beasts tear up the forest floor, strange druids stalk between the trees, and the forest itself is matted with vicious thorns.

A few have heard of the Spirit Stones, a circle of standing stones linked to the magic nature of the forest and guarded by the Monosis druids.

Mysterious Cloaked Figures

Everyone in Moonstone has noticed the recent influx of twenty or so 'strange, cloaked figures.' They know nothing about who these folk are, but most suspect they must be religious pilgrims, criminals, or 'troublesome adventurous types.'

Several villagers claim the group has taken rooms in The Oarhouse Inn, a somewhat shady establishment on the edge of town. A woman by the name of Tillie Brynwin claims to have seen beneath the hood of one of these cloaked figures, and can be found at the bar, drinking heavily to cope with what she claims to have seen.

Crime Syndicates in Moonstone

Most civilians of Moonstone know about the town's criminal underbelly, but loathe to speak of it. Only under extreme circumstances do they yield the following information:

A lot of the trade in town is stolen goods plundered from ships off the north coast, brought here up the River Fryd, and distributed at nightfall in the black market.

Oduk the Reaver, a ferocious gnoll, is at the heart of the business and is a relative of a gnoll captain who raids ships up north named Turek. Oduk's base of operations is in the old warehouse by the docks.

5. SEARCHING FOR HELLINA

Following up on Ulfwin's suggestion, the adventurers can find Hellina in Moonstone. This guide is a young human ranger, known to locals as a strange girl who spends too much time in the Duskthorn Forest.

Hellina makes a living selling pelts and rare herbs to traders. About one hour of investigation will be enough for the heroes to track down a merchant who mentions that when she's in town, Hellina can usually be found at the Travelers' Lodge, a log cabin at the edge of the city where travelers may stay. When the heroes arrive at the lodge, they find their guide mortally wounded.

Lying on the floor of the lodge, in a growing pool of blood, is a young human woman wearing green clothing and a thick grey cloak. She clutches at a wound in her belly, blood trickling through her fingers. As you approach, she struggles to look up at you. Through clenched teeth, she manages to force out a few final words: "The Prophets, beware the Prophets..."

After this, her head slumps to the floor, and she lets out a long, rasping breath.

♥ Hellina (Female human ranger)

Unfortunately for the characters, the Prophets of the Void ambushed Hellina. They tried to get the location of the Monosis Druids from her, but when she refused to speak they decided instead to kill her to prevent anyone following them into Duskthorn Forest.

maddening whispers

An aural assault of twisted voices, crooning whispers, and alien sounds from the Far Realm assault the characters, drifting on the tides of stray energies emanating from the mutated fisherman. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of a Far Touched creature must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or take no action on its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the Far Touched's maddening whispers for 24 hours.

Use the maddening whispers to create exciting, spooky, or outright frightening roleplaying situations and put seeds of doubt and devious mystery into your storyline. Are the PCs hearing the whispers because they are nearer to the Hand of Narkul? Is it Narkul speaking? Are the effects dangerous and possibly permanent for the characters?

Mysterious Note

A scrap of paper in Hellina's pocket is covered with scribbled calculations and a small note reading *"Can't risk hunting in Duskthorn. Need more provisions than usual?"* A character examining the sheet and able to succeed on a **DC14 Intelligence (Investigation)** check will realize that Hellina was working out how much food and water a party would need to carry for a roughly six-day journey.

On the back of the sheet is an incredibly crude map showing a path and occasional navigational aids such as, rock formations, streams, and unusual trees. Eventually, the trail seems to end at a set of stone circles. Without a scale or any labels, however, it's not the most reliable of tools.

If the heroes alert local authorities to Hellina's murder, they will only carry out the most cursory of investigations before blaming unnamed bandits and closing the case.

6. THE OARHOUSE INN

The Oarhouse Inn, run by **Nayum Jurgva**, is a shady establishment where traders and merchants meet to discuss underhand deals in private. The shabby wattle and daub building hangs precariously out over the docks. The characters can learn more about The Prophets of the Void and Oduk the Reaver here.

The little inn hangs dangerously over the edge of the docks; black smoke exudes from its single chimney. Outside, on a perch, a scraggly seagull watches passers-by, occasionally screeching at those it finds distasteful. As you enter, you feel several pairs of eyes looking you over, before returning to the bottom of their drinks.

A rundown, circular bar takes pride of place downstairs. Off inside rooms, figures in dark clothes huddle around round tables, muttering under their breath. Suddenly, a woman at the bar falls off her stool, crashing hard onto the floorboards and spilling her wine.

♥ Tillie Brynwin (Female human commoner)

This woman is Tillie Brynwin, a local stonemason. She has been drinking here to cope with what she saw just the night before. Tillie likes a drink, and The Oarhouse Inn is the cheapest in town.

She claims to have seen one of the hooded figures lift his hood, and beneath, his bald head was covered in little, wormlike tentacles. She's told others, but no one believes her, putting it down to drunken visions.

She also overheard them talking about something they called the **Hand of Narkul**, but as soon as she heard the phrase a barrage of maddening whispers overtook her mind.

Prophets Arrive

While Tillie tells her tale, a pair of Prophets emerge from a back room and stride through the bar. Everyone goes quiet, watching them stride past.

A successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** check allows characters to glimpse a strange Minor Mutation on one of the Prophets (See Realm Rift mutations table in the Appendix)

7. BACK ROOM MEETING

Characters who succeed on a **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth)** check can sneak down a short corridor leading into the back room unnoticed. Here, they can hear the muffled conversation of a group of people;

"We will bring him back here, under cover of night, and load him up onto your vessel."

"Whaddever werks for ya, the boat's there already."

"Leave plenty of rope aboard so we can truss him up."

"No problem."

"And you're confident that it's an easy sail to the island?"

"That's why we're 'ere ain't it? Wi'out us ya'd be scuppered on the rocks. Me an' my boys know the way."

"Splendid, then we'll take our leave."

♥ Oduk the Reaver, Xerifix, Prophet Initiates (3)

After this brief interchange, chairs can be heard scraping against the floor. If the character does not hasten to leave, they will be caught by **Oduk the Reaver** (Appendix A), as well as **Xerifix** (Appendix A) and three Prophets of the Void (Appendix A).

8. TOBIN'S TRAVELERS TROVE

Unlike many of the other buildings in town, the paint on Tobin's Travelers' Trove appears fresh and the windows showing the goods within are so clean you could eat your lunch off them. In fact, the only thing marring the jolly little general store is the fact that one of those windows is boarded up, though even the planks are painted in bright shades of yellow and red.

As you enter, a portly halfling man with curly blond hair smiles up at you from behind the counter.

♥ Tobin Rosewater (Male halfling trader)

Tobin has been running his store in Moonstone for as long as anyone can remember and has always been an upstanding member of the local community.

Despite appearances, however, Tobin has actually spent decades running a secretive criminal empire. His store and cheerful façade are simply a cover designed to throw anybody snooping around off the scent.

Recently, however, Tobin has found his empire pulled out from under him as Oduk and his cronies moved into town. While the gnolls may not be the smartest of foes, Tobin does not currently have the muscle needed to oust them. Tobin has been spying on his rivals for some weeks now, and knows that Oduk is working with the Prophets.

The store sells mundane adventuring gear and tools (SRD p.69-70), while Tobin himself is happy to help out the adventurers so long as it seems that they might take down Oduk in the process.

Stolen Goods

If the heroes recovered the stolen goods from Darkstone Pass they might know that they were intended for Tobin.

If they pass on the goods and the note, the halfling will drop his friendly façade. Now they know of his clandestine side business, he may as well take advantage of their skills. Tobin will supply what information he can about Oduk and the Prophets, and offers a reward of 500gp if they kill the gnoll.

If the adventurers attempt to threaten or blackmail the halfling crime lord he will play along and act as though he is scared. Once he is out of sight, however, he will send an anonymous tip to Oduk's gang, letting them know that some out-of-towners have been asking questions.

9. KRASSUS' SHIPWRIGHT WORKSHOP

The sound of whistling comes from the open doors of a large shed. Inside, you can see a shirtless man with dark skin and a cloud of grey hair carefully sanding a curved plank of wood.

♥ Krassus Yarr (Male human shipwright)

The man inside the workshop is Krassus, the younger brother of Sestone's dockmaster Kronko.

He will initially be highly suspicious of the heroes, as decades spent in Moonstone have left him ingrained a fair amount of suspicion.

If they mention his brother, however, Krassus' mood will become much more welcoming. He heard that there had

been deaths in Sestone, and is happy that Kronko remains safe. Though he loves Moonstone, the open corruption of the town weighs heavily on Krassus and he is happy to provide the party with a plain, unvarnished description of what's happening there.

Beyond information, Krassus offers to let the heroes bunk up in his workshop. It's not the most luxurious quarters around, he admits, but it's dry and a whole lot safer than most of the inns found in Moonstone.

10. THE OLD WAREHOUSE

♥ Guards, Veterans, Mastiffs

Guarded day and night by **six guards** (SRD p.394), **two veterans** (SRD p.398) and **two mastiffs** (SRD p.379), this wooden warehouse houses Oduk's base of operations, where he meets to discuss business with potential traders, stores his stolen goods, and deals with anyone who gets in his way.

Characters who can make their way past the guards, using disguise, stealth, brute force, or otherwise, find themselves in an open plan warehouse. Stacks of crates, barrels and trunks of goods form towers on the cold stone floor. The place is lit only by a few lanterns, which cast long shadows throughout. Most of the goods are marked with company names that are not native to Moonstone.

Far Touched Patrol

The interior of the warehouse is patrolled by **four pairs of gnoll raiders** (Appendix A) who are **Far Touched** and have minor mutations (Appendix B). If the gnolls spot the characters, they howl loudly, alerting the other patrollers.

11. ODUK'S QUARTERS

At the back of the warehouse is a raised platform with a few rooms atop it. If the adventurers explore, the first room is clearly an office of some sort, as a large, leaded window allows characters to easily see inside. The interior is crude, with no décor. A long wooden desk covered with papers takes up most of the space. A door behind the desk leads deeper into the rooms.

Alerting the Guards

In order to access the rooms, characters must pick the locked door with a **DC 15 Dexterity** check using thieves' tools, or force the door with a successful **DC 18 Strength (Athletics)** check. Forcing the door alerts the patrolling gnolls.

Compromising Paperwork

The papers on the desk are trade agreements, tying many businesses from throughout Moonstone to the black-market trade network. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals a secret drawer underneath the desk, which pops down. In this drawer is a letter permitting the trade of **dubiously acquired goods from Taberta Blackworth**, and

a note from someone named **Xerifix** requesting a fast boat to be left for him in the docks in four nights' time. Finally, a note from Oduk's brother, **Turek**, in scribbled writing reads; *our camp is ready on Aelmor Island. Waiting for you.*

Oduk's Private Room

♥ Oduk the Reaver (See Appendix)

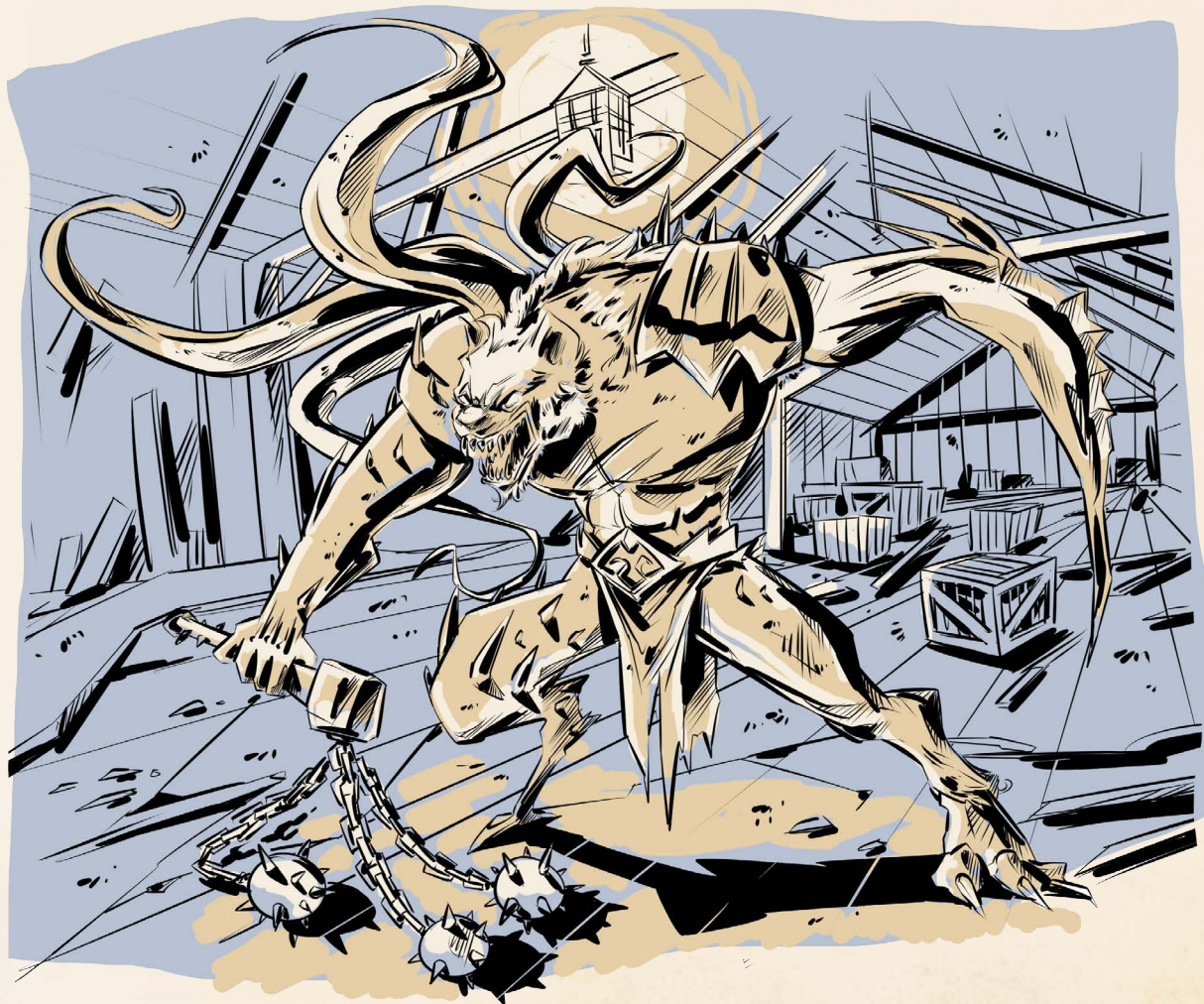
The last room is Oduk's bedroom. At the GM's discretion, Oduk the Reaver (Appendix A) may be resting within. This room, too, is simple, with a worm-eaten wooden bed, a dresser filled with dark clothing, and a chest. The chest is locked and requires a successful DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open.

If the characters kill Oduk here, they seriously harm the plan of the Prophets. Firstly, they must find a new getaway boat, and second, they have no guide to sail them safely to Aelmor. At the GM's discretion, the Prophets may lose members of their crew to the rocks, or perhaps, to guards defending a second getaway boat.

♦ **Treasure:** The chest contains 1,200gp, 850sp and 220cp. Five pearls (100gp each), an ornate hourglass with a golden trim (50gp), and antique map of the Sestone region in a walrus tusk scroll case (500gp) and three potions of healing.

ROUNDING UP IN MOONSTONE

Once the characters have finished exploring Moonstone's ramshackle streets and learned the location of the Monosis' druid tribe, they should proceed to travel toward Duskthorn Forest.



Duskthorn Forest

Eerie and foreboding, Duskthorn Forest is a dense woodland which stretches on for hundreds of miles. It is home to a ring of secretive druids, who claim stewardship over the Sestone region. A verdant wall of trees forms the edge of Duskthorn Forest before you. This magnificent woodland seems to stretch away forever, with the horizon disappearing into a mass of fog-filled treetops.

Even here at the edge, much of the sunlight is masked by a canopy that casts deep shadows onto the tangled mass of vicious brambles, which give the forest its name. As soon as one sets foot into the forest, the hair on the back of the neck stands on end, and goosebumps cover the body. Shadows seem to flit around in the half-light, putting even the most seasoned adventurers on edge.

Duskthorn Brambles

Duskthorn forest is dimly lit during the day, as little sunlight can penetrate the thick canopy. At dusk, a thick, matted carpet of twisted vegetation and thorns forms from the infamous duskthorn bramble. The bramble itself is a dark brown color, but the thorns seem to glint like metal in the fading light. Any creature that falls prone while in the forest at dusk takes **4 (1d6) piercing damage** from the plants' ripping barbs.

Finding the Spirit Stones

The Monosis Druids make their home in a clearing of standing stones, called the Monosis Spirit Stones. These great monoliths have been carved over the generations with the faces of the Monosis elders, so that they resemble thin totem poles of humanoid faces. The Monosis can communicate with their ancestors through the magical connection these stones have to the higher planes of existence.

In order to find the Spirit Stones, the heroes must travel deep into the forest. The journey will take at least two days from the northern edge of Duskthorn.

Navigating Duskthorn Forest

To orient themselves correctly to head deeper into the forest, the party's navigator must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check at the start of each day. A failure results in the party traveling in the wrong direction. If they have access to Hellina's crude map, the difficulty of this check is reduced to 13 as they can spot terrain features ahead.

If there is a ranger or druid in the party, they noticed sequences of marks carved in trees and chiseled into rocks. These signs are left by the Monosis to help them navigate the forest. The discovery of these signs allows the navigator to make the Wisdom (Survival) check with advantage.

Random Encounters in Duskthorn

Once per day, roll a d20 to determine which random encounters, if any, the adventurers run into.

1-3	Prowling Prophets of the Void
4-5	Monosis Druids Patrol
6-7	1d4+2 Giant Boar
8-9	1 Phase Spider
10-11	Awakened Duskthorn
12-13	4 Thorn Dryads
14-15	Sylvan Pool
16-20	No Encounter

12. PROWLING PROPHETS OF THE VOID

♥ Prophet Initiates

A group of 1d4+2 Prophets of the Void (Appendix) come stumbling through the forest; they were ambushed by the Monosis and separated from the rest of their group on their way to kidnap Tarnillo, the Druids' leader. The cultists are trying to make their way back to Moonstone to regroup.

Suddenly, you hear footfall and strange voices ahead. Two people seem to be having a heated conversation about which way north is. Their voices sound distant and eerily otherworldly.

The Prophets know all about the plans to kidnap of Tarnillo but keep it secret unless their life is at risk. They pretend to be lost monks to anyone who approaches them in a friendly manner and even offers a reward of 15gp to anyone who can lead them to the northern edge of the forest.

Mutations

The Prophets' robes are torn and ripped, revealing horrifying mutations beneath; translucent skin, jabbering mouths and bloated air sacs. Consult the Appendix entry on Realm Rift for more mutation ideas.

13. MONOSIS DRUID PATROL

♥ Monosis Druids (Human druids - SRD p. 393)

1d4+1 **Monosis Druids** (SRD p.393) are searching the woodlands for Prophets of the Void. They have heard from animal companions and fey spirits that a dangerous group has been wandering through the trees, and are seeking to intercept them.

A small group of figures in green robes breaks through the undergrowth before you. Each has a thick braid coiled atop their head, and bracers made of bark. As soon as they catch sight of you, they draw their quarterstaves and demand an explanation of who you are, and why you are here.

A successful **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion)** attempt allows the party to explain that they have been sent by Ulfwin the Fair from Sestone to seek out the Monosis. The druids then reveal themselves as members.

If the heroes seem trustworthy, their leader will summon an eagle companion that leads them directly to the Spirit Stones. A **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** check is enough to convince them that the heroes' quest is vital enough for the druids to escort them back personally.

Any attempts to intimidate the druids results in combat. The druids attempt to knock the characters unconscious, tie them up in vines, and drag them back to the Spirit Stones.

14. GIANT BOARS

♥ Giant Boar

A sounder of 1d4+2 **giant boar** (SRD p.368) are digging for truffles in the woodland. These pony-sized beasts are aggressive to creatures that invade their territory. There is a 50% chance that they are with a litter of 1d4+2 giant boar piglets (use the Boar statistics SRD p.363).

A sounder of hulking boar snuffle about in the undergrowth, now and then one raises its head, snorts the air, huffs, and continues digging around. These beasts are powerfully built, their muscles rippling beneath the coarse hair that covers their bodies.

If more than half of the giant boars are killed, the rest attempt to flee.

15. PHASE SPIDER

♥ Phase Spider

Characters with a passive **Wisdom (Perception)** of 12 or less walk straight into the translucent strands of a giant spider web.

You feel something adhere to your body, tugging you back as you attempt to continue through the forest. As you move to look at what it is, you get caught up in more sticky rope. Looking closely, you notice translucent strands of webbing forming a massive network between the trees.

Any creature trapped in the webbing is restrained. As an action, the target can make a **DC 14 Strength (Athletics)** check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; immunity to bludgeoning, poison and psychic damage).

A character wishing to continue forward through the area covered by webbing must succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check so do so without getting caught again.

1d4 turns after the first character is restrained, scuttling can be heard as a phase spider comes to collect its prey. The spider remains in the ethereal plane for one turn, before appearing by a character still restrained by the webbing.

16. AWAKENED DUSKTHORN BRAMBLE

♥ Duskthorn Bramble

Duskthorn bramble (use as **Shambling Mound** SRD p.348, with an extra 7 (2d6) **piercing damage on all attacks**) awakened by the Monosis Druids at the Spirit Stones attacks the party, viewing them as intruders on the forest.

The earth in front of you rips, as a huge patch of matted duskthorn bramble rears up and swings a barbed arm of twisted vegetation toward you in a wide arc. Leaves, dirt and twigs rain down on you.

The Monosis Druids have awakened the forest itself to help capture the Prophets of the Void who invaded their homeland. If the party are accompanied by Monosis Druids, skip this encounter.

If the party make it through the forest without heading back to Moonstone, continue onto the Spirit Stones, if they do turn back, skip that section and pick up at "**Midnight Mission.**"

17. THORN DRYADS

♥ 4 Thorn Dryads

A group of four **Thorn Dryads** (SRD p.304, with their club attack replaced by a thorn whip that has 10 ft. reach and deals piercing damage) have received a message from the Monosis telling them to watch for intruders. When the heroes stumble into their territory, they decided to interrogate them. The quartet attempt to start any encounter by casting **Entangle** on the party.

You are passing through an unusually open clearing when suddenly the thorns that criss-cross the ground start to shudder. Moments later, they spring to life and begin tangling themselves around your feet.

The heroes must attempt to save against the **Entangle** spell as usual, and moments later the four thorny Dryads emerge from the shadows surrounding the party. They will claim that they only wish to talk, but as they only speak **Sylvan** and **Elven**, there is a chance that they will not be understood.

If the heroes can communicate – either by speaking the correct languages or working out a crude sign language – the Dryads will ask what their plans are. A successful **DC12 Charisma (Persuasion)** check will be enough to convince the Dryads of their good intentions, and the fey creatures will provide the heroes with directions that allow them to automatically pass their next navigation check.

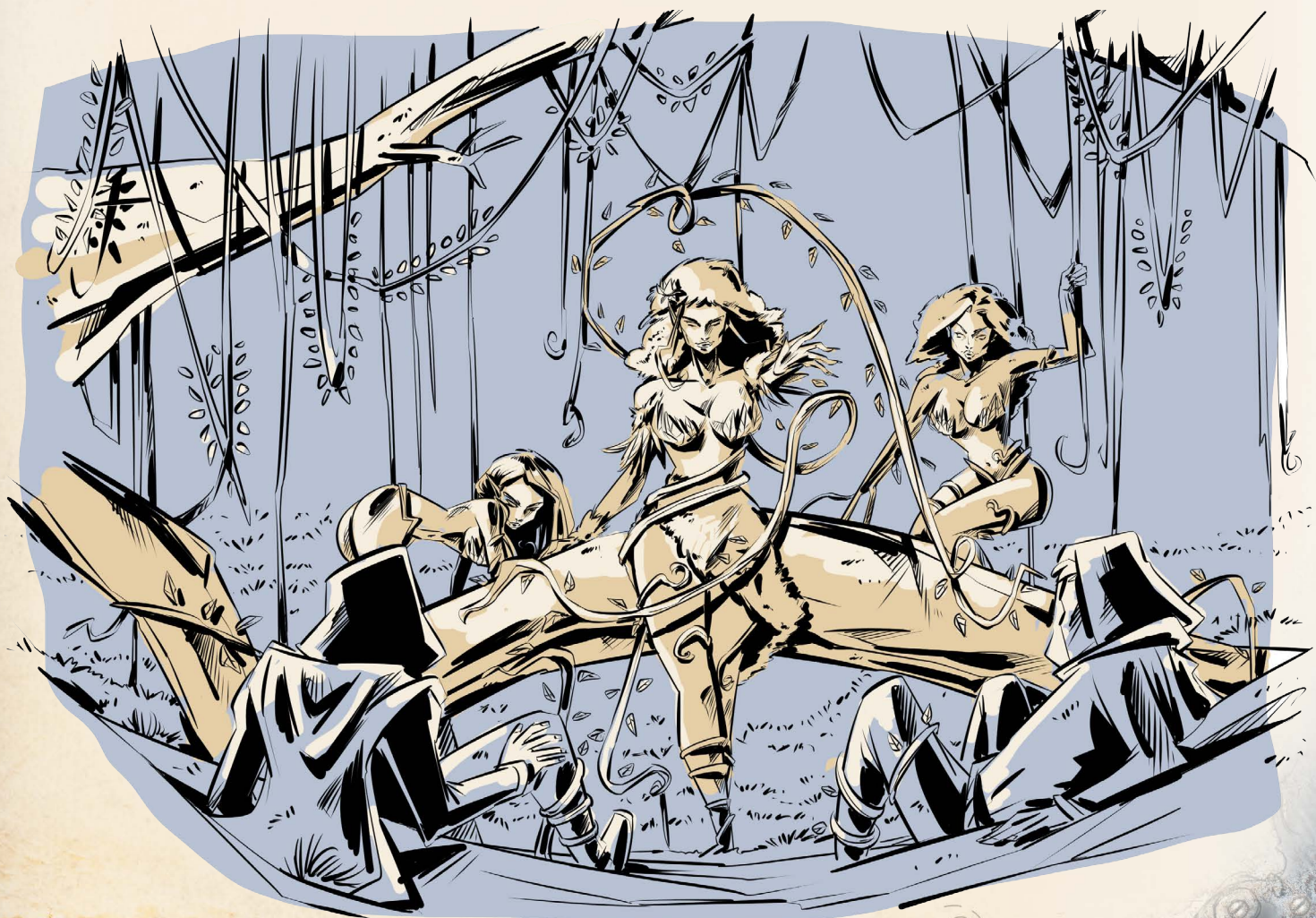
If they are attacked, the Thorn Dryads will fight back. If two or more of them are felled, however, they will flee into the forest.

18. THE SYLVAN POOL

♥ Sprites

You push past the trees in front of you and almost plunge directly into a large pool of clear blue water.

A beam of sunlight shines down through a gap in the thick canopy above you, and you would swear that the water seems to shimmer and sparkle. As you watch, a small deer emerges from the bushes on the far side of the water and leans forward to take a drink.



The pool of water is magically enchanted by the fey spirits that dwell within the forest.

Any hero that drinks the water will find that they can speak Sylvan and Druidic for the next 1d4+1 days and that they are cured of any curses or diseases afflicting them.

Bathing any injuries in the water will also cause them to be healed, though the magical pool cannot restore any lost limbs or similar damage.

If the heroes somehow defile the pool – by attempting to drain it or dump waste in it – they come under attack by a cloud of 2d6 angry **Sprites** (SRD p.348).

THE SPIRIT STONES

Deep in the Heart of Duskthorn Forest, stands a clearing filled with magical standing stones carved by the Monosis Druids to resemble the faces of their elders, past and present.

This clearing is a meeting place for Monosis Druids from across the Sestone region. The Monosis were in the middle

of a night time festival when a group of around thirty hooded figures had burst into their sacred grove, struck down many of the unprepared druids, and kidnapped their leader: **Tarnillo the Elder**.

19. BATTLE BY THE STONES

You crest the top of a ridge and suddenly find yourself in a grove of impossibly tall standing stones. Each grey monolith has been intricately carved with incredibly detailed human faces, and they stand like totem poles in the center of the clearing before you.

The moment of awe and wonder breaks when you realize that something has gone badly wrong here. A half dozen or so druids are gathered around the stones, desperately casting spells on fallen allies while others rush to and fro, shouting information and frantically planning.

Even a glance is enough to tell you that the entire place is in an uproar. As well as the fallen druids, you spot a few black-robed bodies sprawled out in the dirt, and you can hear the sound of fighting coming from up ahead.



Desperate Battle

♥ Druids (6) Prophet Initiates (4) Prophet Voidweaver (1)

Further into the clearing, four more druids are fighting with a group of Prophets, who are trapped by Duskthorn Bramble.

If the six **druids** (SRD p.393) gathered around the stones notice the characters, they jump up from whatever task they are conducting and brandish their quarterstaves.

The characters may join the fight against the remaining six Prophets of the Void (Appendix), which goes some way towards proving where their loyalties lie.

If the heroes end up drawn into battle against the Monosis, the druids will not seek to kill, but rather, capture.

Should the characters succeed on convincing the Monosis that they mean well, the Monosis yield the following information, and ask for the party's help:

Kidnapped Leader

Tarnillo was kidnapped a few hours ago. Since then, the druids have been desperately trying to uncover information on his whereabouts and hunt down his captors. They suspect the Prophets are taking their leader back to Moonstone, where he will be handed over to the clan of Gnolls.

The druids have awakened the forest to slow the escape of the Prophets. Several captured Prophets are refusing to talk and prove immune to most forms of mind-reading and interrogation. If the heroes set off as soon as they can, there is a chance that they may be able to catch the Prophets before they escape.

20. CHASING THE PROPHETS

To catch up with the Prophets before they reach Moonstone, the characters must travel at a fast pace for 16 hours, with 8 hours of forced march (**see SRD p.80 for rules**). Characters should have the opportunity each hour to give up if they see fit.

If characters decide to follow but do not catch up with the Prophets, they eventually arrive in Moonstone just after the cultists and their captive.

21. ESCAPING DUSKTHORN FOREST

If the heroes manage to press on at a fast pace and catch up to the Prophets, they will encounter them on the very edge of the Duskthorn.

Your legs ache from the exertion and part of you wonders if the forest goes on forever when suddenly you spot something up ahead. The light of a torch! A surge of energy runs through your body, and you quicken the pace. The single flickering light is joined by another, and then another. The band of cultists is hacking their way through the thorns, making a path for a cart loaded with a heavy-looking cage. Before you can formulate a plan, one of the Prophets lets out a cry. She yells back to her fellows that she can see Moonstone, and you realize you must be on the very edge of the forest.

♥ Prophet Initiates (3) , Thorn Dryads (3)

Between the fight against the Spirit Stones and occasional attacks from woodland creatures the cultists' numbers have been halved, and only three Prophets of the Void (Appendix A) are left. One stands to guard Tarnillo on the cart while the others are hacking their way through the bramble. If they are attacked, the Prophets attempt to slow down the heroes while one of them tries to escape with Tarnillo.

Dryad Assistance

A group of three **Thorn Dryads** (SRD p.304, **with their club attack replaced by a thorn whip that has 10 ft. reach and deals piercing damage**) will join the fray during the third round of any combat, as messages about the cult attack have just reached them. The dryads will not leave the safety of the trees, however.

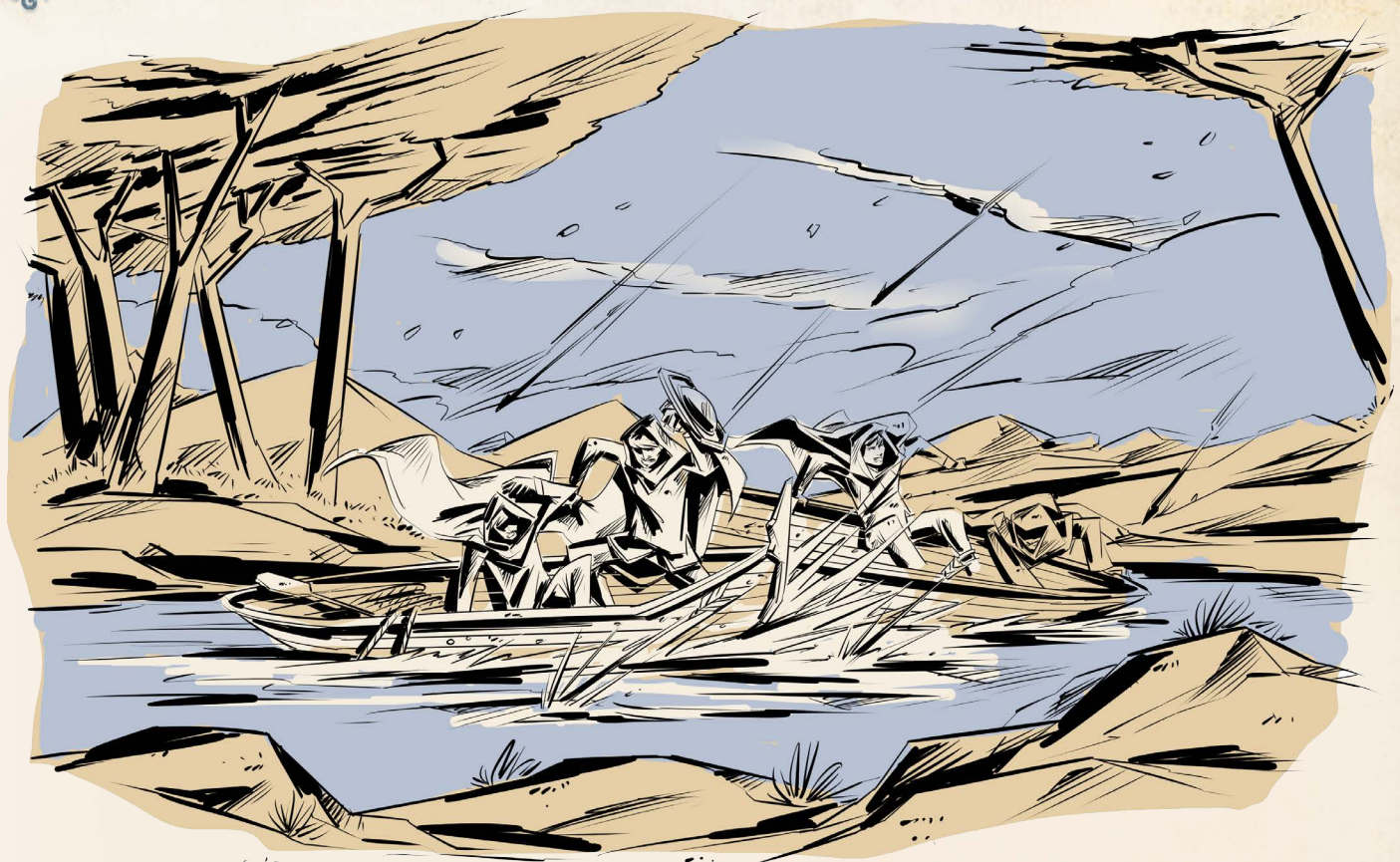
If the heroes somehow manage to rescue Tarnillo before the Prophets load him onto the waiting ship, he will be incredibly grateful and provide all the information listed in the **Conclusion** chapter at the end of the book.

22. MIDNIGHT MISSION

Unless the heroes managed to push on through the night and catch up to the Prophets in time, the crazed cultists will beat them to Moonstone. Once there, they loaded the druid onto a sailboat prepared for them by Oduk the Reaver. The gnoll will join the Prophets, hoping to benefit in some way from the mission, and meet his brother Turek on Aelmor Island.

If the heroes killed Oduk, the boat is not present, and the Prophets are delayed 4 hours before they arrange another boat to flee. This may, if you wish, give the heroes just enough time to catch up with the Prophets and allow them to launch an attack on their ship just as it gets ready to leave.

The Prophets aim to take Tarnillo to Aelmor Island. This journey will take the best part of a day. All of the Prophets leave Moonstone on the boat, but a few were dropped off around the neck of the Tondell Delta to ambush anyone following them.



23. RETURN TO MOONSTONE

Slowly, the now familiar walls of Moonstone come into view with spires of smoke reaching for the sky. As you track your quarries' trail to the gate, you discover it hangs open and unattended.

If the heroes take a look in the shadows by the gate, they will find the bodies of five town guards and a mastiff. Clearly the Prophets did not want to leave any witnesses.

Refer to the "Moonstone" section for general information about the town, but eliminate any mention of the Prophets, who have disappeared from the town, as well as any characters the party previously killed.

Waterborne

The heroes can follow the Prophets' tracks towards the docks. A few commoners admit they saw some dark-robed fellows heading towards the docks. When the adventurers arrive at the docks, a few workers report seeing a big crate loaded onto a boat headed downriver. The party must acquire or steal a boat to chase the Prophets of the Void.

♥ Moonstone Guards (2), Far Touched Gnolls (2)

Oduk's fleet of sailing ships are each guarded by four **guards** (SRD p.394) and two **gnolls** (SRD p.317).

Alternatively, if the heroes have encountered Krassus, the friendly shipwright will happily captain a vessel for them if they're willing to pay 25gp in danger money.

The trip from Moonstone to Tondell takes around 10 hours by boat so there's plenty of time for the heroes to take a long rest. Most of the boats available will require a crew of at least two, including the pilot, so the heroes may have to rotate shifts if everyone is going to sleep.

24. TONDELL DELTA AMBUSH

This encounter only occurs if the heroes have killed fewer than six Prophets so far in the adventure. If they've killed more than this, the cult is short on bodies and is unwilling to commit the numbers necessary to launch a successful ambush. See Map **River Ambush**

♥ Prophet Initiates (3), Prophet Voidweaver (1)

A defiant group of Prophets of the Void is camping by the neck of the **Tondell Delta**. See Map **River Chase**. Here, they wait in the brush, armed with a crate containing twenty flasks of **Alchemist's Fire**.

Once the party's vessel comes down the **River Fryd** and into the delta, characters on deck with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 13 or higher notice two groups of cloaked figures hiding in the brush. Once the heroes' boat is within 100 feet of the ambushers, the Prophets use slings to launch the **Alchemist's Fire** (see SRD p.66) at the boat.

As you head into the neck of the Tondell Delta, a sudden burst of movement up ahead catches your eye.

A group of Prophets jump up from the brush lining the river, swinging bottles of something around in their slings. As you watch, one of them lets loose their projectile.

A flask of thick black liquid falls short of the deck, but when it smashes into a craggy outcropping of stone the oily substance bursts into flame. The smell of burning Alchemist's Fire quickly fills the air.

All characters on deck can attempt a **DC 13 group Dexterity check** to bring the boat around in a wide arc, with at least half the group needing to succeed in order to avoid the flying flasks.

If the boat is being piloted by Krassus or another experienced captain, only one character needs to succeed on the check as they untie ropes and shift sails at his command.

Should they fail at this, the ship is pounded by flasks of the fire, which the Prophets can attack the heroes with as an action. It takes four rounds for the heroes' ship to pass the Prophets and get out of range of their attack.

Tondell

A small town on the river Fyrd, Tondell is an unremarkable place. To date, its biggest claim to fame is as the heart of a thriving swamp-fishing industry.

That will change, however, when a second Realm Rift opens unexpectedly in the town. By a strange coincidence, this happens just as the Prophets of the Void arrive with their precious cargo...

FOREBODING IN TONDELL

Dawn has broken by the time you arrive in Tondell, and the small, swampy town should be bustling with what passes for commerce in this part of the region.

As your boat pulls up to the docks, however, you catch the sound of screams and bellows of fright. Now that you look at it, there seems to be a strange purple glow emanating from the center of town.

Another Realm Rift

Shortly after the Prophets arrived in Tondell, a Realm Rift tore its way into existence in the middle of the town square. Dozens of townsfolk have been killed or dragged off by monstrous winged 'collectors.' See the Appendix for information on Realm Rift and Monsters.

Despite the Prophets strange relationship with the rifts, their people seem not to be utterly immune from its dangers. Tarnillo – still in his cage – was dragged off by a group of collectors during an attack on the Gnoll pirates' ship.

Oduk's Ship

Finding the pirate ship itself isn't too hard for the heroes, as it's, by far, the largest and most impressive vessel on the docks.

The only creature remaining on board, however, is a badly injured Gnoll pirate bleeding to death on the deck. In return for either magical healing or a swift death the pirate will reveal that the crew was planning to pick up supplies in Tondell, but just after they pulled up, everything started to get weird.

Before they knew what was happening, a group of winged monsters grabbed the cage the old man was being kept in and carried it off towards the glowing light in the middle of town.

At a glance, there seem to be two obvious routes towards the town square and its rift – either a straight trip down the somewhat exposed main road or a more careful, but further, way down the back alleys.

25. OTHERWORLDLY ABOMINATIONS

♥ Far Touched Ravager (2), Far Touched Villager (4)

You barrel directly towards the weird glow in the distance. As you run, the sounds of terror seem to be getting louder, and soon, people – some dressed for work, others clad only in nightgowns – stream past you, running as fast as they can.

A scream rings out behind you as a bizarre otherworldly monstrosity plucks a young man from the crowd and carries him off, but the creature is out of bowshot before you can even think about reacting.

Moments later an even more piercing scream rips through the air. This time it's coming from in front of you, and through a break in the crowd, you see an elderly woman trying to hide two young children behind her as two shambling monstrosities bear down on her, waving tentacles and roaring with countless malformed mouths.

The old woman and the children are all commoners (**SRD p.398**) and are being attacked by Far Touched Ravagers (Appendix). Several Far Touched Villagers stagger among the crowd, mutated by the Realm Rift energies.

If the heroes stop to help the townsfolk they will be grateful, but far too frightened to offer up any reward beyond their thanks.

26. ALLEYWAY GNOLLS

♥ Far Touched Gnoll (See Appendix)

You duck through the alleyways, turning here and there, but always getting closer to the strange glow that shimmers over the rooftops.

It seems as though you're almost there when the doors explode off a house just in front of you, followed by a pair of black-clad figures you recognize as cultists. A roar fills the air, and the hideous form of a Gnoll stalks through the wreckage. As it enters the weak sunlight, however, you realize that the creature has been stricken with violent mutations. Tentacles have burst from its arms, and far too many eyes peek out from its face.

It seems to have not noticed the adventurers yet, but it's hard to tell how long it will take for the beast to get bored of attacking the cultists.

If the heroes act quickly, they can sneak past the Far Touched Gnoll with successful **DC13 Dexterity (Stealth)** checks for more than half the party. Alternatively, they may be able to avoid the creature by: climbing to roof level, creating a distraction, or some other clever ploy. If they do not succeed on these, the monster attacks with all its fury.

27. TOWNSQUARE TERROR

♥ Prophet Void Weaver (1), Prophet Initiate (2), Far Touched Shambler (1), Far Touched Gnoll (2), Far Touched Villager (3)

The town square is a scene straight from a nightmare. A realm rift has torn the fabric between the material and Far Realm plane, resulting in a terrifying sight. Anyone getting within 80 feet of the Rift risks being affected by its warping energies. See Appendix III: Realm Rift.

A crack in the air hovers just above a ruined fountain. You can see purple light glisten and shine within it. For a moment, you think you see something vast staring back out at you, but a moment later, it's gone.

All around the crack are signs of reality warping around itself. Water bubbles and freezes again within a matter of seconds, while the cobblestones melt like snow next to fire before flinging themselves into the air.

You snap your attention away from the weirdness, however, to focus on the task at hand. A group of hideous winged monsters is dragging a heavy-looking cage towards the rift while trying to avoid the vicious punches, kicks, and curses thrown by the elderly man trapped within.



Townsquare Chaos

A rough band of bedraggled Prophets and gnoll pirates are trying to push their way through to the cage, but are being held up by a wall of writhing abominations.

Several Prophets of the Void, Far Touched Gnolls and Oduk the Reaver are battling the abominations that have stepped out of the Realm Rift. A pack of remaining Prophets attempts to drag Tarnillo the Elder towards the Realm Rift.

If the heroes made it to the town square as fast as they could (without fighting anything) Tarnillo's cage is 50 feet from the rift when they arrive. Otherwise, it is 30 feet.

Unless they are engaged in close combat or driven off, the collectors drag the cage 10 feet. If Tarnillo is taken into the rift, he is lost forever.

Frail Loyalty

If the adventurers manage to free Tarnillo, or if the gnolls otherwise feel their odds have turned against them, they will abandon their masters and flee. The Prophets fight to the death to accomplish their mission.

Conclusion

If Tarnillo is rescued he thanks the party profusely, after which, he reveals what he knows to the adventurers.

Realm Rifts Expanding

Tarnillo and his Monosis group have been studying the Realm Rift anomaly on Aelmor Island for some time. First discovered by the dissident Zaharel, the leaking Far Realm energies and escaping monsters have become an increasing threat to nature's balance. Tarnillo believes the Realm Rifts are not stable and will continue to expand, slowly devouring the mortal world. He is unsure how to close or stop the expansion process.

Narkul, the Great Collector

In a vision, Tarnillo has seen a giant entity on the other side, which reached out to him and whispered in his mind. Unlike an unsightly demon, he describes the creature as beautiful, with six arms crouched in a meditating position. Humans floated around it with eyes closed, as if in a peaceful slumber.

Cursed Bloodline

In addition to the increasing threat of the Realm Rifts, Tarnillo learned about the Prophets of the Void and their hunt for the Hand of Narkul. The mysterious artifact, trapped inside the Aelmor Realm Rift, has been the cause of much trouble through the ages and will continue to do so if it is retrieved again. In their studies of ancient writings, the Monosis came across the mention of a family name a few times: Vorden. Wishing to focus their efforts on healing the Realm Rifts, the Monosis have no wish to investigate the

Vorden family's involvement themselves.

Ulfwin's Reward

The heroes can return to Ulfwin in Sestone to inform him of their discoveries and claim their 500gp reward. Ulfwin will be thankful for their efforts and suggests the adventurers investigate the Vorden family's involvement with the Hand of Narkul. This can be a potential new questline to pursue.

WHERE TO NEXT?

In the wake of the events that transpired, some opportunities present themselves for new quests. Consider the following hooks below, or come up with an exciting story yourself based on your player's actions and adventure outcome.

The Prophet's Poise

The Prophets of the Void will continue to hunt for the Hand of Narkul, trying desperately to free it from the Realm Rift below Aelmor Island. The Realm Rift is expanding, however, eating up more and more of the once peaceful island daily. Far Realm monsters prowl, and whole parts of the island sink away into the otherworldly void.

Mortale plane corroding

Slowly but surely, the Realm Rifts are devouring parts of the fabric between the Far Realm and mortal plane. If left unchecked, this proves a grand danger to the world.

The Vorden Family

Your heroes can investigate the mysterious Vorden family's involvement with the Hand of Narkul. Rich and influential, this secretive aristocratic family bloodline dates back to the very first discovery of the Hand of Narkul.

Appendix Monsters

I:



FAR TOUCHED GNOLL

Medium humanoid (far touched), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)	10(+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Athletics +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands Gnoll but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibiousness. The far touched gnoll can breathe air and water.

Otherworldly Howls. Any creature within 120 feet of the far touched gnoll that can hear it howling must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks for 1 round. On a successful saving throw, the creature has advantage on its saving throws made to resist any monster's Otherworldly Howls ability for 1 minute. Far touched creatures are immune to gnoll's Otherworldly Howls.

Rampage. When the far touched gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The far touched gnoll can then make two attacks: one with its bite, and one with either its claws or its tentacle.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.



FAR TOUCHED RAVAGER

Medium aberration (far touched), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 54 (12d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	11(+0)	8 (-2)

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +2

Damage Resistances psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dimension Leap. (Recharge 5-6). As a bonus action, the Far Touched Ravager teleports to any point in space it can see within 120 feet.

Maddening Whispers. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the far touched Far Touched Ravager must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or cannot take its action on its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to any monster's maddening whispers ability for 1 minute. Far touched creatures are immune to the Ravager's Maddening Whispers.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Far Touched Ravager can make two attacks: one with its claws and one with its tentacles.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage.

Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Body Spike. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 50/100 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Time Warp. The Far Touched Ravager forces a creature that just rolled a d20 roll to reroll that dice. The creature must accept the result of the new roll

TUREK, FAR TOUCHED CLANMASTER

Medium humanoid (far touched), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 71 (11d8+22)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	10(+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Athletics +5

Damage resistances necrotic

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands Gnoll but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)



Amphibiousness. Turek can breathe air and water.

Feign Weakness. Turek has advantage on his melee attack rolls until the end of his first turn.

Limp. Turek has disadvantage to his Strength and Dexterity checks and saving throws made to avoid being knocked prone or maintain his balance.

Otherworldly Howls. Any creature within 120 feet of the Turek that can hear him howling must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or have disadvantage to attack rolls and ability checks for 1 round. On a successful saving throw, the creature has advantage on its saving throws made to resist any monster's Otherworldly Howls ability for 1 minute. Far touched creatures are immune to Turek's Otherworldly Howls.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Turek uses his Otherworldly Howl. He then can make two attacks: one with its triple-headed flail and one with its pick.

Draining Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and Turek can't use this attack against another target. At the beginning of each of its turns, a grappled creature also takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and Turek regains a number of hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt.

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

Triple-Headed Flail. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.



FAR TOUCHED SHAMBLER

Large aberration (far touched), chaotic evil

Armor Class Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (14d10+28)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	11(+0)	7 (-2)

FAR TOUCHED SHAMBLER

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +2

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances psychic

Condition Immunities poisoned, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Poisonous Blood. A creature that hits the far touched shambler with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) poison damage.

Maddening Whispers. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the Far Touched Shambler must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or cannot take its action on its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to any monster's Maddening Whispers ability for 1 minute. Far touched creatures are immune to the shambler's Maddening Whispers.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The far touched shambler can make two cleaver attacks.

Cleaver. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Maw of Pestilence. (Recharge 5-6). The Far Touched Shambler releases a lingering cloud of poisonous gas from its mouth. This effect is equivalent to a level 2 **cloudkill** spell (DC 13) centered on the Far Touched Shambler.

FAR TOUCHED VILLAGER

Medium humanoid (human), unaligned

Armor Class Armor Class 12

Hit Points 38 (7d8+7)

Speed 30 ft., swim 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Limited Amphibiouness. The mutated human can breathe air and water, but starts suffocating after 1d3 hours without being submerged in water.

Maddening Whispers. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the mutated villager must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or cannot take its action on its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the mutated human's maddening whispers for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mutated human can make two tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage.

Medium humanoid (far touched), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (chain shirt, robes)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

PROPHET INITIATE

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	

Skills Perception +1, Stealth +3

Damage Resistances psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the prophet of the void can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Mind Rending. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of prophet of the void must succeed on a DC 11 Charisma saving throw or have be frightened for 1 round. On a successful saving throw, the creature has advantage on its saving throws made to resist any monster's Mind Rending ability for 1 minute. Far touched creatures are immune to prophet's Mind Rending.

Sneak Attack. (1/Turn). The prophet of the void deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the prophet that isn't incapacitated and the prophet doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

PROPHET VOIDWEAVER

Medium humanoid (far touched), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	13(+1)	11 (+0)

PROPHET VOIDWEAVER

Skills Perception +3, Religion +2

Damage Resistances psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Voidhaunt. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of prophet of the void must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or have be frightened for 1 round, suddenly being filled with the dread of depthless nothingness. On a successful saving throw, the creature has advantage on its saving throws made to resist any monster's Voidhaunt ability for 1 minute. Far touched creatures are immune to prophet's Voidhaunt.

Spellcasting. The prophet of the void is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at-will): light, mending, sacred flame
- 1st level (4 slots): bane, inflict wounds
- 2nd level (2 slots): hold person, spiritual weapon

ACTIONS

Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d10 + 1) bludgeoning damage.



XEREFIX - PROPHET CHIEFTAIN

Medium humanoid (far touched), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 82 (15d8+15)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+0)	13 (+1)	11(+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +2

Damage Resistances psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Mind Rending. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of prophet of the void must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have be frightened for 1 round. On a successful saving throw, the creature has advantage on its saving throws made to resist any monster's Mind Rending ability for 1 minute. Far touched creatures are immune to prophet's Mind Rending.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The prophet of the void makes two weapon attacks. If the prophet of the void hits the same target with two tentacle attacks, the target is knocked prone.

Greataxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d12 + 2) slashing damage.

Mind Lash. The prophet of the void targets one creature within 120 feet. The target takes 11 (2d10) psychic damage, or half as much on a successful DC 12 Wisdom saving throw.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The prophet of the void 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. The prophet of the void regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The prophet of the void makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tentacle. The prophet of the void makes a tentacle attack.

Appendix II: Magic Items

THE HAND OF NARKUL

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

The **Hand of Narkul** is a mysterious alien artifact. Its origins are largely unknown. Severed from the arm of a mythical creature from the Far Realm, it's rumored to yield unfathomable power and knowledge. Lost into the Realm Rift after the defeat of Otwic Anthomodus 300 years ago, none have seen it since.

Attunement: To attune to the hand, you must cut off your right hand at the wrist and then press the artifact against the stump. The hand grafts itself to your arm and becomes a functioning appendage. If the hand is ever removed, you die and a new Realm Rift is torn between your current plane and the Far Realm.

When you first attune to the artifact, you immediately gain the adjusted ability scores and the **Fount of Knowledge** properties and your alignment changes to chaotic evil. You then gradually progress through the stages of Narkul's Command as your bond to Narkul strengthens (see Stages 1, 2 and 3). How quickly you acquire them depends on the GM's discretion.

Adjusted Ability Scores. Your Strength score and your Intelligence score increase by 2, to a maximum of 24.

Fount of Knowledge. You add your proficiency bonus to any Intelligence checks made to recall a piece of knowledge, or twice your proficiency bonus if you are proficient in the appropriate skill.

Narkul's Command. The moment you attune to the *Hand*, you immediately begin to experience the symptoms of a split personality as Narkul's gradually replaces yours. At the beginning of each day, you must succeed on a DC 10 Charisma saving throw. On a failed saving throw, Narkul's personality overwhelms yours and you lose control of your mind and body for 24 hours (you become an NPC under the control of the GM).

Stage 1: Whispers of the Void

You begin to physically transform into an alien creature, a servant of Narkul. Your arms transform into a myriad of tentacles and the features of your face start to disappear. The DC of the Charisma saving throw to resist Narkul's Command increases to 15. You can use an action to cast the following spells (save DC 18):

3/day: *dream*, *modify memory* (as a 7th-level spell), *telekinesis*

1/day: *disintegrate*, *feeblemind*

Stage 2: Acolyte of the Hand.

Your physical transformation continues and accelerates, as does your bond and obedience to Narkul. Your torso grows translucent, showing your internal organs. Large air sacks bulge from your belly and back, lifting you 10 feet into the air, providing the ability to fly 60 feet (hover). Your head completely changes into a slimy, lizardlike eyeless cranium, and your legs morph into a tangle of slithering tentacles. Your type changes to *aberration* and you gain resistance to psychic damage. The DC of the Charisma saving throw to resist Narkul's Command increases to 20. You can use an action to cast the following spells (save DC 18):

At-will: *dream*, *modify memory* (as a 7th-level spell), *telekinesis*

3/day: *disintegrate*, *feeblemind*

1/day: *reverse gravity*, *time stop*

Stage 3: Avatar of Narkul

You can no longer make Charisma saving throws to resist Narkul's Command. Narkul's personality devours your own. You become an alien entity entirely under the control of Narkul. You can move between the Material Plane and the Far Realm freely. Doing so ignores any negative effects of a Realm Rift.

Your physical transformation and obedience to Narkul is complete and irreversible. Any trace of your past nature is gone. You can communicate telepathically with Narkul and can understand its foreign speech.

Destroying the Hand

The *Hand of Narkul* is indestructible for as long as Narkul lives. The only way to destroy it is to kill Narkul. If anyone is bearing the *Hand of Narkul* when the Collector dies, the hand withers and falls off harmlessly after a week.

MONOSIS' FOLIO OF THE SEA

Wondrous item, uncommon.

This collection of manuscripts in a prussian blue leather binder describes a myriad of aquatic creatures and plants. A character in possession of this book receives advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks when able to reference it to identify and learn more about aquatic monsters, creatures, or plants. If a character spends 48 hours over a period of 6 days studying the book's contents, the effect becomes permanent and no longer requires referencing the book.

Appendix III: The Realm Rift

A Rift Between Planes

When the *Hand of Narkul* was severed from its previous bearer, Otwic Anthomodus, a massive tear in the fabric of reality opened a Realm Rift between two worlds. Rippling and twisting like liquid glass, time and space tremble under the savage force of two planes of existence pulling against each other. The rift appears to be a gateway into the Far Realm. To an unsuspecting eye the threshold appears to be only a few yards deep, beyond which, an inconceivable alien world sprawls as far as your eyes can see. Upon setting foot into the Rift, however, all normal laws of physics, dimension, and perception suddenly melt away and the distance to cross it turns out to be much farther and more difficult to navigate.

Far Touched

Dangerous stray energies leaking from the Realm Rift into the Material Plane distort the physicality of everything around it, endangering anything and anyone near it. The effects of being *Far Touched* start subtly, such as a finger turning into a small tentacle momentarily or body parts becoming translucent and showing their internal bones and organs. Prolonged exposure can cause severe and even permanent mutations, and impacts the way others interact with the victim.

Stray Energies

Each round a creature spends near the Realm Rift, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw to avoid suffering physical mutations. These effects stack, so it is possible to attain more than one mutation over time.

Any item carried or in the vicinity also has a chance of being affected, such as a sword suddenly becoming wobbly and jellylike or potion flasks becoming weightless, floating into the air.

Minor Mutation. Each round, a creature within 80 feet of the Realm Rift must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it acquires a Minor Mutation lasting 1d10 days. You may randomly determine the mutation from the table below or invent one of your own. In addition, there is a 20% chance the creature suffers 1d10 damage.

Major Mutation. Each round, a creature within 30 feet or inside of the Realm Rift must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it acquires a Major Mutation lasting 1d20 days. On a roll of 1, the mutation is permanent. In addition, there is a 50% chance the creature suffers 1d20 damage.

Resist Polymorph. A creature's mutations persist even when under the effect of shape-changing magic such as an alter self spell. The mutations reappear on the new form 3d4 minutes after such magic affects the creature.

Social Stigma. A mutated creature has disadvantage on Charisma checks when socially interacting with others, often triggering reactions of disgust and hostility.

Minor Mutations

d8 Mutation

- 1 One of your fingers turns into a tiny squidlike tentacle.
- 2 Parts of your skin become translucent, revealing your bones, muscles, and internal organs.
- 3 A random body part goes limp and becomes twice as heavy. You have disadvantage on any Dexterity-based action.
- 4 Your skin turns photosynthetic, requiring large amounts of sunlight to sustain. Every hour spent in low light or darkness inflicts 1d6 damage.
- 5 Several frothing mouths grow from your face and neck, and sickly green colored flecks dot your entire skin. You have disadvantage on Charisma checks.
- 6 Gills grow on the side of your ribcage and your skin secretes slimy goo. You can breathe air and water but suffocate after 1d3 hours without being completely submerged in water. You gain a swim speed of 30 feet.
- 7 Your arms and hands turn into undulating, gelatinous tentacles. You lose the ability to hold objects, but you can make unarmed slam attacks at 10-foot range.
- 8 The voices of dead foes and loved ones whisper endlessly in your mind. You have disadvantage to your Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Inside the Rift

Making progress inside the Realm Rift isn't a matter of simply stepping through and exiting into the Far Realm on the other side. Once inside, a creature experiences a multitude of severe spatial and perceptive distortions: it might think it's walking straight when in fact it's running in circles; it might take a step forward and move away from its destination. Gravity changes in unexpected bursts, structures shape shift, and what had seemed close only a moment ago suddenly turns out to be miles away.

Limited Movement: As a result, creatures inside the Realm Rift can move a maximum of 5 feet per turn, regardless of skills, bonuses, or magical aids. Strong-minded creatures can attempt a DC 18 Intelligence check to mentally adjust to the utterly bizarre environment. Each turn on a successful save, the maximum movement distance increases to 15 feet.

The Other Side

What awaits a creature that has crossed over into the Far Realm is unknown to most and therefore left to the GM's discretion. Voices whisper of an ever-changing realm beyond human comprehension, fluctuating to the sound of a brooding alien heartbeat. But few have come back, and even fewer still had the sanity to tell what truly lies beyond. . .

Major Mutations

d8 Mutation

- 1 A giant freckled air sack grows from your belly, lifting you into the air. You gain a flying speed of 60 feet (hover).
- 2 Large snail-like eyestalks sprout from your head, shoulders, and back, providing advantage to Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
- 3 Your mouth turns into a gaping maw with hundreds of tiny slithering tentacles. You lose the ability to consume normal food. Instead you must feed on rotting flesh. Each day you fail to do so, you take 1d6 damage.
- 4 Becoming translucent and emanating a sickly purple light, your body becomes immune to gravity and floats weightlessly 10 feet above ground. You lose the ability to move. You take double damage dealt to you from any source.
- 5 Your legs turn into a swirling tangle of tentacles that can't support your weight. You lose the ability to walk and can only crawl using your arms.
- 6 Massive throbbing bulbs grow from your back, emitting a gray toxic gas. Any creature within a 10-foot radius must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 1d10 damage.
- 7 Thousands of black poisonous thorns sprout from every part of your body, dealing 1d8 damage every turn to you and any creature you touch.
- 8 A swirling vortex opens from your belly, spewing a constant stream of incomprehensible maddening screams and alien sounds. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of you must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become disoriented and must take no action on its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature becomes immune to the effect for 8 hours.

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