

Playground Adventures



NIGHTMARES ON PARADE



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Adventure Background

Centuries ago, a nightmare lord of bogeyman became exiled to the mortal plane after suffering a crushing loss by a rival. Behast refused to accept the defeat, and attempted to enslave the local fey. He lost, overwhelmed by both numbers and the alarming degradation of his abilities, becoming sealed away within a claustrophobic realm of nightmares. Seeking to reclaim his power, he began corrupting the dreams of innocent mortals. A small group of young heroes banded together with a band of pixies, and together they vanquished him.

Thrice defeated and greatly diminished, the nightmare lord could only manifest unstable avatars or gateways to dreams. The pixies patrolled these places, and kept the descendants of the heroes safe from Behast's influence. They let the king rot away in his prison, going from terrible threat to legend, knowing that his power would fade with waning fear.

When Edwin wandered into the Nightmare King's clutches, it was the first opportunity in centuries to exert real influence over the waking world. Kidnapping the boy, he spent a decade feeding off his fear and transforming the child into a vessel for his avatar. Drawing power from Edwin, Behast prepared for escape and a reckoning, reaching out to form alliances with other creatures of dream. However, his plans all again came to ruin due to mortals and meddling pixies.

With Edwin freed and his avatar destroyed, Behast is left with his hoarded power, and an incalculable rage at losing again. In a foolish impatient move he expends great magic to draw the mortals that opposed him into the Dream Realms. If he cannot escape, at least they are trapped with him. Once his nightmare army conquers the impertinent mayfly creatures, he shall use their fear to restore his spent might. In his arrogance, he refuses to accept the threat posed by mere mortal children, even if the pixies have seemingly imbued them with a shard of his power.

Adventure Summary

The Nightmare King draws the town of Glavost into the strange land known as the Dream Realms. There the unprepared citizens are tortured by their out of control fears. Only the children who saved Edwin before have developed mastery over the strange land fueled by belief. In freeing the people from nightmares, the PCs can teach them to likewise harness the power of imagination. As Behast's army marches, he sends his lieutenants ahead to stall the PCs. While they work to escape, Glavost

becomes surrounded. To save the town, all must band together, but only the PCs can stand against the Lord of Bogeymen.

Chapter 1: Manifest Imagination

See the *Pixies on Parade* adventure and *Glavost: A Fairy Tale Village* supplement for details on Glavost and the important NPCs within the town. The Nightmare King expends most of his hoarded power to bring everyone and everything within the village into the Dream Realms (see sidebar). The PCs are instinctually better at controlling dreams, and can use the realm's unique nature as a tool. Unfortunately, the rest of Glavost is quickly overwhelmed by fear and uncertainty. The PCs must save their friends and loved ones, by teaching them to master overactive imaginations.

The first chapter can be run as a sandbox, with various encounters occurring while the PCs reclaim Glavost and rescue the adults. If a more linear adventure is desired, the GM can use the following encounters in order. As the PCs free more of the villagers, assume those rescued go off to help other townsfolk until all are saved.

If after the events of *Pixies on Parade* the PCs haven't quite gained enough experience to reach 7th level, consider introducing some side quests or allowing them to advance to 7th level prior to the adventure's start.

Changing Dreams

The PCs are uniquely empowered by their experiences in *Pixies on Parade*. Each is capable of altering the Dream Realms through imagination and willpower. Similar to the imagination magic of the previous adventure, any mundane equipment or scenery details the PCs desire is automatically available. Unlike the similar effect on the Material Plane, these modifications can defy all logic or even seem like magic. A PC wishing for a horse might cause one to materialize out of thin air, or a PC planning a leap from a roof might turn the ground below to soft mud. These manifested pieces of dream might also be truly wondrous in appearance (unintentional or otherwise), such as a rainbow-colored unicorn steed or ground turned to chocolate pudding.

The PCs cannot (yet) make gross changes to scenery. For example, they might cause handholds or a door to appear on a wall, but cannot disintegrate the wall itself. They cannot use this ability to cause damage or impact any other creature. While summoned items and equipment might look exceptional or magical, the mechanical effects are only equal to a mundane

Dream Realms

Mortals generally travel physically to the Dream Realms, although almost all venture there in sleep. It is a plane where thought becomes manifest, which can be overwhelming for those lacking practice at mastering imagination. A dream creature can be any other monster with the following statistical modifications:

- A dream creature's alignment is unaligned. Some dream creatures have alignments based on their shape or the intention of a living creature shaping them.
- A dream creature's type changes to construct. Dreams are not truly alive or aware, and merely animate dreamstuff given the barest borrowed intelligence.
- Dream creature's gain damage resistance to psychic damage.
- **Seize the Dream.** As an action, any creature can attempt to control a dream it can sense using imagination magic. This requires a DC 10 Charisma check. On a successful check, the creature gains a permanent bond with the dream and can give it commands that it must obey without further checks being necessary. If the dream has already formed a bond with a creature, only that creature can attempt to Seize the Dream (see individual encounters or dream creatures for details).
- A dream creature speaks and understands any languages known by a creature it bonds to with Seize the Dream.
- A dream creature gains the proficiencies of the creature it bonds to with Seize the Dream, but loses all other proficiencies.

equivalent. So while a PC might summon a "unicorn", it does not gain a unicorn's abilities or other statistics. Any creature called, created, or summoned uses the statistics for a **lesser dream** (see below).

Lesser Dreams

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 6 (1d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Damage Resistances psychic

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages varies

Challenge 1/8 (100 XP)

Seize the Dream. As an action, any creature can attempt to control a lesser dream with a DC 10 Charisma check. On a successful check, the creature forms a permanent bond with the lesser dream and can alter its appearance (per the change shape ability). Once any creature successfully controls a lesser dream, only that creature is capable of ever controlling that specific lesser dream.

Actions

Change Shape. The lesser dream magically polymorphs into any creature of any size, but cannot change back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to insubstantial mist if it dies. If the lesser dream's appearance is altered by another creature due to the Seize the Dream ability, the change is permanent, and cannot be altered thereafter.

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

Most dreams are mindless extras, no more alive than scenery. They take whatever form is required to fulfill the dreamer's expectations, or to suit the wishes of more powerful creatures. Some dreams become set in form by magic or the desire of dreamers—growing in power to match their shape. Even in these situations, most remain beholden to the whims and imagination of the beings that define them.

A. Dreamlands

It has been weeks since the annual pixie parade, and the sleepy forest town of Glavost returns to normal. The heroes who returned Edwin to his parents are regarded by adults with pride, but it is still hard to really be taken

seriously. The fanciful sounding tale of the town's danger is not believed by most, although everyone acknowledges odd events occurred. No one bothers explaining Edwin's lack of aging, or the incredible skills gained by children. Life goes on, with one more fairy story to tell.

It is early dawn when the tranquil peace and quiet of Glavost is broken. The ground rattles like an earthquake, and the sky's light fades. All around the town's edge a thick fog appears with strange moving shapes within reaching out like long fingers. Far off in the distance an impossibly tall and crooked black tower rises above the mist, though the haze hides everything in-between.

Intelligence (Arcana)

With a DC 10 check, the PCs can identify their surroundings as the Dream Realms (or Dimension of Dreams). It is the realm where everyone travels in sleep, but in general is near-impossible to reach physically. Pulling an entire town into the dreamlands must have taken extraordinary power.

The PCs (like most of Glavost's citizens) become targets for dreams instinctively seeking motivation and a set form. Depending on the PC, the dream might become anything imaginable. The dream's appearance and attitude often even shifts from moment to moment

until it strikes a strong enough connection. The GM should personalize each apparition for the individual PC, but they might include imaginary friends, long-lost pets, NPCs from the previous adventure, or scary-seeming monsters of impossible size.

Creatures

Each PC is targeted by a single **lesser dream** that takes on an appearance and personality tailor-crafted to suit them. Unlike most citizens of Glavost, the PCs can recognize with a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check that the creatures are only dreams, and they can thus control each with a DC 10 Charisma check (per Seize the Dream).

Development

Each PC should defeat or else learn to control a single lesser dream, choosing its form and shaping its personality. If the PCs do not begin the adventure together, the lesser dreams can be used to unite the party. A lesser dream of Lista (see *Pixies on Parade*) might directly encourage them to get together, or a puppy might drag a PC by the sleeve toward a friend. After the group is united and has a chance to absorb their new circumstances, allow them to explore Glavost and free the townspeople. A GM requiring greater control can either tempt the PCs to investigate sights and sounds at desired locations, or use the lesser dreams to encourage movement in specific directions.



A1. Lonely Leafflower

The half-elf smith Belle Leafflower wanders down the main street of the town, shouting for help. She seems scared and alone, desperately calling for anyone to come save her father.

The outgoing and goofy Belle Leafflower holds a deep secret anxiety. She worries that nobody really likes her, and everybody only puts up with her because of her skills at the forge. Her father is getting quite old (even for an elf), and she fears becoming all alone when he passes. She has nightmares of waking up, with everyone in town having left without her.

She knows her father is in danger (see area A2), but her unresolved fears manifests in the Dream Realms as an inability for Belle to see, hear, or feel anyone else (including dream creatures). The PCs must somehow figure out a way to contact and communicate with Belle.

Many options exist, and the GM is encouraged to reward creativity. The PCs could perhaps write out letters on the ground or give her notes, although Belle is completely mystified by their appearance. They might use magical telepathy, summon objects in front of her, or even create an illusion that can talk to her. As soon as Belle realizes the PCs are there but invisible and intangible, she tries to explain her father is being attacked and leads the PCs to her home.

Development

Belle continues to be creature-blind until a PC can resolve her secret fear. This requires a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check before her father is rescued and a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check afterward. Until the PCs establish a consistent means of communication with Belle, all Charisma (Persuasion) checks are made with disadvantage. On a successful check, Belle admits her worry that everybody actually thinks she's annoying and are only nice to her face. PC's comforting Belle help her gain the confidence to take control of her dreams, allowing PCs to train her in using imagination magic.

Inspiration Award

A PC can gain Inspiration for resolving Belle's secret fear.

A2. Book Learning

The inside of the Leafflower home is a lot bigger than it should be! It has become a vast and dreary library, with shelves of thick books rising stories into the air. With each passing moment, dozens of new books appear

with new shelves popping up to fit them. In the middle of the room is the old elfen wizard Elas Leafflower, with moving piles of books surrounding him. He looks even more ancient than normal, with long gray-white hair and a beard growing out in every direction. He mumbles, "No time... no time... too many..." while desperately trying to read several books at once.

Elas Leafflower is an elf that has lived for decades in the company of humans. The love of his life, Belle's mother, was also human. This has left him with a stark view of mortality, and a curmudgeon's attitude. Worse still, with each passing year there is more to learn, but his time grows ever shorter. In the Dream Realms he finds himself trapped in a nightmare with ever-growing swarms of books. The talking tomes mock him while he ages years in moments.

If Belle is present, but her anxieties remain unresolved, her father is the only person she can see, hear, and feel. She is helpless to aid him, and depends on the PCs to defeat the book swarms she cannot touch. With a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, the PCs can note the area's books all appear to be nonsense jumbles of random words in various languages.

Hazard

The constantly multiplying books in the library make the area difficult terrain.

Trap

One of the really tall shelves of books is overloaded, and anyone passing within 10 feet causes the whole thing to fall over!

FALLING BOOKS

Mechanical trap

Creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage and be restrained. The creature can escape as an action with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Creatures

A pair of dreams latched onto Elas right away, using his memories and magic to take a permanent solid form. The **book swarms** crowd around Elas — not close enough to hurt him, but close enough to make using area of effect spells more difficult to use. Once a victim has been attacked at least twice, they try to find a new target. The book swarms fight until destruction, or until Elas seizes control over them.



Dangerous Dreams

Almost nothing in the Dream Realms is “real” in the same sense as the PCs or villagers. Most creatures encountered are barely more than illusions, and truly living creatures are extremely rare. These beings are given greater substance due to the Nightmare King’s power and the townspeople’s collective imagination. While actual creatures can be harmed or even knocked unconscious, death in the Dream Realms is not a real possibility. Living creatures automatically succeed on any death saving throws. An unconscious creature can only recover consciousness if it is healed by another creature, and cannot otherwise recover consciousness under its own power. If a creature has regeneration, or some similar ability to automatically heal, the ability does not function if it is unconscious. Even spells that cause death do not permanently kill a creature, but if death would be caused, the creature is automatically rendered unconscious. This is all fitting with the Nightmare King’s long-term plan to eternally farm the fear of of an unconscious Glavost. However, the PCs do not know this, and since the situation is truly unique, they can only find this out the hard way.

Book Swarms

Medium swarm of Tiny constructs, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d8+48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Skills Arcana +2, History +2, Investigation +2, Nature +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Seize the Dream. Elas is not in his right mind. He continues trying to read his books, even as more keep popping up, though all are nonsense. With a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, a PC can convince him

to stop. Multiple PCs can contribute to give advantage. The PCs likewise gain advantage on the check if they show Elas that the books make no sense. If the PCs succeed on the check, Elas takes control of the book swarms. If Belle's anxieties have been resolved, the PCs have advantage on their check. her assistance grants the PCs advantage on the Charisma check.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny book. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The book swarm makes two melee attacks or one melee attack and uses age.

Slams. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 20 (5d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 10 (2d6 + 3) if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Age. One creature within the swarm's space must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. The creature become temporarily aged on a failed save, and gains 1 level of exhaustion. Creatures cannot die from exhaustion while within the Dream Realms. A child or teenager affected by this ability does not begin gaining levels of exhaustion until they are affected two or more times. The transformed creature can repeat the saving throw every minute, ending the effect on a success. Ending the effect removes any exhaustion.

Development

If the PCs help Elas recover, the book golems disperse, filling the shelves. From then on, they act only as helpful librarians. As Elas fully recovers, books stop appearing. The mixed-up nonsense words begin changing into the accumulated knowledge of his lifetime, and he can then be trained by the PCs to master imagination magic.

Treasure

After Elas recovers, the books within his library can greatly aid the PCs or any other readers. Anyone using the library to research (requiring at least 1 hour of effort) gains advantage on any Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion skill check. Additionally, there are spellbooks in the library containing every wizard spell of 3rd level or lower. These benefits persist outside of the Dream Realms only if the PCs manage to defeat the Nightmare King in a duel of imagination (see Chapter 3 for details). Elas happily allows the PCs to check out any spellbooks, assuming they promise to return them.

Inspiration Award

The PCs each gain Inspiration for freeing Elas from his nightmare.

A3. Kitchen Chaos

The Pixie's Place kitchens are a chaotic mess, and grown to gigantic size! Rus Ulden, the nearsighted dwarven chef shouts for help while scrambling up counters and over ovens. Chasing after him and chomping at his heels are four wagon-sized cupcakes with chocolate frosting, and warm red jelly oozing from their mouths!

The dwarven chef Rus Ulden can't see well and his eyesight is only getting worse. The ornery old dwarf is aware of his problem, but pride keeps him from admitting it. The most he's willing to do is quietly give local kids treats to help him keep his kitchen sorted. He still occasionally screws up dishes, and uses over-the-top bluster to cover up his embarrassment. Rus knows it is only a matter of time before he makes a titanic mistake, and fears everyone might stop eating his food altogether.

Chef Ulden's fears manifest as a bunch of massive toothy cupcakes chasing him around a giant-sized version of his kitchens. With dream-logic, he believes they are his fault for mixing up ingredients! He only manages to keep them at bay by scrambling up on counters, throwing bags of flour, and using pots like shields.

Hazard

The kitchen's unrealistically large wood burning oven is putting out brutal amounts of heat. Each creature within 10 feet of the oven must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 2d8 fire damage, or half as much damage on a successful save. A creature takes the same damage when it enters the area for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there. If the oven door is closed, the fire damage immediately ends. The giant oven door can be closed as an action with a DC 10 Strength check. A creature aware of the boiling water trap (see below) can attempt a DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check as a reaction to close the oven door without tipping over the boiling water.

Trap

Closing the oven door ends the heat and fire hazard, but might cause a giant pot of boiling water to fall over!

BOILING WATER

Mechanical trap

Each creature within 10 feet of the oven must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 5d8 fire damage, or half as much damage on a successful save.

Creatures

A group of dreams used Rus Ulden's fears to gain a permanent form, acting as four **killer cupcakes**! The killer cupcakes each target one PC with their jelly breath before moving in to bite. The dreams fight until destruction.

Killer Cupcake

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 57 (6d10+24)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, psychic

Skills Intimidation +4, Survival +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Dwarvish

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Edible. Any creature can act as if they possess a bite melee attack when in combat against a killer cupcake. This bite attack deals appropriate damage for a creature of their size (usually 1d4 piercing damage for Small creatures or 1d6 piercing damage for Medium creatures).

Seize the Dream. Rus Ulden cannot gain control of his dreams until the killer cupcakes are defeated. However, he might shout frightened (but helpful) warnings about the oven, boiling water, and the killer cupcake's abilities.

Actions

Multiattack. The killer cupcake makes two melee attacks. When its jelly breath is available, it can use the breath in place of a bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target creature. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Jelly Breath (Recharge 5-6). The killer cupcake can shoot sticky (but delicious) jelly from its mouth in a 15-foot line. Each affected creature must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature

becomes restrained. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 14 Strength check, bursting free of the jelly on a success. The jelly can also be attacked (including with a special bite attack as per the Edible ability) and destroyed (AC 10; hp 15; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

Developments

Once the PCs save Rus Ulden from the killer cupcakes, the gruff old dwarf collapses in a sobbing mess. He loudly blows his big nose on his apron, while saying it is his fault for being a fool who can't admit when the dumb words are all blurry. With a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the PCs can get Rus to calm down and finally ask for help. As soon as he comes around, thick gold-rimmed glasses appear on his face! Able to see everything clearly for the first time in years, Ulden's kitchen becomes a valuable resource and source of power for the people of Glavost. Additionally, the dwarf can then be trained by the PCs in how to use imagination magic.



Treasure

If Rus Ulden gains his glasses, anyone eating food made in his kitchen gains the benefits of the *heroes' feast* spell. They are cured of all diseases and poison, become immune to poison and being frightened, and make all Wisdom saving throws with advantage. Their hit point maximum also increases by 2d10, and they gain the same number of hit points. These benefits last for 24 hours. PCs that ate any of the killer cupcakes while saving Rus or eat any food within the kitchen immediately afterward, they gain the benefits of the *heroes' feast* spell. They do not need to spend 1 hour consuming food and drink to gain this benefit. The kitchen's ability to creature *heroes' feasts* (without requiring material components) persists outside of the Dream Realms only if the PCs manage to defeat the Nightmare King in a duel of imagination (see Chapter 3 for details).

Inspiration Award

A PC can gain Inspiration for helping Ulden get over his pride and summon himself some glasses using his imagination.

A4. Optional Encounters (CR varies)

The encounters detailed concern the established NPCs introduced in *Pixies on Parade*, but the GM is encouraged to include similar scenes of their own creation. This is especially true if the GM or players created other NPCs to populate Glavost. The PC might need to rescue friends or family, or other NPCs mentioned in the *Glavost: A Fairy Tale Village* supplement. The following are optional ideas for additional encounters.

- **Annoying Sibling:** One of the PC's little brothers or sisters is being attacked by toys! They were playing by themselves because the PC wouldn't let them tag along. In frustration, they took some of the PC's toys, roughly playing with them. The combination of anger and guilt caused the tiny things to turn evil. However, the toys are only scary and not really dangerous. The PC resolves the issue by protecting their sibling, and spending some time with their little brother or sister.
- **Dog Dreams:** A beloved pet is being chased by four **giant spiders**! The PC must rescue the poor dog, and give it a good scratch behind the ears. This might even be the former hellhound puppy rescued in *Pixies on Parade*.
- **Messy House:** One of the PC's parents often get into silly little arguments about cleaning up the house, with one caring a great deal about it, and the other

thinking it shouldn't matter. These quarrels can spiral way out of proportion to the initial cause, which is usually bad enough. However, in the Dream Realms, the dredged up emotion causes the house's furniture to animate and attack! The furniture (use the statistics for **animated armor**, **flying sword**, and **rug of smothering** to represent various pieces of furniture) tries to grab people to use them like chairs or tables! The PC must save their mom and/or dad, and then help them clean up afterward.

- **Villain's Monologue:** Doctor Zekin Moar, the town's halfling teacher/physician, is trapped within the schoolhouse, which has transformed into a prison. The energetic halfling believes his past has finally caught up to him, and the nobleman who framed him for a murder has chained him up to gloat (see *Glavost: A Fairy Tale Village*). The noble is still only a **lesser dream**, appearing as a tall thin stereotypical villain with a waxed mustache and fine clothing. The PCs can easily defeat the weak dream, but that only makes Zekin believe they are in just as much trouble! To free the halfling, the PCs must appeal to their teacher's optimism and convince him the situation isn't real. He then slips free of his chains and realizes he can walk right between the bars of his cage. All the fuming noble can do is ineffectually shout at him.
- **Wills and Ways:** Miss Rebecca Duladerre (Miss Becca) is Glavost's big farmer who has no heirs (see *Glavost: A Fairy Tale Village*). While everyone believes she plans to give her land to Mayor Owen Burson when she passes, her will actually has everything getting distributed among the sharecroppers. The gruff older woman is a lifelong farmer, and doesn't really understand all the technicalities of the contract. This has always been a nagging worry in the back of her mind — that when she's gone it all might get screwed up somehow. She hates the idea that the town she loves could suffer due to her ignorance. A dream has taken the form of an **imp** that holds a copy of the will, spouting circuitous nonsense legalese, hopelessly confusing her. Defeating the imp doesn't solve her anxiety, but the imp is only a manifestation of her doubt, and lacks any real legal knowledge. Likewise, the true will is safely stored at Owen Burson's home. The PCs can show the imp to be a liar, and the false will a lie with a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (History) check. The PCs can then try to remind Miss Becca she can trust those she loves to do alright by each other.

A5. False King

The Mayor's home has turned to black stone, twisting and leaning to one side as it slowly grows taller in height. From within comes deep-throated maniacal laughter and the worried pleading voices of Edwin and his parents. The broken front door reveals clinging writhing darkness surrounding and entrapping the Bursons!

After his rescue by the PCs, Edwin forgot his time in Behast's Crooked Tower. Unfortunately, returning to the Dream Realms brought much of the old terror right back. A dream used the boy's fear to take the form of the Nightmare King himself, although the creature is a pale reflection of the true bogeyman lord. Edwin's fear is feeding the dream, which in turn prompts it to want to cause more terror. It's trapped Edwin's parents and is using them to continue the boy's emotional turmoil.

Hazard

The Mayor's home is filled with semi-solid *darkness* (as the spell) except the space it touches is treated as difficult terrain. The *darkness* can be automatically dispelled by any spell that creates magical light. Any PC merely strongly presenting a light source (such as a torch) can attempt a DC 10 Charisma check for imagination magic as an action. On a successful check, the *darkness* is dispelled. If the *darkness* is dispelled, the area is no longer difficult terrain. The false Nightmare King is unaffected by the *darkness* or difficult terrain.

Creature

The **false king** shaped by Edwin's fears is nowhere near as powerful as the real fey, but it is more than a match for the powerless boy and his terrified parents. The false king further hampers the PCs by controlling shadows or summoning **lesser dreams** with gigantic and terrifying shapes. If the PCs begin to turn the lesser dreams against him, he ceases summoning them. If the *darkness* is removed, the false king instead begins to attack directly, focusing on anyone attempting to reason with Edwin. The false king fights until destroyed or until Edwin takes control of it.

False King

Large construct, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 133 (14d10+56)

Speed 30 ft., fly 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances psychic

Skills Intimidation +4, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)



Seize the Dream. Even through the haze of his fear, Edwin knows and trusts the PCs. Additionally, because of Edwin's experiences, he has more control over the hostile dream than most. However, he doesn't even know his friends are there until the *darkness* hazard is dispelled. Then, his fear turns to hope, frightening the little nightmare that's been feeding on him. This causes the false king to have disadvantage on Charisma and Wisdom saving throws. PCs can notice the shift with a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check. If they prompt Edwin to do more — such as standing up to the dream directly, the false king must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw (with disadvantage) or gain the frightened condition and begin cowering in the corner.

Control Dreamlands. The false king possesses limited control over the Dream Realms. This functions as a *mirage arcane* spell, except it is no mere illusion, and functions as literal changes to the environment. However, the alterations are only to scenery and generally have no mechanical impact.

Actions

Multiattack. The false king makes one bite and two claw attacks. When its control shadows or summon lesser dream abilities are available, it can use either in place of its bite or claw.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target creature. *Hit:* 25 (5d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft. one target creature. *Hit:* 15 (5d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Control Shadows (Recharge 5-6). The false king can form shadowy grasping hands, tentacles of stone, tripping roots, or other strange constructions of dream to hamper enemies. The false king can target a creature within 30 feet and the creature must make a DC 16 Strength (if being grappled) or Dexterity (if being knocked prone) saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature becomes grappled or prone for 1 minute. The creature can attempt a new saving throw of the same type at the end of each of its turns to negate either condition.

Summon Lesser Dream (Recharge 4-6). The false king summons a **lesser dream** which appears in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of the false king and acts as any ally of the construct. It remains for 1 minute, until it or its summoner dies, or until its summoner dismisses it as an action. When the false king summons a lesser dream, its appearance is automatically altered (per the Change Shape ability).

Development

In defeating the false Nightmare King and rescuing the Bursons, the PCs deal with the most dangerous dream threatening Glavost. Backed by the hope and trust inspired by Mayor Burson, they can rescue the remaining villagers, regain control over the town, and take stock of their predicament.

With the weight of Glavost's collective will and imagination behind them, each PC gains greater control over the Dream Realms within the town's extents. With concentration, they can begin making gross changes to their environment and scenery. They gain the following abilities:

- They add their proficiency bonus to any Charisma check to gain control over or shape **lesser dreams**.
- They can use the *mirage arcane* spell within 1 mile of Glavost as an at will innate spell-like ability, except within the Dream Realms the illusions are real for most intents and purposes. However, environmental elements created in this fashion generally have no major mechanical impact on living creatures. For example, a lava-spewing volcano might seem uncomfortably hot but causes no actual fire damage. The exception to this is **lesser dreams** which react to the scenery changes as if they were every bit as dangerous as they appear. With multiple uses of the *mirage arcane* spell, the PCs can each layer different fantastic terrain or structural effects within the 1-mile radius of Glavost.

XP Awards

In addition to the XP awards earned for creatures the party overcomes in this chapter, the characters earn 500 XP (divided equally among all party members) for defeating the false king and helping Edwin face his fears.

Chapter 2: The King's Court

The Bogeyman Lord sends an army of nightmares to Glavost! The PCs have the opportunity to summon and organize defenses, created from the dreams and imaginations of the townsfolk. Behast hardly expects such stiff resistance, and has his allies delay and distract the town's champions. Drawing upon the piece of his stolen power within the PCs, he pulls them into his follower's pocket dream realms. However, this last minute change of plans has a chance of backfiring, as his allies are less than impressed with the Nightmare Lord's ignoble tactic.

Allow some time for the PCs to recover and discover their newfound control over dreams after the end of Chapter 1 before reading or paraphrasing the following.

Approaching Army

From the direction of the cooked black tower comes the echoing sound of a hundred drum beats and thousands of steps moving in tandem. While the thick clouds obscure the approaching force, it sounds as if a massive army marches on Glavost!

The PCs face the daunting prospect of protecting a small town with a population numbering in the hundreds against a nightmare army. However, the PCs have the weight of the town's collective imagination behind them. How much time the people of Glavost have before the army arrives is uncertain, so the PCs must quickly organize and create defenses to protect everyone.

Given the versatility of the PC's growing control over the Dream Realms, the specifics of the measures the PCs take might vary widely. An action might be training an NPC, creating an army for Glavost, or erecting defenses to protect the town. Each PC can train any number of NPCs in imagination magic, but can each only perform a single successful creation of offenses or defenses before Behast grows irate. If a PC fails to create offenses or defenses, then whatever specific idea they had doesn't work, but they can retry with a new idea or after getting some help. It is recommended that the GM encourage the PCs to act independently in this manner, giving each an opportunity to have the spotlight.

Training

The PCs are the only people with any real experience using imagination magic or controlling the Dream Realms. Every NPC within Glavost can learn the skill, with many showing the potential by unintentionally affecting their environment. Mastering the ability requires help from the PCs. This does not necessarily require any ability or skill checks on the part of the PCs, but does require roleplay. Some NPCs, such as Belle Leaflower, Elas Leaflower, Chef Ulden, and Edwin Burson, must overcome hidden fears before they can be taught. However, even with guidance, the imaginations of the adults are not as versatile as the children. They have an easier time creating or shaping things related to their proficiencies and backgrounds. For example, Chef Ulden's imagination always manifests in food-based terms, and Selda Burson creates wooden toy soldiers. The most powerful potential dreamer, besides the PCs themselves, is Edwin Burson. If the PCs can teach the boy to fearlessly tap into his lost memories, he becomes

Respect

Dealing with parents and adults in general can be frustrating for clever children. Condescension is common, and respect is rare. This has been a recurring theme up until this point in the adventures around Glavost, with the adults regarding the PCs as "heroes", but not *truly* believing the fairy stories about pixies and bogeymen. Now they've all seen exactly what the PCs are capable of, and many were personally rescued by the children. The PCs are not only literally the most powerful people in Glavost, they are also the most experienced with fighting the enemy moving against them. Most fall in line behind the PCs, or at least Owen Burson, who gives them his full and unwavering support. Only the most arrogant, stubborn, or over-protective adults might question the PCs at this point, and even they are quickly silenced by the other townspeople. The adults might even play a part in guiding the PCs on how to use their imagination magic constructively, suggesting the creation of armies or defenses.



capable of altering the terrain and structures of Glavost (as the *mirage arcane* spell) like the PCs can.

Offense

Glavost doesn't have an army. Of the few hundred farmers who live there, only a handful has ever even held a sword. A bare few, such as Selda Burson, are accomplished hunters, but firing at a deer with a bow isn't the same thing as fighting a war. Luckily, within the Dream Realms, creating an army is a matter of focus and time. Countless lesser dreams wait for form and function at the fringes of the town. The PCs can begin mass-shaping the lesser dreams into a fighting force, with any form they can imagine. This requires a DC 10 Charisma check for imagination magic. A PC creating soldiers connected in some way to the PC's background or any trained tool or skill gains their proficiency bonus on the Charisma check. For example, a PC trained in the Nature skill would gain their proficiency bonus to the check when trying to summon fey-like dreams to Glavost's aid. If the PC is receiving assistance from one of the NPCs they've trained in imagination magic, they have advantage on the Charisma check, but the creation is flavored by the NPC's influence in some way. Edwin's help might create scary shadowy dreams or Elas Leafflower's assistance could produce paper wizards.

Defenses

Glavost is a small town, without even the barest wall for protection. With an army on the way, it sweeps immediately in if there aren't some measures to stop or stall. The PCs with their ability to alter Glavost's terrain and structures have the opportunity to defend Glavost with whatever measures they can dream up. The PCs can do anything from summoning barriers of pure magical force, building depthless pits as a moat, or layering elaborate mechanical traps. Like creating soldiers, this requires a successful DC 10 Charisma check for imagination magic. A PC creating defenses connected in some way to the PC's background or any trained tool or skill gains their proficiency bonus on the Charisma check. If the PC is receiving assistance from one of the NPCs they've trained in imagination magic, they have advantage on the Charisma check, but the creation is flavored by the NPC's influence in some way. Walls Chef Ulden aids in creating might look like food more than steel, or Doctor Zekin Moar's defenses might be pulled from famous historical lessons he tried teaching the PCs in class.

Developments

Each step taken by the PCs at this stage aids them in their conflict against the Nightmare King in Chapter 3. Keep track of each major change the PCs enact.

Behast sees from his tower the town's defenses, guardians, and rapid mastery of imagination magic after each PC performs one successful creation of an offense or defense for the town. This infuriates him, and he uses his connection to the PCs to pull them into his ally's pocket dream realms. Behast's allies are powerful fey or nightmare creatures, with far more experience with dreams than the PCs. Each traps Glavost's champions in a realm with its own rules and restrictions. The PCs must defeat the King's allies, and regain their freedom.

Inspiration Award

A PCs gains Inspiration each time they train an NPC in imagination magic.

B1. Light Work

The distant army sounds closer with each passing minute. Glavost's protections and guardians grow, but it is impossible to tell if they are enough.

Suddenly, it feels like some powerful but poorly controlled force hits and pulls before everything goes black! When the darkness clears, Glavost is gone, replaced by a forest clearing with a house in the center. Unlike any normal building, this one seems built from gingerbread and candy. The gumdrop-covered door slams open, showing a teenage girl with pale skin, dark hair, and a glowing red gemstone around her neck. She smirks with her hands on her hips, like she is in complete control.

"So you're the brats giving the boss all the trouble? You don't look like much to me," she says, raising her chin defiantly. "Don't bother trying anything. This is my dream, and I make the rules. Here's my offer: you do a few chores for me, and I'll let you go. Deal?"

The teenager is Isabeth, a young **night hag** allied with the Nightmare King. The immature but powerful hag has repeatedly refused to join any covens, finding most of their goals to be boring and lame. Behast approached her years ago, in his effort to secure help for his eventual release and conquering of the world. Not only was that *way* more exciting sounding than being a soul merchant, but Isabeth also has a bit of a secret crush on him. However, this whole getting beaten by mortal children thing is having a seriously negative impact on his cool in her mind. While she follows orders in delaying the PCs, her heart is not in the effort.

Isabeth isn't lying. She is hoping to kill two birds with one stone—delay these kids for her boss, while getting her house cleaned for free. Oh sure... she *could*

just clean the place up herself, but she really doesn't want to. The PCs might quickly find that their imagination magic doesn't seem to work here like it did in Glavost. However, they still have access to their knowledge and skills to bring to bear. Isabeth's goal is to stall them, and she isn't interested in fighting. If they attack, she becomes ethereal to escape or otherwise avoids direct conflict. If this occurs, read or paraphrase the following.

"Ugh! That's so rude!" the invisible teenager shouts. "Look... whatever. I don't care. I'm not interested in fighting you. Do what you want, but the longer you try to find me, the longer you're stuck here not getting the chores done."

[If the PCs ask what the chores are, read or paraphrase the following.

"Super easy stuff. Just dishes, taking out the trash, and feeding my pretty pony. Do that and I'll let you go," she says, although her voice sounds a bit too amused with the whole situation to be completely trustworthy.

Wisdom (Insight)

Isabeth doesn't try to deceive, both because she's lazy, and also because every second the PCs question her is a second they aren't back in Glavost.

Intelligence (Arcana)

With a DC 10 check, the PCs can determine they must have been kidnapped to a personal pocket Dream Realm—a place somewhat similar to a demiplane. Pocket realms can take years to create, and the rules of each are dictated by the creator. That control carries the downside of the place being a lot less mutable than the unformed Dream Realms. Additionally, they can recall that these sorts of places always must have some sort of internal logic, and readily apparent means of escape. With a DC 15 check, they can verify that Isabeth probably has to tell the truth about doing the chores and getting free, but might have some trick up her sleeve she hasn't volunteered.

Chores

The PCs can escape from Isabeth's dream by doing her requested chores — dishes, trash, and feeding her pony. This might not sound so bad at first, but the teenage hag is a complete and utter slob. The dishes are stacked up to the ceiling and the trash is all thrown into a foul-smelling corner. Also, her "pony" is a **nightmare**. The PCs can perform these chores as a group or split up to tackle them independently. Isabeth follows the PCs around as they do chores, generally acting like the titanic mess is no big deal, and she is way too cool to pick up after herself.

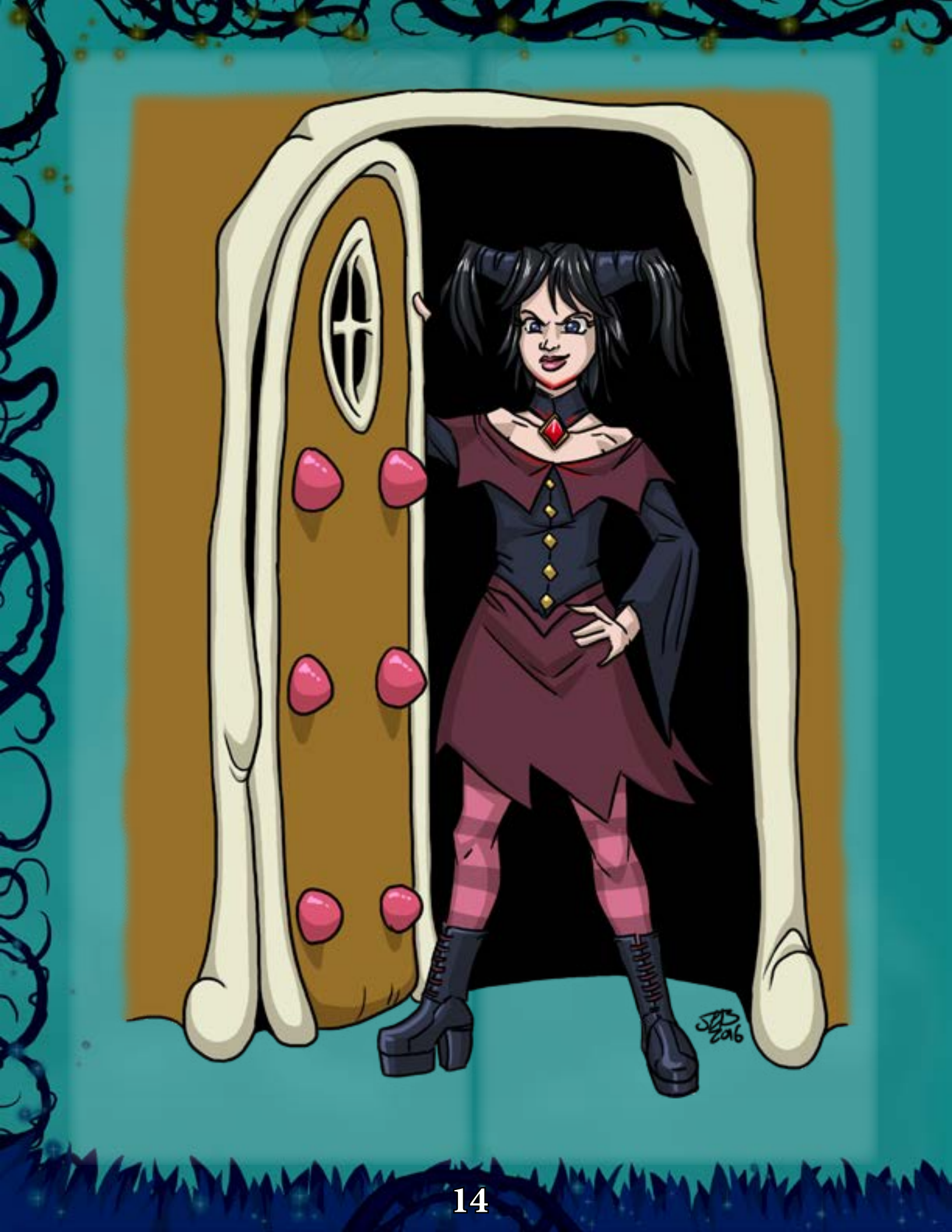
Dishes: Cleaning and drying the dishes by hand is a lot of work. They are stacked up in a big pile next to a large bucket of water and rags to do the washing with. Doing the dishes requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. If the PCs succeed on the check by 5 or more, they get the dishes done in record time. If they fail the check, they eventually get through them all, but it takes forever. Any magic that helps accomplish the task grants advantage on the check. This could include creating water to help wash, wind to help dry, or summoning servants to aid in the task's completion. Other clever solutions or abilities might likewise add bonuses to the check.

Nightmare: Isabeth's pet is named Princess Grimdark, and she is an extremely particular sort of **nightmare**. Isabeth points to bags of corn and grains, saying that Princess Grimdark is way too good for stupid dream grass. So, the PCs have to mix precisely half a cup of corn with two cups of grain. She warns that if Princess Grimdark's food isn't prepared to her pretty pony's exacting specifications, she is likely to get angry. The PCs can either try to get the mix of food absolutely perfect with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, or try to cajole the nightmare into accepting a less than ideal mix with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the PC fails the check, they can try again, but any additional attempts at the same check have disadvantage.

Trash: Isabeth has a trash pit outside of her house. She has Princess Grimdark start a fire to dump all the trash into for disposal. This is pretty gross, and seems to be really bad for the nearby dream-trees, but the teenage hag doesn't care. A far less unpleasant method of disposal would be creating a compost pit (although the PCs might think of other ways), requiring a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check. Carrying the trash is pretty simple and straight-forward, but Isabeth's let it sit so long without cleaning that it is incredibly disgusting. To clean up the trash, a PC must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the PC gains the poisoned condition for 1d6 minutes and becomes too sick to really help. If the PCs protect the tree-dreams, they return the favor by growing sweet-smelling flowers, which make the chore a bit more bearable. This grants the PCs advantage on the Constitution saving throw.

Creatures

Isabeth is a **night hag** and Princess Grimdark is a **nightmare**. Neither attempts to fight the PCs, and instead simply avoids combat by becoming ethereal.



Isabeth (Night Hag)

Medium fiend, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 112 (15d8+45)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +7, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances cold, fire, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Primordial

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *magic missile*

2/day each: *plane shift* (self only), *ray of enfeeblement*, *sleep*

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

Actions

Claws (Hag Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Change Shape. The hag magically polymorphs into a Small or Medium female humanoid, or back into her true form. Her statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

Etherealness. The hag magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. To do so, the hag must have a *heartstone* in her possession.

Nightmare Haunting (1/Day). While on the Ethereal Plane, the hag magically touches a sleeping humanoid on the Material Plane. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the target prevents this contact, as does a *magic circle*. As long as the contact persists, the target has dreadful visions. If these visions last for at least 1 hour, the target gains no benefit from its rest, and its hit point maximum is reduced by 5 (1d10). If this effect reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the

target dies, and if the target was evil, its soul is trapped in the hag's *soul bag*. The reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until removed by the *greater restoration* spell or similar magic.

Princess Grimdark (Nightmare)

Large fiend, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24)

Speed 60 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Damage Immunities fire

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages understands Abyssal, Common, and Infernal but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Confer Fire Resistance. The nightmare can grant resistance to fire damage to anyone riding it.

Illumination. The nightmare sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Ethereal Stride. The nightmare and up to three willing creatures within 5 feet of it magically enter the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane or vice versa.

Developments

The PCs can escape Isabeth's dream by either defeating her in combat (knocking her unconscious) or doing the chores. However, since Isabeth is pretty capable of avoiding a fight, it is most likely they must swallow their pride and do the lazy teenager's chores for her.

While it is difficult, it is not impossible for the PCs to befriend the teenage night hag. As the Nightmare King is lowered in her mind, she becomes equally impressed by the children defying him. If the children helpfully do the chores for her, and act friendly, allow them to attempt a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the PCs are successful, she decides to go ahead and betray the Nightmare King. If the PCs succeed by 5 or more, she actually gifts them with her *heartstone*.

Treasure

If the PCs befriend Isabeth, they might gain her *heartstone*. A PC wearing the ruby is immune to all diseases and has advantage on all imagination magic Charisma checks for the next 24 hours. The *heartstone*'s benefits might become permanent if the PCs can defeat the Nightmare King in a duel of imagination in Chapter 3.

Inspiration Award

A PC finishing the dishes in record time gains Inspiration. If a PC manages to feed Princess Grimdark without her getting upset, they gain Inspiration. If a PC disposes of Isabeth's trash without harming the dream-forest, they gain Inspiration. If the PCs manage to befriend Isabeth, each PC gains Inspiration.

B2. Detention

While the forest clearing and gingerbread house fade away, they become replaced with a dark and dingy dungeon that seems to have been hastily converted into a classroom. A faceless and shadowy robed figure floats a foot off the ground at the front, standing before a chalk board. When it speaks, the voice sounds like a deep dark chattering chorus, "Sit down children. If you can answer my questions... correctly... I shall set you free."

Long ago, the Nightmare King made an alliance **nightmare gremlins** dwelling in the fairy forest. The chaotic anarchist gremlins aren't usually the sort to unite or lead, but these have grown to hate the pixies and people of Glavost enough to set aside their normal issues. Beyond that, Behast has promised to help them tear down all of mortal civilization. With that sort of offer, they'd follow the bogeyman anywhere.

At the King's direction, the gremlins work to delay Glavost's champions. Since their foes are mere children, they choose to force them into a classroom situation, hoping to use magic to trick them into giving the wrong answers. Like with the last encounter, the PCs can choose to ignore the gremlin's request and simply attack. In this case, that sort of strategy might also be successful but could prove difficult. The PC's imagination magic doesn't function within the gremlin's dream, but they can still use all their normal class features.

Creatures

The "teacher" is actually six **nightmare gremlins**. They hover together inside of a large robe, using *minor image* and *ghost sound* spells to help conceal their appearance and aid in intimidation. In combat, the nightmare gremlins use

flight to keep out of reach while focusing attacks against the weakest looking target as a group. The fey fight until reduced to 1/2 their maximum hit points or less. They then attempt to Feign Death, forcing the PCs to remain within the pocket dream realm until they can see through the ruse.

Nightmare Gremlins

Tiny fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d4 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., fly 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +3, Intimidation +4, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Feign Death. While the nightmare gremlin remains unconscious, it appears to be dead. The fey can also pretend to be dead while conscious, requiring a creature inspecting them to succeed on a DC 13 Medicine skill check to note the gremlin is actually still alive.

Frightful Presence. If the nightmare gremlin damages a surprised creature, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The saving throw is made with disadvantage if the gremlin is within line of sight. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the gremlins Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.
Innate Spellcasting. The gremlin's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *ghost sound*, *minor image*, *suggestion*
1/day: *dream*

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (4d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Lessons

The nightmare gremlins coordinate use of their innate spell-like abilities, so that each targets a different PC at once. They hope to use *suggestion* to force the children to provide them the responses they ask for, rather than the correct answers.

The shadowy robed figure strides over to the chalkboard. It scrapes what must be a claw across the surface with a loud screeching sound! It leaves writing behind—"Should children be brave?" The strange dark chorus of a voice speaks out as it turns, "Say no, children, and nothing else. You are young, and naturally frightened."

Each PC must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw (as the *suggestion* spell) or be compelled to say, "no," when the answer is actually yes. PCs that succeed on the save can respond any way they wish. If at least one PC succeeds on the save and gives a contrary answer, the gremlins growl angrily, but reply, "Correct."

The figure turns back to the chalkboard and scrapes on it again—"Should children use their imaginations?" It turns to speak again with the overlapping dark voices, "Say no, children, and nothing else. You must learn to accept things as they are."

Each PC must again succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw (as the *suggestion* spell) or be compelled to say, "no". If at least one PC succeeds on the save and gives a contrary answer, the gremlins growl louder, but reply, "Correct. Final question."

Each PC must succeed on a final DC 13 Wisdom saving throw (as the *suggestion* spell) or be compelled to say, "no". If any give a contrary answer the gremlins shout their rage and frustration, shattering their illusions as they leap from the robes to attack. Unfortunately, by the terms of the deal struck, the PCs gain their freedom before the gremlins can do any harm.

The creature turns back to the blackboard, scraping on it with more deliberation this time, as if frustrated and taking it out on the surface, "Should children fight the Nightmare King?" "Say no, children, and nothing else. You are too young. It isn't safe."

Developments

If the PCs either defeat the nightmare gremlins in combat (knocking them all unconscious) or correctly answer all three questions, they succeed and move on to the next encounter. In the unlikely event the PCs all fail every

Peer Pressure

It is unlikely all of the PCs fail a round of checks. The deekit gremlins are surprised the PCs have wills as strong as they do, but even they don't expect all of them to always fail. What they hope for is that most of them fail each time, causing peer pressure to bully the rest into remaining silent. What is most likely to happen is that at least a few of the PCs pass the save for each question posed, but probably not the same PCs each time (unless one or two have a particularly good Will save). This means that those free to speak must stand up for the rest. Encourage a different speaker to give a rebuttal with each successful save if possible, as it gives different players a good opportunity to roleplay in the spotlight.

attempted Wisdom save against one of the questions, they must fight the gremlins in order to escape.

Inspiration Award

A PC gain Inspiration for correctly answering the gremlin's question if the majority of the other PCs are forced to say "no".

B3. Power of Knowledge

The dark dungeon-classroom fades away to reveal a warm, large, and cheerful dining hall fit for a king. A long stone table rests before a roaring fire. Food and drink of every type... and some that defy imagination, are spread out as a feast. At the head of the table on the far end is a handsome young man with curling ram horns and the lower body of a furry goat. "Welcome Champions of Glavost! I am Avar Dunier, ally to Behast the Nightmare King, and your gracious host," he says with a bow and an inviting motion for you to come closer.

"First off, I wish to apologize for the rudeness of my colleagues and patron. They disrespect you because of your age, instead of noting your accomplishments and potential. We have been 'asked' by our lord to delay you heroes long enough for his army to reach your brave town. I find such tactics... cowardly, and beneath me. So here is the only deal I shall offer—stay here, enjoy my hospitality for a while, and hear Behast's story. No tricks. No traps. Otherwise, you are free to leave at any time you wish," the satyr pauses before adding in a conspiratorial tone, "I believe you still have some time before the army reaches your town, and it might be worthwhile to know your enemy."

Avar is the last of the Nightmare King's allies and stalling tactics. The **satyr** journeyed to the land of dreams long ago to seek and collect lost stories. When approached by the Nightmare King, he agreed to an alliance, knowing the bogeyman lord could make life easier for him. However, he is a warrior-poet, with an honorable streak he hasn't quite managed to shake. He follows Behast because the King is mighty, but he doesn't owe Behast any true loyalty.

The skald has spent years collecting scraps of truth from the legends surrounding the Nightmare King, because he finds him to be a fascinating character. However, he sees this whole sorry situation to be a low move. While he plans on following Behast's order to the letter, he at least offers the brave champions of Glavost something worthwhile in exchange for their valuable time.

The satyr is not lying or obfuscating. The PCs, if they wish, can simply choose to leave now and return to Glavost immediately. However, he truly offers Behast's story to the best of his knowledge, which they might find valuable.

Creatures

Avar is a **satyr** who possesses a set of panpipes.

Avar (Satyr)

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 31 (7d8)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +2, Performance +6, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Actions

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

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

Panpipes. The satyr plays its pipes and chooses one of the following magical effects: a charming melody, a frightening strain, or a gentle lullaby. Any creature within 60 feet of the satyr that can hear the pipes must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as described below. Other satyrs and creatures that can't be charmed are unaffected.

An affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to these panpipes for the next 24 hours.

Charming Melody. The creature is charmed by the satyr for 1 minute. If the satyr or any of its companions harms the creature, the effect ends immediately.

Frightening Strain. The creature is frightened for 1 minute.

Gentle Lullaby. The creature falls asleep and is unconscious for 1 minute. The effect ends if the creature takes damage or if someone takes an action to shake the creature awake.

Avar's Story

If the PCs agree to Avar's deal, then read or paraphrase the following.

"I think you are making the right decision. Knowledge is power. Perhaps some secret to Behast's downfall hides within his story," the satyr says. Invisible servants hold out chairs as he clears his throat.

"The fey are not of this world. We come from a far-away place, somewhere between dreams and magic. Within that realm, Behast ruled since time began. He was the first great lord of bogeymen, called the Nightmare King. His home was an endless shifting horror, larger by far than the whole of this universe.

The Lords of the Fey are not without rivals. Behast's was named Tahashta, and she was the light to his darkness. They had warred forever, without either gaining an advantage, but both tired of conflict. They agreed to engage in a duel of imagination, with the loser banished to the mortal realms.

The fight raged, and lasted for many of your lifetimes. Tahashta's final victory came by taking advantage of the Nightmare King's arrogance. She lured him into believing her power waned and defeat was close at hand. He believed these carefully crafted lies, and foolishly attacked without an eye to defense. She struck a crucial blow, stripping him of his godlike glory, and casting the King from his kingdom.

The lord of bogeymen found himself in the heart of an enchanted forest filled with lesser fey. Mad with frustration and still lacking humility, he struck out at

the weaker beings. In his mind, he was royalty, and their proper place was at his feet. However, he again underestimated his enemies, and overestimated his power. The fey united against him, and he was defeated a second time. They bound him within the realm of dreams, which for the ex-god, was akin to a prison cell.

Behast required fear and nightmares to regain strength, and the mortal realm has no shortage of either. He began reaching out to the minds of your ancestors within the town of Glavost, taking from them the power he required. The forest fey that had defeated him saw his plan, and understood the threat. They approached the people of Glavost with an alliance. Champions were chosen and gifted with the power to wield imagination like a blade. They entered Behast's Crooked Tower within the Dream Realms, overcame every challenge, and triumphed.

Having been thrice defeated, once by Tahashta, once by the forest fey, and once by mere mortals, Behast's power was shattered. For hundreds of years he remained trapped, capable only of briefly touching the world or dreams. It was not until Edwin Burson fell into his clutches that he truly began to recover. By drinking deep from that single child's fear, he has regained a fraction of his former might. He is dangerous, but could become invulnerable if no one stands against him.

That is my story children, collected from a hundred whispers and legends. I cannot know for certain how much is true, but it has the ring of truth to it. I hope you find it useful when facing the trials ahead. Be aware that while this was centuries ago by mortal reckoning, to a being such as Behast, they are recent wounds. Also, you have defeated him once already. I am sure he fears what might happen should you continue to defy him," the satyr says, bowing low before rising with a smile.

"Thank you for being my guests. I wish you luck, and my only request is that you refrain from sharing with my lord this teensy tiny betrayal on my part," he says with a wink.

Development

If the PCs remain friendly and respectful, listening to the entirety of Avar's story, he gifts them with his pipes as both an apology for his part in these events, and to aid them against the Nightmare King. Then, the PCs can choose to return to Glavost at any time thereafter.

Treasure

While the PCs cannot use the *satyr's pipes* as a satyr, in the Dream Realms they grant advantage on Charisma

checks to use imagination magic. This lasts for 24 hours, but might become permanent if the PCs can defeat the Nightmare King in a duel of imagination in Chapter 3.

XP Awards

In addition to the XP awards earned for creatures the party overcomes in this chapter, the characters each earn 100 XP for learning the Nightmare King's story.

Chapter 3: Wars of Imagination

While the efforts of Isabeth, the nightmare gremlins, and Avar are a stalling tactic at best, even if the PCs succeed brilliantly, by the time they return to Glavost, the Nightmare King's army is closing in. This gives little additional time to prepare, leaving the PCs with whatever soldiers and fortifications they were able to assemble prior to the kidnapping. They must rally the people and imaginations of their home to fight off the King's forces, prompting the dark bogeyman lord to challenge them directly for the fate of the town.

C1. Nightmare Siege

The satyr's hall fades away, replaced by... Glavost! The townspeople crowd around, obviously on edge. As soon as they realize you've returned, a triumphant hopeful shout spreads!

Unfortunately, the sounds of the drumbeats and marching army sound closer than ever. The fog surrounding Glavost clears, revealing a massive army built from nightmares—evil gremlins, dark shadows, and zombies move in unison, closing in on the town.

The army is composed of thousands of **lesser dreams** personally bound and shaped by the Nightmare King. When he created and set them to march on Glavost, he believed the force was total overkill, thinking that the pitiful mortals would be too tortured by fear to put up any defense. Once taken, he could feed upon the collective fear of the populace, using it to regain his lost power. The King became shocked beyond belief to see the town quickly adapt to the Dream Realms, and unite behind children. Within *hours* he watched armies created and defenses erected.

There could be only one explanation. The children must have somehow tapped into *his* power that they stole to shape dreams to their desires. It is not in Behast's nature to think in terms of the bonds of friendship and family. He doesn't yet understand the strength the PCs can call upon by having the backing of Glavost's collective will.



Imagination War

It is recommended that the war between Glavost and the army of nightmares be handled in a more descriptive fashion, especially for younger or inexperienced players. However, rules are provided below for running it as a mass combat.

If a less rules-intensive approach is desired, it becomes more an exercise in the PC's imagination, and a matter of time before victory is achieved. Roll initiative, with the nightmare army going last each round. On their turn, each PC must choose to either defend Glavost or attack the nightmare army with imagination magic. The PC describes how they are using imagination magic and attempts a DC 15 Charisma check. They gain their proficiency bonus to the check if it is connected in some way to the PC's background, any trained tool or skill, or the offenses and defenses erected in Chapter 2. On a successful check, they alter the Dream Realms in the stated manner, doing anything from calling down lightning to raising walls of adamantite.

- An NPC trained in imagination magic can aid one PC per round, granting advantage on the Charisma check. PCs can likewise assist each other to grant advantage. The PCs might also gain advantage if using the *heartstone* or *satyr's pipes* potentially gained in Chapter 2.

A single successful defensive check each round is sufficient to prevent the army from reaching or harming Glavost. The PCs require a number of successful offensive checks equal to the number of PCs present (usually four to six) to turn the tide of the battle in their favor. If PC's fail to defend Glavost in a round (with at least one successful defense check), then all offensive successes are lost, and they must start over again.

Mass Combat

The battle can alternately be run as a large-scale combat encounter. While it is recommended that the nightmare siege be handled with a focus more on description and story, some GMs and players might be more comfortable with a more tactical battle.

Mass combat functions exactly like normal combat, except each army created by a PC (in Chapter 2 or during the course of the battle) functions as a summoned creature with the statistics shown below when fighting against other armies (do not use these statistics when using an army to combat an individual or small group). The mass of dream creatures function in a similar manner to swarms.

It is recommended that the Nightmare King have one additional army unit more than the PCs when

the battle starts, so if the PCs created three armies in Chapter 2, the Nightmare King has four armies with greater power. The PC who created the army should act as its commander.

Any imagination magic the PC's used to apply to Glavost's defenses in Chapter 2 affects the battlefield conditions. Fortifications created (walls, castles, moats, etc.) add a cumulative +1 to the AC of all army units under their control. Other modifications could create obstacles, difficult terrain, or hazards on the battlefield at GM discretion.

Mass Imagination Magic

The collective imagination of Glavost is behind the PCs, boosting their already impressive power within the Dream Realms. They can wield their imaginations within the mass combat, harming enemy armies, healing their own troops, or even summoning entirely new armies to continue fighting.

During their turn in initiative, each PC can use imagination magic to swing the battle in their favor or against their enemies. There are few descriptive limits on the sort of power the PC's can wield with their imagination in this way, summoning new armies, healing units, calling down fire from the heavens, etc. However, it is more difficult to do so quickly and in the heat of battle. The PC attempts a DC 15 Charisma check as an action. They gain their proficiency bonus to the check if it is connected in some way to the PC's background, any trained tool or skill, or the offenses and defenses erected in Chapter 2. The PC gains advantage on the check if an NPC trained in using imagination magic assists on the check. Likewise, PC can aid any other PC, forgoing their check, but granting advantage to their ally's check. The *satyr pipes* and *heartstone* gained in Chapter 2 gives the PC possessing them advantage on these checks. On a successful check, the PC can affect the battle in the following ways:

Resources: The PC can grant an allied army unit powerful and even magical weapons or armor. Each successful imagination magic check adds +1 to the army unit's armor class or attack. This can only be performed twice per unit (granting a maximum of +1 to both armor class and attack).

Harm/Healing: The PC can deal or heal 4d8 + their Charisma modifier in damage to a single army unit.

Offense/Defense: It is possible for the PCs to summon an additional army unit or alter the battlefield conditions as they did in Chapter 2. However, the conflict makes it more difficult to do so. It requires two

successful DC 15 Charisma checks to create a new army unit, create fortifications (granting +1 AC to all allied army units), or alter battlefield conditions (creating obstacles, hazards, or difficult terrain). Two PCs can act together in the same round toward the same action (with two successful checks) or a single PC can accomplish it with two actions over two or more rounds.

Creatures

If using the mass combat rules, use the following statistics for the forces of Glavost and the Nightmare King. Each Glavost army's specific skills, languages, and attacks depend on its creator and shape.

Glavost Armies

Gargantuan swarm of Medium constructs, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (armor or natural armor)

Hit Points 145 (19d20 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)

Skills varies

Damage Resistances psychic

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages varies

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Medium creature. The swarm can't gain temporary hit points and can't regain hit points except through imagination magic.

Actions

Multiattack. The Glavost army can make two melee or ranged attacks.

Varies. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one army unit in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, or 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage if the army unit has half its hit points or fewer.

Varies. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 100 ft., one army unit. *Hit:* 17 (4d6+3) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, or 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage if the army unit has half its hit points or fewer.

Nightmare Armies

Gargantuan swarm of Medium constructs, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 217 (19d20 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +5, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances psychic

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Medium creature. The swarm can't gain temporary hit points and can't regain hit points except through imagination magic.

Actions

Multiattack. The nightmare army makes one bite attack and one siege engine attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one army unit in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 32 (5d10 + 5) piercing damage, or 16 (2d10+5) piercing damage if the army unit has half its hit points or fewer.

Siege Engine. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 200 ft., one army unit. *Hit:* 31 (4d12 + 5) bludgeoning damage, or 18 (2d12+5) bludgeoning if the army unit has half its hit points or fewer.

Development

With the power of imagination magic, the nightmare army is more intimidating than dangerous. Of course, without the PCs to face them, the citizens of the town would be quickly overwhelmed. Backed by the collective will of their friends and neighbors, a bunch of nightmares stand little real chance. Victory is all but assured since the PCs can continually replace their losses, improve their troops, or even harm the enemy directly. This forces the Nightmare King to intercede directly when their victory appears certain.

Inspiration Award

The PCs all gain Inspiration for defeating the nightmare armies.

C2. Duel of Imagination

"ENOUGH!" echoes out an impossibly loud voice that seems to come from everywhere at once. A great shadow rises from the distant Crooked Tower, and shoots toward the battlefield. It slams into the earth with the force of a meteor, shaking the ground and throwing both armies back.

When the dust clears, a thin male figure stands in the middle of a small crater. He wears black finery fit for royalty, and a long-brimmed hat that casts a shadow over his face. He does not appear to be shouting, but his voice is as loud as a hurricane.

"It is obvious I have underestimated you. Again," he says, turning to face the town and the brave people defending it. "I refuse to allow lesser dreams to decide my fate," he raises a clawed hand and makes a fist. The armies of dream and nightmare fighting for either side disappear in a blast of mist and shadow.

"Come face me Champions of Glavost," says the Nightmare King, "I wish to talk."

Behast finally realizes that he has been severely underestimating the PCs, but does not recognize the true reason. To the Lord of Bogeymen, the simple explanation is that these otherwise ordinary children possess a shard of his power, and that is the only thing that could make them mighty. The Nightmare King wishes to recover this impressive scrap of stolen magic, but if he simply defeats the children then it is lost. Instead, he can challenge them to a duel of imagination, and in victory reclaim the power they stole.

Behast is patient, and allows the PCs time to prepare and approach. Glavost's NPCs (especially Edwin or relatives) embrace them and give each strong personal encouragement. Even the most over-protective now undoubtedly recognizes that the children represent their best and only hope. When the PCs approach Behast, read or paraphrase the following.

When the Nightmare King speaks again, his voice has lowered to a more ordinary volume. However, fear and panic seem to pour from him in waves, like a physical force. "Thank you for choosing to settle this with honor," he says with the barest nod of respect.

"I challenge you to a duel," he says with an air of ritual. "Since I assume none of you have taken part in a battle of imagination, I shall explain. It is a contest of wills and creativity, with the winner gaining a share of the loser's power, along with other terms. The challenger... that is me... creates a situation and champions that

the challenged... that is you... must overcome. If you succeed, I shall depart and return Glavost to your world, and you add a piece of my strength to what you've already taken. If I succeed, you return to me my lost power, and the fears of your town are mine to feed upon. Do you understand and agree?"

Intelligence (Arcana) or (Nature)

With a DC 10 check, the PCs know that duels of imagination are a way of settling grievances within dreams by the fey. It is considered a nobler and safer practice than direct conflict among beings that might live forever... save for a violent end. The fact that the Nightmare King is even offering this as a possibility means that he is showing them the respect that he would a lesser fey, and is bound by his word. They can refuse to agree to Behast's terms, which is within their rights. However, refusing to accept the challenge is a grave insult when he is paying mere mortals such a relatively high degree of esteem. It means he might attack them in full force, with all the considerable power at his disposal.

Imagination Magic

The PCs have made amazing strides in wielding the growing power of their imagination. They have already exceeded the limits of what most mortals ever achieve. However, even backed by the collective hope of Glavost, the PCs are not yet capable of truly wielding imagination magic in combat. They are certainly not in the same league as the bogeyman lord.

While the PCs cannot control the Dream Realms with the Nightmare King's speed, ease, and finesse, they can hamper his actions and efforts. As an action, any PC can attempt a DC 15 Charisma ability check. A successful check allows the PC to immediately end or dispel any ongoing legendary action effect (conjunction, hazard, or intimidate) created by the Nightmare King.

The PCs gain their proficiency bonus to the check if it is connected in some way to the PC's background or any trained tool or skill. For example, a PC proficient in Arcana could unsummon a dream creature with magical sigils of conjunction. The PCs can help one another on this check to gain advantage or gain advantage if they possess the *satyr's pipe* or *heartstone* potentially gained in Chapter 2.



Creatures

Behast the Nightmare King has the following statistics. The king casts *invisibility*, flies up, and uses his legendary actions to *conjure fey* (to summon a **giant crocodile** or **mammoth**) and create hazards. He then uses *phantasmal killer*, or casts *invisibility* again before creating additional hazards or summoned creatures. If engaged in combat by a single PC, he switches to melee and using legendary actions to frighten, but seeks to avoid getting attacked by multiple PCs at once. The nightmare king fights until he becomes unconscious, knowing that he cannot be permanently destroyed.

Behast, The Nightmare King

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 180 (19d8 + 95)

Speed 30 ft., fly 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)

Skills Deception +9, Intimidation +9, Perception +8, Stealth +8 (+11 in dim light or darkness)

Damage Resistances acid, fire, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Feign Death. While the Nightmare King is unconscious, he appears to be dead. The fey can also pretend to be dead while conscious, requiring a creature inspecting him to succeed on a DC 17 Medicine skill check to note the fey is actually still alive.

Frightful Presence. If the Nightmare King damages a prone, restrained, stunned, or surprised creature, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Behast is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Behast's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Innate Spellcasting. The Nightmare King's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *darkness*, *detect thoughts*, *gaseous form*, *ghost sound*, *invisibility*, *sleep*, *suggestion*, *tongues*
3/day each: *dream*, *phantasmal killer*

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

Terrible Regeneration. The Nightmare King regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he is within 100 feet of a creature with the frightened condition. The Nightmare King is defeated only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and does not regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. The Nightmare King makes two claw attacks and one bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (5d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (5d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Legendary Actions

The Nightmare King 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 Nightmare King regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Conjuration. The Nightmare King can duplicate the effects of any sorcerer or wizard conjuration spell of 6th level or lower. He can only have a single summoned creature in this manner. If he summons a different creature, the first is immediately dispelled. This requires concentration (as if concentrating on a spell).

Hazard. The Nightmare King can intentionally create nightmare hazards similar to those chaotically created by his avatar at the end of *Pixies on Parade*. This includes effects that duplicate the following spells (save DC 17): *bigby's hand*, *gust of wind*, *reverse gravity*, *sleet storm*, *slow*, or *spike growth*. The Nightmare King is unwilling to use the same effect twice (doing so is considered unimaginative in duels).

Intimidate. The Nightmare King can cause the Dream Realms to reflect the fears of a single PC. The PC must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom save or become frightened of a creature of the fey's choosing. The Nightmare King can only cause one creature at a time to be frightened in this way. The effect lasts for 1 minute or the Nightmare King focuses the fear on

another target. The target can attempt a new saving throw at the end of each of its turn.

Development

The PCs can agree to Behast's challenge and terms, or simply attack him outright. However, the Nightmare King represents a grave opponent to face directly within the Dream Realms. GMs with younger or less experienced players should encourage them to avoid facing the Nightmare King (at this time) since he represents a singularly dire threat. Should the King be defeated in combat, his body disappears (returning to his Crooked Tower), and the PC's are victorious (see Conclusion).

C3. King's Champion

When the agreement is struck, Behast holds up one hand and snaps clawed fingers. The sound that follows is thunderous, echoing out across the Dream Realms. The ground rumbles, and begins to slowly rise. The dirt transforms to black stone, becoming the top of a crooked tower with uneven teeth-like parapets on the periphery. Soon, clouds hide the sight of the earth far below.

"As the dueling grounds, I choose, my tower," he says, the white of his sharp teeth showing from within the otherwise impenetrable shadow of his hat.

"As my champion, I choose... the nightmares of Edwin Burson," he says.

The air and shadows before him coalesce into a massive giant figure... not quite human, animal, or fiend, seemingly formed from solidified darkness.

The Nightmare King uses the last of Edwin Burson's hoarded fear to create a powerful **living nightmare** to act as his champion against Glavost's heroes. Worse, it is backed by Behast's masterful command of imagination magic. However, the PCs are not without hope. While the King now recognizes the threat posed by the PCs, he does not account for the rest of Glavost's mortals.

While Edwin's nightmares are powerful, the PCs can call upon the support of the NPCs of Glavost for defense or to weaken it. Using the PCs as a focus and a conduit, the entire town might overcome the Nightmare King together.

Creature

The **living nightmare** has the following statistics. Behast's statistics are detailed in encounter C2 along with his imagination magic options each round.

Behast cannot take direct part in the conflict, but

can still swing the battle in his champion's favor with imagination magic using his legendary actions. He begins by using *conjure fey* and creating hazards. He then begins attempting to make the PCs afraid of the living nightmare, replacing summoned creatures or hazards as needed. Likewise, as in encounter C2 the PCs can act to dispel Behast's legendary actions.

The Living Nightmare

Huge construct, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)

Skills Intimidation +9, Stealth +5 (+8 in dim light or darkness)

Damage Resistances psychic

Condition Immunities frightened, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Nightmare Embodied. The living nightmare is built from Edwin's nightmares (see *Pixies on Parade* for details), and can switch between them as a bonus action each round. However, it can only embody one nightmare at any time.

Bear's Terror. The living nightmare becomes larger and terrifying. It gains an additional 5 feet of reach with its slam melee weapon attack (20 feet total) and a fearful gaze special attack. If a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of the construct and the two of them can see each other, the living nightmare can force the creature to make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw if the construct isn't incapacitated. On a failed save the creature is frightened for 1 minute. If the creature ends its turn more than 30 feet away from the living nightmare, then it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. This condition ends if the frightened creature attacks the living nightmare. A creature is immune to this gaze for 24 hours after the condition ends for it.

Dragon's Breath. The living nightmare grows golden scales as a dragon, granting it a +2 bonus to armor class and can use its breath weapon as an action (see below).

Fairy's Bite. The living nightmare grows a biting mouth filled with ridiculously giant and mismatched human



teeth. Its slam attack becomes a bite attack that deals piercing damage. A target damaged by the bite attack must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 round.

Hound's Fire. The living nightmare becomes bathed in flames with burning, fiery eyes. Its slam attacks deal an additional 2d6 fire damage, and it becomes immune to fire damage.

Shadow's Darkness. The living nightmare covers itself in concealing darkness (as the *darkness* spell). The darkness fills an area within 15 feet of the construct and moves with it. The living nightmare can see through this darkness.

Soldier's Splinter. The living nightmare becomes wooden. The construct gains damage resistance against lightning and poison damage, and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite. It gains immunity to the charmed, exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, and poisoned conditions.

Nightmare Weakness. Each Nightmare Embodied ability carries different benefits, but also the following downsides if the PCs have the right NPC of Glavost supporting them. This only requires any PC to have trained the given NPC in the use of imagination magic in Chapter 2.

Bear's Terror. If the PCs helped train Edwin in imagination magic, when the living nightmare uses the bear's terror ability, the young boy's imagination forces it to become soft and plushy. Its slam attack only deals 20 (3d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage and no necrotic damage.

Dragons' Breath. If the PCs helped train Owen Burson in imagination magic, his love and forgiveness for his son shines through the PCs to protect them. When the living nightmare uses the dragon's breath ability, affected targets gain advantage on their Strength saving throw.

Fairy's Bite. If the PCs helped train Elas Leafflower to accept his mortality, his knowledge and magic enshroud them in protective armor. The PCs gain resistance against piercing damage, including the construct's bite attack and advantage on the Constitution saving throw.

Hound's Fire. If the PCs helped train Belle Leafflower in imagination magic, her experience with forge-fire protects them from the dream's heat. They each gain resistance to fire damage. If they already possess resistance to fire damage, they instead gain immunity to fire damage.

Shadow's Darkness. If the PCs helped train Chef Rus Ulden in imagination magic, he helps them to see more clearly. Any PC possessing darkvision can see through the living nightmare's magical darkness.

Soldier's Splinter. If the PCs helped train Selda Burson in imagination magic, her experience in carpentry aids them in knowing how to strike. Any weapon or natural attack the PC's use against the animate dream is treated as adamantite for the purposes of its damage resistance.

Actions

Multiattack. The living nightmare makes two slam attacks. If it can use its breath weapon, it can make a breath weapon attack in place of a slam attack.
Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 31 (5d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d10) necrotic damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5-6). The living nightmare exhales gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or have disadvantage on Strength-based attack rolls, Strength checks, and Strength saving throws for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The living nightmare must be using the Dragon's Breath ability to use this breath weapon.

Treasure

If the PCs defeat the Nightmare King and his champion in a duel of imagination, they can claim another shard of his power, in addition to rescuing Glavost. This not only weakens the lord of bogeymen, but empowers each of the PCs. The benefits gained in encounters A2 and A3 in Chapter 1 (the library and the kitchen) become permanent, even in the waking world.

Additionally, each PC gains a single rare or very rare magical item. It can alternately be a single item combining the benefits of two uncommon or common magical items. The item can be one of their choosing, or selected as an appropriate item for the character by the GM, at the GM's discretion. A new magical item created might be summoned whole from the ether, or be some item they've valued that gains magical properties. For example, Isabeth's *heartstone* might permanently become a magical *amulet of health* or *amulet of the planes* or Avar's pipes might gain the benefits of both *pipes of haunting* and *pipes of the sewers*. If the PC instead wishes to improve the magical bonus granted by an enchanted armor, shield, or weapon they possess, they can increase it to an *armor* +2, *shield* +3, or a *weapon* +3 (in addition to whatever other abilities it might have) or give it the additional magical benefits of any other rare or very rare magical armor, shield, or weapon. For example, the *longsword* +1 that grants finesse to the wielder when attuned gained in *Pixies on Parade* could be upgraded to a *longsword* +3, or given the abilities of a *sword of sharpness* in addition to its base abilities. A magical item combining the traits of multiple items requiring attunement only requires attunement to the single item.

A PC wearing or wielding an item enchanted or gained in this manner gains advantage on all imagination magic Charisma ability checks.

XP Award

The PCs gain experience for defeating both the Nightmare King and the living nightmare.

Conclusion

Should the PCs fall against the Nightmare King, all is not lost. They cannot truly die within the Dream Realms, and where there is life, there is hope. Behast's forces sweep into Glavost, capturing the villagers to use their fear to feed his lost power. He banishes the PCs back to the waking world, confident that his victory is complete. Lista and the pixies learn of the dire news, but work with the PCs to plan a rescue. It likely requires a return to



the Dream Realms, or even an assault upon the King's Crooked Tower.

If the PCs accept Behast's challenge and lose, the situation worsens. He reclaims the power granting them wisdom and strength beyond their years, before he sends them away to the mortal world. In this unfortunate event, the PCs might have to perform some quest to reclaim their lost abilities, or perhaps the pixies must sacrifice their magic to give another chance to stop the Nightmare King.

If the PCs thwart Behast's invasion and defeat the bogeyman lord (knocking him or his champion unconscious), they break his hold over Glavost. The town immediately returns to the mortal world from the Dream Realms. The rescued people of the town raise a long cheer of celebration, picking up the victorious champions and beginning an impromptu celebration that is destined to become a new tradition.

The town's pixie protectors led by Lista immediately sweep in, ready to do battle... only to find the children have already won. They wait until things settle down

before approaching the Champions to get the whole story. She is both amazed and delighted at their bravery, commenting proudly that she *always* believed in them.

The End

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Conquer the Nightmare!

The PCs thwarted the Nightmare King's plans in *Pixies on Parade*, but the ancient bogeyman despises the idea of losing to mere mortal children. Expending the greater portion of his hoarded strength, he draws all of Glavost into the Dream Realms. There his power is absolute, and the pixie guardians are cut off from the helpless townsfolk. The only ones capable of opposing him are the young champions who defeated his avatar and stole a piece of his magic. Can the PCs protect the adults of Glavost from their fears and teach them the power of imagination, or is the town forever lost in a nightmare with no waking?

Nightmares on Parade is an adventure for the 5th Edition of Dungeons and Dragons written as a sequel to *Pixies on Parade*. It is written for 4-6 PCs of 7th level, who should reach 8th level by the adventure's conclusion

