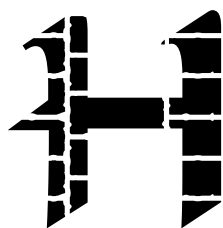


ARRIVAL

JAY AFRICA

Adventure Designer

Adventure Code: HILL 1-1



Hillsfar struggles to stay aloft after the fall of First Lord Torin Nomerthal. Trade is stagnant. Relations between the citizens and non-humans remain strained. Tensions are rising as Sir Vuhm Yestral is unable to ease the situation. The arrival of a charismatic stranger incites the populace to rebel against the new ruler. A D&D Adventurers League adventure set in Hillsfar.

A 4-hour adventure for 5th-10th level characters

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Arrival, a D&D Adventurers League adventure, Part One of the Dark Intentions Trilogy

*This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 6th-level characters**. The adventure is set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms, in and around the city of Hillsfar.*

The D&D Adventurers League

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that continues their story.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a DCI number. This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the D&D Adventurers League home at:

www.dndadventurersleague.org

Preparing the Adventure

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

Before Play at the Table

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character.

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now. Alternatively, they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting the Adventure

Throughout this adventure, you may see sidebars to help make adjustments for smaller/larger groups, and characters of higher/lower levels than the optimized group. Most of the time, this is used for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you may want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 6th-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters
- Divide the total by the number of characters
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table:

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very Weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very Strong

Running the Adventure

As the Dungeon Master of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. Doing so is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating one. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.
- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. Doing so helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide*™ has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

Downtime and Lifestyle

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the D&D basic rules or the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

Spellcasting Services

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
Cure wounds (1 st level)	10 gp
Identify	20 gp
Lesser restoration	40 gp
Prayer of healing (2 nd level)	40 gp
Remove curse	90 gp
Speak with dead	90 gp
Divination	210 gp
Greater restoration	450 gp
Raise dead	1,250 gp

Acolyte Background

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Disease, Death, and Recovery

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or are killed. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

Disease, Poison, and Other Debilitating Effects

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the *D&D Basic Rules*).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

Death

A character who is killed during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all experience and rewards from that session (both those earned prior to and after death during that session) and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

Adventure Background

Hillsfar, the City of Trade, is in disarray. The Dark Prince Graz'zt was banished from the Underdark back to the Abyss, ending the madness that spread throughout the area. The First Lord of Hillsfar, Torin Nomerthal, perished under insurgents' hands, and with him also fell the second Great Law of Humanity.

Commandant Vuhm Yestral of the Red Plumes, the military and police force of Hillsfar, has risen to the position of First Lord. It falls upon his shoulders to rebuild Hillsfar, drawing order out of disarray and working to somehow reconcile conflicts between the differing ideologies within the city. Many of the City of Trade's citizens remain deeply xenophobic—former First Lord Nomerthal's ideologies and propaganda having planted deep roots. As a former commandant of the Red Plumes, Lord Yestral is still viewed by much of the public as the face of the city's peacekeeping militia. While Lord Yestral has promoted Captain Jandra Gragdowel to the rank of Commandant of the Red Plumes, it is the First Lord's name and reputation that are sullied when a Red Plume patrol exhibits poor behavior toward Hillsfarian or foreigner.

With no signs of tensions abating in the city, First Lord Yestral has made it his priority to win the favor of the tradespeople. However, a recent spate of civic disturbances has been causing trouble, disrupting the common folks' efforts to return to everyday life. More importantly, these troubles have been disrupting the commerce protected by the city's Great Law of Trade.

The disturbances stem from a force at work behind the scenes: Malkyn Grenefeld, the former First Lord's Chamberlain, harbors a passionate love for the slain Lord Nomerthal and seeks revenge on the current Lord Yestral. To that end, she has made a pact with dark fey forces set on conquering Cormanthor Forest. Over the past month, Grenefeld has been planting misinformation, forging trade records, and smuggling minions of the dark fey into the city.

With their forces at work within Hillsfar, the dark fey are now positioned to escalate their plans to capture the region. They have sent a night hag named Granny Eve-canker to Hillsfar with the mission of inciting dissent and rebellion. In the guise of a foreign elven noble named Estrellae Moonglow, Granny Eve-canker has been gathering allies within the Hillsfar's nobility.

Overview

This adventure is divided into three parts.

Part 1. The adventure begins with the characters at the docks of Hillsfar. Trouble rears its wicked head when monsters smuggled into the city break out into the public. Subduing the beasts, the adventurers witness open hostilities directed at the hired dwarven sailors who unwittingly brought the creatures into the city. The dwarves plead ignorance of their dangerous cargo, but the trader who hired them is nowhere to be found.

Impressed by the adventurers' actions, a noble named Estrellae Moonglow invites them to her home for a gathering later that day. The adventurers are also approached by a Red Plume guard bearing a summons for them to meet with Commandant Jandra Gragdowel at Hillsfar Castle. The good Commandant has a job for them.

Part 2. At Hillsfar Castle, the adventurers speak with Commandant Gragdowel. She believes that the incidents are intentional acts of malice and asks the adventurers to investigate further.

As the adventurers investigate various locations around the city, they meet a number of individuals, root out rumors, and perhaps get into a fight or two. Attending Moonglow's gathering, the adventurers gain new insight about the growing schism within the city populace. Eventually, they find enough clues that point to the culprit they have been searching for.

Part 3. The adventurers track the culprit to a recently unearthed temple just outside the city walls. There, they confront Granny Eve-canker and her minions in her lair.

Adventure Hooks

Heroes of Hillsfar. Characters who have adventured in Hillsfar and the surrounding region have ties there. They have maintained their presence in or have returned to the area to either keep a vigilant eye out for danger or to assist with the region's recovery efforts.

Remuneration in Recuperation. Money-minded characters find no shortage of work in Hillsfar. Traders need guards and the rebuilding efforts need labor. Characters hiring themselves out in the city can maintain a comfortable lifestyle.

Faction Directive. The Factions know that there is much work to be done to rebuild the City of Trade. They have directed the adventurers to Hillsfar to help First Lord Vuhm Yestral keep the peace. This is particularly applicable to members of the Lords' Alliance, the Order of the Gauntlet, and the Zhentarim.

Breaking Through Stigma. Both human and non-human characters may be involved with efforts to sway xenophobic Hillsfarrians towards open-mindedness. These characters speak in public and seek audience with closed-minded citizens in attempts to ease hostilities within the populace. Harpers and members of the Emerald Enclave may find this pursuit worthwhile.

Designers Notes

On the Xenophobia of Hillsfar. The xenophobic populace of Hillsfar exhibit behavior that is hostile, oppressive, and racially charged. Be aware of attitudes at your table. If portraying NPCs' xenophobia would make you or anyone at your table feel uncomfortable, feel free to shift the focus of the social conflict toward the politics and economics of Hillsfar. Perhaps an NPC is unhappy with Vuhm Yestral as the successor to Torin Nomerthal. Or perhaps an NPC feels the influx of new labor into Hillsfar is diverting resources or employment from the long-time citizens of Hillsfar. Maybe an NPC was slighted or wronged by the Red Plumes and, with the Plumes being better controlled by the current government, sees the time as right to speak out against them. In any case, feel free to paraphrase or alter any pertinent box text within this adventure appropriately in order to minimize or eliminate the portrayal of xenophobia, should you feel the need.



PART 1. TROUBLE REARS ITS WICKED HEAD

Danger At The Docks

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

The adventurers find themselves at the docks of Hillsfar in a tavern called the Rusty Nail. They are either taking a break from patrolling the city, are taking repast, or are under the employ of the Rusty Nail's proprietor as guards (their payment having been settled "off-screen").

General Features

The general features of the Hillsfar docks are as follows:

Light and Visibility. It is mid-morning, shortly after nine bells. The sun is up but the sky is overcast, setting a dreary tone to the day.

Smells and Sounds. Sweaty laborers, barrels of fish, merchants haggling with sailors, hoofs clattering on the pier, heated political conversation.

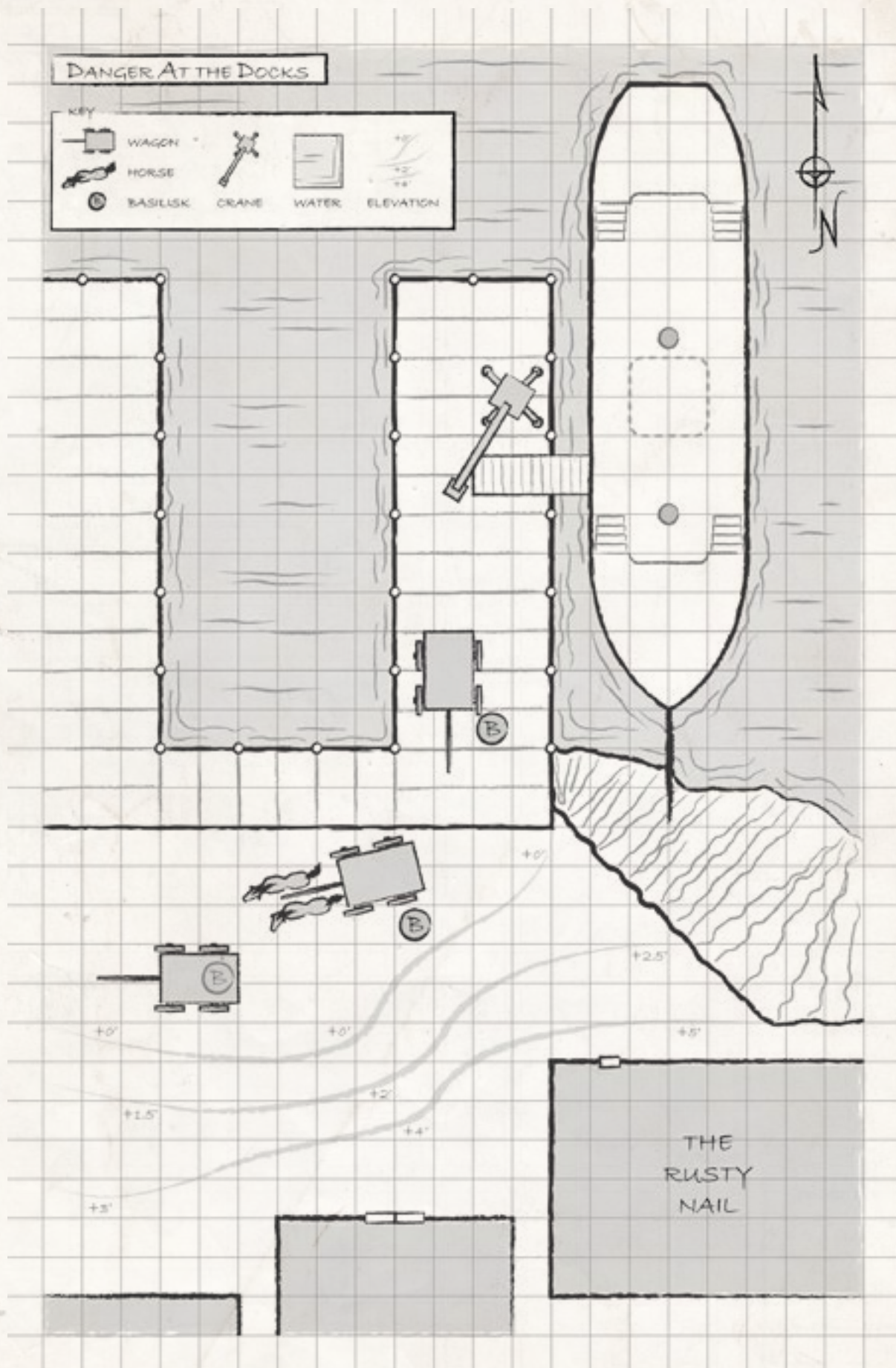
Surrounding Activity. The docks are relatively quiet, with few trade ships in port at the moment. Sailors and other hired-hands loiter, and traders and merchants buy and sell wares. Both humans and non-humans linger at the Rusty Nail, conducting business or looking for employment.

The waters of the Moonsea lap lazily against Hillsfar's docks as you sit at the Rusty Nail, one of two dockside taverns. The docks of Hillsfar have seen busier days. Though built to accommodate up to a dozen cargo ships, a recent slowdown in trade has left the piers nearly empty for the past month. Fortunately for you, your reputations as adventurers have provided enough opportunities for employment.

Three ships are currently anchored in port, the one nearest the Rusty Nail unloading several wagons onto the pier. All around, Hillsfarrians argue loudly and openly about the recent resurgence of non-humans in the city.

Characters engaging with tavern patrons or listening in on the conversations around them learn the following:

- Two local merchants debate the pros and cons of the Great Law of Humanity's dissolution. One of them blames the stagnant trade on the influx of non-humans, claiming that they are driving away business from both local and foreign merchants who only wish to deal with the human populace. The other trader advocates the return of non-humans to Hillsfar, claiming that the city's commercial troubles are the result of the madness that gripped it not too long ago.
- A group of sailors who have just returned from a voyage discuss a recent spate of odd occurrences: livestock falling ill and dying, shipments of cargo going missing from various warehouses, and wild beasts being found within the city walls and terrorizing the public. Some sailors attribute these recent misfortunes to the non-humans who have been allowed into the city, suspecting that these troubling events are acts of revenge against the city for having enacted the now defunct Great Law of Humanity.
- Nearby Red Plumes tell the story of several within their ranks who went seemingly mad and then abruptly passed away.
- As the adventurers listen in on or speak with the tavern patrons, there is a sudden commotion outside.



Loud crashing noises and screams erupt from outside and from the docks just below. Panicked dockworkers scramble around three wagons parked in the staging area and at the edge of the pier. Off in the distance, a frightened pair of draft horses about to get hitched to the wagon on the left gallops up the main path toward the city. What appear to be two horse statues are hitched to the center wagon. A many-legged lizard the size of a small pony takes bites out of a statue of a dwarf, posed in a posture of fear and gesturing towards the center wagon, the side of which has been smashed open from the inside.

At the edge of the pier below, a third wagon stands idle, a similar hole punched through its side. Two statues lay smashed on the pier nearby the fearful scene, as dockworkers fend off more danger.

Two **basilisks** have awakened from magically-induced sleep and have burst from the center wagon and the wagon at the edge of the pier, both having been unloaded from the moored ship. Frightened dockworkers flee the scene, either running up the pier, taking refuge in the ship, or scattering from the staging area away from the two resting wagons. A few Red Plumes assist with their escape. The basilisks have plenty of dockworkers and merchants within reach (use **commoner** stats), and unless the adventurers act fast, a dockworker or merchant perishes each round, either turned to stone or ravaged by the beasts.

Tactics

The basilisks immediately shift their attention to the adventurers if the characters advance. At the start of the second round, a third basilisk awakens, bursts out of the leftmost cart, and joins combat. To keep combat from drawing on too long, consider limiting the use of each basilisk's petrifying gaze to one character per round.

Crowd. The dock is filled with workers fleeing for their lives. For the first two rounds of combat, the pier and the staging area outside the Rusty Nail are considered difficult terrain. In either zone, ranged attacks made at a distance greater than 10 ft. are made at disadvantage, while attacks that affect an area risk hitting civilians (use **commoner**

stats, as above). After the end of the first round, the pier clears as the fleeing workers move into the staging area. After the end of the second round, the staging area clears.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **basilisks**, add three **cockatrices** that begin combat by the cart on the pier
- **Weak party:** Remove one **basilisk**, add three **cockatrices** that begin combat by the cart on the pier
- **Strong party:** Add one **basilisk**
- **Very strong party:** Add two **basilisks**, and each **basilisk** has 66 HP

Development

Once the monsters have been defeated or subdued, the adventurers hear a crowd of raised voices.

A dozen or so dockworkers and merchants drag three dwarves to the wagons.

"We know you brought these monsters on board that ship," shouts one furious dockhand. "I knew they would be trouble," yells a seething merchant. A chorus of agreement and accusations follows from the rest of the crowd.

"We had no idea what our cargo was," pleads one of the dwarves. "We swear! Find Eldeth. She hired us for this job." But the dwarf's voice is lost in the clamor of the crowd.

The dwarves are sincere in their claim of ignorance, a DC 5 Wisdom (Insight) check confirms. It takes a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) to calm the crowd and have them back away from the dwarves. Otherwise, the crowd obstinately refuses to ease off the dwarves.

Whether questioned by the adventurers or by the crowd, the dwarves relay the following information.

- The three dwarves were hired by another dwarf named Eldeth Marblehead. Eldeth hired them just outside of Mulmaster. They were desperate for work and agreed to take on the job, no questions asked.
- The ship was likewise chartered in similar desperate conditions. None of the crew knew the nature of the cargo.
- Eldeth kept to herself throughout the entire journey, so no one knows anything about her. In the heat of the struggle against the monsters, she seems to have disappeared.

After a few minutes of interrogation, a squad of Red Plumes arrives. They break up the crowd, take the dwarves into custody, and march them off to Hillsfar Castle for questioning. As the Red Plumes leave with the dwarves, the adventurers are approached by a stranger.

An elven noblewoman approaches you gracefully. She is dressed in vibrant violet robes adorned with rich green trim, matching green gloves gracing her hands.

"Greetings. My name is Estrellae," she says as she extends a hand to you. A small, velvet pouch rests in her outstretched palm. "You deserve this... for saving the day."

The pouch contains a reward of platinum pieces (see *Treasure* below), and Estrellae gives it to the adventurers without hesitation.

Roleplaying Estrellae Moonglow

Elven noble Estrellae Moonglow is one of several personas Granny Eve-canker has taken in her efforts to sow dissent in Hillsfar. (Eldeth Marblehead being another).

As Estrellae, she is graceful, poised, well-spoken, and speaks in calming tones. She claims to be new to Hillsfar, having only moved recently from Sembia to capitalize on the trade opened up by the recently dismissed Great Law of Humanity. Estrellae wears her *emerald kidgloves* (see *Rewards* at the end of this adventure for a description of this magic item), making her prone to giving compliments and being generous.

Granny Eve-canker is a night hag from the Border Forest to the west of the Moonsea. She is horrific in appearance, shrill of voice, and wicked in demeanor. She hides all this when she takes the form of Estrellae. More details about role-playing Granny Eve-canker can be found in **Part 3** later in this adventure.

Estrellae asks the characters to visit her at her home just north of the Vault of Swords, where the noblewoman is hosting a small gathering. Based on the valor the characters just displayed, she would like the characters to attend as special guests. She hands them a paper invitation written in green ink, then excuses herself, citing business to take care of at home before the guests arrive.

As she walks away, a Red Plume guard approaches the adventurers. The guard tells the characters that Commandant Jandra Gragdowel, the new leader of the Red Plumes, wishes to speak with them at Hillsfar Castle. Gragdowel would like to recruit the adventurers for a special assignment. The guard asks that the adventurers go see the Red Plume leader at once, handing each a writ that grants free passage into Hillsfar Castle for the purpose of speaking with the commandant.

XP and Intrigue Awards

If the characters successfully calm the crowd in defense of the dwarves, award each character 100 XP.

Characters that interact warmly, flatteringly, or otherwise positively with Estrellae receive **1 Hillsfar Dissidents Intrigue Point** (see the **Intrigue** sidebar). Characters who interact rudely, dismissively, or otherwise negatively receive no Intrigue Points.

Treasure

Estrellae gives the adventurers a small pouch filled with 20 platinum pieces (equivalent to 200 gp) for their display of bravery against the monsters.

Intrigue

Over the course of this adventure, characters can earn the favor of two different and conflicting political circles jockeying for influence in Hillsfar: the **Hillsfar Government** and the **Hillsfar Dissidents**.

The Hillsfar Government group supports First Lord Vuhm Yestral and works toward repairing the City of Trade through the power of the current administration.

The Hillsfar Dissidents are a cadre of nobles, traders, merchants, and guild leaders who are actively amassing support against the current government. Their aim is to unseat First Lord Yestral and his supporters in order to put their own leaders into power.

As the characters interact with various individuals in this adventure, they will gain **Intrigue Points** in categories matching the two political circles. At the end of the adventure, the number of Intrigue Points each character bears will determine which political circle finds them more favorable. Their Intrigue Points may also determine how particular NPCs react to them.

Whenever the adventure text indicates that characters earn Intrigue Points, tell the respective players which category applies and how many they receive.



PART 2. HILLSFAR EXPLORED

Hillsfar Castle

Expected Duration: 15 minutes

The adventurers arrive at Hillsfar Castle.

General Features

The general features of Hillsfar Castle are as follows:

Light and Visibility. The sky remains overcast. Windows and arrow slits allow sunlight to enter the castle halls. Wall mounted lamps cast light in halls and rooms as needed.

Sounds. Red Plumes marching in the hallways, city officials dealing with the public within various offices, individuals debating politics, the dull thrum of the protesting crowd outside bleeding through the castle walls.

Surrounding Activity. The usual activity within the castle walls consists of officials and scribes tending to the day-to-day functions of the city, Red Plumes patrolling the grounds, servants taking care of the castle's many rooms, and other civic matters.

Hillsfar Castle is an unusual but grand and beautiful building. A mishmash of primarily human architecture with elements adopted from the styles of other races, the castle stands as a symbol of a previous government's desire to distance itself from the xenophobia of the original Great Law of Humanity.

Its gates are mobbed by locals and foreigners loudly protesting the current administration's inability to improve the city's situation. A platoon of Red Plumes keeps the crowd at bay, clearing a path to the castle's gates and allowing you entry. You are led to a large office, the far end of which is occupied by an imposing and intricately carved wooden desk. On the far side of the desk sits Red Plume Commandant Jandra Gragdowel.

Roleplaying Commandant Jandra Gragdowel

Jandra, a human in her mid-30s, is small but bears an imposing presence. She is young for her position and places the highest stakes on her success. She has sharp features, raven black hair, and is physically fit. She is to-the-point and all business when working.

Gragdowel shares the information below with the adventurers.

- The past month has been difficult on the new Hillsfarian government. In the midst of recovery from the recently quelled demonic activity, troublesome events have been occurring at various places of commerce. These disturbances are frightening merchants away to the degree that local traders are being forced to make their deals at other locations outside the city, and much of the labor force is losing opportunities for work.
- Local peacekeeping forces have their hands tied with a number of matters (city rebuilding, re-establishing Yulash, patrolling the outskirts, etc.) and don't have the manpower to deal with these recent events.
- The situation has greatly strained First Lord Yestral's reputation. Gragdowel is a loyal supporter of the new First Lord and knows that he is doing everything within his resources to restore Hillsfar.

Having relayed the circumstances, Commandant Gragdowel asks the adventurers to investigate the latest disturbances and gives them the following details. The adventurers may have already heard of these depending on who they spoke to or eavesdropped on in the docks.

- Earlier this morning, a herd of sheep were found dead in a livestock trading house located within the Merchants Quarter. This is one of several recent cases of animals mysteriously passing away.
- Crates of spices vanished from one of the dockside warehouses the night before. The entrance was broken into, but the trail ran cold just outside of the building.
- Several Red Plumes have died after bouts of madness. It was previously thought that this madness was part of the epidemic that stemmed from the demonic presence of the Dark Prince Graz'zt. The rest of the populace has recovered, however, and Commandant Gragdowel believes that the recent inflictions on the Red Plumes are more than just coincidence. Another case was reported several days ago. The afflicted Red Plume is currently bedridden at a guardhouse by the city gates, where his companions wait helplessly for him to die.
- A grick burst out of a well by the Thayan Enclave in the south side of the city a tenday ago. A number of the Faithful of Tempus from the nearby Vault of Swords responded to the threat and killed the creature, but not before it killed and injured several citizens.
- It is highly unlikely that these disturbances are happening by chance. Commandant Gragdowel suspects that there are hidden forces at work behind these events. With so much happening, surely some clues must have been left behind somewhere.

These are only the most recent in a string of similar events that have plagued Hillsfar over the past month. To facilitate their investigation, Gragdowel gives the adventurers a writ of her endorsement and a city map noting the various locations above.

Gragdowel offers the adventurers a payment of 500 gp up front (see *Treasure* below) to be split. The party can earn an additional 500 gp should they succeed in apprehending a culprit (for a total of reward of 1,000 gp).

If asked about Estrellae Moonglow, Gragdowel gives an exasperated look. She reveals the following to the adventurers:

- Estrellae is new to Hillsfar, having taken up residence within the city about a tenday ago.
- A merchant by trade, she has been quite successful in doing business in the city despite the stagnant commerce. Because of this, she has gained the admiration of the nobility.
- Over the past five days, she has been publicly speaking out against the First Lord. She accuses him of caring only for his own comfort, citing the dwindling trade that plagues the city while Lord Yestral sits insulated within the Tower of the First Lord.

Only if an Insight check is requested by a player should you have a character roll one. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Gragdowel is leaving something out. With that, only a successful DC 25 Charisma (Intimidate or Persuasion) check will get her to admit it. She will lie, and say that there is bad blood between them and that it is rather personal. Nothing will convince her to confide in the characters.

If any of the characters mention being invited into Estrellae's home, Gragdowel encourages them to accept the invitation, asking them to report back with whatever talk they might hear. Characters who agree to this request receive **2 Hillsfar Government Intrigue Points**.

Moving Forward

At this point, the adventurers have a number of areas they can visit. For a four-hour game session, the characters are expected to visit **Estrellae Moonglow's Home**, plus investigate **two of the leads below**. If the session is running without time constraints, the players may opt to explore more locations.

- The livestock trading house in the Merchants Quarter
- The warehouse at the docks (additionally, they may think to re-visit the scene of the basilisk attack in Part 1)
- The Red Plume guardhouse by the city gates
- The well by the Thayan Enclave
- Estrellae Moonglow's home

The following sections detail what the players find at each of the areas above.

Treasure

Commandant Gragdowel gives the adventurers a sack containing 500 gp.

The Merchants Quarter

Expected Duration: 15 minutes

Chattering voices fill the air in the Merchants Quarter. In the past, the voices mostly belonged to merchants and traders haggling over assorted goods. Lately, though, the majority of voices belong to laborers milling about the quarter's streets hoping to find employment.

You come upon a squat, barn-like building. Livestock neigh, bleat, and cluck from within, while the pungent smell of animal hide fills your nostrils.

The proprietor greets the adventurers warmly and welcomes them to look around. The trade house is a large, open building, the inside of which is divided into six large animal enclosures. The carcasses of the sheep have been removed.

As the adventurers look around the trade house,

a **sprite** named Gillun Glimmersting materializes before the character with the highest Charisma. The lone sprite relays the following tale.

- Gillun and three other sprites were captured by strange spider-like creatures some weeks ago as they cavorted in the woods of Cormanthor.
- His friends are being held in an abandoned shop not far from the trade house and have been promised a grisly end if Gillun doesn't do as their captors command.
- The captors have been sending him out to poison animals throughout the city. Gillun's powers of invisibility allow him to get into animal pens, and his poison-tipped arrows are small enough to escape notice.

If asked why the sprite revealed himself to the adventurers, he says that he saw good intentions in the characters' hearts. He implores the party to rescue his friends. If the adventurers hesitate, he entices them with talk of treasure the captors had accumulated. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check confirms the sprite's truthfulness. If the party agrees to the rescue mission, Gillun directs them to the abandoned shop, a nondescript building built against the city's south wall.

The Hostage-Takers' Hideout

The hideout is a forgotten and largely ignored building set back from the other buildings in the area. It currently houses a number of creatures Estrellae smuggled into the city. The windows are shuttered and the doors are locked from inside.

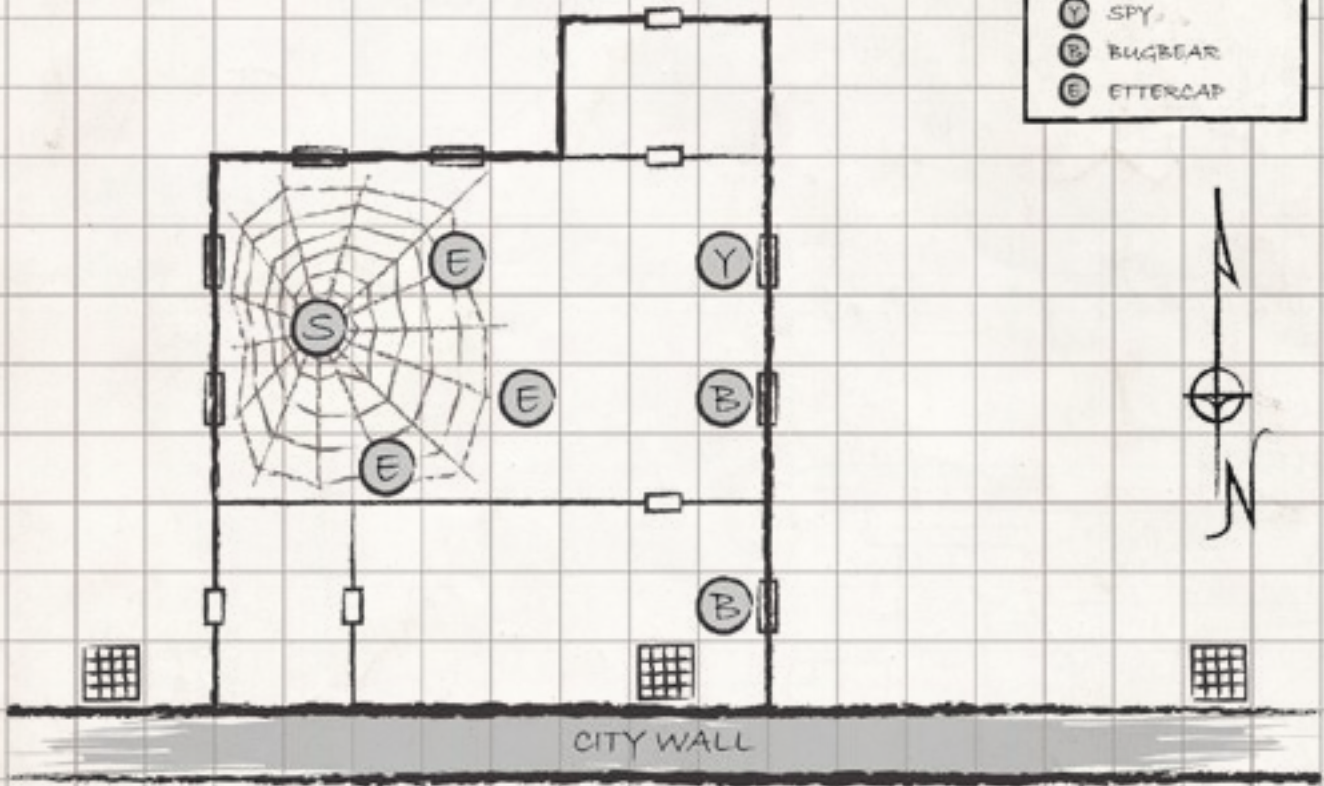
The front door opens to a vestibule, which in turn opens to the main room of the house. A human **spy** and a **bugbear** keep begrudging company as they watch over three **ettercaps** in this main room. A door in the room's southern wall leads into what was once a kitchen, where a second **bugbear** is stationed.

Three **sprites** (Gillun's friends) are bound within webbing that the ettercaps have spun in the western half of the room. These web-filled areas are difficult terrain. A creature entering a webbed area for the first time on a turn or starting its turn there must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained by the webs. A restrained creature can use its action to try to escape, doing

THE HOSTAGE-TAKERS' HIDEOUT

KEY

-  DOOR
-  WINDOW
-  WEB
-  SEWER GRATE
-  SPRITES
-  SPY
-  BUGBEAR
-  ETTERCAP



so with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. Each 10-foot cube of webbing has AC 10, 15 hit points, vulnerability to fire, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage.

Like the front entrance, the rear entrance opens up to a vestibule that then opens up to the kitchen. A door on the north wall of the kitchen leads to the house's main room.

The spy and the bugbears are biding their time, waiting for the command to set the ettercaps loose on the populace.

Gillun discourages a direct or loud approach, saying that anything that alerts the miscreants inside may result in harm befalling his sprite friends. Encourage creative thinking and let the characters decide how to approach the hideout and deal with the situation. It is possible to parlay with the human, but more difficult to do so with the bugbears.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **bugbears** and one **ettercap**, and the **spy** flees combat rather than participating
- **Weak party:** Remove one **bugbear**
- **Strong party:** Replace the **spy** with a **bugbear chief**
- **Very strong party:** Replace the **spy** with a **half-black dragon veteran** and add an **ettercap**

Development

The spy, bugbears, and ettercaps attack the adventurers on sight unless the characters give them a compelling reason not to. If combat occurs, the bugbears and ettercaps fight to the death, but the spy attempts to escape when the battle goes badly for his side.

If the party succeeds in overcoming the house's occupants and freeing the trapped sprites, Gillun is grateful. He reveals a small chest wrapped up in the webbing containing the treasures below, a deed

to the house signed by First Lord Yestral himself, and **Handout 1**. If the players found **Handout 1** at another location earlier in this adventure, they instead find **Handout 2**.

Gillun and the other sprites leave the city and return to the forest of Cormanthor if freed.

The bugbears and ettercaps were brought into the city by a dwarf named Eldeth Marblehead and taken straight into the hideout. The spy was hired by Marblehead, who claimed to somehow be in league with First Lord Yestral's forces (this is false but he does not know that). The deed to the hideout signed by the First Lord himself was proof enough.

XP and Intrigue Awards

If the characters successfully free the sprites, award each character 100 XP.

If the characters capture any of the creatures in the hideout and turn them in either to Hillsfar Castle or to the Red Plumes, they each receive **1 Hillsfar Government Intrigue Point**. If the spy escapes, they each receive **1 Hillsfar Dissidents Intrigue Point**.

Treasure

The small chest hidden in the webs contains a burl wood sculpture of a goat's head with milky pearls for eyes (worth 40 gp) and 3 small coin purses each containing 20 gp. Stitched on the coin purses in green thread are the words, "With love, Granny."

Additionally, the adventurers find a *potion of greater healing*. If they were awarded the potion of greater healing previously during this adventure, they instead find a *potion of acid resistance*. If both potions were awarded previously, they simply find the sculptures and coin purses.

The Docks Revisited

Expected Duration: 20 to 30 minutes

The docks have grown silent since you were last here. The wagons that carried the deadly cargo remain, as do the two petrified horses and the partially-eaten stone dwarf.

Characters who inspect the wagons and succeed in a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check find pieces of parchment glued inside the crates. Spellcasters, characters who are proficient in Arcana, or who use *detect magic* on the parchment pieces sense the dwindling presence of enchantment magic—the parchment pieces are remnants of sleep wards that kept the monsters contained.

The Dockside Warehouse

Red Plumes stand stationed at the dockside warehouse's broken doors, guarding the goods within.

If the adventurers question the guards, they learn the following details:

- The crates of spices arrived at the warehouse yesterday afternoon, shortly before the warehouse was locked for day. When the warehouse foreman arrived this morning, the door was broken down and the spices gone.
- While the crates of spices were the only items stolen, although several other crates being stored were moved, as if the perpetrators were searching for something.

General Features

The general features of the Dockside Warehouse are as follows:

Light and Visibility. The windows are shuttered, allowing only dim inside through slits and cracks. The only other light entering the warehouse comes through the broken door.

Smells and Sounds. Wooden crates, dust, ambient noise from the docks outside.

Investigating the Warehouse

Have the characters make DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. Each character who succeeds notices one of the following details:

- Several sets of scrapes indicate that crates were dragged back and forth across the floor between the broken door and the interior of the warehouse. There are no signs that point to any crates being removed from the warehouse.
- The southwestern corner of the warehouse shows more signs of crates being moved around, although no crates actually occupy that area.

The broken door is a red herring. The thieves came in through a tunnel underneath the warehouse.

Characters investigating the southwestern corner of the warehouse find a series of loose boards. The boards lift up to reveal an unlit tunnel that descends westward towards the city. The tunnel is large enough to accommodate the missing shipping crates. A trail of flattened earth on the tunnel floor indicates something heavy was dragged through the tunnel. The drag marks obscure any footprints that might have been left, indicating that the item was pulled down the tunnel.

The tunnel extends 100 feet westward from the warehouse and descends 15 feet before leveling off. From there it extends another 200 feet west, where it opens into a 30-foot-wide, 80-foot-long, torch-lit cave.

The point where the tunnel meets the cave is trapped with a *glyph of warding* cast by Granny Eve-canker. Her hired thugs know the passphrase ("By the full moon's glow"). The ward requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to detect and triggers if a creature gets within 5 feet of it. It can only be removed by triggering it, speaking the passphrase, or by casting *dispel magic* on it.

If triggered, the ward erupts with magical energy in a 20-foot radius sphere centered on the glyph. Each creature within that radius must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (5d8) thunder damage as a painfully deafening cackle fills the area. Characters that succeed on the saving throw take only half damage.

The Smugglers' Cave

The cave is full of crates and barrels stolen from various locations around the city. Another tunnel opening on the far wall of the cave (80 feet from where the characters enter) extends northwest 300 feet and ascends 100 feet to the city above. The tunnel exits out to a walled-off property in the eastern quarter of the city near an inn called the Diamond in the Dung. Old planks from a demolished building conceal the tunnel entrance from public view. Signs plastered on the surrounding wall declare the property as having been seized in the name of First Lord Yestral.

A single **thug** lies snoring amidst a stack of crates, about 40 feet from where the adventurers enter. If the characters trigger the *glyph of warding*, the noise awakens the thug, who grabs a nearby torch and attempts to escape via the western tunnel leading up to the city.

If the characters do not trigger the trap, they can sneak up on the sleeping thug. An opposed Dexterity (Stealth) check against the Thug's passive Perception of 10 allows a character to get to the thug without waking him. Since the thug is asleep, characters making this check do so with advantage. A failed check wakes the thug, who then attempts to flee the scene.

If the adventurers take chase, feel free to run it as you see fit, calling for ability and skill checks as needed. If the thug makes it out of the tunnel, he tosses the torch aside, bursts through the panels concealing the entrance, exits the property walls, and disappears into the crowd.

Development

If the thug is captured, the characters can learn the following information from him with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidate) check:

- He is part of a crew hired by a dwarf named Eldeth Marblehead to steal goods from various businesses and warehouses around Hillsfar.
- First Lord Vuhm Yestral is working with Marblehead and has provided property in which the stolen goods can be stored before being transported to The First Lord's Tower (this is false, but they do not know that).

- His crew was given partial payment for their services up front, with a greater bounty promised upon completion of the job. They were to collect payment from Marblehead just outside the city at a place called the Outcast's Sanctuary.

- The passphrase to gain access to the Sanctuary is "Granny loves all her children".

Characters who search the cave find **Handout 1** where the thug laid sleeping. If the players found **Handout 1** at another location, they instead find **Handout 2**.

XP and Intrigue Awards

If the adventurers capture the thug, award each character 100 XP.

Additionally, if the characters capture the thug and turn him in to the Red Plumes, they each receive **1 Hillsfar Government Intrigue Point**. If the thug escapes, they receive no intrigue points for this encounter.

Treasure

A pouch containing 100 gp sits by the area where the thug laid sleeping. The crates in the cave contain sundry supplies that are not valuable.

Additionally, the adventurers find a *potion of greater healing* by the pouch of gold pieces. If they were already awarded the *potion of greater healing* during this adventure, they instead find a *potion of acid resistance*. If both potions were awarded, they simply find the pouch.

The Red Plume Guardhouse

Expected Duration: 30 to 40 minutes

A rowdy crowd stands protesting by the Red Plume guardhouse at the city gates. Hillsfarrians shout epithets at non-humans entering the city and at the Red Plumes who are allowing them passage. A number of protestors lead a scathing chant against First lord Yestral.

Pushing through crowds of protestors, you make your way into the guardhouse to see the afflicted Red Plume.

The adventurers are led to an infirmary towards the rear of the station, where a dressed-down human male lies tied to a bed. The lieutenant on duty, a human female **guard** named Alis Maerr, introduces the sick individual as Dern Gelnacht and recounts the details below to the adventurers.

- Seven days ago, Dern reported having trouble sleeping. He was fine for a few days afterward, but his condition deteriorated until one night he attacked and injured several of his fellow Red Plumes. During the attack he ranted about how someone called “Granny” was telling him to punish the “bad, bad Red Plumes.”
- Alis shows the characters a heavily bandaged arm, revealing that she was one of the Plumes injured during the attack. This is painful for her to report, as she and Dern have been romantically involved for some time now.
- Dern continues to ramble madly about “doing what Granny says” and maliciously about “the wicked people running Hillsfar.”
- Five other Red Plumes had been struck by such madness over the past weeks, though Dern’s is the first time someone was driven to violence.

Characters who look around or who have a passive Perception of 10 or higher notice a small, clothbound journal sitting on the side table by Dern’s bedside.

What’s Going On With These Red Plumes?

Dern and the other afflicted Red Plumes were being visited in their sleep by an ethereal Granny Eve-canker, falling prey to her *nightmare haunting* ability, which she uses to plant horrible and extreme thoughts into her victims’ heads. Granny despises the Red Plumes, seeing them as one of the forces that upheld the Great Law of Humanity, whether actively or not. During her final visit to Dern three nights ago, Granny cast a ritual on his body, the effect of which is about to manifest in front of the adventurers.

A few minutes into the conversation with Alis, Dern lets out a loud wail, moaning over and over again that “Granny won’t come visit anymore. I need to see her at the Outcast’s Sanctuary!” Shortly after, his body violently convulses for a few seconds, and then he dies. No amount of healing, magical or otherwise, prevents this.

Characters who examine Dern’s body and succeed in a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception or Medicine) check notice a churning motion in the dead Plume’s stomach and some sort of black ooze leaking from his ears. Characters who do not examine the body or who fail the check are caught surprised as a **black pudding** magically bursts out of the dead body and attacks. As this happens, a feeling of dread fills the room as Dern’s spirit, corrupted by Granny Eve-canker’s influence, appears as a **wraith**.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace the **black pudding** with a **swarm of insects (centipedes)** that bursts out of Dern
- **Weak party:** Replace the **black pudding** with two **swarms of insects (centipedes)** that burst out of Dern
- **Strong party:** Add one **black pudding**
- **Very strong party:** Add two **black puddings**

Tactics

The wraith and black pudding fight to the death.

In the third round of combat, two Red Plume **guards** rush onto the scene. They can either participate in combat, rush out to call for reinforcements, or drag unconscious characters out of the room. If one of the Plumes leaves to call for reinforcements, a squad of 6 Red Plume **guards** arrives to help two rounds later.

If Alis is in the room, the wraith targets her first at the start of combat for an easy kill, then uses its *create specter* ability on its next turn to summon an ally from Alis' body. It does this when the other guards arrive at the scene as well.

Development

If the party succeeds in defeating the ooze and the undead, Alis (if she survived) and the other Red Plumes express their gratitude. Alis pulls a necklace from around her neck and gives it to the players as a token reward. If Alis perished during combat, a Red Plume officer instead gives the characters a reward of gold pieces (see *Treasure* below for details regarding either reward).

If the adventures examine the journal by Dern's bedside, hand the players **Handout 3**.

XP and Intrigue Awards

If the adventurers keep Alis and the other Red Plumes from being killed, award each character 100 XP.

Additionally, each character receives **2 Hillsfar Government Intrigue Points**. If Alis or any of the other Red Plumes perished, they do not receive the extra 100 XP or Intrigue Points for this encounter.

Treasure

Alis' necklace is a gold pendant mounted with semiprecious stones worth 100 gp. It was a gift from Dern and has their intertwined initials carved onto its face. If Alis dies and the adventurers get the gold piece reward instead, they receive 100 gp.

Additionally, one of the grateful Red Plumes gives

the adventurers a *potion of greater healing*. If they were already awarded the *potion of greater healing* during this adventure, they instead receive a *potion of acid resistance*. If both potions were awarded they simply receive the necklace or the gold pieces.

The Well

Expected Duration: 30 to 40 minutes

The sounds of heated debate greet your ears as you arrive at the portion of the city just outside the Thayan Enclave. A tradesperson and a Red Wizard stand in the middle of a rapt audience arguing over the dissolution of the Great Law of Humanity. The crowd maintains its distance from the well from which the grick burst, where two Red Plumes stand guard.

If the adventurers question the guards, they learn the information below.

- This well was once a popular gathering place, where Hillsfarrians would socialize as they drew water. Just over a week ago, the well's water level began to subside. No one thought anything about it, expecting the water to rise again in time.
- A few days later, a grick emerged from the well and attacked the crowd. Stalwarts from the nearby Vault of Swords (the temple of Tempus) rushed to the scene and got to work subduing the creature. The monster was killed, but it killed and injured a number of citizens.
- Nothing has emerged since, but reports of odd sounds coming out of the well (crumbling rocks, splashing noises in the water) convinced the authorities to post guards during daylight hours.

DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

KEY

● LADDER

||||| FLOOD GATE

⤴ VALVE

⊙ T THUG

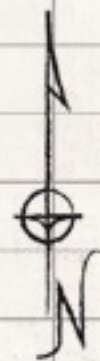
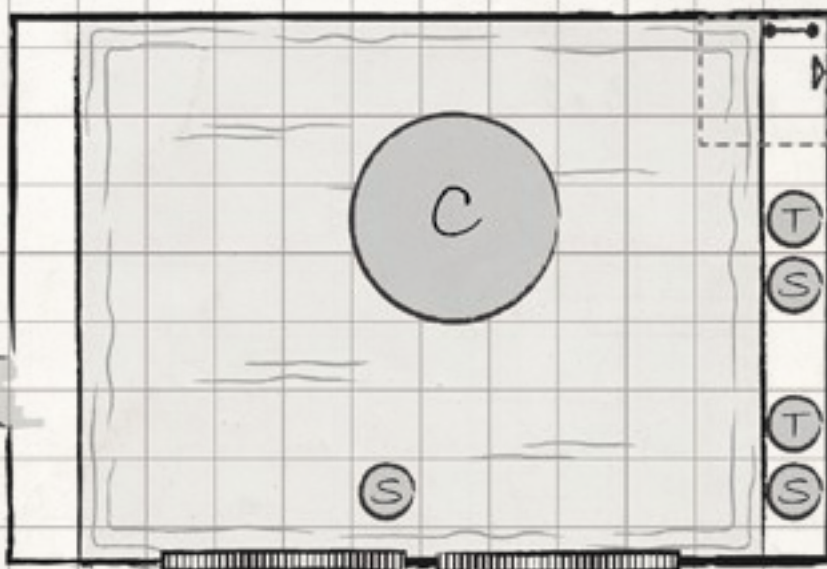
■ WATER

⊙ S SWARM OF SNAKES

--- HOLE IN CEILING

⊙ C GIANT CONSTRUCTOR SNAKE

FROM
WELL



Descent Into Darkness

The well is 50 feet deep, with a few inches of water remaining at the bottom. Sunlight penetrates 30 feet down into the well and darkness fills the rest of the distance. Characters with darkvision or who lower a light source down the shaft can see that a portion of the well's bottom wall has been smashed, revealing a passageway beyond.

The opening at the bottom of the well leads into a tunnel that extends 300 feet ahead before connecting to a large catch basin that is part of the city sewer system. As adventurers approach the catch basin, they hear two voices in discussion echoing through the tunnel. Characters succeeding on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check can pick out the following phrases:

- *"Watch yourself. One bite from these things will leave you sick for days."*
- *"Keep your crossbow handy as I open the flood gate. I don't want that big one getting any ideas..."*
- *"With these things loose in the sewers, I can't wait to get out of here. No wonder that dwarf wanted to meet outside the city walls."*

The tunnel ends at an opening in the catch basin's western wall, 6 feet above a ledge. The ledge sits 1 foot above the water level and spans the entire width of the wall. The basin itself is 40 feet wide by 60 feet across. The water is 2 feet deep, is difficult terrain, and is filthy to the point that anything submerged beneath is heavily obscured. On the eastern end of the basin is a similar ledge that spans the eastern wall. On the north end of the far ledge, a ladder extends upward 10 feet into a hole in the ceiling. The ladder ascends another 30 feet through a chute that ends at a sewer passageway above. By the ladder is a valve that opens flood gates built into the basin's southern wall. Opening the flood gates causes the water in the basin to drain into the rest of the sewer system.

Two human **thugs** are preparing to unleash a **giant constrictor snake** and three **swarms of poisonous snakes** into the city's sewers to wreak havoc. The giant constrictor snake has already been released into the water. The three swarms of snakes are contained in separate barrels. One barrel has already been opened and the swarm dumped

into the water. When the adventurers arrive, the thugs have opened the remaining two barrels and are preparing to dump the swarms into the basin waters.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace the **giant constrictor snake** with a **crocodile**, remove one **swarm of poisonous snakes**
- **Weak party:** Remove one **swarm of poisonous snakes**
- **Strong party:** Replace the **giant constrictor snake** with a **giant crocodile**
- **Very strong party:** Replace the **giant constrictor snake** with three **giant crocodiles**, remove one **swarm of poisonous snakes**

Tactics

The thugs do not wish to confront the adventurers and are only out to do what they've been paid to do. If combat starts without them having dumped the two barrels of snakes, they do so at the start of combat. Then, one thug rushes to the ladder and starts climbing while the other works on opening the floodgates. It takes the thug working the valve two rounds using her action to open the gates. Once the floodgates are opened, the thug flees up the ladder. A thug who makes it to the top of the ladder 40 feet above flees into the streets of the city and cannot be apprehended.

The other creatures attack the characters on sight and fight until defeated. Once the floodgates are opened, the basin empties in two rounds. Once the water has completely drained, the animals escape through the now-open flood gate, diving 30 feet down into a larger basin that filters out to the rest of the sewer system via a dozen or so passageways. Animals that escape through the flood gate effectively disappear as they swim through the murky waters and flee through one of the many passageways out.

Development

If the thugs are captured, the characters can learn the following information from them with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check:

- They were part of a crew hired by a dwarf named Eldeth Marblehead to release smuggled animals and beasts into the sewers.
- Marblehead specifically hired thugs aligned against First Lord Yestral for one reason or other. While they weren't all keen on working with a dwarf, the pay was good and her intentions aligned with their own animosity against the government.
- They were given partial payment for their services up front, with a greater bounty promised upon completion of the job. The thugs were to collect payment from Marblehead at someplace called the Outcast's Sanctuary (show the players *Handout 2*).
- The passphrase to gain access to the Sanctuary is "Granny loves all her children."

If the thugs are killed, the adventurers find a roughly-drawn map on one of them. If the thugs escaped, the adventurers instead find a satchel containing the map and the treasure below on the far ledge, left behind in the thugs' flight.

XP and Intrigue Awards

If the adventurers capture either or both of the thugs, award each character 100 XP.

Additionally, if the characters capture either or both of the thugs and turn them in either to Hillsfar Castle or to the Red Plumes, they each receive **1 Hillsfar Government Intrigue Point**. If both of the thugs escape, they receive no intrigue points for this encounter.

Treasure

Each thug carries a coin purse containing 50 gp.

Additionally, one of the thugs carries a *potion of greater healing*. If they were already awarded the potion of greater healing during this adventure, the thug instead carries a *potion of acid resistance*. If both potions were awarded, the thug carries the coin purse only.

If the thugs escaped, the treasures are instead found in the satchel that was left behind.

Estrellae Moonglow's Home

Expected Duration: 25 minutes

Estrellae's home in the north side of the city is humble for a noble's dwelling. A servant leads you into an atrium where a small crowd has already gathered. Estrellae stands in the center of a garden loudly criticizing the First Lord. Choruses of approval issue from the crowd as they listen to her speech.

General Features

The general features of Estrellae's home are as follows:

Light and Visibility. The atrium is open to the sky and is brightly lit by natural light.

Sights. The house is not large, but is comfortable and stylish. Fine furniture speaks of Estrellae's financial status. The guests come from various walks of Hillsfarian life, from middle-class laborers to upper-class elites.

Smells and Sounds. The aroma of flowers, the scent of food wafting from the kitchen, servants milling about the guests passing out hors d'oeuvres, discussions about city politics, complaints against the First Lord.

Seeds of Dissent

When the adventurers arrive, Estrellae stops her speech and welcomes the party, presenting them to the crowd. If the characters are bedraggled from other exploits during this adventure, neither Estrellae nor the guests acknowledge this, knowing well that such is the state of adventurers sometimes.

The crowd is composed entirely of Hillsfar Dissidents, individuals who oppose First Lord Yestral's administration. The reasons for these oppositions are varied, and some oppose it more vehemently than others.

Characters who socialize with Estrellae or the Dissidents or who eavesdrop on the surrounding conversations hear the opinions and rumors:

- The state of Hillsfar has hardly improved since Yestral ascended to the title of First Lord. While trouble did abound during First Lord Nomerthal's rule, the city prospered.

- The dissolution of the Great Law of Humanity was done too swiftly and suddenly. The influx of non-humans has only served to dilute the labor force and return unsettlingly foreign elements into the city.

- The entrance of non-humans into Hillsfar should be monitored and regulated. Priority should (of course) go to nobles, tradespeople of renown, and individuals who will guarantee the growth of trade and commerce within the city.

- First Lord Yestral has been keeping himself holed up in his tower. Practical folk see this for what it is: an unsure leader protecting himself from the public.

- It has been rumored that Yestral is hoarding supplies within The First Lord's Tower, anticipating societal collapse if trade doesn't improve.

- It has also been rumored that Yestral is participating in illicit trade activities. Though no one will openly accuse him, it has been said that he has something to do with the various troubles plaguing the City of Trade (dying livestock, stolen goods, etc.)

- Despite having only recently moved to Hillsfar, Estrellae has been instrumental in unifying the citizens opposed to the First Lord.

- Organized opposition to Yestral has grown to the point that a group of dissidents are ready to take action. A concerted effort to incite a civilian uprising has begun.

Feel free to create NPCs as needed, keeping in mind that almost every facet of society is represented in the gathering. Call for social interaction checks (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) as the interactions demand. Characters that have more **Hillsfar Dissidents Intrigue Points** than **Hillsfar Government Intrigue Points** make any such checks at advantage. Characters who have more **Hillsfar Government Intrigue Points** than **Hillsfar Dissidents Intrigue Points** make any such checks at disadvantage.

Note that the interaction and dialogue may be influenced by details the characters learned earlier in this adventure if they explored other locations prior. As the characters interact with the attendees,

take note of how positively or negatively their interactions go.

After some time speaking with the adventurers and her guests, Estrellae excuses herself to make an announcement.

Estrellae takes her position in the atrium as the crowd falls silent to listen. "Friends and all my gracious guests, Hillsfar is being put to the test. Yestral mocks us from on high, openly turning a blind eye upon the truth before his face: poverty rises at a striking pace. The time has come for all to act. Without fear and without tact shall we, Hillsfarrians, rise to meet this fraud upon the ruler's seat. Speak against him openly, and march against the powers that be. Tomorrow at nine bells we'll meet outside the castle, in the streets. Demand that Yestral resign before our city's sure decline. Hillsfarrians shall not stay quiet. Meet our demands or else we riot!"

The crowd roars in approval and the guests turn their attention to one another, excitedly discussing plans for the next day's protest.

Estrellae's speech marks the end of the gathering and the guests start to leave. Estrellae has matters to tend to before tomorrow's activities. She bids the characters farewell and sees them to the door.

As soon as she is out of sight, Estrellae slips into the ethereal plane, takes on her true form as Granny Eve-canker, and spirits herself away to the Outcast's Sanctuary where she has been keeping her base of operations when not within the city walls. Granny has to prepare some surprises to be unleashed on the city tomorrow.

Crafty characters may get the idea to explore Estrellae's home. If they do so, they find nothing out of the ordinary among the mundane goods and the finery.

Intrigue Reward

Characters who interacted positively or supportively with Estrellae and the Dissidents receive **2 Hillsfar Dissidents Intrigue Points**. Characters who manage to sway a Dissident away from opposing the First Lord (either via good roleplaying by the player or through successful social interaction checks) receive **3 Hillsfar Government Intrigue Points**.

Putting the Pieces Together

After visiting the locations above, the adventurers should have gathered a few clues pointing toward Granny Eve-canker and the Outcast's Sanctuary, just outside Hillsfar.

If the players missed any details (such as the map) or wish to investigate further, they may choose to inquire about the clues in a number of ways:

Reporting to Jandra Gragdowel. Gragdowel denies any allegations of the First Lord's involvement with illegal activity. If shown the letter of instruction (**Handout 1**), she dismisses it as a fake created to wrongly implicate the Lord Yestral. She doesn't know of the Outcast's Sanctuary, but calls in a castle scholar who reveals it to be the name of an old temple to Fenmarel Mestarine (see sidebar below) that was lost to a sinkhole some few hundred years ago. The scholar can provide the location of the temple, several miles south of Hillsfar and just west of the Moonsea Ride. Gragdowel urges the adventurers to investigate the temple immediately.

Researching. Adventurers trying to find information around town can learn about the Outcast's Sanctuary from a local scholar or mage for 5 gp. (Characters with an appropriate background may do so at a discount or for free.) Doing so reveals the information and location noted above.

Asking the Dissidents. The characters may possibly ask about these topics if they visit Estrellae Moonglow's home after finding clues. If so, one of the attendees knows of the Outcast's Sanctuary and its location as given above. No one admits to knowing about any criminal activity, though. Estrellae herself may choose to reveal the lost temple's location, wishing to lure the adventurers there and deal with them herself as Granny Eve-canker. If shown the letter of instruction (**Handout 1**) or told of preparations being made concerning the protest, the Dissidents ask the adventurers to investigate the temple at once, hoping to stop anything that may interrupt the next day's activities.

Fenmarel Mestarine, God of Outcasts

Not much is known about the elven deity known as Fenmarel Mestarine. The god of outcasts is a member of the Seldarine and patron to castaways, exiles, pariahs, and derelict souls throughout the Realms. He is often portrayed as morose, reticent, and greatly distrustful of non-elves. Clergy who serve him have been known to train followers in the ways of subterfuge (poisoning, guerilla warfare, deception, etc.) His tenets include fierce independence and self-sufficiency.

Once the adventurers decide to travel to the Outcast's Sanctuary, move on to **Part 3**.



PART 3.

THE OUTCAST'S SANCTUARY

The Temple of Fenmarel Mestarine

Expected Duration: 90 minutes altogether, between Areas 1 through 7.

General Features

The general features of the Outcast's Sanctuary are as follows:

Light and Visibility. The time of day varies from late afternoon to evening, depending on when the adventurers decide to go to the temple. Sunlight or moonlight shines accordingly on the exposed areas. Unless otherwise noted, the interior areas of the temple are lit by torch light. Unlit interior areas are pitch dark.

Sights. The temple walls, floors, and ceilings are constructed of stone unless otherwise noted. Having been submerged for a few hundred years, the walls are overgrown with various flora and fungi. Tree roots burst through in places.

Smells and Sounds. Vegetation, dank earth, torch smoke, the pungent aroma of the creatures that linger within.

The temple entrance is located amid a nondescript copse of trees a few miles south of the city. The tree line opens ahead of you, revealing a statue-lined walkway that descends into a group of sunken buildings.

The Outcast's Sanctuary was consumed by a sinkhole and abandoned several hundred years ago. The same seismic activity that created the Waydown unearthed the temple's lost entrance, but it was not discovered until recently by dark fey forces.

The temple entrance is obscured by the copse of trees surrounding it. Characters who explore the area and succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check find a small, natural vent nearby from which they hear faint, gruff voices. The vent is big enough

for medium or smaller sized creature to climb down one at a time. The sides of the vent are slick and muddy and it takes a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check to climb down. Climbers using rope make the check at advantage. Characters who fail the climb check slide down the vent into **Area 5: Garbage Disposal** below and take 2d6 hit points of bludgeoning damage from the fall.

If the adventurers approach the temple head-on, they begin at **Area 1: The Walk of Welcome**. **Area 1** and **Area 2: Pilgrim's Crossing** are exposed. The rest of the temple is a series of structures that have either been partially or totally sunken into the earth.

Area 1: The Walk of Welcome

Expected Duration: 20 to 30 minutes

Austere statues line the main walkway into the temple. Each depicts a monk with its back turned toward the walkway—a welcome fit for castaways. Three of the statues have fallen off their bases. Much of the walkway's north side remains buried in earth, the statues there peeking out of mounds of rock and soil. An armed human and three furry, humanoid creatures stand guard.

A human **veteran** and three **bugbears** keep watch. A **druid** stands behind a statue on the south side of the walkway. If the characters speak the passphrase, the guards do not attack. Otherwise, they attack without any questions.

The area slopes from ground level on the east down to 10 feet below ground level on the west. The three fallen statues are difficult terrain. The mounds of dirt are also difficult terrain and may be scaled from the ground level above.

The walkway to the west goes five feet then drops off five feet below before continuing onto **Area 2: Pilgrim's Crossing**.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove the **veteran** and one **bugbear**
- **Weak party:** Remove one **bugbear**
- **Strong party:** Add one **veteran**
- **Very strong party:** Add one **druid**, one **veteran**, and two **bugbears**

Treasure

Each creature carries a belt pouch containing assorted coins totaling 40 gp. Additionally, the druid has an exquisitely carved yew wand tipped with a piece of blue jasper (that acts as a druidic focus) worth 60 gp.

Area 2: Pilgrim's Crossing

This intersection extends north, east, south, and west.

The northern path drops down five feet into a domed structure buried under a layer of earth. It is dark within.

The southern path ends at a pile of fallen earth that partially covers two stone benches.

The western path leads into another buried structure. A stone archway marks the entrance into a large, torch-lit chamber. On the archway's capstone is carved a set of peering eyes.

The stone benches to the south were part of a small reflecting garden that was buried and destroyed when the temple sank. Unless an enemy creature from elsewhere in the temple escaped to this area, there is nothing of interest here.

Area 3: Burnt Offerings

This area is unlit.

A simple, stone altar sits at the northern end of this dome-roofed room. Burn marks cover its unadorned surface. A small break in the east wall leads into a naturally formed tunnel that descends further underground.

Pilgrims visiting the temple used the altar to burn offerings to Fenmarel and to forgotten souls before entering the Chapel of the Outcast (Area 4). The first character who burns an offering worth at least 1 sp on the altar feels the god's blessing and gains Inspiration.

Area 4: Chapel of the Outcast

Torchlight fills what was once a large chapel. The south wall is caved in, soil and rock intruding into the space. The chapel is broken halfway through its length, the north half of the room resting about 4 feet below the southern half.

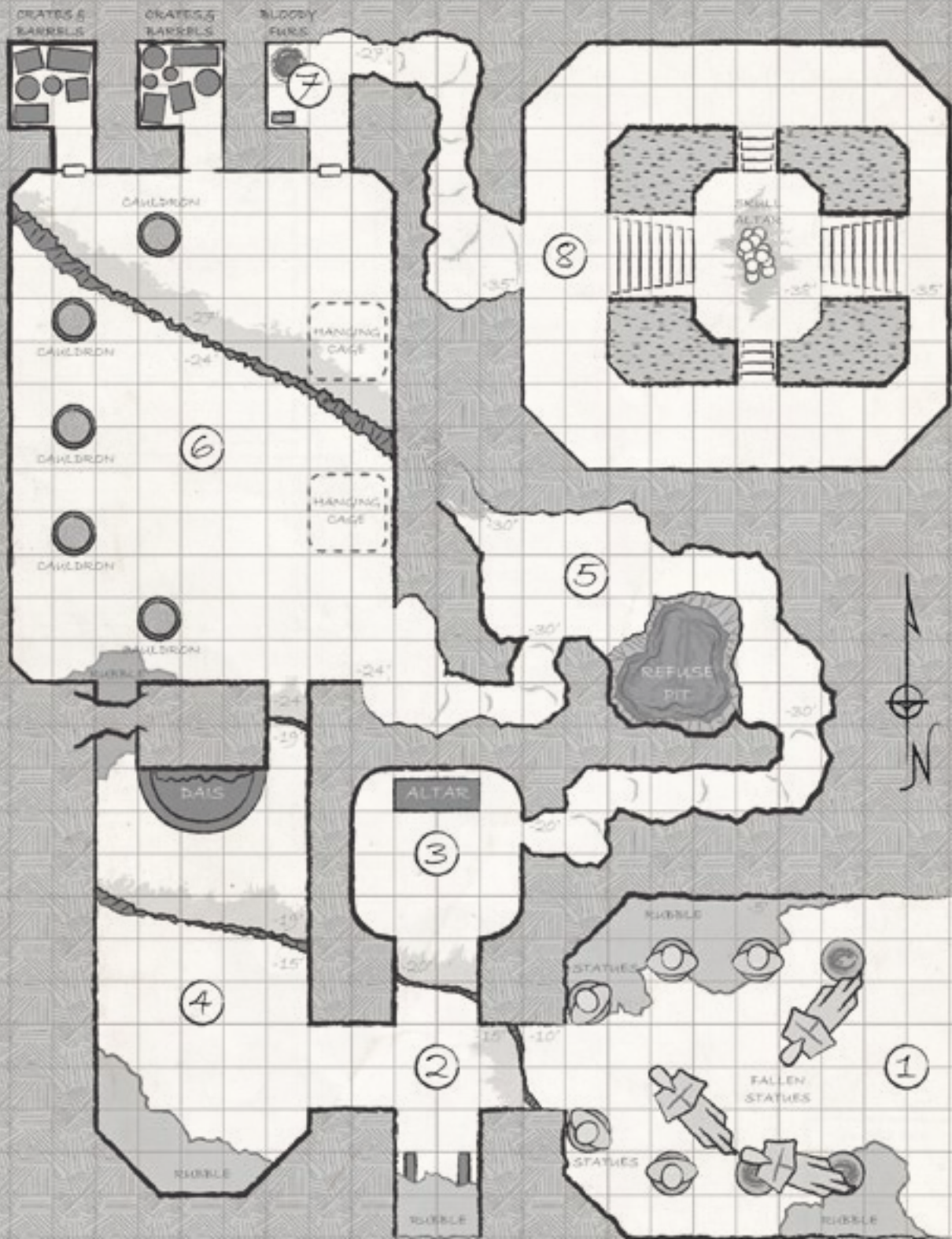
Two passageways flank a dais on the north end of the room. On the wall above the dais is a bas relief depicting a robed figure with its back to the chapel, numerous worshippers reaching out towards it.

Scattered throughout the chapel are an assortment of bedrolls, supplies, and cooking implements.

The various minions hired or brought in by Granny Eve-canker use this chapel for lodging. The western passageway on the north wall ends in rubble. The eastern passageway on the north wall drops off five feet into what was once the temple's living quarters.

Characters who rummage through the various belongings find nothing of value. Unless an enemy creature from elsewhere in the temple escaped to this area, there is nothing of interest here.

THE OUTCAST'S SANCTUARY



Area 5: Garbage Disposal

Expected Duration: 20 to 30 minutes

The adventurers may find themselves here after either climbing or falling down the natural vent described at the opening of Part 3. Unless unceremoniously dropped into the room from falling, the first character that gets within 20 feet of the area hears voices complaining about something and catches the horrible stench of detritus.

The passageway opens up into a natural cavern. A horrid stench fills the chamber. Two humanoids dump what appear to be dead bodies into a large, refuse-filled pit in the center of the cave.

Two **thugs** on garbage duty are dumping some of Granny Eve-canker's slain victims into the refuse pit so that the bodies may be devoured by the **otyugh** that lives there. If the characters have the passphrase, they can interact with the **thugs**. Otherwise, the thugs attack any characters that wander in or that fall down the natural vent into this room. If combat begins, the **otyugh** rises out of the pit and joins the fight against the adventurers, protecting the thugs that have been feeding it.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove the two **thugs**
- **Weak party:** Remove one **thug**
- **Strong party:** Replace the two **thugs** with three **bugbears**
- **Very strong party:** Replace the two **thugs** with three **bugbears** and add one **bugbear chief**

Treasure

At the edge of the pit, buried under a layer of filth, are a handful of halfling teeth encrusted with obsidian, altogether worth 100 gp.

Area 6: Holding Cells

Expected Duration: 20 to 30 minutes

This large chamber appears to be a kitchen. A number of iron cauldrons—several filled with some sort of pasty, yellow gruel—line the west wall.

Three doorways line the north wall. The leftmost and rightmost doorways lie shut. The center doorway hangs open, revealing a small storage room beyond.

The southeast wall has collapsed, revealing a natural passageway that descends into the earth beyond.

There are two narrow passageways to the south. The western passageway is blocked by debris. The eastern passageway ends at a ledge 5 feet up that ascends into another large room beyond.

The northernmost third of the room has broken off from the rest and has sunk 3 feet below the level of the southern portion of the room. Two cages, 10 feet tall by 10 feet wide and 10 feet deep, hang suspended by rusty chains about 8 feet above the floor from the vaulted, stone ceiling.

This chamber used to be the temple's main living area, acting as a common sleeping room, kitchen, and dining room for the monks, chaplains, and transient pilgrims. The three rooms to the north were sleeping quarters for guests of note. Now, Granny Eve-canker uses this room to store the monsters she plans to smuggle into Hillsfar. Granny Eve-canker's minions are aware of the contents of this room and avoid it unless commanded to enter by the hag.

Currently, the room is set up to house a number of oozes that Granny Eve-canker intends to teleport into the city during tomorrow's protest. The "gruel" in the cauldrons are actually **ochre jellies** kept at bay by continuous *hold monster* spells. If this encounter is being run at *strong* or *very strong* difficulty, the suspended cages each contain a **gelatinous cube** also subject to similar continuous *hold monster* spells. If the gelatinous cubes are present, spotting them requires active scrutiny of the cages and a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Casting *detect magic* on the cauldrons and the cages reveals the presence of enchantment magic.

The first time a creature that is not Granny Eve-canker gets within five feet of a cauldron containing an ochre jelly, two things happen simultaneously.

First, a *hold person* spell trap goes off. Any character within five feet of a cauldron must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be paralyzed as if targeted by a *hold person* spell. Characters paralyzed in this way may make the same saving throw at the end of their turns, ending the paralysis on a success.

Second, all *hold monster* spells keeping the oozes in the room at bay deactivate, and any creature present in the room being held in a cauldron or cage surges out to attack the adventurers. Gelatinous cubes slithering out of the cages fall to the ground below and take 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Of the three small rooms to the north, the westernmost and center room are being used as storage for sundry supplies. Most of the contents found in the crates and barrels are not noteworthy, but there are a few valuables to be found (see *Treasure* below).

Granny Eve-canker uses the easternmost room as her private quarters.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove one **ochre jelly**, and each **ochre jelly** begins combat with 24 HP
- **Weak party:** Remove one **ochre jelly**
- **Strong party:** Add two **gelatinous cubes**
- **Very strong party:** Add one **ochre jelly** and two **gelatinous cubes**

Treasure

Characters that search the western storage room find a crate of burgundy silk robes lined with star and moon motifs stitched in golden thread. The robes are exquisitely made and are worth 120

gp altogether. Characters that search the center storage room find a small box which contains an assortment of gems, altogether worth 80 gp, and a coin purse containing 10 platinum pieces (observant characters may notice that these platinum pieces match the ones given to them by Estrellae Moonglow earlier in this adventure).

Area 7: Granny's Room

This area is unlit.

Rotting animal furs covered in blood and gore lie in a heap on the northwest corner of the room. On the southwest corner sits a dainty, white writing desk painted with golden cloud motifs. An alabaster writing set rests on the tabletop next to sheets of parchment and a pair of delicate, emerald green kidgloves.

A tunnel stretches down and east through a collapsed section of the northeastern corner of the room.

Granny Eve-canker has been using this room as her private quarters, retiring to the heap of furs when she gets tired of taking her disguised forms. The door is enchanted, and Granny knows whenever anyone enters the room, regardless of her location.

The writing desk is where the hag fabricates her forged notes. The writing set is valuable and the green gloves are magical (see *Treasure* below). Characters who leaf through the sheets of parchment find a number of noteworthy documents:

- Several letters instructing hired thugs to receive particular shipments from the docks and move them to a number of locations throughout the city.
- A note titled "Granny's Red Plume Sweethearts". Several names have been written in and crossed off, the last name being Dern Gelnacht. Small hearts are scribbled throughout the note.
- A number of shipping manifests signed either by Eldeth Marblehead or Estrellae Moonglow. The several sets of manifests bear the same dates, and a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals them to be well-crafted forgeries.
- A series of official-looking orders signed by First Lord Yestral instructing the Red Plumes to

arrest a half-dozen individuals, all of whom were present at the Dissidents' gathering at Estrellae's home. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals these orders to be forgeries as well.

Intrigue Reward

If the adventurers surrender the various forged documents to either Commandant Jandra Gragdowel or to First Lord Yestral at the conclusion of this adventure, they each receive **3 Hillsfar Government Intrigue Points**.

Treasure

The alabaster writing set on the desk is worth 100 gp. The *emerald kidgloves* are *gloves of thievery* and may come in handy should the characters attempt to steal Granny Eve-canker's *heartstone* (see the *Tactics* section in *Area 8* below).

Area 8: The Sunken Garden

Expected Duration: 20 to 30 minutes

A winding tunnel leads from Granny Eve-canker's private quarters to an old temple garden, once buried, now cleared and restored. Granny uses this area to cast rituals at a gory altar.

Having been warned by the enchantment on the door, Granny expects the adventurers and cannot be surprised.

The tunnel opens up to what appears to be a large, underground garden. A stone walking path lines the walls of this cave, with stairs leading down to a lower section three feet below. Lush greenery lines the walls. Tall, wild growths spring out of four plots of soil surrounding the garden's lower level.

In the center of the lower level sits a four-foot stack of bloody humanoid skulls, flesh still on their bones and crawling with maggots. A horrific, indigo-skinned creature dressed in Estrellae's clothing stands chanting with arms outstretched by the gruesome collection of skulls.

Granny is in the final stages of completing a ritual to teleport the oozes in Area 6 into Hillsfar during the crowded protest. If the adventurers destroyed all of the oozes in Area 6, Granny is furious—she and her allies attack the characters on sight. If any oozes were spared, Granny is incensed but open to parley. She is looking for only the slightest excuse to attack the adventurers, though, and the slightest provocation triggers her wrath.

Roleplaying Granny Eve-canker

Granny is wicked and ruthless. Two horns grow out of her head, sweeping back to sharpened points. Sagging indigo skin covers her tall, thin body. She calls the adventurers pet names such as "sweetie, deary, honey-cake," etc. Any interactions she makes with the adventurers are done so in a parental fashion, as if instructing children.

A character making a successful DC 20 Intelligence check knows that Granny is a night hag, and recalls the following about them.

- Night hags usually possess something called a heartstone. This lustrous black gem allows her to use her etherealness ability. If she does not have possession of this gem, she can't use that ability.
- A night hag uses a soul bag to collect souls. When a victim of her soul mongering dies, she captures their soul in this bag made of human flesh, if she was able to convince them to perform evil deeds on her behalf.

Granny stands on the lower level of the garden, just east of the skull altar. Two **displacer beasts** hide in the plots of growth west of the altar. It takes a passive Perception of 13 or better or a Wisdom (Perception) check of the same difficulty to notice the creatures there. The plots are difficult terrain.

If the skull altar is destroyed (AC 5, 5 hp), any hag in the room takes 1d10 psychic damage. A character that destroys the altar becomes the target of Granny's full wrath.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace the two **displacer beasts** with one **cockatrice**
- **Weak party:** Remove one **displacer beast**
- **Strong party:** Add two **displacer beasts**
- **Very strong party:** Add two **green hags** and one **displacer beast**, use **coven** rules for shared spellcasting for the **night hag** and **green hags**

Tactics

Granny stays out of melee range, retreating to other portions of the room to sling spells and let her allies get close. If combat turns against her, she uses *etherealness* to escape. If her *heartstone* is somehow taken from her, she cannot use *etherealness* and instead focuses all of her efforts to retrieve the stone.

If this combat is being run on *very strong* difficulty, the green hags begin on the upper level walkways in the northeast and southeast corners of the room. In this case, the three hags stay out of melee range for as long as possible and cast their coven spells without mercy. The hags support Granny in any of her efforts to escape or retrieve her *heartstone*. Unlike Granny, the hags fight to the death.

XP Award

If the adventurers prevent Granny Eve-canker from escaping and slay or capture her, award each character 100 XP.

Treasure

Buried in the skull altar are valuables taken from Granny's unfortunate victims. Characters searching the altar find several coin purses containing a total of 560 gp in coins, assorted pieces of jewelry valued at 300 gp, and two ebony statuettes depicting prancing satyrs worth 70 gp each.

Granny's *heartstone* and *soul bag* may be taken as trinkets. They are useless and have no magical power to anyone but Granny Eve-canker herself.

Conclusion

Reporting back to Jandra Gragdowel at Hillsfar Castle, the adventurers find her in audience with First Lord Vuhm Yestral. The First Lord recognizes characters who have encountered him in past adventures (*DDEX03-03 The Occupation of Szith Morcane*, *DDEX03-14 Death on the Wall*, and/or *DDEX03-15 Assault on Maerimydra*).

Roleplaying First Lord Vuhm Yestral

Vuhm Yestral is a human in his early 60s and a member of the Lords' Alliance. While kind and compassionate, Yestral is also loud, opinionated, and a commanding presence. His authoritative presence masks his discomfort as the current leader of Hillsfar. Despite his discomfort, he fervently works for the good of the citizens of Hillsfar and the city.

Characters with **Government Intrigue Points** equal or exceeding their **Dissidents Intrigue Points** earn the *In Yestral's Service* Story Award. Characters whose **Dissidents Intrigue Points** exceed their **Government Intrigue Points** earn the *A Dissident is Here* Story Award.

Regardless of which story award a character receives, both the First Lord and Commandant Gragdowel express gratitude. If the adventurers captured Granny Eve-canker or submit proof of her defeat, they receive the additional reward promised by Commandant Gragdowel (see *Treasure* below).

Capturing or slaying Granny Eve-canker leaves the Hillsfar Dissidents leaderless and disorganized (for the moment). The protest occurs, but Estrellae's absence leaves much of the Hillsfar Dissidents demoralized: the event fizzles out without violence. If Granny was captured, the Mage's Guild is capable of holding her prisoner.

The dark fey have other plans. The defeat of the night hag is a mere setback for them. When the adventurers wake the next day, they each find vellum notes by their bedsides. Written in beautiful and flowing script, the notes read:

"Forces much greater than you
Are coming to collect their due.
Though our Granny did you quell,
Hillsfar yet shall see its hell.
Try and stop us, if you must.
Your bones shall be ground to dust."

This story continues in *HILL 1-2 Exodus*.

Treasure

As promised earlier in the adventure, Commandant Gragdowel awards the adventurers 500 gp if the characters captured or defeated Granny Eve-canker.

Rewards

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

Experience

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Basilisk	700
Black Pudding	1,100
Bugbear	200
Bugbear Chief	700
Cockatrice	100
Commoner	10
Crocodile	100
Displacer Beast	700
Druid	450
Ettercap	450
Gelatinous Cube	450
Giant Constrictor Snake	450
Giant Crocodile	1,800
Green Hag (coven)	1,800
Guard	25
Half-Black Dragon Veteran	1,800
Night Hag	1,800
Night Hag (coven)	2,900
Ochre Jelly	450
Otyugh	1,800
Specter	200
Sprite	50
Spy	200
Swarm of Insects (Centipedes)	100
Swarm of Poisonous Snakes	450
Thug	100
Veteran	700
Wraith	1,800

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Char.
Talk the crowd down (Part 1)	100
Free the sprites (Part 2)	100
Protect the Red Plumes (Part 2)	100
Capture a thug (Part 2)	100
Capture Granny (Part 3)	100

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 3,000 experience points.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 4,000 experience points.

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

Treasure Awards

Item Name/Location	GP Value
Estrellae's reward (Part 1)	200
Gragdowell's reward (Part 2 & 3)	1,000
Hostage Takers' Hideout (Part 2)	100
Smugglers' Cave (Part 2)	100
Red Plume Guardhouse (Part 2)	100
Descent Into Darkness (Part 2)	100
Walk of Welcome (Part 3)	100
Garbage Disposal (Part 3)	100
Holding Cells (Part 3)	300
Granny's Room (Part 3)	100
Sunken Garden (Part 3)	1,000

Emerald Kidgloves (Gloves of Thievery)

Wondrous item, uncommon

These delicate, goatskin gloves are colored with a bright green pigment and slip onto the wearer's hands effortlessly. While wearing these gloves, the wearer experiences irresistible generosity, expressing compliments to those around them and spending coin for the benefit of others without hesitation. Unlike conventional *gloves of thievery*, these gloves do not turn invisible when worn, but shrink or grow to accommodate a small or medium wearer's size.

Potion of Greater Healing

Potion, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Potion of Acid Resistance

Potion, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Renown

Each character receives **one point of renown**.

Downtime

Each character receives **10 downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

Story Rewards

Characters have the opportunity to earn the following story awards during this adventure.

In Yestral's Service. Your actions supporting Hillsfar's current regime have been noticed by the political factions in the City of Trade. You gain advantage on Charisma-based ability checks that involve interacting with any of Hillsfar's government officials and with the Red Plumes. Additionally, you gain disadvantage on those checks when interacting with anyone actively opposed to First Lord Yestral and his government. If you later earn the *A Dissident is Here* Story Award, you lose this Story Award and any of its effects.

A Dissident is Here. Your actions subverting Hillsfar's current regime have been noticed by the political factions in the City of Trade. You gain advantage on Charisma-based ability checks that involve interacting with anyone actively opposed to First Lord Yestral and his government. Additionally, you gain disadvantage on those checks when interacting with any of Hillsfar's government officials and with the Red Plumes. If you later earn the *In Yestral's Service* Story Award, you lose this Story Award and any of its effects.

DM Rewards

For running this adventure, you receive **875 XP**, **437 gp**, and **ten downtime days**.

DM Appendix: NPC Summary

The following NPCs appear or are mentioned in this adventure.

Estrellae Moonglow (ES-truh-lay). Female elf. Noble and recent transplant to Hillsfar. Charismatic and seemingly savvy in business and politics. De facto leader and spokesperson of the dissidents opposing First Lord Vuhm Yestral. Secretly Granny Eve-canker in disguise.

Eldeth Marblehead (EL-dith). Female dwarf. Trader who hired a company of dwarves to ship questionable cargo into Hillsfar. Secretly Granny Eve-canker in disguise.

Granny Eve-canker. Female night hag. Sent by the dark fey to Hillsfar to cause chaos and subvert the City of Trade's government. Disguises herself as Estrellae Moonglow and Eldeth Marblehead.

Commandant Jandra Gragdowel (JAN-druh). Female human. Current Commandant of Hillsfar's Red Plumes. Assigned to her station by First Lord Vuhm Yestral.

Gillun Glimmersting (GILL-uhn). Male sprite. Forced to secretly kill livestock by Granny Eve-canker's minions. Originally from the forest of Cormanthor.

Alis Maerr (AH-lis MARE). Female human. Red Plume soldier. Lover of Dern Gelnacht.

Dern Gelnacht (DERN GUHL-nawkt). Male human. Red Plume soldier. Lover of Alis Maerr. Afflicted by madness by Granny Eve-canker.

First Lord Vuhm Yestral (VOOM YES-strill). Male human. First Lord of New Hillsfar. Kind and devoted to the City of Trade's citizens. Member of the Lords Alliance. Former Guard Commandant of the Red Plumes and the Wall surrounding Yûlash.

Appendix: NPC/Monster Statistics

Basilisk

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9

Languages –

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Petrifying Gaze. If a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of the basilisk and the two of them can see each other, the basilisk can force the creature to make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw if the basilisk isn't incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature magically begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

A creature that isn't surprised can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If it does so, it can't see the basilisk until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If it looks at the basilisk in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

If the basilisk sees its reflection within 30 feet of it in bright light, it mistakes itself for a rival and targets itself with its gaze.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Cockatrice

Small monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 27 (6d6 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw against being magically petrified. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified for 24 hours.

Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages – any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

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

Bugbear

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Stealth +6, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack).

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Actions

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage in melee or 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage at range.

Bugbear Chief

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (-0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2, Stealth +6, Survival +3

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack). *[continued next page]*

Heart of Hruggek. The bugbear has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned, or put to sleep.

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Actions

Multiattack. The bugbear makes two melee attacks.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage in melee or 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage at range.

Ettercap

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 13

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the ettercap knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The ettercap ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The ettercap makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) poison damage. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* The creature is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained creature can make a DC 11 Strength check, escaping from the webbing on a success. The effect ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has AC 10, 5 hit points, resistance to bludgeoning damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Half-Black Dragon Veteran

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances acid

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). The veteran exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reactions

Parry. The veteran adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the veteran must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Sprite

Tiny fey, neutral good

Armor Class 15 (leather armor)

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +8

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 40/160 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. If its saving throw result is 5 or lower, the poisoned target falls unconscious for the same duration, or until it takes damage or another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Heart Sight. The sprite touches a creature and magically knows the creature's current emotional state. If the target fails a DC 10 Charisma saving throw, the sprite also knows the creature's alignment. Celestials, fiends, and undead automatically fail the saving throw.

Invisibility. The sprite magically turns invisible until it attacks or casts a spell, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the sprite wears or carries is invisible with it.

Spy

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16(+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, **Stealth** +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

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

Actions

Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

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

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

Black Pudding

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	5 (-3)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, cold, lightning, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages –

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the pudding corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits the pudding is destroyed after dealing damage.

The pudding can eat through 2-inch-thick, non magical wood or metal in 1 round.

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

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) acid damage. In addition, non magical armor worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

Reactions

Split. When a pudding that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new puddings if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new pudding has hit points equal to half the original pudding's, rounded down. New puddings are one size smaller than the original pudding.

Specter

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical weapons that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

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

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Guard

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one languages (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Swarm of Insects (Centipedes)

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

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

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages –

Challenge 1/2 (100 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 Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Swarm of Centipedes. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by a swarm of centipedes is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Actions

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Wraith

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical weapons that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Specter. The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

Crocodile

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages –

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Hold Breath. The crocodile can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

Giant Constrictor Snake

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 60 (8d12 + 8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the snake can't constrict another target.

Giant Crocodile

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (9d12 + 27)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages –

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. The crocodile can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Actions

Multiattack. The crocodile makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10ft., one target not grappled by the crocodile. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Swarm of Poisonous Snakes

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

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

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 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 Tiny snake. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Thug

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Druid

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 11 (16 with barkskin)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Medicine +4, Nature +3, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Druidic plus any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The druid is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *produce flame*, *shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *longstrider*, *speak with animals*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *moonbeam*, *barkskin*

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+4 to hit with shillelagh), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage with shillelagh or if wielded with two hands.

Veteran

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Otyugh

Large aberration, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Con +7

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Otyugh

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Limited Telepathy. The otyugh can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 feet of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Actions

Multiattack. The otyugh makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its tentacles.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. Every 24 hours that elapse, the target must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a success. The target dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until the disease is cured.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13) and restrained until the grapple ends. The otyugh has two tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

Tentacle Slam. The otyugh slams creatures grappled by it into each other or a solid surface. Each creature must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or take 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and be stunned until the end of the otyugh's next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn't stunned.

Gelatinous Cube

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 6

Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	3 (-4)	20 (+5)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Ooze Cube. The cube takes up its entire space. Other creatures can enter the space, but a creature that does so is subjected to the cube's Engulf and has disadvantage on the saving throw.

Creatures inside the cube can be seen but have total cover.

A creature within 5 feet of the cube can take an action to pull a creature or object out of the cube. Doing so requires a successful DC 12 Strength check, and the creature making the attempt takes 10 (3d6) acid damage.

The cube can hold only one Large creature or up to four Medium or smaller creatures inside it at a time.

Transparent. Even when the cube is in plain sight, it takes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot a cube that has neither moved nor attacked. A creature that tries to enter the cube's space while unaware of the cube is surprised by the cube.

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) acid damage.

Engulf. The cube moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter Large or smaller creatures' spaces. Whenever the cube enters a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw.

On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the cube. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw.

On a failed save, the cube enters the creature's space, and the creature takes 10 (3d6) acid damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the cube's turns. When the cube moves, the engulfed creature moves with it.

An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 12 Strength check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the cube.

Ochre Jelly

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances acid

Damage Immunities lightning, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

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

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage.

Reactions

Split. When a jelly that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new jellies if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new jelly has hit points equal to half the original jelly's, rounded down. New jellies are one size smaller than the original jelly.

Displacer beast

Large monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Avoidance. If the displacer beast is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Displacement. The displacer beast projects a magical illusion that makes it appear to be standing near its actual location, causing attack rolls against it to have disadvantage. If it is hit by an attack, this trait is disrupted until the end of its next turn. This trait is also disrupted while the displacer beast is incapacitated or has a speed of 0.

Actions

Multiattack. The displacer beast makes two attacks with its tentacles.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Green Hag

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

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

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Draconic, Sylvan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Coven Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Amphibious. The hag can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

Mimicry. The hag can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Illusory Appearance. The hag covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like another creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The illusion ends if the hag takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies.

The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, the hag could appear to have smooth skin, but someone touching her would feel her rough flesh. Otherwise, a creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the hag is disguised.

Invisible Passage. The hag magically turns invisible until she attacks or casts a spell, or until her concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). While invisible, she leaves no physical evidence of her passage, so she can be tracked only by magic. Any equipment she wears or carries is invisible with her.

Granny Eve-canker (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 weapons that aren't silvered

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Primordial

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Coven Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 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:* +6 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.

Night Hag Items

A night hag carries two very rare magic items that she must craft for herself. If either object is lost, the night hag will go to great lengths to retrieve it, as creating a new tool takes time and effort.

Heartstone. This lustrous black gem allows a night hag to become ethereal while it is in her possession. The touch of a heartstone also cures any disease. Crafting a heartstone takes 30 days.

Soul Bag. When an evil humanoid dies as a result of a night hag's Nightmare Haunting, the hag catches the soul in this black sack made of stitched flesh. A soul bag can hold only one evil soul at a time, and only the night hag who crafted the bag can catch a soul with it. Crafting a soul bag takes 7 days and a humanoid sacrifice (whose flesh is used to make the bag).

Player handout 1: Letter of Instructions

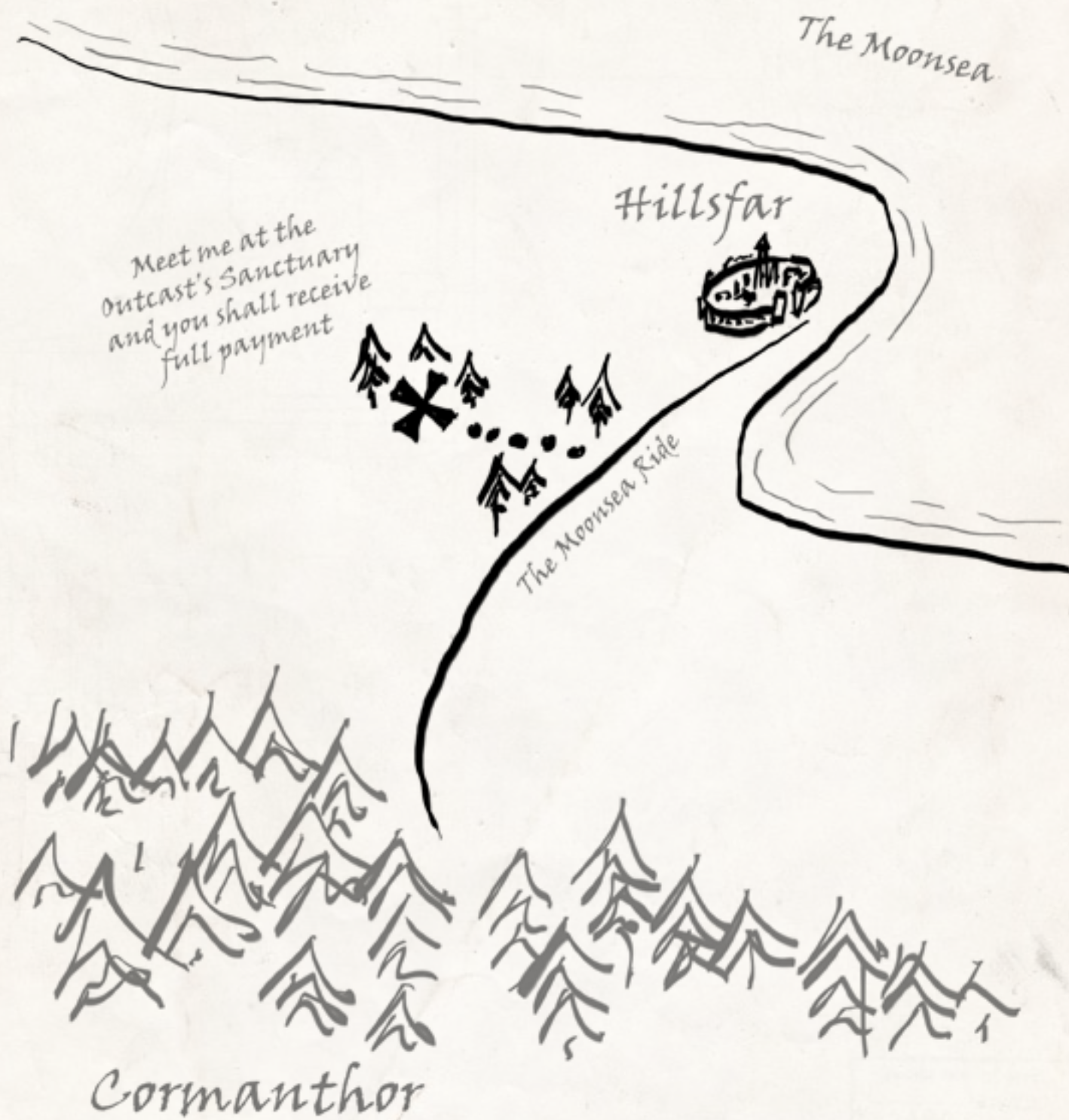
Our plans proceed apace.

Stay at your post and watch over the goods.
We make our move when the protestors' cries echo throughout the city.
I will be at the Outcast's Sanctuary, preparing something special for the occasion.

Lord Yestral is incredibly pleased with the progress we've made. When the smoke clears, your rewards will exceed anything you can imagine.

By the full moon's glow,
E.M.

Player handout 2: Thug's Map



Player Handout 3: Entries from Dern Gelnacht's Journal

TWO WEEKS AGO

"She visits me in my dreams, always beautiful. Alis has nothing to fear from my dreams, though. I am hers and I shall always be true to my love."

TEN DAYS AGO

"These restless nights are taxing, but Granny's nightly visits make things better. It's our special, little secret. She said last night that she doesn't appreciate my being a Red Plume. She says that the Red Plumes are wicked and hurtful. But my Alis isn't like that at all, or is she? Perhaps I have gone down the wrong path."

SEVEN DAYS AGO

"Granny said that I'm a bad, bad boy for staying within the Plumes' ranks. I think my cohorts know of her nightly visits. They whisper behind my back, even my beloved. But Granny is a true friend—perhaps my only true friend. How long have my comrades-at-arms been spreading rumors about me? How long must I put up with their hushed words?"

FIVE DAYS AGO

"She says she won't come back if I remain here. She is staying somewhere called the Outcast's Sanctuary. I need to find her. My duty and my station can't get in my way. The Red Plumes can't get in my way. I won't let them..."

Player Handout 4: Emerald Kidgloves

Emerald Kidgloves (Gloves of Thievery)

Wondrous item, uncommon

These delicate, goatskin gloves are colored with a bright green pigment and slip onto your hands effortlessly. Although these act as *gloves of thievery*, these gloves do not turn invisible when worn, but shrink or grow to accommodate a small or medium wearer's size.

While wearing these gloves, you gain a +2 bonus to Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks and Dexterity checks made to pick locks. Additionally, you feel a sense of irresistible generosity, expressing compliments to those around them and spending coin for the benefit of others without hesitation.