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The WITCHFIRE Trilogy

TM



BOOK
ONE
The
LONGEST
NIGHT

TM



TM



The Witchfire Trilogy™ Part I: The Longest Night

A D20 System Adventure for PCs
Of Levels 1-3

By Matt Staroscik
Art by Brian Snoddy & Matt Wilson
Cover by Matt Wilson
Production Manager Etien Staroscik



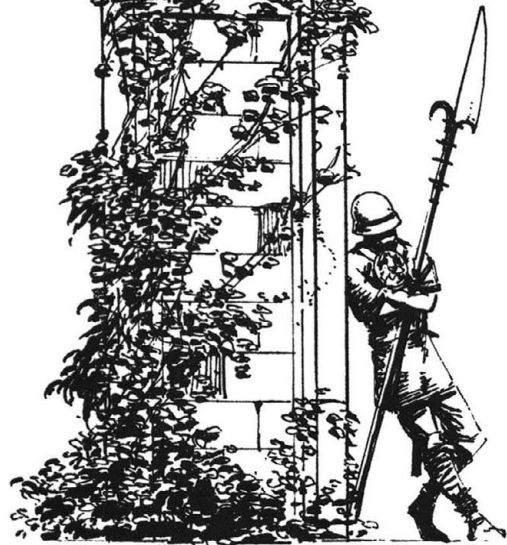
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Iron Kingdoms Game World



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Privateer Press
4323 Evanston Ave N #202
Seattle WA 98103
Voice: (206) 545-2943
Fax: (206) 770-7373
<http://privateerpress.com>
frontdesk@privateerpress.com

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The Witchfire Trilogy

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The Open Game Content in this product consists of the following: all of the maps, excluding the City of Corvis on page 9 and the region surrounding Corvis on page 13; the Firearms skills on page 8; steam power skills on page 9; monster stat blocks from Appendix A, excluding monster names; Generic NPC Profiles and the new Feat in Appendix B; NPC stat blocks in Appendix C, excluding character and place names.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
The Iron Kingdoms	5
Map: The City of Corvis	9
Map: Corvis & Surrounding Areas	13
Act I	14
The Caravan	14
The Church of Morrow	16
Investigating the Grave Robberies	20
Act II	24
The Witches' Tomb	24
Map: The Tomb	25
Alexia's Hideout	33
Map: Alexia's Hideout	36
Act III	40
Fort Rhyker	41
Map: Gatehouse Ground Level	43
Map: Gatehouse Upstairs	44
Map: Gatehouse Battlements	45
Map: Gatehouse Sublevel	46
Map: Fort Sublevel	46
Map: Fort Battlements	48
The Longest Night	49
Appendices	55
Appendix A: Creatures	55
Appendix B: NPCs	60
Appendix C: Dramatis Personae	62
About Privateer Press	64

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Introduction



This module is designed for three to four characters of level 1–2. It introduces the PCs to the city of Corvis and the surrounding lands, which are developed over the course of the *Witchfire Trilogy* into a rich environment for adventure—the Iron Kingdoms. DMs will find new monsters, spells and magic items in the pages of the Trilogy's pages, as well as new kingdoms and living cities with their own histories and characters. For more information on the Iron Kingdoms, visit <http://ironkingdoms.com>.

If the DM wishes, existing D20 System deities and creatures can be used in this adventure. However, the Trilogy provides an entirely new campaign setting in the Iron Kingdoms. DMs who want to place the adventure in their current game world will need to replace the names of gods, locations and the like as they come up.

The Longest Night is divided into three Acts. Major events in the Acts are put into Chapters—for example, exploring the catacombs under Corvis is a Chapter in Act II. DMs will find that there is a natural flow to the adventure, but the events in the story can usually be rearranged if the DM has a reason. The PCs should be encouraged to forge their own road, and not forced to perform events in the order printed unless there is a major plot point at stake. Experience should be given out for good roleplaying, clever combat tactics and diligent investigation—not just dead monsters!

To play the *Witchfire Trilogy*, the gaming group will need the *Dungeons & Dragons*® 3rd Ed. *Player's Handbook*. The other Core Rulebooks will certainly be useful as well. In the text, these books are abbreviated to PH, DMG and MM. If a page number is referred to, it is printed after the abbreviation (i.e. DMG 93). This product contains Open Game Content that can only be used under and in terms of the Open Game License found on page 2.

The plot and fabric of the game world are rich, and the more familiar the DM is with the material the better the game will be. Let the players learn as much about

the Iron Kingdoms as possible during play. If there is something interesting in the DM's background material, find a way to let the players know about it—all's fair as long as it doesn't ruin the plot.

Conventions

To save space, monster and NPC attributes are listed in the condensed format detailed on DMG 129. Enemies will have a Challenge Rating (DMG 165). Stats for NPCs and monsters are in the appendices, and are usually not repeated in the main text.

Text that should be read aloud to the players is enclosed in a grey box. This isn't to say that if it isn't in a grey box it's a secret—the key to a rich gaming experience is making the world come alive!

Adventure Summary

The PCs come to the city of Corvis in the employ of a merchant caravan. After having their guard skills tested in an ambush, they arrive in the city. There, they quickly learn that some evil is afoot—bodies are being stolen from the city's graveyards. The PCs are hired to investigate the matter by Father Pandor Dumas, who sees their arrival as an opportunity to resolve the matter quietly.

They PCs quickly learn that the stolen bodies relate to a witchcraft scandal that rocked the city a decade ago. They will visit the witches' tomb, deep in Widower's Wood, for clues. They will also explore the catacombs beneath Corvis, where they will learn that the niece of a respected religious leader is involved in the sinister happenings. Eventually, they will find themselves back in the depths of Widower's Wood, trying to head off an attack on the city itself.

Father Dumas' niece, Alexia Ciannor, is the one behind the evil acts. Her mother was one of the witches who were executed long ago, and young Alexia (a budding sorceress) is out for revenge. What she does not know is that the coven was framed by one of the

The Witchfire Trilogy

city's leaders—and that man, Magistrate Ulfass Borloch, was himself being manipulated by another man, a powerful wizard named Vahn Oberen. Oberen arranged the death of the coveners so that he might take their lives himself, executing them with the magic blade Witchfire. The wielder of the Witchfire gains some of the powers of spellcasters that are slain by the blade, and Oberen orchestrated the whole thing to absorb the powers of the Corvis Coven.



The Iron Kingdoms



The Witchfire Trilogy introduces a new fantasy world—the Iron Kingdoms. Within the Iron Kingdoms, classic fantasy takes on a new edge, and the PCs will encounter steam power, pistols and cannon almost as often as swords and sorcery. DMs can embrace as much or as little of the Iron Kingdoms as they choose; the Witchfire Trilogy is easily adaptable to any fantasy setting.

These adventures are set in and around the city of Corvis, an important trade nexus in the Kingdom of Cygnar. The kingdom and city can be integrated into the DM's favored game world, or an entire campaign can be built within the Iron Kingdoms, which will be detailed throughout the Trilogy.

Enter The Kingdom of Cygnar

So, new to the Cygnar, are ye? I'll give ye the five-copper tour. The Kingdom is about two hundred leagues from east to west, and about three hundred leagues from north to south. We've three major rivers, one inland sea and scores of lakes. The capital is Caspia, far to the south, where the Black River empties into the Gulf of Cygnar.

The Kingdom was founded about 400 years ago, at the end of the Orgoth Empire. As ye know, the Orgoth raiders

conquered this land a thousand years ago, and ruled it with an iron fist. It was only after hundreds of years of brutal rebellion that the inhabitants of this continent defeated the invaders. Born in this conflict was what we today call the Iron Kingdoms—of which Cygnar is the shining star.

Cygnar's last ruler was King Vinter Raelthorne IV—a cruel, evil man. After almost two decades of his rule, his younger brother Leto led the coup that removed him from power. Unfortunately, with the help of those still loyal to him, Raelthorne the Elder managed to escape the palace before his execution. He is rumored to be plotting his revenge to this day, but no one has seen hide nor hair of him or his black-hearted lieutenants.

I wouldn't worry about Raelthorne the Elder, though—he hasn't a chance of regaining the throne. His brother Leto is a fine king and an honorable man. Under his rule the Kingdom has become a much safer place. So long as ye stay within the cities or on the major trade routes, nary a soul will bother ye. The King's patrols are a common site, and they do a fine job at keeping the peace, though they are often heavy-handed. Don't cross them, my friend, or there'll be a warrant out on ye before ye know it.

The King has also started building roads to support more trade, though there are years of work still to be done—and plenty of taxes to be collected, I'll wager. Taxmen are almost as commonly seen as guard patrols, but at least they finance the mighty steamjacks that are carving roads out of the living rock.

Lesser Cygnar, as the south is called, are home to rocky hills and lush forests. The moors of Greater Cygnar, to the north, are dotted with swamps and marshes. It's here, where the Black River and the Dragon's Tongue diverge that you'll find the city of Corvis.

The City of Corvis

Ah, Corvis. "City of Ghosts," they call it. Merchants that plied the Black River and Dragon's Tongue founded the city almost nine hundred years ago, right at the edge of a natural harbor where the rivers meet. These pioneers believed that trade from the rivers could drive the growth of a city, and they were right. They had a rough time of it at first, but soon the city was growing faster than a swamp rat pup. Today about 100,000 souls call it home, and more arrive every day. Corvis is an island of civilization in the roughest part of Greater Cygnar. The next closest major city is Point Bourne, over two hundred leagues to the west. Farther still downstream is the infamous Five Fingers.

Most of the folk in Corvis are human, but ye do see some elvenkind and dwarves passing through. If ye need a smith's services there'll be some fine dwarven shops in the armorers' bourg. If ye need to find some muscle, there'll be thugs for hire at the waterfront. There'll be trouble there for ye too if

The Witchfire Trilogy

ye aren't careful—the river folk are a tough lot. Keep to the merchant's 'bourg at night, where the Watch is always close at hand. Corvis has seen folk tougher than you floating in the harbor.

Being built in a swamp and such, space is precious, and the folks of Corvis tend to build up rather than across. Down at street level, lost in the mists, are the rough stone structures of Old Corvis. Built on top of them are the elegant spires of New Corvis—home to the merchant elite. In between are shops and homes of the regular folk, and it's all connected by a maze of ramps, bridges, canals and tunnels that would drive even a dwarven engineer mad!

The wonders of Corvis, like so much else in the Iron Kingdoms, wouldn't have been possible without the advent of the steamjacks. The first of the metal giants were brought to the city about 300 years ago, where they worked the quarries, cutting stone for new buildings. They also carved roads and worked the docks—without them, we'd be a second-rate town like Five Fingers, I tell ye. If ye be curious about the Iron Kingdom's famous steamjacks, ye need only visit the docks. There are always some there, hauling cargo about.

Ye may wish to hire a guide, friend, for you'll soon find yourself lost without one. Corvis is a maze, and that's just what you'll find above ground. The original city, laid nine centuries ago, has long since been swallowed by the swamp. It's now a maze of catacombs, and is home to naught but hooligans... and worse, I hear. If ye have a brain in that knobby head of yours, stay out of the Undercity.

So, are ye wondering why they call Corvis the "City of Ghosts?" They say that Old Corvis is haunted by the ghosts of the first settlers, many of who died in the early days. Many folk believe that anyone who drowns in the canals or the harbor is doomed to walk the city for eternity. The dead

are also said to walk about openly in the Undercity, which is one more reason to stay out, if ye ask me. Any way you look at it, there's nary a soul in Corvis who hasn't seen a shade at one time or another—or so they claim. Stay here long enough and I wager you'll see one too.

In fact, the Longest Night is fast approaching, lad. As ye know, once every year or so an eclipse blackens the skies all over the Iron Kingdoms. Well, here in Corvis, the eclipse has always ushered in our largest festival, a grand all-night party the likes of which you've never seen. The streets will be full of revelers, and spirits too if ye believe the locals.

There it is, lad, a bit of Corvis lore for ye. I hope it serves ye well. Keep your wits about ye, and stay away from the waterfront at night if ye want to avoid seeing yer own guts!

Points of Interest

Corvis is full of things to keep PCs busy. Over the course of The Witchfire Trilogy and the forthcoming Iron Kingdoms sourcebooks, Corvis will be built out into a nexus for adventure—the ideal launchpad for any kind of campaign. Don't hesitate to let the players in this adventure get temporarily sidetracked exploring the wonders of Corvis; that's half the fun.

The Undercity

The swamp has swallowed many of Corvis' original buildings. The Undercity, as the locals call it, is a treacherous subterranean maze. Many of these passageways are ancient buildings and streets, entombed in the damp earth. Others are natural passages, or recent excavations by the inhabitants.

The Undercity is inhabited mostly by vagrants and criminals, but legends speak of far more sinister denizens. PCs who explore the Undercity and stray



The Witchfire Trilogy

from the well-traveled areas have a chance of running into devil rats, undead and other monsters. In the "civilized" areas PCs can still meet various human and demi-human thugs and bums.

Those with intimate knowledge of Corvis have a chance to locate an entrance to the Undercity in relatively unfamiliar areas. The difficulty of this task is DC 25, though the DM can assign modifiers as he sees fit.

The Quad

The center of the city is a large cobblestone clearing, over 100 yards on a side. The Quad is usually packed with merchants, and it is a popular spot for both tourists and natives of Corvis. Many of the river merchants will set up shop here for a few days before moving on, so there is always something new to see.

At night, the Quad slows down, but it doesn't stop. About half of the merchants will stay open, and often the wares for sale change once the sun sets. PCs in need of a specific kind of item can probably locate it in the Quad with an appropriate skill check and some good roleplaying. Illegal items are often for sale, but the PCs will need to work extra hard to find them!

The Watch takes their peacekeeping duties very seriously, especially in the Quad and the rest of the merchant's 'bourg. PCs who get caught buying contraband can end up in the pokey for a couple of days.

The Waterfront

The docks and warehouses used by the merchants are in what is undeniably the worst part of town. Despite the best efforts of the Watch, the waterfront is nothing but trouble. It's also where the PCs will need to go to find many useful things, like hired muscle, river transportation and odd jobs. Naturally, the best bars and gossip are found there too. It's also where the characters can see the mighty steamjacks at work. These magical and mechanical giants help drive the economy of Corvis by providing tireless labor, loading and unloading boats under the direction of the harbormaster's office.

The more shabby and tough the PCs look, the better they will fit in at the waterfront. Fine clothes and expensive equipment will stand out and increase the chances of attracting undesired attention. Nonhumans will also stand out.

Law and Order

Corvis prides itself on being a bastion of law and order, a city where anyone can take a walk in the middle of the night with no fear. Unfortunately, the politicians who propagate this view are delusional, probably due to their bodyguards and gated homes. Corvis is a rough town, and it has cut more than a few tough folks down to size.

The City Watch

Locked in constant battle with the criminal element is the city Watch, an elite group of guardsmen. The Watchmen are guards, constables, detectives, and on occasion even judge and executioner. Not every body that's found in the harbor come morning was put there on account of a criminal dispute—sometimes it's criminal justice. Only a fool or a powerful criminal will voluntarily cross the Watch.

Criminals at large sometimes earn the dubious privilege of wanted posters with their likeness posted around the city. Depending on the crime, the city may offer a reward to any citizen who catches the fugitive. Often the offender's corpse will be good enough to collect the reward. A skilled bounty hunter can make a decent living in Corvis.

When the Watch apprehends a criminal, justice is swift and harsh—it's too expensive to keep prisoners behind bars for long. Trials are conducted as quickly as possible, and the penalties are usually physical punishment (including hard labor), fines, or both. For lesser crimes, the courts will hear the case in 1d4+1 days. More serious crimes are heard in 1d3 days. Prisoners have few rights and are generally considered guilty unless proven innocent. Perpetrators of minor crimes don't get a trial at all. The Watch captain on duty at the time issues a summary judgment, and punishment (such as a night in the stocks) is carried out without the court's involvement.

While the judges within the courts are powerful men, the ultimate power within Corvis is held by the city council. This group of twelve Magistrates, led by the Mayor, has the power to create new laws on a whim. They are restricted only by a vaguely written city charter.

Taxes

While many citizens will welcome the site of the Watch, everyone recoils in horror upon seeing the traditional brass medallion and tricorn hat of a city tax

Crime & Punishment In Corvis

Improper speech

A night in the stocks. No bounty.

Drunkenness

A thrashing on the spot. No bounty.

Shoplifting

10 lashes on the spot. No bounty.

Burglary

20 lashes & a week of labor on the docks. Bounty 2 gp.

Major theft

40 lashes & 1 month of labor on the docks. Bounty 5 gp.

Price fixing

... is not a crime in Corvis

Prostitution

... is not a crime in Corvis

Arson

Hobbling and exile. Bounty 15 gp.

Rape

Branding, a severe beating and exile. Bounty 25 gp.

Murder

Death. Bounty 35 gp.

In Corvis, the traditional way to put a person to death is drowning.

Firearms

In another twist on classic fantasy, the folk of the Iron Kingdoms have discovered the art of gunsmithing. This isn't to say that every back-alley thug is packing a pistol—far from it. The sword and bow are still the main weapons of the day, and magic is more visible in the culture than guns are. Firearms are exotic and expensive, and they are wielded mainly by military officers. The DM should *always* keep them rare and special. If they are easily to get they lose their charm.

Guns in this world do not use black powder. Instead, they require magical blasting powders that can only be created by skilled alchemists. This makes buying ammunition for a firearm an adventure in itself! First, an alchemist who can make blasting powders must be found. Powder charges are matched precisely to an individual weapon; miscalculations can result in dangerous malfunctions.

Powder charges and properly sized lead shot are sewn into small chemically treated silk pouches, which are then wrapped in ornate paper and labeled with the maker's name, the date, and the type of gun they are intended for. To reload, the user needs to open the breech and place the silk pouch in the combustion chamber. The trigger spring must then be primed by means of a crank or lever. When the gun is fired, a needle pierces the powder charge pouches, causing them to mix and explode. The silk flashes into dust, and the bullet is sent on its way in a spurt of flame and smoke. For more detailed rules visit our web site, <http://privateerpress.com>.

New skills relevant to firearms:

- ▶ **Craft (gunsmith)** Building and fixing guns, rifles and cannons.
- ▶ **Craft (demolitions)** Using blasting powders for bombs & earthmoving.
- ▶ **Knowledge (firearms)** Knowledge about firearms and bombs.
- ▶ **Profession (gunsmith)** Designing all kinds of firearms & explosives.

collector. The taxmen carry out their orders with precision, keeping careful track of each business in their district, taking precisely fifteen percent of the gross for the city coffers. Evading payment or meddling with the affairs of a tax collector are serious crimes, punishable by months on the docks.

It is an open secret that the taxmen are all as rotten as a three day old fish. Most merchants are forced to pay a few extra gold each month to keep themselves from having mysterious "problems" with their tax paperwork. Taxmen are considered lower than lepers in Corvis, which built its fortune on free trade.

The Merchants of Corvis

As in many cities, many merchants of Corvis have arranged themselves by specialty. Some of the more notable merchants quarters—or "bourgs," as they are called by the natives—are:

Grocer's 'bourg—This 'bourg is home to the finest foodstuffs outside Caspia. Salted meats and hardtack for the thrifty can be found as well.

Armorer's 'bourg—Almost a dozen weapon and armor smiths will compete for your gold in these narrow streets. The few shops that repair steamjacks can be found here as well.

Jeweler's 'bourg—These merchants are tucked away in the spires of the southern city. Moneychangers and moneylenders can also be found here.

Merchant's 'bourg—This is a catch-all district where merchants of various sorts have gathered over the years. Technically, the Quad is part of this 'bourg.

This isn't to say that *all* the armorers are to be found in the armorer's 'bourg, for example, but a good many will.

Noteworthy Shops and Shopkeepers

There isn't room to detail all of the merchants in Corvis, but here are details on a few shops the PCs may wander into, and their proprietors.

Garworth's

Tucked away in a misty corner of the merchant's 'bourg, Garworth's is known as one of the finer arcana emporiums in the city. The owner, Burrman Garworth, has a talent for keeping high quality items in stock—glassware of elven manufacture, fresh reagents, reams of fine paper and anything else a wizard or alchemist may need.

Though a young man, Master Garworth is known to be a wizard of formidable skill, and his shop is said to be safeguarded by all manner of spells. In fact, Garworth displays a pet frog in the shop's window; it is said that the frog was once a would-be thief. (PCs who cast speak with animals will discover that the story is true!)

If the PCs need any wizard or alchemist supplies, Garworth's probably has them or can get them. Supplies for any spell or task of up to 5th level equivalent are always in stock. Above 5th level, the GM must make a roll of DC 10, adding 1 to the DC for every level above 5th. If a roll fails, the GM can roll again every other day, adding +1 to the roll each time. If the roll fails three times, Garworth cannot get the item, though the PCs can try again in one month. Special items like antitoxin are not easy to stock up on; if Garworth has them at all, he'll have only 1d3 applications.

For example, if the PCs need a special item to craft a magic rod (a Feat that requires the caster to be 9th level or above), Garworth would have the component in stock on a roll of 14 or more. If the GM rolls below 14, in two game days he can roll again, this time needing only a 13, and then a 12 two days after that. If the roll fails three times, Garworth can't get that item for at least a month more.

The PCs can add bonuses to the roll by doing their own research and telling Garworth about their findings. This can easily lead the party to further adventures, if the DM is so inclined.

Burrman Garworth: Male Human Wiz 11th (DMG56) Garworth will normally memorize mostly Divinations, with a small number of defensive spells.

Bodak's Blades

Far from selling only blades, Bodak's is a full-service armor and weapons emporium. The merchandise is good quality, though unremarkable. The shop is known for selling quality gear at a fair price, and this has made

The Witchfire Trilogy

it one of the most popular in the armorer's 'bourg.

The shop's owner is Hamil Bodak, a human of about 50 summers. Word on the street is that he used to be a mercenary, seeing action across a dozen kingdoms. His scarred face and missing fingers certainly support the theory, though he doesn't talk about his past. He especially doesn't talk about the mysterious scandal that ended his promising career in the city Watch almost ten years ago, or his ongoing feud with Captain Julian Helstrom.

Bodak's staff is capable of mending armor and weapons, and they can also fit sophisticated armor like full plate. Use the rules on PH66 to determine how long Bodak's craftsmen take to finish a job, but add a delay of 1d6 days. It's a busy place, after all. The shop will occasionally have masterwork items in stock—there is a 25% chance each month for weapons and armor. If a masterwork is indicated, determine the type randomly. In all cases, masterworks will be sold within 1d6+1 days.

Bodak's is also known as the kind of place a person can go to hire muscle—muscle of a higher caliber than what you find at the waterfront. With good roleplaying and a little luck, PCs may be able to hire a fighter of level 1–2. They have two chances per week, DC 20. Applicable skills can be Knowledge (Local), Bluff, or anything else the DM thinks is appropriate. If the

hireling doesn't return, the DC increases to 25 the next time the PCs are looking for help.

Hamil Bodak: Male Human Ftr 13th (DMG52) Bodak does not wear armor while at work. He has access to any conceivable non-magical gear, as well as several magic weapons and suits armor.

Engines East

Engines East caters to the owners and operators of steamjacks. The legendary iron constructs are expensive and complex—it takes special expertise to keep them in working order. Engines East has steam engine specialists, metalworkers and wizards on call to keep any type of steamjack in good working order. Their work is top-notch, and their prices reflect this.

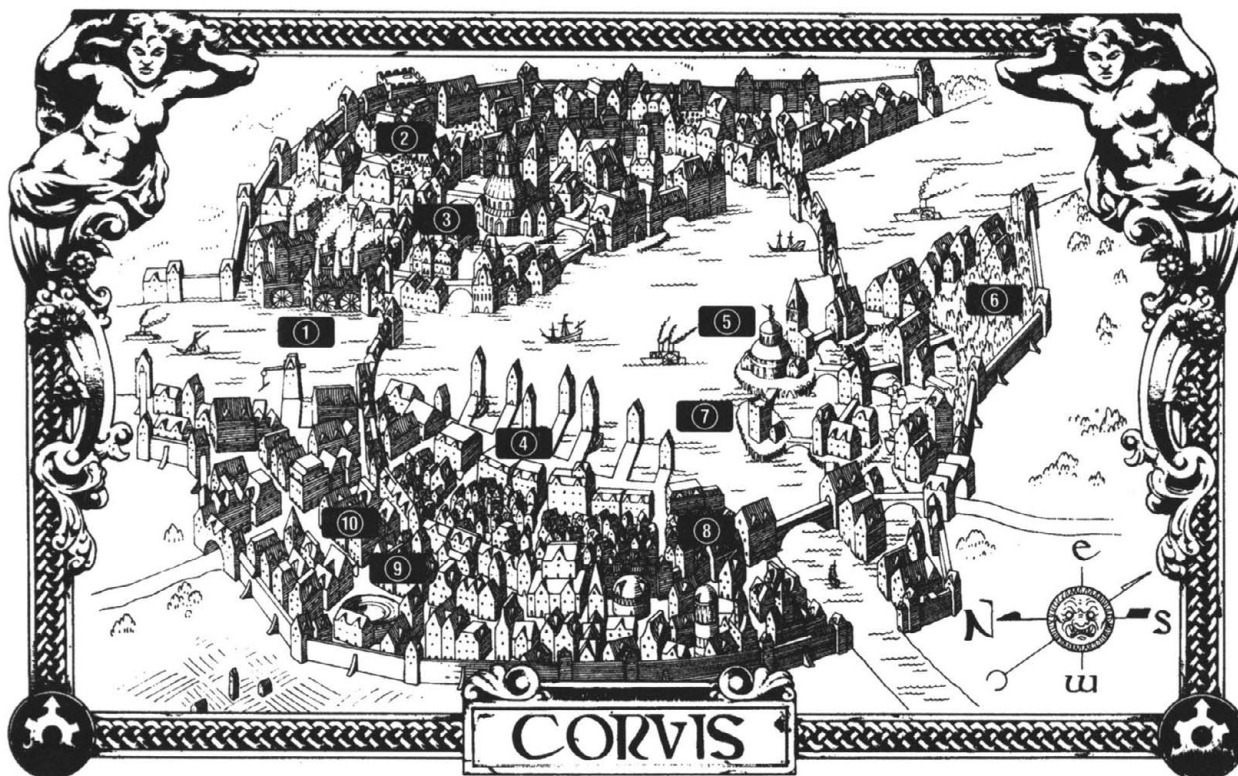
If the party has need of a steam engineer, the staff of Engines East will sometimes freelance after hours. The shop's owner, a dwarf named Gamack Redhammer, doesn't mind this but he prohibits them from working on steamjacks on the side—only boats, mills and other such steamworks. The shop's excellent reputation keeps the engineers as busy as they want to be after work hours.

On rare occasion the shop will have a used steamjack for auction.

MAP KEY

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Industrial 'bourg | 6. Park |
| 2. Northern graveyard | 7. Courthouse & Jail |
| 3. Church of Morrow | 8. Armorer's 'bourg |
| 4. Waterfront | 9. Arena |
| 5. City Hall | 10. Merchants 'bourg |

These are just some of the points of interest in Corvis.



Steam Power

While the magical arts are quite advanced in the Iron Kingdoms, the last few centuries have seen the development of something new—steam power. PCs will encounter all sorts of steam-powered gadgets in their travels. Most common are the steamships that drive trade up and down the rivers and coastlines of the realm. There are also steam-driven factories and war machines.

Probably the most famous of all steamworks are the mighty steamjacks. These metal giants are the ultimate fusion of the wizard and engineer's arts. They are powered by a coal-fired steam plant, but are given a mind through magic. The tireless labor they provide has transformed the Iron Kingdoms into a realm on the verge of an industrial revolution.

Skills that are relevant to the steam-powered Iron Kingdoms are:

- ▶ **Profession (steam engineer)** This profession devises the innovative steamworks of the Iron Kingdoms.
- ▶ **Craft (steamworks)** Specially-trained craftsmen construct steamworks from engineer's plans and repair existing machines.
- ▶ **Knowledge (steamworks)** This covers all kinds of steam-powered machinery.

Steamjacks are extremely expensive—the cost of a fancy model is akin to buying a fully-outfitted steamship. They are rarely owned by private parties. Consequently, Engines East does most of its business with large trade concerns, wealthy business owners and the local government.

Gamack Redhammer: Male Dwarf Ftr 8th (DMG52) Gamack is not armed while in his shop—with pet steamjacks about, why bother?

Guilds of Corvis

The political landscape of Corvis is said to be almost as intricate as that of the kingdom's capital city, Caspia. Part and parcel of these intrigues are the city's Guilds. While almost every group of tradesmen has a Guild, there are only a few that are powerful enough to make an impact city-wide.

The Merchants Guild

Without a doubt, this is the most powerful Guild in the city. No cargo enters or leaves the city without passing through Guild-affiliated hands. Guildsmen own most of the docks. Guild warehouses store cargo. Guild elders make large contributions to city elections—and so on. The Guild can stop nearly all trade in Corvis

to further its political agenda, and it has done so in the past.

It is said by some that the membership fees the Guild collects are barely enough to pay off all the crooked city officials they need to bribe to maintain their system. This may be true, but the Merchants Guild Hall is still the most opulent structure in Corvis, surpassing even City Hall.

It's important to note that the Merchants Guild is not concerned with membership for every "mom and pop" store in the city. Their primary interest lies in business-to-business transactions—that is where the big money changes hands, and the Guild has made sure they will always get their cut. All the major import/export houses are Guild shops, and their by-laws dictate that they only do major business with other Guildsmen.

A small but fanatic group of merchants has eschewed Guild membership. Occasionally they can offer items for less than Guild shops will charge, but patronizing these merchants is risky. Being blacklisted by the Merchants Guild will result in prices mysteriously rising in many shops.

The Thieves Guild

The fact of the matter is there is no one all-powerful "Thieves Guild" in Corvis—as if there is in any city! Instead, the city is home to dozens of gangs of various sizes, all backstabbing each other at every opportunity. In this chaos, three groups have managed to stand out, and they exist in an uneasy truce. PCs who wish to make contact with the underworld will need to make an appropriate skill roll of DC 15–25, depending on where they are and their reputation.

In the north, the Griffons rule. This gang is a loose organization of thugs, thieves and other criminals who have banded together for protection from the rest of the criminal element. Their leader changes frequently as there is constant infighting. The Griffons have few safe houses and are unable to collect "membership fees" efficiently due to their weak leadership. The Griffons are considered to be in danger of being consumed or breaking up from within.

In the southwest, the Black Hand rules the streets. Like the Griffons, the Black Hand is an opportunistic grouping of thugs. Unlike the Griffons, the Black Hand has effective leadership, a high-level rogue named Garrick. No one in the Hand's territory will dare to hold out on them—a fraction of every score finds its way into the group's coffers. Their resources are considerable. Garrick's ultimate plans are unknown, but absorbing the Griffons is thought to be a good start.

The eastern part of Corvis is home to the enigmatic Gertens crime family. They have centuries of history in the city—at one time, they controlled almost the entire criminal underworld. Over the years their territory has shrunk to about one third of the city, and this area they guard viciously. No member of any other gang will pull a job in their territory, since they have a good chance of being sent home in a series of small boxes. The Gertens' current plans are unknown, but stories of dark family secrets circulate throughout the criminal community.

The Wizards Guild

The proper name for this Guild is actually the "Fraternal Order of Wizardry." It is a branch of an organization that can be found in large cities all across the Iron Kingdoms. As might be gathered from the name, membership is only open to men. In fact, women are not allowed into any of the Order's functions, and it has been such for almost five centuries.

The Witchfire Trilogy

The Order is a stuffy, traditional group. New members must be sponsored by a current member, and the complete approval process takes 1d4+1 years. Along the way there are plenty of strange rituals, midnight meetings and secret handshakes. Candidates must be wizards of at least 8th level before they will be considered, and of good breeding and schooling. Sorcerers are not accepted for membership under any circumstances!

Those who are accepted into the Order will rub elbows with powerful, well-connected individuals. King Raelthorne's court wizard is a member of the Order in Caspia; he actually came to Corvis for a function last year. The Order also has the best library of arcane and magical knowledge in the city, bar none, and that makes it the best such resource for hundreds of miles around. Access to the library is impossible without the help of a member.

The Order's lodge can be found in the eastern part of the city, in a high tower with a good

view of the Quad. PCs should not come visiting unless they have been invited. There are currently 11 wizards in the Order, of levels 8–14.

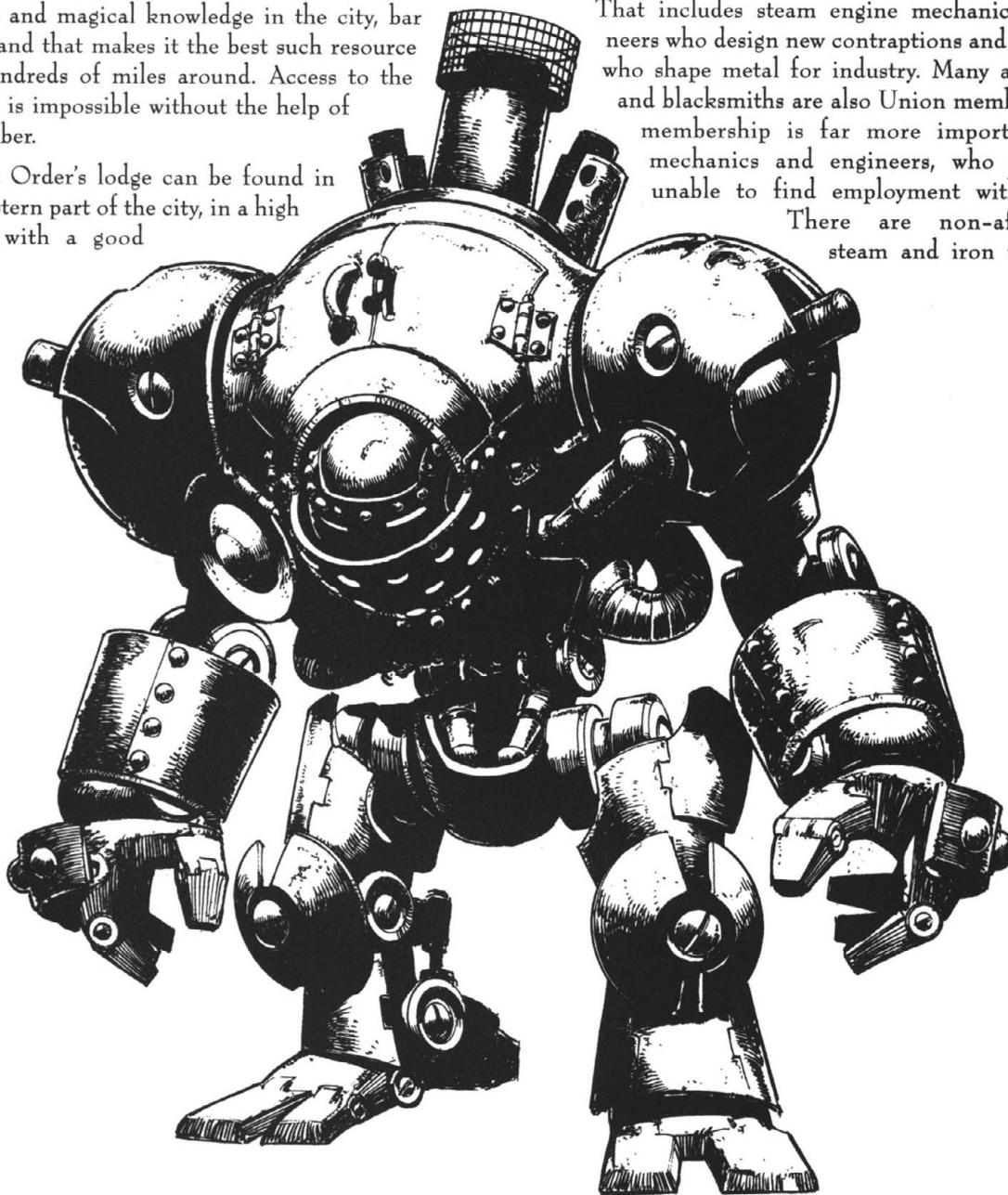
The Engineers Guild

Like the Fraternal Order of Wizardry, this is a local branch of an organization with a presence across the realm. The true name, as emblazoned on the guildhall's iron doors is the "Steam & Iron Workers Union." The Corvis chapter is #18, established about two centuries prior to the present day.

The Union, as it is usually called, exists to protect the interests of workers in the steam and iron trade.

That includes steam engine mechanics, engineers who design new contraptions and workers who shape metal for industry. Many armorers and blacksmiths are also Union members, but membership is far more important for mechanics and engineers, who may be unable to find employment without it.

There are non-affiliated steam and iron workers,



An industrial steamjack

Encounters In Widower's Wood

When traveling in the Wood there is always the chance that the PCs will run into trouble. The DM should roll 1d20 twice a day, and a roll of 15 or more results in an encounter. Apply the following modifiers to the roll:

- ▶ Party is on or near a road: -4
- ▶ Party has more than 5 people: -2
- ▶ Party is quietly camped: -2
- ▶ Party is loud: +2
- ▶ Party has wounded members: +2
- ▶ Party is far off the beaten track: +2

If an encounter is indicated, roll 2d6 on the encounter table. Add 1 to the roll if the party is far from any road. Note that not all encounters will necessarily result in a fight!

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 2 | 1d2+1 human bandits (Ftr 1; HP 1d10) |
| 3 | 1d3 razorbats |
| 4 | 1 pygmy boar |
| 5-6 | 1d4 swampies going about their business |
| 7-8 | 1 bog constrictor |
| 9 | 1d6 devil rats |
| 10 | 1d8 swamp gobbers |
| 11 | 1d2 swamp shamblers |
| 12 | PCs stumble into a swamp gobbler pit trap. Reflex check of DC 12 for the lead rank to avoid falling in. Damage 1d6+1. |

Creature profiles can be found in Appendix A.

Swamp Gobbers

Widower's Wood is home to an especially nasty species of goblinoid, which the locals call swamp gobbers. Like all gobbers, they prefer to avoid a stand-up fight, but they are known to ambush travelers on occasion. Swamp gobbers have smooth, greasy skin, and can change color like a chameleon. See Appendix A for all the details.

but anyone who cares about their sophisticated steamworks will seek out a Union engineer.

Corvis, being a modern city, relies on steam power for many things. This makes the Steam & Iron Workers Union very powerful, though historically they have been unwilling to flex their muscle. There have only been two strikes in all of the Union's history, and most negotiations are conducted in an extremely civilized manner.

Union members must be paid certain minimum rates for labor, in exchange for which the Union guarantees the customer that members meet certain minimum skill standards. Many shops, such as Engines East, are Union-only. Don't bother trying to get a job in a Union shop unless you have the traditional gear-shaped pendant of a Union member.

To join, an applicant must have a minimum score of 4 in one or more relevant skills. The prospect pays the union a 1gp application fee, and they take a test administered by a master craftsman. The difficulty of the test depends on the skill and experience of the prospect. If the test is passed to the satisfaction of the proctor, the applicant is awarded a Union badge, rank and number. Union ranks start at Apprentice and end at Master. To advance in rank, another test is needed. It is common for a skilled individual to skip Union ranks when taking the advancement tests.

Membership dues are typically 4% of any fees collected while performing work as a Union member. Members who are caught cheating the Union out of their dues are typically expelled for one year. Those who are expelled twice are not welcomed back. Members can also be

expelled for running a crooked shop and tarnishing the Union's good name.

Widower's Wood

Near Corvis is one of the staples of local legend—Widower's Wood. The Wood surrounds most of the city at a distance of a few miles, at some points coming within a stone's throw of Corvis. Inside the Wood it is always dark and foggy. Twisted, black trees claw their way out of the swampy muck towards the sunless sky. Tracks vanish almost as soon as they are laid, filled in by slimy seepage. Strange animals can sometimes be seen scampering through the thick branches overhead—anyone who manages to bring one down will find the dark meat tough and odd tasting.

The only roads through the Wood are narrow, meandering paths that follow the rare spots of solid ground. Even so the muck can be a foot deep at points, making any trip an ordeal. To make matters worse, tribes of swamp gobbers will occasionally ambush travelers.

A few brave folk do live within the Wood, but the city dwellers think the "swampies" are mad for it. These hardy souls manage to eke out a living by farming small plots of land and trapping the local wildlife for fur and meat. Sometimes they will visit the city and sell their skins in the Quad, or barter for things they need. The swampies may be unsophisticated, but anyone traveling in the Wood would be wise to heed their words.

Legends & Warnings

Widower's Wood is featured in many of the regional legends. Here are some of the more common.

Swamp Shamblers

It is said by some that anyone who dies in the Wood and is left there unattended will rise again in seven days as a Swamp Shambler. These undead will try to return to their home and slay those who abandoned them. Anyone killed by a Shambler rises as a Shambler themselves just a few minutes later. Swamp folk claim to know how to make a talisman that will prevent a Shambler from approaching. Producing a talisman takes 2d4 days of gathering materials, crafting, and curing. At the end of the time, a Craft (talismans) roll is made by the DM. The amount of the roll is the DC of the Will save the Swamp Shambler must make to approach within 50 ft. of the talisman. Each Shambler may only try to approach once.

Orven's Gold

25 years ago a human prospector named Lars Orven seemed to have found a gold mine deep in the Wood. Every few weeks the grubby prospector would sneak into town with a load of crudely minted ingots. After a year of stashing his hoard in the Bank of Caspia, Orven vanished. To this day no one has found the mine, and it remains one of the region's most well-known legends.

The Witchfire Trilogy

Some maintain Voorie ate him. Others blame the Gertens crime family. The gold remains in storage at the bank.

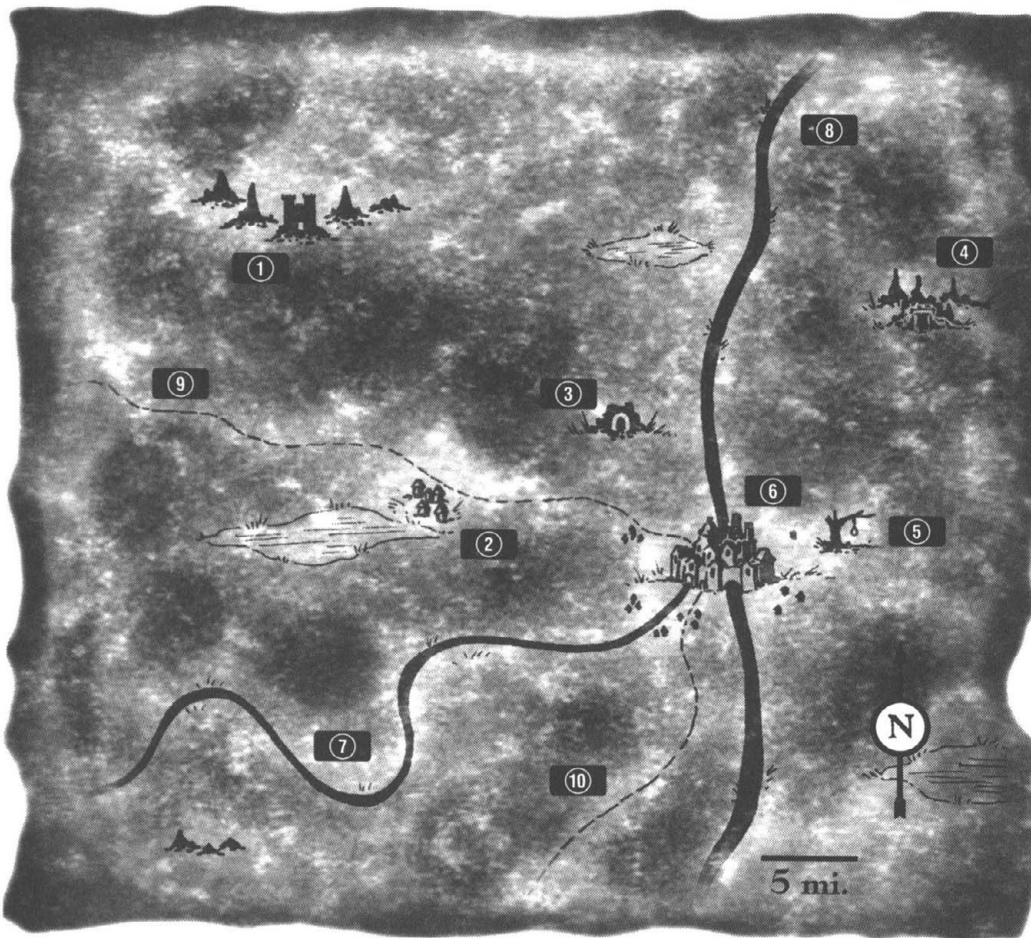
Voorie

Most folk in the Wood and Corvis believe in "Voorie," the great serpent of the swamp. Sightings are rare, but there is often other evidence—slain livestock, claw marks on trees, and chilling calls late in the night. A few brave city folk have tried to find the beast and slay it. Those that returned at all never found a trace of her. Lucky them—Voorie is actually a baby dragon, abandoned in the Lower Cygnar a hundred years ago when her mother was killed. Today, Voorie has made her lair in Orven's lost mine—dragons can smell gold

from miles away. Anyone who finds and defeats her will be able to claim the last of Orven's gold, several thousand gp worth of crude ingots.

Regional Map

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Fort Rhyker | 5. Hangman's Tree | 8. Black River |
| 2. Swampie Village | 6. Corvis | 9. Road to Five Fingers |
| 3. Witches' Tomb | 7. Dragon's Tongue River | 10. Road to Caspia |
| 4. Orven's Lost Mine | | |

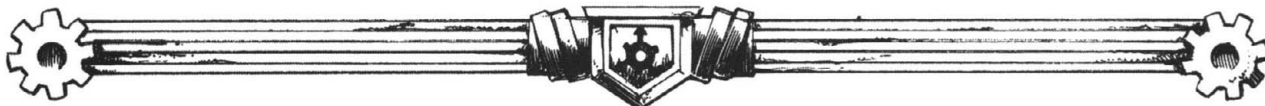


The Witchfire Trilogy



Act I

Wherein the intrepid adventurers reach Corvis, City of Ghosts and begin to learn something of the town's sinister history.



If the DM is starting a new group of PCs, it is best to begin the adventure with the caravan ambush sequence. It provides an easy way to get the PCs into the city and in touch with the right people. If the DM has moved the PCs into Corvis by other means, an encounter with the High Priest, Father Pandor Dumas, will need to be engineered.



The Caravan



Summary: The PCs have been hired to escort a merchant caravan en route to Corvis. Shortly before arriving in the City of Ghosts, the caravan is attacked by a pack of hungry swamp gobbers. The intent of the encounter is to set up Widower's Wood as a dark, dangerous place, and to give the PCs some action.

To bring the players up to speed, the DM should read them the following text, and give them an opportunity to ask questions.

You have been hired by the Merchant's Guild in Fellig to guard a caravan on the treacherous route to Corvis. The journey takes more than two

weeks, and passes through rocky mountain passes, dense forest and swampy lowlands. For your services you are to be paid 25 gp each at the end of your journey.

After chasing the rising sun for many days, the ordeal is near an end—Corvis is only half a day's ride away through Widower's Wood. The trip has been without incident so far.

"Easy money, aye?" shouts Gunner Wadock, the caravan's leader, from his position on the front wagon. "If only all my trips 'twixt Fellig and Corvis were so painless."

The caravan consists of five wagons, with four pack horses bringing up the rear. Gunner sits atop the lead wagon with his driver, a sour, quiet human called Viggo. The other four wagons each have one driver. The pack horses are tied to the last wagon.

The PCs should indicate how they are spread out among the caravan. If the players are too complacent, Gunner will insist that they look sharp—the job's not over yet!

The pack horses are carrying food, water and camping supplies for the caravaners. All the trade goods are in crates within the caravans, or in chests lashed to the outside. Each wagon has 4 chests mounted outside and 1d4+10 crates inside.

Ambush!

Just when it looks like the caravan might make it to Corvis without incident, a dozen swamp gobbers (Appendix A) ambush the group. The gobbers will kill the lead horse with a crafty spear trap, then hurl darts at the humans to sow more chaos. In the confusion, the

The Witchfire Trilogy

gobbers will try to steal chests and pack horses from the caravan, and then retreat into the fog.

For the duration of the combat, the thick mud reduces movement by 1/2 (PH142). The fog also gives 10% concealment (PH133) to everyone outside of 10 ft.

The DM should sketch a map for this encounter. It only needs to show a narrow length of road and the position of the 5 wagons.

The black, twisted trees join overhead, blotting out the sun. In the darkness, the only sounds are the rattles of the wagons and the buzzing of insects. The horses are straining to pull the wagons through the muck, which is over a foot deep in spots. The thin mist that always permeates this swampy forest is thickening into a dense fog with every step. After a minute you can barely make out the other wagons and horses. Only a few more hours of this and you'll arrive in Corvis.

Suddenly the lead horse screams in anguish and the caravan comes to a stop. You can hear Gunner and the other men cursing, and projectiles whistle past you. Thick fog swirls about, concealing your attackers.

There are a dozen swamp gobbers surrounding the caravan, hidden in the fog. They are all armed with darts and daggers. Eight of them are within 20 ft., and will attack random caravan members from cover as soon as the lead horse falls. Three of them are in the trees overhead, and will drop onto a random wagon when the chaos starts. The last one is 40 ft. away, operating a bizarre bellows contraption that is producing the thick fog in the area. As soon as combat begins, he

will abandon his contraption and join the raid.

Two of the gobbers will remain hidden in the fog, throwing extra darts at the caravan. The rest of the gobbers will charge the wagons. Their goal is to steal as many chests as they can. They are also interested in the packhorses, which they consider quite tasty.

It takes three gobbers to steal a chest. Two of them will saw through the ropes securing the chest to the wagon with their crude flint knives, while the third tries to guard them. It takes one round to cut the chest loose. Two gobbers can carry a chest at a rate of 1d4x10 ft/round—it depends on how heavy it is. If a chest is too heavy, the gobbers may drop it and try to get another one.

It also takes three gobbers to steal a packhorse. They must cut through the rope and pull the frightened animal into the swamp. The three gobbers' movement rate will be 20 ft. while stealing a horse.

The gobbers do not want to fight to the death. They just want to steal as much as they can and return to their village. If they take 50% losses, the survivors will concentrate on escape above all else. With their chameleon abilities, silence and speed they will be difficult to catch. The caravaners want to protect their cargo, but they are not interested in a fight to the death either. It is likely that the gobbers will succeed in carrying away some chests, and maybe a horse or two.

If the PCs recover the fog-maker, they can sell it to any alchemist in Corvis for 50–75 gp. It is the size of a large chest, and consists of a crude bellows and some kind of crucible to mix reagents in. The gobbler's spear-throwing trap is clever, but cannot be sold.

After the raid, the caravan won't be troubled again.

After the Ambush

Gunner will enlist the party to help recover any spilled cargo. The lead horse, which was killed by the

The Caravaners

Gunner Waddock: Ftr1, wielding a longsword (1d8+1). See Appendix C for complete stats. Gunner's right-hand man Viggo is a human first-level Warrior (DMG40) with a longsword (1d8).

Other Caravan Staff (4): Male human Commoners, first level (DMG38).

None of the caravaners are eager to lose their lives to protect wagons full of trade goods. Wounded men will run away or hide. Even Gunner himself will sacrifice a wagon if that's what it takes to escape from the gobbers. These men are merchants, not mercenaries.

As long as the PCs work hard to protect the caravan, they'll get paid. If Gunner thinks they weren't making an honest effort, he'll slash their payment to 15 gp at the last minute. He'll be very reluctant to work with them in the future if he has to dock their pay.

The Chests

If the contents of a chest or crate need to be determined, roll on this table.

d10	Contents
1	Tools
2	Weapons
3	Artwork
4	Fine furs
5-6	Letters and parcels
7-8	Exotic foods & spices
9-10	Fabric



The Witchfire Trilogy

spear trap, will be replaced with one of the packhorses. If all the packhorses are dead or lost, one of the wagons will have to be abandoned. This will make Gunner furious, and the caravaners will have to spend 30 minutes prioritizing and shuffling the cargo crates and chests. Gunner will refuse to leave behind any weapons the gobbers can use. If any food needs to be abandoned, he will personally trample it into the mud so it is useless to scavengers. All the while he will rant, rave and swear at the gobbers, their mothers, and their mothers' mothers.

While the party is tending to the caravan, there is no risk of being attacked. The gobbers are gone for good. Of course, the DM shouldn't let the players know that! The swamp is a dark, damp, spooky place, full of strange noises. The PCs should be kept on edge until they are out the Wood, which takes a few hours.

At last, you are free of the swampy morass of Widower's Wood. The black, twisted trees part, and the ever-present mist finally thins and clears. Ahead of you is Corvis, City of Ghosts. A low wall surrounds an impossibly dense mass of stone structures. Marble spires, topped with gold, burst through the fog and smoke at street level and reach for the heavens. A tangle of bridges and arches ensnares everything in a stony grasp. Gunner Wadock raises his voice to be heard over the creaking wagons. "We'll be first off to see Father Dumas at the Church of Morrow. He can tend our wounds, and we have a crate or two for him as well. We'll part ways there, and you'll get yer gold. 'Twas a pleasure riding with you."



At the Church Of Morrow



Summary: The PCs make the acquaintance of Father Pandor Dumas, one of the most respected spir-

itual leaders in the city. The Father asks the PCs to investigate a recent rash of grave robberies in and around Corvis. This will lead the PCs into a greater mystery relating to a witchcraft trial many years ago.

The Church of Morrow is a large, ornate cathedral set upon a small island in the eastern part of the city. Father Dumas lives in the upper story of the building, as he has for almost 20 years. The Church is attached to the mainland by two short bridges. There is a small graveyard on the premises, and in it lie generations of priests and other friends of the Church. An imposing granite tomb lies just outside the entrance to the Church; in it is buried the lead witch from the Corvis Coven scandal.

If any of the caravaners are killed or badly hurt, Gunner Wadock will frantically run into the church and begin shouting for Father Dumas. Otherwise, his approach will be more relaxed, and he will first retrieve two crates from inside one of the wagons. If asked, he will say the crates contain hymnals, holy texts and other such items for the Church—not including holy water, if any PCs should ask.

After getting Father Dumas' attention for the wounded, Gunner will turn to the PCs. Each of them will receive 25 gp for their escort duties. If the gobbler ambush was successfully fought off, Gunner will be complimentary and friendly. If the caravan lost a lot of cargo, or if anyone was killed, Gunner will be curt if not outright rude.

If the group had to temporarily abandon a wagon on the road, Gunner may, at the DM's discretion, ask the PCs to help him retrieve it. If the PCs agree, they will be paid an additional 5 gp each, and Gunner will set out immediately, leaving the other caravan drivers to deliver the rest of the cargo. The details of this jaunt are left up to the DM, but here are some ideas.

- ▶ Gobbers have returned and dragged the wagon deep into the swamp.
- ▶ A few human bandits have laid claim to the wagon and are looting it when the PCs arrive.
- ▶ A family of swampies has found the wagon, driven it home, and refuses to give it back.
- ▶ The wagon has been shattered and mangled by some sort of animal. If the PCs investigate, locals will say the claw marks are a sure sign that Voorie, the swamp's mythical monster, did the damage.
- ▶ The wagon has been emptied of anything of value—even the wheels have been stolen. The thieves may be located with good use of Track and Wilderness Lore.

If the PCs do go back out with Gunner, make sure they talk to Father Dumas first to keep them on track!

The Witchfire Trilogy



Father Pandor Dumas

A Talk With Father Dumas

After the caravan's business has been concluded, Father Dumas will wish to speak with the PCs. It seems that there have been a number of grave robberies recently in and around Corvis, and the Father would like to hire someone to get to the bottom of the matter. For this work he can offer the PCs no money, but they are welcome to room and board in the church so long as they are investigating. Father Dumas will also assist with his clerical abilities in any way he can, short of adventuring with the party.

Father Dumas is sincere in his desire to find the source of the trouble and put a stop to it. He doesn't have any idea that the grave robbery is related to the witchcraft trial of a decade ago (see below). As the PCs uncover more clues, Father Dumas can help them put the pieces together. He should become an ally and important NPC in this campaign. When the PCs begin their investigation on his behalf, he will give them a small silver holy symbol, which will identify them as his wards. If they abuse this privilege, Father Dumas will be furious.

As Father Dumas speaks with the PCs about the events, the PCs should see his niece, Alexia, peering at them. If they are outside, they will see her silhouette at a window in the cathedral. If they are inside, she'll be upstairs, looking down from the rectory. Alexia is curious about the PCs, and she will ask them what they are doing for her Uncle Pandor if she gets a chance to talk with them.

While the PCs talk to Father Dumas, the DM should keep these facts at hand.

Q: How many bodies have been stolen?

A: Seven so far.

Q: When was the first body stolen?

A: One month ago.

Q: The last?

A: Three days ago.

Q: Where have the events taken place?

A: Four of the bodies were taken from boneyards inside Corvis. Three were taken from family plots just outside the city.

Q: Have any of the bodies been recovered?

A: No.

Q: Who were the "victims?"

A: Various people around town. (Father Dumas will hand the PCs a slip of paper with some notes. This is all he knows about the victims. See the coming sidebar for all the details).

Q: Anything strange about the events?

A: I haven't seen any of the sites first hand, so I can't say. You will have to investigate.

Q: Aren't there already constables in town for this kind of thing?

A: I tried to get the Watch to help. Unfortunately they decided not to investigate the events, claiming that they needed to prepare themselves for the rowdy crowds that the Longest Night festival always brings.

Q: Is Alexia your daughter?

A: No, she is my niece, from my late wife's side. Her mother died and I took her in.

Q: You lost your wife?

A: Yes, she died in childbirth many years ago. I have raised Alexia like the daughter I never had.

What if the PCs Don't Cooperate?

If the PCs don't want to take on the job, don't force

Human Religion in the Iron Kingdoms

The Iron Kingdoms game setting has its own deities and legends. DMs can use this background material, or keep the game in their current fantasy world.

Humans in the Iron Kingdoms have two main patron deities. The prophet Morrow (NG) is the lord of goodness and light, and is worshipped by most humans. His fraternal twin sister Thamar (NE) is the patron of the selfish and evil. The two started out as normal humans, thousands of years ago, but they believed that any person could improve their lot in life almost without end. After a long, hard path, they ascended into divinity and enlightenment, sacrificing their physical bodies so that they could walk the earth in spirit, providing guidance to those who needed it. Sadly, the siblings fought near the end of their journey, and their paths diverged.

Clerics of Morrow and Thamar can be of any good or evil alignment, respectively. Those that are especially devoted may even Ascend to take their place at Morrow or Thamar's side. This is a rare and special event; only a handful have ever Ascended to become Avatars.

The Church of Morrow has a very formal structure and rich history. The worship of Thamar is a solitary thing. Rarely will one see so much as a shrine in her name. However, all humans are strong believers in the central teaching of both siblings—you create your own destiny, and your lot in life is not fixed at birth.

Learn more about the deities of the Iron Kingdoms, including their clerical domains, at <http://ironkingdoms.com>.

The Witchfire Trilogy

them to—yet, anyway. Let them explore Corvis for a few days. They can be pressured into contacting the Father if they run short on money for lodging. A run in with some sticky fingered rogues can help that along. A distraught family member, who is upset that the city Watch won't try to find the criminal, can also hire them. This will quickly lead them back to Father Dumas.

So What's Really Going On?

The PCs will soon find themselves on an adventure with its roots ten years in the past—the infamous Corvis Coven witchcraft trial. It's important for the DM to become familiar with this story, which is the foundation of The Witchfire Trilogy.

Ten years ago, almost to the day the PCs arrive in Corvis, a witchcraft scandal rocked the town. Magistrate Ulfass Borloch, a relative newcomer to the city council, exposed a coven of five witches he claimed were responsible for all manner of devilish activities in and around Corvis. The witches were all apparently normal womenfolk from the city and surrounding communities, but their crimes were indisputable. Whipped into a panic by the crusader Borloch, the townsfolk demanded action. The witches were put on trial, and within days the decision to execute them was made. One of the coveners was Lexaria Ciannor (see-AN-or), Father Pandor Dumas' sister-in-law.

After the witches were executed—on a specially prepared plot of land deep in Widower's Wood—the bodies were locked away in a crypt, and powerful enchantments sealed them away forever. The leader of the coven, Father Dumas' own sister-in-law, received even more special treatment. She lies in a special repository on Church grounds within the city. Her granite tomb serves as a warning to all that Corvis will not tolerate the black arts. Inside the tomb is the magical blade Witchfire, which was used in the executions.

Of course, things are not always as they seem.

The accused women were in fact a coven of witches, but their works were benevolent. They used their sorcerous powers in secret for the betterment of their community. Unfortunately, Magistrate Borloch—an extremely ambitious man of low character—stumbled onto their secret. He decided to use the coven's powers for his own ends, and he proceeded to blackmail them. If the coven did not do his bidding, he said, they would be exposed, tried on trumped up witchcraft charges, and exiled—or worse. As a junior city official he had the connections to make their lives a living hell, and he swore he would do it if they didn't cooperate with him.

Afraid for their lives, the coven agreed to help Magistrate Borloch, which of course sealed their fate. At first their deeds were small—an embarrassing incident created for an enemy of Borloch, that kind of thing—but before long things were out of control.



The Witchfire Trilogy

Borloch's enemies began to disappear or die in mysterious ways. His personal wealth began to grow, and he climbed ever higher in Corvis' political circles.

These events were spread out over three years. Borloch was greedy, but he was also smart and patient. He carefully used the coven's power to his own benefit, simultaneously planning the double-cross that would see them tried and executed. By the time the coven realized what was happening, it was far too late to make things right. Before they could decide what to do, they were dragged from their homes, bound, gagged and imprisoned in the darkest jail cells under Corvis city hall. Within days they were put to death, and Borloch was in the clear.

Father Dumas was unfortunately completely fooled by Borloch's machinations. Even if he knew the whole story, there isn't much he could have done; the coven had done some terrible things, and their poor judgment ultimately doomed them. He was forced to go along with the trial and execution, even though his wife's sister was one of the accused.

Things were even harder on Alexia Ciannor, Father Dumas' seven-year-old niece. Her Uncle Pandor tried to shield her from the harsh realities of the trial and execution, but Alexia was an intelligent, willful child. She managed to sneak away into the woods, where she witnessed the executions for herself. In a daze, she stumbled home. What she saw unhinged her young mind, and it shaped her destiny. Years later, when her own magic powers began to mature, Alexia began to formulate her revenge. This is the same time the PCs arrive in Corvis.

Behind the Scenes

There is still more to the trial of the Corvis Coven, and there is another man in the shadows, pulling strings. Borloch's role as stated above is accurate, but there is another layer that the players will in time unravel.

Magistrate Borloch did not stumble across the coven by chance. He had a mentor of sorts—a powerful wizard named Vahn Oberen. Oberen knew of the coven through prophecy and his own magical means, and had his own dark plans for them. He came to Corvis, approached Borloch in secret and proposed the whole

scheme. Pleased to have a powerful ally, Borloch agreed to move ahead with the plan. He did not fully trust the mysterious Oberen, but decided the risk was worth the reward.

The years passed, and the plan proceeded perfectly. Under Oberen's guidance, Borloch's personal power was on the rise, and eventually the coven had been successfully framed. Oberen had asked little over the years, and Borloch had become complacent. The coven was in chains, and their end was near. It was at this time that Oberen made a final demand of Borloch—when the executions took place, it must be Oberen himself that wore the executioner's black hood.

Borloch was surprised, but as a powerful politician it was easy for him to arrange this. The executions were performed on consecrated ground, deep in Widower's Wood, and only the city's elite inner circle was allowed to attend. Far from the eyes of the public, Oberen donned the executioner's hood and lopped the heads off the five restrained women. In his hand was a most unusual weapon—the ancient blade Witchfire.

Forged for just such an occasion, Witchfire was a powerful anti-spellcaster weapon. It had a most unique ability; when employed in exactly the correct fashion, it had the ability to drain levels from the victim and add them to the wielder.

The Corvis Coven's execution fit the bill perfectly. Five witches, an entire coven, executed on enchanted ground under a full moon—this was the event that Oberen had engineered for years. Borloch was just a convenient pawn, and he had played the role perfectly.

At the final stroke, the blow that executed Father Dumas' sister-in-law Lexaria, the leader of the coven, Oberen was overcome with the power flowing into him and fell into unconsciousness. Borloch had to act quickly lest Oberen be discovered. He ordered his personal guard to take the fallen executioner away and tend to him. At the same time, Father Dumas' holy order descended on the scene to tend to the bodies. Borloch, not knowing anything about the Witchfire and Oberen's plans, left the magic blade where it fell and scurried off to take care of Oberen. Father Dumas' men picked up the sword, and it found its way back to the Church. Totally ignorant of its special properties,



Alexia Ciannor

Father Dumas entombed the Witchfire with Lexaria Ciannor.

Upon awakening days later, Oberen became furious when he learned the Witchfire had been lost. It had taken him years to locate it, and despite the success of the ritual executions he had many more plans for it. He knew that Father Dumas had the blade, but it was not practical to raid Corvis' largest cathedral and take it—so there the Witchfire has remained, with Oberen waiting for an opportunity to take it back. This is the scenario when the PCs arrive.

It will take them even longer to learn about Oberen and his true history. Under the name Dexter Sirac, Oberen used to be in charge of King Vinter Raelthorne the Elder's hated and feared secret police—the Inquisition. As Sirac, Oberen was responsible for countless Inquisition atrocities, including the roundup and execution of hundreds of sorcerers, whom King Raelthorne the Elder considered a threat to his rule. Sirac disappeared when Raelthorne the Elder was overthrown by his younger brother Leto, and made a new life for himself under the name Vahn Oberen.



Investigating the Grave Robberies



Summary: The PCs will visit the sites of the grave robberies, looking for clues. They will speak to some of the family members and other city folk, and they will learn about the Corvis Coven trial of a decade ago. Hopefully, they will begin to see that the events are connected. Father Dumas will be dismayed when this comes to light.

The grave robbery investigation will take the players all over the city, and they'll have to explore the lands beyond the city wall as well. The DM should feel free to stretch the investigation out for several days. Let the

PCs get embroiled in other Corvis adventures while they are on the trail of the grave robber—in the first Act of the adventure, time isn't too critical, and it's important to let the players get to know the city.

When the PCs are investigating the grave robberies, it is important not to let the clues go too freely. The PCs will have to talk to strangers, earn their trust, and ask smart questions. They may miss some vital clue and need to come back to a site a second time. If they get stuck, use Father Dumas to nudge them in the right direction. Don't give anything away freely, but don't let them get frustrated either! If they are getting restless, engineer an encounter with some thugs to let the party blow off steam. This can also be a way of getting acquainted with the town Watch, which is important as well.

Following are details on the grave robbery sites.

The Northern Graveyard

The Northern Graveyard is the largest boneyard in all of Corvis. It is a vast expanse of headstones, crypts and tombs, crisscrossed by narrow winding paths and dotted with scrawny bushes and trees. The thicket of grave markers winds in between the buildings north of the Church. In the center of the graveyard is a tiny stone building where the caretaker lives.

This is where the Sylva and Monsonata family sites were despoiled. The building is home to the sole caretaker, Gum Bocker. Gum is ancient but spry, and he has been working in the graveyard for over fifty years.

If Gum is asked, he will be able to provide the following information to the PCs.

- ▶ The full names of the missing are Moira Monsonata and Kell Sylva.
- ▶ Each has been dead for almost 10 years.
- ▶ The bodies were taken on the same night, exactly 2 weeks ago.
- ▶ No one else has come asking about this.
- ▶ The PCs can see the grave sites, but they have been repaired since the robbery. There are no further clues to be found there.

If by any chance the PCs decide to get Gum drunk, he will tell a slightly different story. On the night the bodies were taken, he saw a lovely young girl in the graveyard. She fled at his approach, and he hasn't seen her since. Once he sobers up, Gum will deny having seen anything at all.

When the PCs visit this graveyard for the first time, Watch Captain Julian Helstrom will be here as well, visiting the grave of his dead wife. If the PCs introduce themselves, Helstrom will be polite and converse with them.

The Witchfire Trilogy

The Gadock Family Farm

This is a small farm near the eastern gate of the city. Bern Gadock, the man of the house, will be happy to see the PCs as long as they are polite. The family was very shaken when old Grandfather Hagger Gadock went missing one week ago. If Bern is questioned, his responses will be just like Gum Bocker's, above—he doesn't know much.

The Gadocks have two small barns, a pen for hogs, and some small fields of wheat and corn. The farmhouse is unremarkable. The family graveyard is behind the farmhouse, in the shade of a giant apple tree.

Bern's wife is named Betilda. The couple has a three year old son named Hagger, after his grandfather. If the PCs decide to question Hagger directly, he will claim to have seen Grandpa walking away on the night he vanished. There is no evidence to support or refute this; it was raining that night, and there are no prints or anything else to find. Bern has also cleaned up the gravesite.



Magistrate Ulfass Borloch

The Sunbright Estate

The Sunbright home is a beautiful mansion surrounded by a low wall, surrounded by many other such homes in one of the nicer parts of the city. The family has hung festive banners from the balconies in preparation for the Longest Night festival, which is a few days from now.

The PCs will be shown into the foyer by the butler, who will then fetch Elger Sunbright. The Sunbrights are a rich merchant family with a distinguished pedigree. Elger is a busy man, and he was on his way out when the PCs called. He will be very unreceptive to the PCs; only if the party is unfailingly polite and well-groomed will their questions be entertained. The only question the PCs are guaranteed to get an answer to is the name of the deceased and when he was taken: Radnor Sunbright, about 3 weeks ago. If the PCs are polite, they may also learn that Radnor's expensive marble tomb was damaged in the robbery, and that he died of illness 8 years ago.

Under no circumstances will the PCs be allowed to see Radnor's tomb. If they decide to sneak onto the grounds later, they will find it still in a state of disrepair. The heavy marble door lies shattered on the ground, and the one-room tomb is totally empty. Just outside the tomb, a Spot check of DC 15 will reveal some tattered shreds of white silk caught in the thorns of a rosebush.

The fabric is from one of Alexia's dresses, and if the PCs can convince Father Dumas to investigate he will find a white silk dress of hers that has recently been mended. It's not proof of anything, but it will make Father Dumas more open-minded if the PCs try to pin the recent events on Alexia. Note that if Alexia gets wind of this, she will immediately become wary of the PCs. On the outside she's all sweetness and light, but she'll come to see them as adversaries, and she'll be extremely cautious around them.

If the Sunbrights see the PCs raiding the family tomb, they will holler for the Watch. If the PCs are caught, their only hope of avoiding a thrashing is invoking the name of Father Dumas. Depending on their roleplaying skills, they may be able to convince the Watch to let them go on their way.

Clues

Father Dumas will give the PCs a scrap of paper with some notes written on it to get them started. These are the only details he knows about the events, besides what is written in the Q&A. The PCs will need to visit the locations and talk to the family members to learn more about the grave robberies.

- ▶ Sylva family & Monsonata family. City of Corvis northern graveyard
- ▶ Gadock family. Gadock family farm, outside the eastern city gate.
- ▶ Sunbright family. Sunbright estate, southern Corvis
- ▶ Hopless family & Burkett family. Eastern boneyard, just outside the city gate.
- ▶ Fullet family. Fullet family farm, north of the city.

The Eastern Boneyard

This pathetic place is where the poor bury their dead. Only the wealthy landowners have family plots inside the city, and the Northern graveyard is home to more middle-class occupants. The rest of Corvis plants their dead in this dreary, mucky boneyard a mile outside the eastern city gate.

There is no caretaker, and the place is in terrible disrepair. The stench of death fills the air, and the ground is littered with improvised grave markers and bone fragments. The PCs will have to search the boneyard looking for the despoiled graves they are investigating. After 1d20+20 minutes, they can find one of the graves. The marker reads, "Ham Hopless." The churned earth offers no further clues. After another 1d20+20 minutes, the party will find another despoiled grave, this one reading "Senn Burkett." Again, there are no clues to be found.

A half-mad bum known as Egger lives at the boneyard. Each time the PCs visit, there is a 75% chance he will be there. If they talk to him, he will refuse to speak unless they give him food or money. If the PCs bribe him, he will tell them a strange story—on the night of the grave robberies, he saw a beautiful girl dressed in white wandering through the graveyard. If the PCs try to intimidate him, he will burst into tears and refuse to cooperate. Thereafter, if he sees the PCs he will shriek and run away.

The Fullet Family Farm

A gravel path leads you from the road up to a well-tended farmhouse, which is surrounded by an apple orchard. You can hear pigs and sheep in the distance.

The Fullets are simple farm folk, like the Gadocks. They tend a hundred head of sheep and some pigs. The mother, Lorna Fullet, leads the family. Her three sons and their wives live on the farm as well. Their father, Chander Fullet, died five years ago and it was his body that was stolen from the family plot two weeks previously.

Lorna is a tough, capable woman but she is extremely superstitious. She is also obviously emotional as she speaks with the PCs; after all, her husband's body was stolen. Again there is nothing remarkable about the gravesite, and Lorna has no information specifically about the robbery.

If she is pressed about reasons for the robbery, she

will make an offhand comment about witchcraft. Attentive players may be able to get more information out of her by asking the right questions.

- ▶ Lorna believes there are always witches about, and she has charms and talismans all over her property to protect the family.
- ▶ Chander was a juror in the Corvis witch scandal a decade ago.
- ▶ If Lorna is given a list of names, she will be able to identify about half of them as being jurors in the trial. The rest her memory will fail on.
- ▶ If the PCs don't know about the scandal, Lorna will tell them the basics: a brave magistrate discovered five evil witches, and they were executed.

▶ Lorna thinks that all of the jurors are dead currently.

▶ Their deaths are not believed to be mysterious, though Lorna sees witches behind every ill deed.

If the PCs ask Lorna about the upcoming Longest Night festival, she'll swear up and down that it's a night of decadence and evil, and decent folk should stay off the streets. "I don't let my boys go into the city for the festival, no sir!"

Conclusions

By the time the PCs are done checking out the leads, they should have learned that some of the bodies that were stolen were jurors in a famous witch trial a decade ago. If the PCs were smart or lucky, they may have also learned that a girl in white was seen at the crime scenes.

The party should also have learned the basics of the witchcraft scandal from Lorna Fullet. When they return to Father Dumas, he will verify that all of the names they have found were jurors, and he will tell the players more about the witch scandal, including the story of the executions and where the witches are buried. He will not tell them anything about Borloch's blackmail or the mysterious wizard Oberen—because he doesn't know.

The fact that all the jurors from the trial of the century have been unearthed will be very unsettling to Father Dumas. He will ask the players not to spread the information around—obviously something is going on, and he'd like to get to the bottom of it.

The PCs may have other questions about the trial, and the people involved with it. If asked, Father Dumas will volunteer the following information.

The Witchfire Trilogy

- ▶ The judge in the trial was Lord Atthias Folver. He is quite alive, and still works for the city.
- ▶ Magistrate Borloch, who exposed the coven, is a powerful man. Only the mayor wields more power in Corvis.
- ▶ The identity of the executioner was secret, as dictated by tradition. It's probably an open secret within the city government though.

If the PCs are slow to suggest a trip to the witches' tomb in the woods, Father Dumas will bring it up. If someone is stealing the juror's bodies, they may be interested in the witches' bodies as well, and that could mean big trouble.

So What's Really Going On?

Alexia Ciannor is a sorceress of no small skill. The abilities she inherited are blooming, and she has planned a campaign of revenge against the people who killed her mother. She has used her skills to raise the dead—she is responsible for all the missing bodies, and she was the girl seen by Egger and Gum Bocker. Young Master Gadock really did see his undead grandfather shambling away into the night; Alexia raised him.

Alexia has raised the dead for two reasons. One, she wants to pick their brains (so to speak) about the trial, so she can add more names to her hit list. Two, she is practicing. Her ultimate goal is to restore the coven to unlife and wreak a terrible vengeance on the whole city, and she is closer than anyone would imagine. The PCs will hopefully thwart her at the end of this adventure, but Alexia will be a central character for the rest of the trilogy.

The crafty girl has also found a secret route into the Undercity, and in a lair there she keeps her undead experiments away from prying eyes. The PCs will get a

chance to explore her hideout, but the story is better served if they investigate the tomb first.

Father Pandor Dumas has no idea what his niece is up to. If the PCs try to make him believe she is an evil sorceress, he will probably just laugh at them!

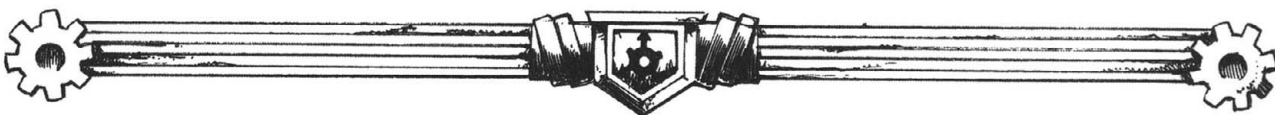
Watch Captain Julian Helstrom





Act II

Wherein the bold adventurers learn the truth behind the gruesome happenings of late in Corvis.



The main thrust of this Act is the discovery of what is really happening in Corvis. Alexia will be finally revealed as a budding necromancer/sorceress, and the party will learn of her intricate plan of vengeance. At this point the PCs should have learned about the witchcraft scandal and connected it to the grave robberies. Through Father Dumas, encourage them to do more investigating. The witches' tomb is an obvious place to start, but indulge anything the PCs want to try. It's more important to give them the freedom to innovate than to hold the adventure to a pre-planned path.



The Witches' Tomb



Summary: The PCs investigate the tomb in Widower's Wood where the dead witches are locked away. They will learn that the bodies of the four witches are missing, and they will find evidence of recent combat.

The Witches' Tomb is a two-hour trip into the swampy Wood. Father Dumas will not accompany the

PCs, but he does provide them with a map and directions. He also admonishes them to be careful—if the Tomb has been violated there is no telling what they will find.

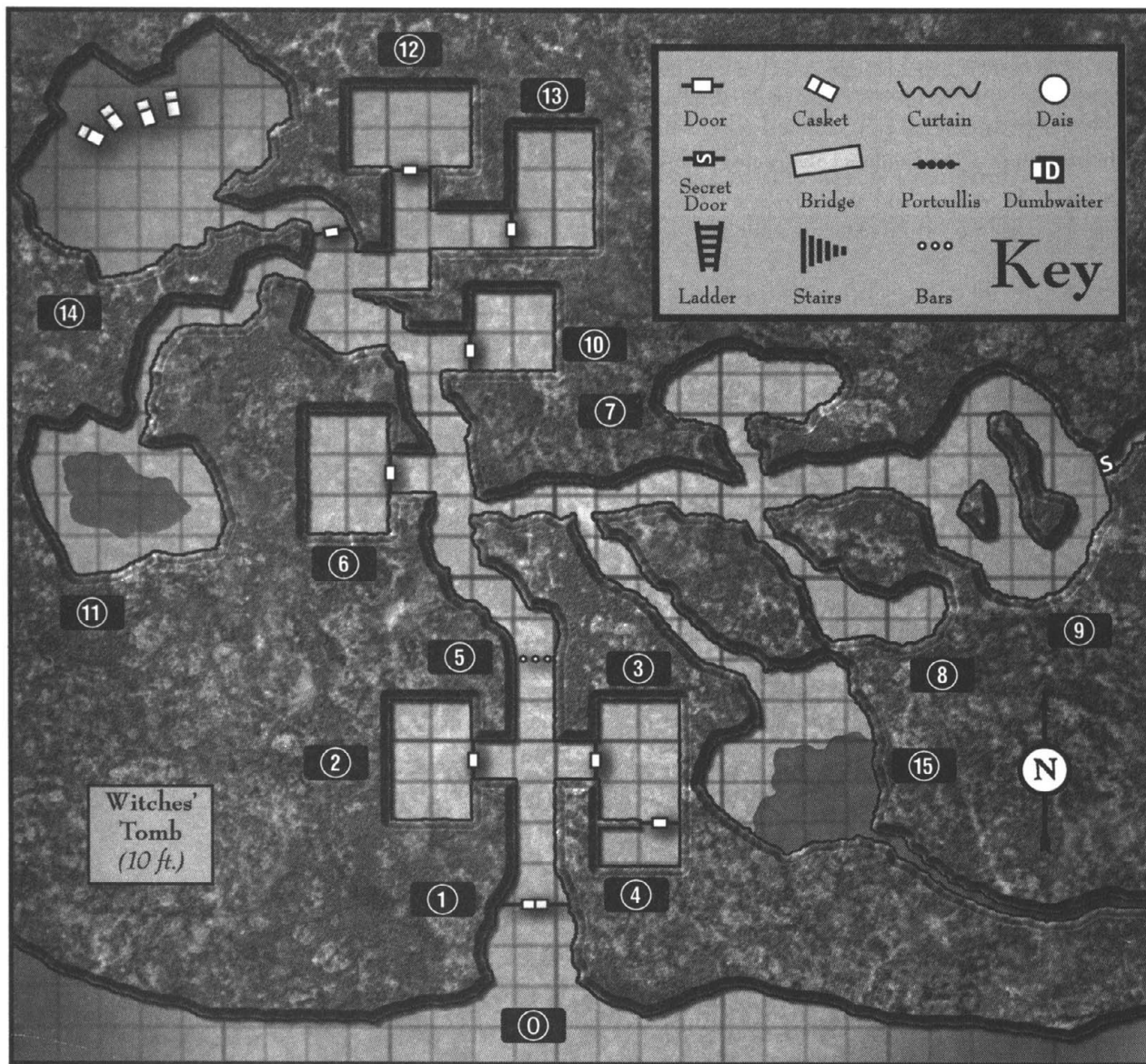
The Tomb is off the beaten track, and the PCs will have to go cross-country. Horses can be taken into the deep Wood, but they offer no speed or mobility advantage due to the thick vegetation and mucky puddles. If the DM wishes, encounter checks can be made on the way to the Tomb and the way back.

The Tomb itself is actually an ancient scout's base from the days of the old Imperial Army. A thousand years ago a great war engulfed the kingdom; this small base and others like it are scattered from here to Caspia. Corvis had no time to excavate a new tomb for the executed witches, so they made do with this dreary fortification in their back yard. Father Dumas will tell the PCs at least this much.

What he cannot tell the PCs is this: about one day before the PCs arrive at the tomb, young Alexia made her own visit. Charged with rage and growing magical abilities, she smashed through the defenses and quickly arrived at the final chamber where four members of the coven were secured. There she remained a long while, intent on the sorceries that would restore the slain witches to unlife.

Of course, Alexia didn't leave herself defenseless as she spent hours chanting in black rituals; she spared a moment to animate some of the tortured souls who lost their lives in this place ages ago. With undead bodyguards at her back, she was free to concentrate on the greater challenge of properly awakening the dead witches and restoring them to some fraction of their former power.

The Witchfire Trilogy



Outside the Tomb

The whole area is overgrown and covered by a thick canopy of trees, like the rest of the swampy Wood. A thin mist creeps about the PC's feet, and strange birds and insects are heard all around.

The entrance to the witches' tomb is set into the side of a hill. A thick granite door bound with rusting iron lies shattered in the mud. Before the door, a 10 ft. wide stone circle is set in the earth. It is overrun with weeds and muck, but anyone who clears away the debris will see arcane runes carved into the granite—it doesn't take a genius to surmise that this is the very spot where the executions took place. The stone slabs are crude; anyone with stoneworking ability can easily see that the circle was built quickly.

Inside the Tomb

The crude interior of the tomb bespeaks its original nature; it was carved out of the ground as quickly as possible for the use of the long dead Orgoth Imperial Army. When the Church and Corvis city council decided to entomb the witches here, they hid the bodies in the deepest part of the base they could find, sealed off the side passages—which have been unexplored for centuries—barred the front door with magic and iron, and hurried back to the comforts of town.

The tomb is a combination of man-made tunnels and natural caves—the original builders accidentally

Wandering Monsters

Every 30 minutes the PCs are in the tomb, there is a 20% chance that they will have a run-in with the swamp gobbers who live here. If an encounter is indicated, the party will meet 1d4+1 swamp gobbers.

The Witchfire Trilogy

broke through into caverns in several places. Some of these caverns were used for storage or other purposes. Others were too wet or treacherous to be useful, and the builders ignored these.

In game terms, the tomb is constructed as follows.

Man-made rooms and passageways: Hewn stone walls, flagstone floors. The tomb's main corridor has a trickle of water running downslope, and the slippery flooring may add to the DC of some tasks.

Natural caverns: Unworked stone walls, natural stone floors.

See DMG105 for more information on dungeon settings.

Remember that the tomb is ancient, about one thousand years old. Anything of obvious value was stolen long ago. Nothing made of wood or natural fiber will have survived the centuries. The only signs of the original occupants are marks on the stone and rusting iron fixtures.

The Tomb's locations numbered on the interior map are detailed below. Please read the entire dungeon before trying to run it. The encounter in room 10 may

need to be moved to another location, depending on your party's path!

0. Front Doors

The entrance to the Tomb is set into the side of a low hill. A thick granite double door, bound with rusting iron, lies shattered in the mud. Beyond gapes a black maw.

Any player that investigates the shattered doors will see the worn remnants of an unfamiliar glyph carved into the stone fragments—a leering face on a field of stars. This is the symbol of the ancient Orgoth Empire that predates the Kingdom of Cygnar. Any PC who has spent an appreciable amount of time in the Iron Kingdoms will know this on an Int check of DC 15.

With a Search check of DC 10, a PC will see the glint of metal underneath the stone fragments. It is a thin bronze plaque bearing the seal of the city of Corvis, which was apparently affixed to the stone door when the witches were sealed in the tomb. The plaque is scorched and warped.



The Witchfire Trilogy

1. Entrance

Beyond the shattered door lies a chamber crudely carved from the living rock. Ahead, a passageway plunges down into the darkness. A trickle of slimy water wends its way from the doorway into the darkness. Two rusting metal bits that may have been torch sconces are fixed to the walls opposite the doorway.

There is nothing to see in this room.

2. Barracks A

This plain stone room is dry and comfortable compared to the damp entranceway and main corridor. Four torch sconces adorn the corners, and there is a dusty fire pit in the center of the room. Someone has apparently been sleeping in a pile of dry leaves in the NW corner. There are no other exits.

The nest of leaves has actually been used very recently, by a tribe of swamp gobbers who sometimes take shelter in the ruins. Over the firepit is a dome in the ceiling, with some sort of vent in it. It's obviously some kind of chimney, though it is far too small for any character to get into.

There is a loose flagstone in the NW corner; a Search check of DC 20 will locate it. Under the stone is a single tarnished copper coin. Upon it is scratched a strange symbol. With a Knowledge check of DC 12 (Local) the mark will be identified as the symbol of the Gertens crime family of Corvis. There another treasure in this cubbyhole—a pistol worth 800 gp. The gun is wrapped in oilcloth, and covered with a thick black grease to keep it from rusting. Three powder and shot charges are present too, placed in a small wood box. Before the gun can be used, it needs to be degreased, which will require a Craft (gunsmithing) roll of 10. The ammunition is old and the magic has faded; each charge has only a 50% chance of firing. Replacements can be purchased from a good alchemist for 10 gp each. (2d4 piercing, reload 1S/DC6, crit 19–20/x3, range 40 ft., 4 lb. See privateerpress.com for rules.)

3. Barracks B

This dry, empty room is unremarkable. There are four sconces in the corners, all of which have a dry, dusty firebrand in them. There is an empty firepit in the center of the room, and there is an exit at the far right corner.

There is nothing to see in this room. Workers left the torches here ten years ago during the witches' burial. As in the other barracks, a vent in the ceiling seems designed to let smoke out of the room.

4. The Lieutenant's Quarters

Water drips from the low rough-cut ceiling onto the flagstones below. An eerie, leering face on a field of stars is carved into a black marble slab, set into the wall opposite the doorway.

The symbol is the same as the one carved into the granite door outside. The marble slab has chips and tool marks around the perimeter—apparently, someone has tried to pry it from the wall, but they failed. Anyone who tries to take the carving must pass a Profession (stoneworking) roll of DC 13. If the carving is removed it has a value of 20gp to the right buyer.

The Orgoth Empire

One thousand years ago, the land now known as the Iron Kingdoms was part of the mighty Orgoth Empire. The Empire was formed after almost two centuries of all-out warfare, with the Orgoth raiders dispatching countless ships from their faraway lands. Eventually the invaders succeeded in their conquest, and the land fell under six centuries of their rule.

The Orgoth folk were human, but not like any now seen in the Iron Kingdoms. They worshipped strange, dark gods, and their customs were alien and distasteful. The Empire was cruel, and erected many works with centuries of slave labor. The dungeon that serves as the witches' tomb was once an army base in the Orgoth Empire.

The Empire was eventually overthrown after almost two centuries of struggle, but their influence is still dimly felt. Today, hundreds of years later, much of their strange stonework remains in dark places. Despite their centuries of rule, little is known today about the Orgoth people or their homeland. They remain a curiosity to modern folk, all but forgotten except to antiquarians or those who explore the ruins that are their legacy.

5. Ruined Gate

Thick, rusted iron bars make up the ruins of an ancient gate. The heavy metal is twisted and warped, as if a great force pulled the gate apart. The floor is littered with flakes of rust and stone chips where the sturdy bars have been wrenched from their foundations.

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The Witchfire Trilogy

The old gate was sealed by the smiths of Corvis a decade ago—one more barrier between the burial chamber and the outside world. The gate was also enchanted, but Alexia destroyed metal and spell alike as she tore the gate asunder.

6. Commons

Rusted hinges imply there was once a door here, but no more. This room has a series of stone tables running the length of it. There is an empty fireplace at the north end of the room.

This was once a mess hall. The wooden benches are long gone, and only the stone tables remain. The chimney for the fireplace is too small for anyone to get into.

Anyone searching the room will quickly find signs of recent occupation: scraps of cloth, gnawed bones, bits of scrounged metal and other trash. If any chests were stolen from the caravan, one will be here, cracked open and pillaged.

7. Smithy

Cracks in the roof of this cramped cavern admit weak sunlight. Crude stone tables line the perimeter of the room, and a dry pool of some kind has been carved out of the rock. In the center of the room is what looks to be another firepit, but this one is large and deep, built with heavy stones. The cavern floor has been smoothed out, but it is covered with a thin layer of sticky mud.

Characters inspecting the roof will quickly learn two things. One, the biggest of the openings is not big enough for even a halfling, though a smaller creature could pass. Two, soot marks stain the roof of this room.

Anyone looking at the muddy floor before the characters trample all over it will immediately see footprints—tiny feet with sharp toenails. If any of the PCs have tried to track swamp gobbers before, they will recognize these tracks automatically. Any PC with tracking skill will be able to tell that “lots” of gobbers have passed through this room in recent days.

In the old days, this was where the camp’s smith worked. The anvil and everything else was stolen centuries ago. All that remains is the firepit, with holes for the bellows, and the dry pit that was once held water for quenching hot metal. The cracks in the roof are how the local gobbler tribe get into the dungeon.

8. Cave

This is another natural cavern. It has a low ceiling and a gravelly floor. There appears to be nothing of interest here.

The ceiling here is solid. There are no tracks on the floor. A character that wants to dig around in the dirt will find 1d6 tarnished silver coins of the Orgoth Empire if they make a Search check of DC 15. The coins are worth 1gp each to a collector, but only if they are cleaned up first.

9. Cave

This unremarkable cavern has two large rock formations jutting from the rough stone floor. The ceiling is low, and there appears to be nothing of value here.

This unremarkable cavern has two large rock formations jutting from the rough stone floor. The ceiling is low, and there appears to be nothing of value here.

Behind the rock formations the PCs will see the skeletal corpse of a swamp gobbler. The gobbler was killed and eaten a couple of days ago by the 10'x10' patch of cavewort that lurks over this spot. A bit of leather peeks out from under the body. It's a lizard-skin pouch, and inside it is dried rat ear jerky and a spider climb potion. Anyone reaching for the pouch will be attacked by the cavewort.

At the back of the cavern is a very cleverly made secret door, a remnant of the Orgoth Imperial Army. It can only be found with a Search check of DC 22. The gobbers have not found it, nor have anyone else. It hasn't been opened in about six hundred years, so it's a little sticky; a Strength check of DC 22 is needed to open it. Two PCs can try together.

The secret door opens onto a crude passageway that runs 50 yards away to another clever secret door, this one opening from a rock outcropping into a thick patch of forest. This door is stuck in the same manner as the inside one.

10. Captain's Quarters

This bare stone room has a fireplace in the far wall. A single swamp gobbler cowers in the fireplace, holding a short spear in front of him. He whimpers and backs away into the shadows.

The Witchfire Trilogy

Conversation with a Gobber

The DM should try to make this encounter happen after the PCs have seen other signs of gobber presence, such as the items in rooms 2, 6 and 15. If necessary, move this encounter to any other room that doesn't have its own encounter. This is a complex encounter that can end in many different ways, so study it carefully!

This gobber is Borkanhekkanken, a minor figure in the tribe's political system. He was assigned to clean this room, which used to be the Orgoth captain's quarters, and set up a nice fresh nest of leaves so that the gobber chief could sleep here. Alas, poor Bork has bad ears and he didn't hear the PCs coming until it was too late.

Bork is scared for two reasons. One, the chief will kill him for this. Two, Alexia was here yesterday, and she caused all kinds of trouble for the poor gobbies. Bork isn't sure that the PCs aren't somehow related to her—all non-gobbers kind of look the same, after all.

Bork will squeal and beg for mercy in broken Common. Bork will not voluntarily sell out his tribe or his chief, though he could be tricked into this.

As he converses with the players, he will pursue this agenda:

1. Stay alive! Bork is good, Bork is nice, Bork tell you anything! Show you much treasure! No kill Bork!
2. Learn if the PCs connected to the scary witch girl who came here yesterday.
3. Fix this somehow, so Bork will look good to the chief!

Borkanhekkanken knows that the "witch girl" came here yesterday, animated three skeletons from the bone pit to guard her, and then spent half a day in the cavern where the "smelly boxes" (caskets) lie. She then left with four zombies, though Bork will call them "grey women" if asked; he doesn't know that they were really the re-animated witches. The skeletons Alexia created to guard her stayed behind. They haven't moved from the cavern they were told to guard, but having them around is still driving the gobbies nuts.

Depending on how the PCs treat Bork, this can end a few different ways. If they slay him, all the gobbies in the dungeon will automatically consider them enemies—there's no disguising the smell of gobber blood on them. If they converse with Bork they may be able to negotiate a temporary truce—perhaps the PCs can destroy the skeletons in exchange for safe passage. A last possibility is that Bork tries to save his life by showing the PCs to "treasure," and he leads them to the skeletons instead. From this point on it's definitely combat whenever the gobbies are seen.

The DM should keep in mind that swamp gobbies are primitive, selfish and chaotic, but they aren't pure evil and they aren't stupid. If it helps the story, have a few gobbies that speak a little common, or use sign language or chalk writing to communicate. An uneasy truce with the gobbies is a lot more interesting than combat. A long-term relationship with a gobber tribe has a lot of possibilities, too!

11. Bone Pit

A crumbly rock ledge runs around a still pool of black water. Water drips from the low, jagged ceiling.

Long ago, this dry sinkhole was used to dispose of bodies produced by the Imperial "interrogation" room. Over the years the Orgoth torturers filled the pit, and many of the skeletons are preserved, encrusted with minerals. Any character shining a light into the pool will see a mass of slimy, greenish bones a few feet below the surface. A few rusted bits of metal are also visible here and there. Anyone making a Spot roll of DC 15 will note a few drips of wax on the floor, as if someone stood here holding a candle. The wax looks as if it is only a few days old at most.

The bone pit is 20' deep, but hopefully no character will be daft enough to find that out. It's obvious that long ago the smell from the pit must have been horrendous. Apparently the Orgoth soldiers stationed here didn't care.



The Witchfire Trilogy

The Thrall Warriors in area 14 came from here. Alexia animated them to act as guards while she performed the more complicated ritual designed to bring the coveners to unlife.

12. Brig

This room was carved out of living rock, and mineral streaks stain the rough walls. Around the perimeter of the room are small alcoves, each just big enough for a man to stand in. Rusty stubs of metal jut from the walls at about eye level.

The Imperial army used this room as a brig. The prisoners were kept standing, hands chained over their heads, until it was their turn in the interrogation room. There is nothing of interest here now.

13. Torture Chamber

Water dripping from the rough ceiling has stained the walls and collected in a pool at the south end of this room. All around the room, rusty bits of metal poke from the walls. Below each metal stub a shallow channel is carved into the floor. The channels merge into a central trough, which ends in a pool in the south end of the room.

"Interrogation" rooms after this fashion are found in most Imperial works of any size. The channels carved into the floor are intended to route the blood of the victims into the holding pool. The floor slopes very slightly from north to south; any character with stoneworking skill will be able to detect this easily.

The holding pool has a few inches of water in it, which is surprisingly clean. The swamp gobbers have been using this water supply instead of braving the pool in area 15. Any character making a Track roll of DC 15 will spot their faint, damp footprints here.

14. Burial Chamber

This natural cavern has a high ceiling and an uneven, gravelly floor. Three slimy, green skeletons clad in scraps of corroded armor stand in formation in the middle of the chamber. With a ghastly hissing sound, they begin to advance!

This was the cavern the Corvis city council had four of the witches buried in. Alexia returned here yesterday and raised them from the dead. She created these Thrall Warriors as well, at the bone pit in area 11. They were told to guard this place while she worked, and she

didn't think to dismiss them as she left; they'll stay here, attacking anyone who enters the cave, until they are destroyed. If the players deal with the Thralls, they will be able to investigate the caskets.

The caskets are arrayed in the very back of the cavern. Each is made of thick, heavy wood, bound with iron and brass. Heavy chains wrapped each casket, but these are now broken, and the caskets lie open. Their crude wooden interiors are heavily bloodstained, especially at the top—astute players will know that the witches were beheaded, after all...

At the foot of each casket, a tarnished brass plaque is mounted, naming the occupant and her crimes.

Here Lies Doromia Smythe, Beheaded for the Crime of Witchcraft in the Year of Our Kingdom 593

The other three names are Kellwyn Sikes, Morgan Innswood and Aria Black. If the characters have researched the witch trial, they will recognize the names, and note that one is missing—Lexaria Ciannor. She is interred on hallowed ground, at Father Dumas' church. The PCs may not know this yet, but if he is asked Father Dumas will explain things.

A dozen beeswax candles, each about half-burned, are arranged in a circle around the caskets. (Any character making an appropriate skill check will know that takes about four hours.) In between the candles, glyphs have been traced out in a fine red powder. Many of the glyphs are ruined, trampled and unreadable, but towards the back of the circle they are legible. A Spellcraft roll of DC 12 will reveal that they are of necromantic nature. A roll of DC 16 or more will inform the reader that they are part of a very powerful resurrection spell. The red powder, upon closer examination, seems to be nothing more than colored sand. A spool of thick black thread and a heavy needle are also laying here—Alexia had to sew the severed heads back on to the dead coveners.

15. The Still Pool

The narrow, rocky passage you tread eventually widens into a large cavern. Thick, fine sand lines the floor, and a large pool occupies the back half of the cave. Strangely, a small boat has been pulled up onto the shore.

The Pool

The water in the pool is crystal clear, and with good light the PCs can see down 15' to the bottom, which is lined with sand and jagged rocks. Only a very sharp-eyed PC will be able to Spot the 10' long swamp squid,

The Witchfire Trilogy

which is partially buried in the sand and perfectly camouflaged. On the other hand, it's easy to see the 2d6 gold coins scattered on the sand, plus what looks like an ornate dagger in a sheath. Buried for centuries, these treasures have recently been stirred up by the squid.

The still pool is joined to a nearby river by a few hundred yards of cramped natural tunnel, which is just barely big enough for the gobbers' small boat. The tunnel mouth is at the very back of the pool, and won't be visible from the shore unless something stronger than torchlight is used to illuminate the cave. The squid often visits this place, where it snacks on fish and rats.

Gobber tracks are easily visible in the cavern's soft sand, needing only a Track roll of DC 10. If the characters are careless and walk all over before checking for tracks, the difficulty increases to 20.

The Boat

The small canoe of reeds and skins belongs to the swamp gobbers that often use this abandoned base for shelter. It has a few items in it—a broken knife, scraps of dried rat meat wrapped in leaves, a few nails in a leather pouch and four small water skins. There is also a 10' pole with a small basket of woven reeds on the end. The gobbers were trying to use the basket to scoop up the coins at the bottom of the pool, but they misjudged how long a pole they needed.

The boat can hold only about 150 lbs. If a heavy PC gets into it, it will snap and sink!

The water skins actually don't contain water at all—instead, they hold a thick, brown, noxious liquid that, if tasted, makes the character nauseous for 1d2 hours, or 1d4+2 hours if they fail a Fort save of DC 14. The liquid isn't gobber booze—it is swamp squid repellent. Unfortunately for the PCs it isn't labeled.

They gobbers were here when Alexia showed up yesterday, and saw everything she did. Because of her, they are a little spooked, and they will give the characters a wide berth until they can determine if they are dangerous or not.

The gobbers know that a large, ornery swamp squid often lurks in this cave pool. They have brewed up their own repellent, which they dump into the water if the

squid attacks them. The squid may be learning; it is in the pool today, but it didn't attack the gobber boat. From where it lies it can dimly see the PCs, though, and it will attack if anyone gets too close to the water!

The Squid

Each time a PC or group of PCs steps up to the water there is a 25% chance per round the squid will strike. If anyone enters the water, the chance of attack is 100%. The squid will strike with lightning speed, and try to drag the victim underwater to drown.

If the repellent is dumped into the water, the squid will squirt ink (if it has any left), immediately release anyone it may be holding and swim away down the tunnel. It will not return for 1d4 days.

Like squid ink, the repellent will also cloud the water for up to 20 minutes, making it impossible to see the treasure at the bottom. See Appendix A for complete stats on the swamp squid.

The Treasure

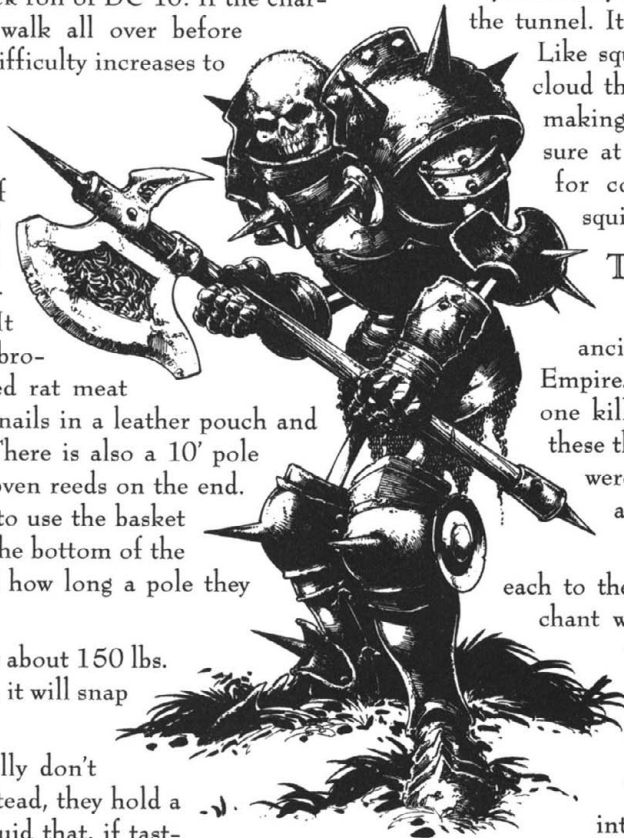
The gold coins and dagger are ancient, dating back to the Orgoth Empire. In fact, a squid much like this one killed a soldier in this cave, and these things were his. His companions were afraid to dive into the pool and retrieve the items.

The gold coins are worth 2gp each to the right buyer, though any merchant will take them in trade at 1gp value. They bear the likeness of His Most Dreadful Aspect, Emperor Kale XXXIV of the Orgoth Empire.

The dagger is much more interesting. It is a 9" black steel blade, inlaid with bright copper runes. The hilt is wrapped in black wire, and there is a cut piece of obsidian at the pommel. The sheath is black leather dressed with copper filigree. The dagger and sheath are untarnished, and it won't take King Raelthorne's court wizard to see that magic is at work.

If the dagger is analyzed properly, the PCs will learn these things.

- ▶ The blade is enchanted to +1. Unlike some magic weapons, it does not give off any light.
- ▶ The inscription, in ancient Orgoth, reads as follows: *For my son, Ryark. May your blade always strike true.*—Gen. Orvos XIII



A Thrall Lieutenant

The Witchfire Trilogy

Further research will reveal that General Orvos XIII was a powerful figure in the ancient Orgoth Empire. The dagger was given to his son when he gained officer's rank upon his 19th birthday. It is worth 1500gp for its magical properties alone, but twice that to a buyer who is an aficionado of ancient Orgoth works.

Wrapping Up

After this dungeon romp, the PCs should have learned the following

- ▶ The coven's bodies have been taken!
- ▶ The perpetrator seemed to be a young girl of considerable sorcerous ability

Back in Corvis

At this point there are a number of things the players can do. Some players will have deduced that young Alexia Ciannor is responsible for the havoc at the tomb, and probably the grave robberies as well. Other players may need to do more investigation before reaching that conclusion. It's even possible that some parties may want to call in the guard, or seize the girl themselves. Let's take a look at the possibilities.

"There she is! Get her!"

The worst possible scenario, this is a party bent on frontier justice! If the party wants to seize Alexia Ciannor and take her to the authorities—or dispense justice themselves—the DM has some fast talking to do. First of all, Father Dumas won't believe that his niece is capable of doing such things as raising zombies or digging up graves. He'll listen to the PCs with an somewhat open mind, but he will argue her side, claiming that it must have been someone else, or perhaps an evil spirit.

Father Dumas will not turn Alexia over to the PCs or to the Watch. If the PCs are insistent, and have evidence, such as the scrap of fabric from the Sunbright estate, Father Dumas may go so far as to "agree to talk to her." If the PCs attack Father Dumas or Alexia, he will use his clerical powers to defuse the situation, casting calm emotions, hold person, command and cause fear.

"We're telling"

If the PCs go to the Corvis city authorities, they'll be ignored or laughed at. "So you're telling me that Father

Dumas, a pillar of the community—his niece has been digging up bodies and raising the dead? Are you daft? Get out of here before you get a thrashing!"

If Father Dumas learns that the PCs have been telling tales to the authorities, he will become angry with them. He won't refuse to work with them, though—his nature is more forgiving than that. The PCs will have to do something really boneheaded to earn his permanent ire. Father Dumas has an important role in this story, and the DM should try to protect it, within the bounds of reason.

"Let's keep an eye on her"

If the PCs decide to stake out Alexia, they will be rewarded for their patience. 1–3 days after they return from the witches' tomb, they will be able to follow Alexia into her secret hideaway in the catacombs beneath Corvis. This subterranean jaunt is the next major task in the adventure, and the end of Act II.

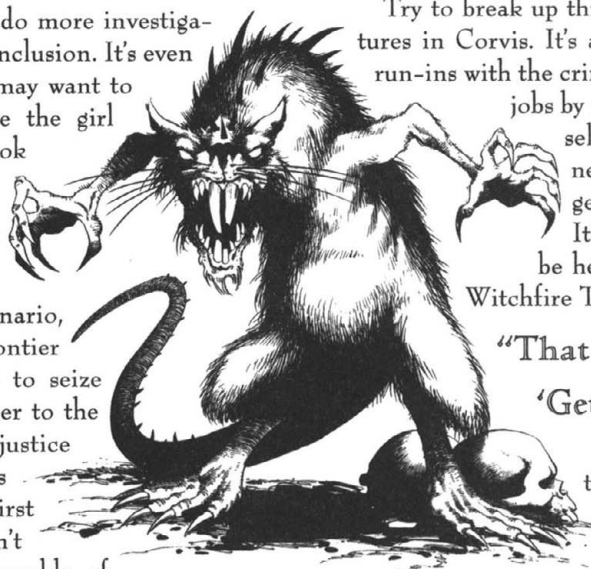
Try to break up this time with other mini-adventures in Corvis. It's a big place! The PCs can have run-ins with the criminal element, be hired for odd jobs by merchants or just occupy themselves searching for spell components. Take every opportunity to get them familiar with the city. It's an exciting place, and they'll be here a lot over the course of the Witchfire Trilogy.

"That was your plan?"

"Get her?!"

There is always the possibility that the PCs will try to abduct Alexia from her home in the church. It's important that they don't get away with this. If they try it, Alexia will give them the slip, and lead them on a chase to her hideout in the catacombs. Don't let them catch her—or if they catch her, find a way for her to get away. Father Dumas can show up, or the Watch can march out of the fog and order, "Put down that girl, miscreant! Prepare for a thrashing!"

It can be argued that it is kind of cheating to use your DM's powers to prevent the players from doing something, especially when they have it well-planned. The trick is to make all of your roadblocks look realistic—even fun. Give them just enough success to make them want to keep going, but hold the real prize just out of reach. The chase should end with Alexia slipping into a secret door, with the players hot on her heels.



The Witchfire Trilogy

“We got her! Now what?”

If the players have such a peach of a plan that it would be a crime to defuse it, let them catch Alexia. She's semi-crazy, but she's not dumb. She'll turn on the waterworks, beg for mercy, and generally look regretful without getting into the specifics of what she may have done. Of course, she's playing them. Her goal will be to get away and get into her hideout. If the best she can do is lure the PCs into her hideout and give them the slip, she'll do that instead. For more details, read ahead to “Alexia's Hideout.”

“Hey, what's in those books?”

If the party tries to search her room in the church's living quarters for clues, the DM can oblige. Under her simple bed are three old history texts. Each was penned by a High Priest like her uncle, and they tell the story of the Church in Corvis over the centuries. In one of these books she learned about the catacombs under the church. If the party notices this dog-eared page (Spot DC 12), they should be able to figure out where she has gone and follow her.

Naturally Father Dumas will be unhappy with the party if they are caught rummaging through her things. However, if the PCs show Father Dumas the marked page detailing the catacombs, he will agree that it is interesting and ask them to investigate. After all, if his niece has started exploring the dangerous Undercity, he'd like her brought back safely.



Alexia's Hideout



Summary: The PCs explore Alexia's secret hideout and learn that she is indeed the one responsible for the grave robberies. She also has much more dreadful plans for Corvis.

Clever Alexia has located an entrance into the ancient catacombs built under the Church. Hundreds

of years ago the damp, dreary catacombs were once used to store plague victims who were waiting their turn on the funeral pyre. After the epidemic subsided, the catacombs were sealed up and fell into disuse. They have been forgotten by all, but Alexia learned of them while reading her uncle's history books. She decided that they would be a perfect place for her to practice her natural magical abilities.

So, one day many months ago she snuck out of her room at night and located a loose flagstone just outside the Church grounds. As promised by the moldy old tomes, it led into the catacombs. The damp limestone passageways hadn't seen anyone for centuries—they were perfect for her needs. She began to move in the supplies she needed for her work—writing materials, candles, herbs, frog's eyes and the like.

Over the next months she continued to study and practice her sorcery in secret, often retiring to the catacombs when she needed extra safety and privacy. Before long, she was ready to try her hand at some more serious necromancy—the raising of people, in preparation for the restoration of the Corvis Coven. Alexia vowed that her mother and the others, who were set up and then executed, would live again to have vengeance!

Alexia's first test subject was the first of the “grave robberies” that the player's investigated. The victim, who was one of the jurors in the Corvis Coven trial, was crudely animated and then concealed in Alexia's underground hideout. Others would soon follow. This is where the events of the past begin to intersect with the PCs' time in Corvis.

In game terms, the catacombs are constructed as follows.

- ▶ Man-made rooms and passageways: Hewn stone walls, flagstone floors.
- ▶ Natural caverns (area 19): Unworked stone walls, natural stone floors.

See DMG105 for more information on dungeon settings.

The Witchfire Trilogy

0. Entrance

You follow a narrow alley into the darkness. After two bends, and a total distance of about ten feet, you come to a dead end. No doors, windows or ladders are to be seen anywhere in the alley. The slick stone walls reach up seemingly forever.

Remember, the PCs can come upon the entrance to Alexia's hideout in many ways. They may have been in hot pursuit, or they may have sneaked in after seeing her enter one evening. They may even have read about

the entrance to the underground hideout in her books. Either way, they come upon what seems to be a dead end. The cobblestones make tracking very difficult (DC 20). A successful check will reveal that someone with small feet has recently been in this alley, but they seem to have vanished.

In fact, there is a secret door here—a trap door, concealed very cunningly among the cobblestones (DC 20 to find it). The door is also magically locked with a *hold portal* spell. Alexia's effective caster level is 10, so the DC to dispel the hold portal is 21. The secret door can also be forced open once it is found; the DC for this is 18 (this includes +5 DC for the hold portal spell).

If the party tries to force the door open there is a 25% chance every 10 minutes that some passing thug will hear the noise and investigate.

Wandering Monsters

While in the catacombs, there is a 25% chance of encountering a wandering monster every 30 minutes. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1d6.

- | | |
|-----|---------------------|
| 1 | Thrall Lieutenant |
| 2 | 1d4+1 Devil Rats |
| 3-4 | 1d3 Thrall Warriors |
| 5-6 | Cavewort (5'x5') |

1. Cramped Tunnel

The trap door opens to reveal a cramped tunnel, no more than six feet tall. Slippery, rusted iron rungs embedded in the wall lead down to what looks like putrid ankle-deep water. The water flows quickly to the north, from where you hear a dull roar. A heavy iron grate prevents travel upstream. More water flows from another grate set into the wall about ten feet downstream.

The party has entered Corvis' aged sewer and drainage system. There is nothing of interest in this tunnel. If anyone looks for tracks, they will see that someone has passed this way very recently with a Tracking roll of DC 10—the slime on the rocks and the ladder makes tracking fairly easy here.

If anyone drops something into the water, they may lose it forever. Floating objects will be whisked away in the brisk current, which moves faster than anyone can run in this space. Heavy objects will roll along the floor, eventually being lost. Very heavy objects, like swords and metal armor won't be swept away. The DM can allow Dex checks to retrieve dropped objects if appropriate. The water smells foul, and is full of floating debris.

The grates, built into the stones, are very old and very heavy. They can't be sundered without heavy tools and a lot of time. Magic could do it too, of course, though probably not at low levels. If the party manages to breach the grates, they will be able to explore more of the tunnels under Corvis. Such an expedition is not within the scope of this adventure, but the DM can feel free to improvise. The PCs could encounter new types of monsters, criminal hideaways, forgotten tombs, natural caves and nearly anything else!

2. Wide Tunnel

The cramped tunnel meets another, much larger tunnel at this intersection. A giant metal grate to the west admits a torrent of water, which runs rapidly down the middle of the tunnel. Raised stone walkways are present on each side of the rapidly-flowing water, and a wet, warped plank bridges the gap. To the east, the passageway slopes downward. The roaring sound is louder here.

There is nothing of value here, though there is plenty of peril for clumsy adventurers. Anyone stepping or falling into the stream of dirty water in the wide tunnel must make a Dex check of DC 14 or they will fall and



The Witchfire Trilogy

be carried downstream. The check must be repeated every round. The water is only a few feet deep, but it is moving very quickly, and it can carry even the heaviest adventurer away. Anyone who is swept away by the water will plunge into the whirlpool in area 3, and they must begin to make Swim skill checks as described there.

It is easy enough to step from the floor of the cramped tunnel to the safe stone walkway that parallels the quickly flowing stream in the wide tunnel. It's also easy to cross the wooden plank that stretches across the torrent of water, if anyone wants to walk on the other side. However, the plank is old and rotten. If two or more characters walk on it at the same time, it will break and everyone on it will fall into the water. At that point, Dex checks of DC 18 need to be made, or else the PCs will be swept away into the whirlpool.

Fortunately for the characters, some rusted iron fittings in the walls can be used to make a rope bridge across the torrent. Unfortunately, the old metal rings are brittle, and there is a 5% chance every 10 minutes that one of them will break if it is supporting any weight.

3. The Whirlpool

The torrent flowing down the middle of the wide tunnel plunges ten feet down into a large whirlpool. Another such torrent enters from the east side of the room. A narrow walkway permits movement around the edge of the pool, but it has collapsed on the south side of the chamber. Ten feet below the ledge, a metal grate on the south wall admits more water to the whirlpool; a grate on the north wall seems to be a drain. The room is quite loud from the rushing water.

There is an exit on the east side of the chamber. Anyone who walked across the plank in area 2 and followed the stone walkway down to the whirlpool room can easily walk around the ledge and exit this room. Anyone who stayed on the south side of area 2 will need to backtrack, unless they have some other way of crossing the collapsed ledge.

The whirlpool is rotating quickly, but most of the water in it is draining out the north grate, and there is little downward suction. Anyone who falls into the water will need to make a Swim check of DC 12 every round or they will begin to drown. See the Swim skill rules on PH74.

4. Beyond the Whirlpool

This is another wide tunnel, with two stone walkways above a swiftly flowing stream of water—exactly like the tunnel with the improvised bridge. The tunnel slopes up to the east, and water rushes past you to plunge into the whirlpool. There seems to be another passageway on the north side of the tunnel.

Anyone on the north side of the tunnel will be able to enter the passageway. Anyone on the south side will need to find a way to cross the rushing water. Falling in the water will require constant Dex checks as described in area 2.

If someone investigates the passageway, it will be seen to be dry and finely constructed. Any character with stoneworking experience will be able to tell that the passageway is far older than the sewer system it is connected to.

5. Alexia's Hideout

This chamber has obviously been recently inhabited. There are cushions on the ground, and simple fabric drapes the plain stone walls. In the northeast corner, a crate makes an improvised desk. In the southeast corner, some sort of magic circle is inscribed on the floor.

Interacting with Alexia

If the party chased Alexia into her hideout, she will re-appear at the entrance to this chamber, cast hold person on the party, and lock them in the dungeon. If the PCs captured her and brought her here, she'll make her escape now, trapping the characters and forcing them to find their own way out. It won't be hard; she's equivalent to a 10th level sorcerer in most ways, and the characters are at best second level by now.

To get away from the characters, she will wait for all the PCs to enter the room, and then she will set off a magical trap constructed for just such an occasion. With a word or gesture, a specially modified *hold person* spell will discharge, and the party will be stuck in place. Anyone who saves will get zapped with another *hold person*, *sleep* or *blindness* at the DM's discretion.

If the party has managed to bind and gag Alexia for the trip to the hideout, the trap will still discharge automatically once they have entered the room. At this point a Thrall Slave (Appendix A) will enter the room from the north and untie Alexia.

The Witchfire Trilogy

Once the PCs are incapacitated, Alexia will make a little speech to them.

Fear not, travelers. You are my uncle's guests, and I shan't harm you. I know he brought you into this. I only wish he could understand what I am doing—why I am on this path...

If the party tries to speak to Alexia, she will indulge them, but she will only tarry for a few moments. Under no circumstances will Alexia free the party and work with them.

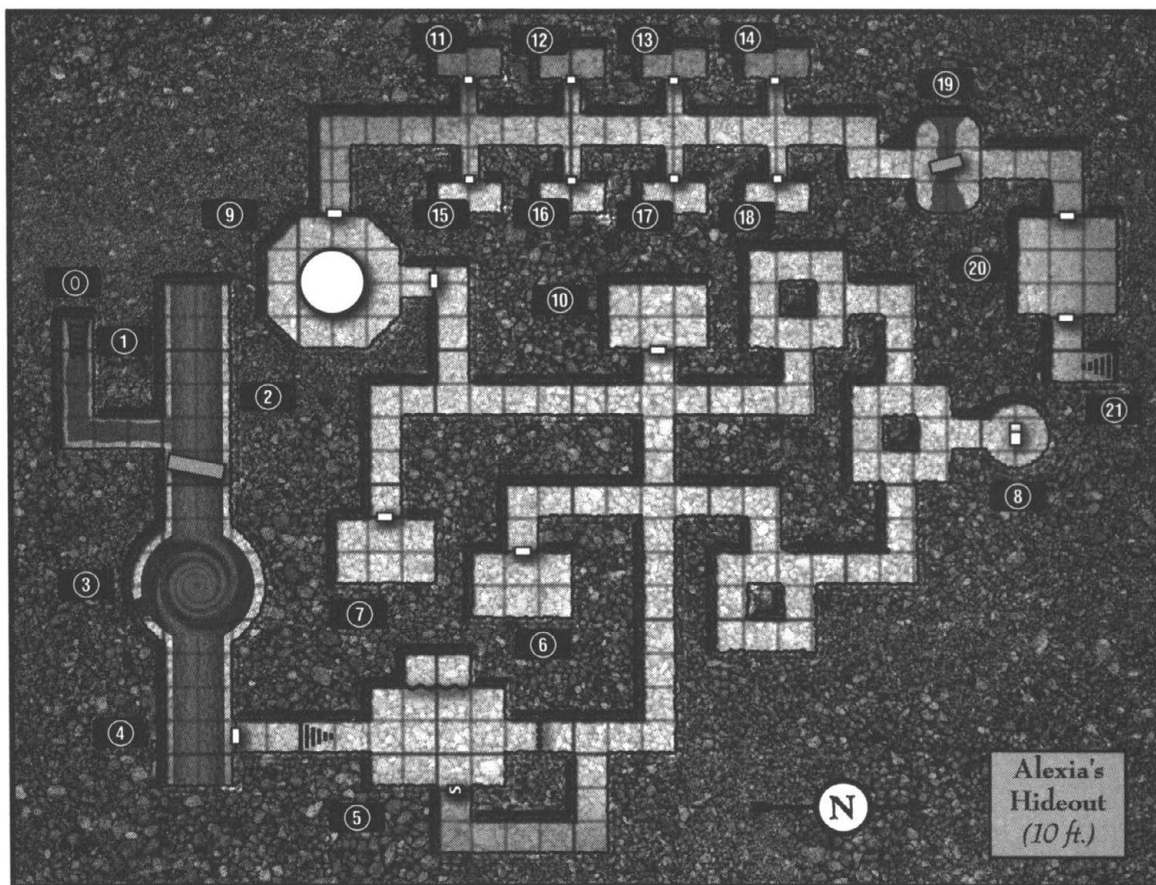
- ▶ If Alexia is asked about the affairs at the witches' tomb in Widower's Wood, she will admit she was there, though she will not go into details.
- ▶ If she is asked about the trial of the Corvis Coven, she will insist that her mother and the others were good people who were unjustly executed. Any implication that the Coven was evil will enrage her!
- ▶ If the party hints that the Coven was framed somehow, Alexia will name Magistrate Borloch as the culprit. Note that Alexia does not know about the powerful wizard Vahn Oberen, who has been manipulating Borloch for years.

If anyone tries to learn what Alexia's next steps are, she will reply with some or all of the following, depending on how cleverly the players converse.

- ▶ The guilty must be punished.
- ▶ To accomplish this the entire coven must be restored to life.
- ▶ This includes Alexia's mother, who is buried on Church grounds
- ▶ To *fully* restore any of the coven to life, their essence must be reclaimed from the magic sword that executed them—the Witchfire.
- ▶ The wicked city must pay a price.
- ▶ Before that can happen, there is much work to be done still, and far from here.

When the conversation is done, Alexia will leave the chamber, heading south towards the sewers. As she leaves, she will cast stone shape to seal the exit behind her. The stone wall will be too thick for the party to breach; to escape, they'll have to brave the catacombs and find another exit. Alexia's parting words are these.

I'm afraid I'm being a terrible hostess, but I will have to leave you here now. I have many things to tend to, and no time to entertain. If you see my uncle again, tell him... I'm sorry.



The Witchfire Trilogy

Examining the Hideout

The improvised desk displays a large iron key atop a sheaf of papers and a half-spent candle. There is also a quill, inkpot and sand shaker for writing. The papers, in Alexia's hand, have several items of interest. One page is a list of names—M. Monsonata, K. Sylva, H. Gadock, R. Sunbright, H. Hopless, S. Burkett and C. Fullet. These were the seven jurors in the trial of the Corvis Coven. Each name has a neat, methodical checkmark by it. Below the juror's names is the note "Executioner?? Borloch's friend, of the lightning eye."

Another page has these notes. "Witchfire—forged 300 years ago? Drain, store essence. Key to restoration. Who was executioner?"

A third paper has the beginning of a letter to Father Dumas. "Dearest Uncle, I wish I could make you understand..." Besides this, the page is empty.

Behind the fabric draping the west wall, the party will find a few stone steps that lead up to a hidden cubbyhole. Simple but comfortable pillows and blankets line the area, and a lantern half-full of oil rests on a crate. Under the pillows are a few sheets of parchment. Upon them are scrawled some mysterious, elaborate glyphs, labeled with phrases such as "strength," "the maker's sigil," "fortitude," and "mind." There are also a scroll tube here. It contains a scroll of invisibility and lightning bolt, created by Alexia when she was 5th level. See DMG 203 for more on scrolls.

The only obvious exit from this room now is to the north. Ten feet down the hall, a heavy iron portcullis bars the passageway. An iron wheel, set in the wall, will raise the gate if two PCs can muster a Str check of DC 20. The mechanism is old, but it looks like it has been used recently—it is oiled and in good repair.

6. Holding Cell #1

A heavy iron door is here, streaked with rust and grime. Marks on the dusty floor indicate it has been opened recently.

This is an old but unremarkable iron door. Anyone making a Spot check of DC 15 will note that the hinges have been oiled recently. Anyone listening at the door, and producing a roll of DC 20 will hear a faint shuffling sound, as if someone is walking about. The iron key from Alexia's makeshift desk will unlock this door, or the lock can be picked (DC 15). If the party tries to break the door down, see PH135–136 (the stats for the iron door are at the bottom of table 8–15).

Behind the door are two Risen Thralls (Appendix A). They are the animated corpses of two of the Corvis

Coven jurors, Monsonata and Sylva. As soon as the door is open, the Risen will attack the party.

Anyone examining the corpses may notice that they have odd tattoos on them—in fact, they are some of the same glyphs as were sketched on the papers the party may have found earlier. A Spellcraft roll of DC 15 (or an Int check at the DM's discretion) will reveal that Alexia seems to have some new method for raising the dead.

Both of the Risen are dressed in worthless tatters. The corpse of Sylva wears a fine silver ring set with a garnet, which is worth 12 gp if it's cleaned up. (It's worth more than that in karma if the PCs return it to the Sylva family.)

7. Holding Cell #2

There is a sturdy but rusty iron door here. Arcane glyphs have been painted on the door in bright red pigment.

This is another holding cell exactly like the one in area 6. Inside are 3 of the Risen. These are the bodies of Gadock, Sunbright and Hopless. Sunbright's body has two finely crafted gold rings (worth 25 gp each) and a silver dagger in a belt sheath (value 20 gp).

The glyphs on the door are similar to the ones in Alexia's papers from area 5, but they are not magical.

8. Honored Dead

A domed chamber, lined with fine black marble, arches over a decorative sarcophagus. The heavy stone lid bears a granite sculpture of a weeping griffon. The phrase "Temptation Begets Darkness Eternal" is carved repeatedly into the floor, encircling the sarcophagus.

Centuries ago, these catacombs were connected to the Church above. Honored servants of the Church were buried here at the time. This is the tomb of one such man, who was the steward of the Church long ago, just as Father Dumas is today. "Father Edric Samos VII" is carved into the stone side, the letters inlaid with gold. This name will probably mean nothing to the party, but Father Dumas knows the history if he is asked.

Father Samos rests here peacefully, clad in fine plate armor and clutching his +1 mace. The characters can safely open the sarcophagus and observe this, but any attempt at theft or other disrespect will set off the magical trap set here. Any character meddling with the Father's belongings, or defacing the tomb—perhaps

The Witchfire Trilogy

picking the gold out of the lettering—will be stricken blind, as by the 3rd-level clerical spell (PH180). A save (Fort DC 20) is allowed, but each time a character does something inappropriate they will be subject to the effects of the trap again.

Note that merely opening the sarcophagus won't set off the trap—only robbery or defacement will do it. Blinded characters can be healed by Father Dumas, but he will be most disappointed in their actions, and they will receive a long, boring ethics lecture.

9. Temple of the Ascended

This chamber has a high domed ceiling, and soft light illuminates every corner. Intricate friezes line the walls, and a lining of beaten gold adorns the peak of the dome. In the center of the room, a marble statue of a man stands upon a three-foot tall dais. Lettering upon the marble dais reads, "Avatar Ulbrecht Sambert, Ascended 605 BR."

This long-lost chamber is magically illuminated by *continual light*, and protected by a permanent *protection from evil* spell (PH240).



The Avatar is not buried here—he is something akin to a saint in the Church's history, having thrown off his worldly form to Ascend and take his place in the great beyond. This statue is here to honor him, and the scenes on the walls show the story of his life, from his birth to his Ascension. A few moment's examination of the images will make this clear to all but the most dim PCs—Av. Sambert is shown slaying great beasts, traveling to exotic lands, leading armies, and finally rising into the sky in a beam of angelic light.

On the dais next to the statue is a small wooden chest, inlaid with gold. Inscribed in the top of the chest is the phrase, "Blessed Be." The chest appears to be worth about 200 gp for its fine craftsmanship. If checked with *detect magic*, it has a strong aura. It is not locked or trapped, and it opens easily. The chest is empty, but it has a special ability. If a high-quality ring (value 50gp or more) is placed inside the chest and the lid is closed, the ring will be blessed, and will function as a *ring of protection +1* for 1d4 days. The chest can do this once every seven days, and it will only perform the function for a lawful good character. If the chest is removed from this room, it will permanently lose all of its magical abilities, and the gold fittings will turn into brass, making it worth about 1 gp. If a non-lawful good character wears an enchanted ring, the magic will immediately fade.

When found, the chest has a simple gold ring inside, which has taken the enchantment. Roll 1d4 for the duration in days. The inside of the ring is engraved with the saying, "To follow in his footsteps," which is a common expression in the Church of Morrow.

Behind the dais is a human skeleton, crouched on the floor. This hapless cleric was trapped in the catacombs when they were sealed centuries ago. Around his neck are prayer beads, which are magical. These *prayer beads of potent healing* grant a +1 to each die used to produce a healing spell effect. They will only work for a good cleric.

10. Holding Cell #3

A heavy iron door is set into the wall here.

A heavy iron door is set into the wall here.

This is another holding cell exactly like the one in area 6. Inside are 2 of the Risen. (hp 10, 11) These are the bodies of Burkett and Fullet. Neither corpse has anything of value.

The Witchfire Trilogy

11. Crypt #1

A rotting wooden door stands ajar, revealing a glimpse of a crypt stacked with old bones.

This crypt is lined with stone shelves, each of which holds a jumble of old bones. If a PC investigates the skeletons, he will quickly find several pendants. They appear to be jewelry at first, but the crude iron chain holds a pendant into which the word "PLAGUE" has been stamped. The crypts that line this hallway hold hundreds of skeletons, all dumped here during the epidemic long ago. It was because of these plague-ridden corpses that the catacombs were sealed up and then forgotten.

The epidemic was hundreds of years ago, and there is no risk of catching anything from the dusty old bones. Don't let the PCs know that though—let them sweat. Make secretive rolls every time they enter a crypt or handle the bones.

12–17. Crypts #2–7

A rotting wooden door stands ajar, revealing a glimpse of a crypt stacked with old bones.

Each crypt is basically the same as the first one—they are full of dusty old bones, and there are hundreds of plague tags to be taken if desired. After the first crypt, there is also a chance of running into a pack of devil rats every time a crypt is entered, or even walked by. If devil rats are present—there is one chance in three for every crypt after the first one—a pack of 2–3 will attack the party. If a crypt harbors devil rats, the PCs will find a nest inside, which has a 50% chance of harboring disgusting, mewling devil rat pups. Each nest will also have 2d6 gold and silver coins buried among the filth.

18. Crypt #8

One of the aged wooden crypt doors has been spiked shut.

A Listen check of DC 15 will reveal that there is something moving around behind the door. If the door is opened—easily done if a few moments are taken to remove the spikes—the PCs will see a skeleton charging towards them!

The skeleton is a Warrior Thrall. One of Alexia's early experiments, it is poorly made, and she locked it away. This specimen is unarmed but it will try to dis-

patch the PCs with its bony claws (1d4). It was built from a plague victim's skeleton, and it still wears the telltale pendant.

In the crypt is a scrap of parchment that reads, "... maker's sigil is the key to control of living or dead. Must refine this glyph before —"

19. Underground River

A deep chasm divides this rocky chamber. About 20 feet below, a wide, slow river flows to the west. A rickety wooden bridge spans the gap.

The catacomb's engineers had to deal with this natural underground river when they excavated this area. Anyone who falls into the river will immediately be swept away, but luckily they will be shot out into the harbor after a short (but harrowing) ride. Anyone dumped into the harbor will have to make Swim checks for calm water (DC 10) and holler for help!

A 5'x5' patch of cavewort has grown on the ceiling here. It's directly in front of the near side of the bridge.

20. Mass Graves

This plain room has a low ceiling and damp earthen floor. Piles of skeletons are arrayed around the walls.

Long ago this room was used to bury the poor. If the PCs dig in any location, they will find bones after just a few inches. Any holes dug will quickly fill with water. The piles of skeletons around the edges of the room are more plague victims. There is nothing of value here.

The exit from this room leads to a passage that slopes upwards, ending at the tomb in area 21.

21. The Secret Entrance

The stone passageway slopes sharply upwards, then ends in a decorative marble door about 50 ft. away.

When the PCs open the door, they will find themselves inside a tomb on Church grounds. Apparently, the entrance to the catacombs was re-done as a tomb in days past, and the entrance was concealed and forgotten. The secret door still functions now that the PCs know where to look.

Inside this tomb are two simple stone coffins, bearing the bodies of beloved Church officials from days past. There is nothing of value here.

The Witchfire Trilogy



Act III

Wherein the party is given an important new mission, and makes an important decision.



Immediately after the party has explored the catacombs, the DM should engineer an encounter with Watch Captain Julian Helstrom. He could be waiting for the characters when they emerge from the catacombs, or he could appear out of a foggy Corvis alley, beckoning them to come closer. The exact circumstances of the meeting are not important, but it should take place while the horrors of the catacombs are still fresh in the players' minds.

Helstrom will be dressed in a civilian's cloak, but his pistol, sword and badge are unmistakable. If he finds the party on the city streets, he will take them aside and speak to them privately. If the PCs won't cooperate, Helstrom will whistle, and a dozen of his men (Experienced Watchman NPC foundation; see Appendix B) will appear in moments. These hand-picked men of Helstrom's won't hurt the PCs, but they

will subdue them and throw them in the pokey if the characters don't come along. After the party members stew in a cell for a few minutes, Helstrom will arrive and speak to them. He'll apologize for his tactics, but insist they were necessary if the PCs refused to speak with him earlier. The Captain is not having any luck getting his superiors to take him seriously, so he will appeal to the players for help since they already know at least a little of what's going on.

If the party has gotten off-track, the conversation with Helstrom is a great way to mend things. For example, if their plan is to kill Alexia, burn down the Church and turn Father Dumas in for being a warlock and skimming off the collection plate, Helstrom can correct their misperceptions and give them a valuable role to play.

When Helstrom talks to the PCs, these are the important points to cover:

- ▶ How long have the PCs been in Corvis?
- ▶ What is the PCs' relation to Father Dumas?
- ▶ What are the PCs' intentions?
- ▶ What did the PCs learn in the catacombs?
- ▶ Helstrom and his crew recently learned about the catacombs themselves. In fact, they were staking out the entrance and watched the PCs enter.
- ▶ Helstrom sees that Alexia seems to be growing into a powerful sorceress, and her intentions are questionable at best—he knows about the grave robbery zombies.
- ▶ One of Helstrom's men followed Alexia to the witches' tomb, and then saw her lead four zombie women deeper into the swampy forest.
- ▶ Alexia has been seen to make several trips in that same direction in the last week. There is an old keep out there named Fort Rhyker. Helstrom sent

Helstrom's Handouts

Each 20 lb. keg is full of the same things that make guns go bang. They do 10d6 points of fire damage to anything they are in contact with. The damage is reduced by 2d6 for every 5 ft. of range. Anyone caught in the open can make a Ref save of DC 16 for half damage. (For the effects of cover see DMG133.) The fuse is a string; when it is pulled sharply, it begins an unstoppable alchemical process that will result in detonation 3–5 rounds later. On the open market each keg is worth 250 gp. If the party tries to sell them, Captain Helstrom will find out, and he will make their lives miserable!

To safely disassemble the kegs, a Craft (demolitions) roll of DC 10 needs to be made. A failed roll brings a 25% chance of explosion, and a 75% chance that the components will be ruined. If the kegs are smashed (hardness 4, HP 3, break DC 18) there is a 50% chance they will explode.

If Helstrom gives the PCs a pistol, the stats are identical to the weapon described on page 27, area 2. Helstrom's ammo is guaranteed to fire though.

The Witchfire Trilogy

two men to check it out, but they never returned.

- ▶ Helstrom's superiors in the Watch have refused to look into any of this. None of the city authorities will help. Why isn't clear but the interference seems to be coming from the highest levels of the government. Helstrom can only rely on his few trusted Watchmen—and hopefully now the players.
- ▶ Helstrom has a simple plan for the party. They are to travel immediately to Fort Rhyker and see if there is any sign of Alexia. If possible, they should determine what her plans are. If there is any kind of hostile force, don't engage it; ride back to the city to make a report. If the PCs learn that Helstrom's men met their ends, they are to return their badges to the Captain and give the bodies a decent burial in wilds.
- ▶ The Longest Night festival is fast approaching. By this time tomorrow, the streets will be filled with revelers. Time is of the essence.
- ▶ In return for their efforts, Captain Helstrom can provide an ally in the Watch, 40 gp (the missing mens' salaries for the last two weeks), and the promise of a few favors if the PCs find themselves in trouble in Corvis.

Most likely, the party will jump at the chance to get on Helstrom's good side, and they'll be glad for his information. In the unlikely event that the players are out of control, Helstrom will throw them in the slammer, or keep them there if he's already had to catch them to talk to them. They'll then miss the opportunity to visit Fort Rhyker, and they'll stay in their cells until the undead attack the city during the Longest Night festival. That's in about one day. If that happens, they'll manage to escape during the chaos.

If the players go along with Helstrom's plan, he will give them some gear to help out. First and foremost, the party gets two powder kegs, in case they need to make something explode. If the party doesn't have any firearms, he'll loan them a rusty old pistol (loaded) and supplies for 3 more shots. "I'll be needing that back. It's from the evidence locker," he will say as he hands it over. The party is also welcome to horses and any other mundane weapons, armor or equipment they need within reason. The Captain will suggest that the PCs try to get some healing magic from Father Dumas. If they tell the Father what they are doing and ask for help, he'll give them three potions of cure light wounds (1d8+3).

When the party returns, they are to come to the Corvis courthouse. The Watchmen on guard there are loyal to Helstrom, and can take the party to him.



Fort Rhyker

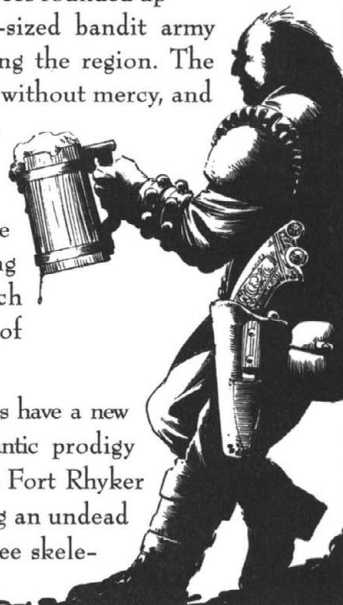


Summary: The party follows Helstrom's instructions and visits Fort Rhyker. There they learn that Alexia has created an army of undead.

As the party leaves, Helstrom will give them a map on a tattered scrap of parchment. It shows the location of Fort Rhyker—a hard four-hour ride away. To reach it, the party will have to travel northeast through Widower's Wood, all the way to where it thins and joins the rocky plains outside the swamp. The DM is free to throw in some random encounters if desired, or the party can have an easy time of it. They'll have their work cut out for them soon enough.

Over a century ago, Fort Rhyker was the scene of a large battle, as the King's forces rounded up and smashed a good-sized bandit army that had been troubling the region. The brigands were crushed without mercy, and hundreds of them died within a few bowshots of the fort. Their bones decorate the field to this day, along with wizardly scorch marks and other scars of battle.

Today, those old bones have a new job. Alexia the necromantic prodigy has come calling, and Fort Rhyker is where she is building an undead army. The party will see skeletons digging in



The Witchfire Trilogy

the field, and moving carts of bones up to the fort. There, the parts are processed further, ultimately being animated by Alexia and the four undead witches. By the time the players arrive, there are about five hundred skeleton warriors ready for battle, standing in formation in the middle of Fort Rhyker. In just a few hours, the army will march on Corvis! It's up to the players to learn as much as they can and report back to Captain Helstrom. Ideally, they'll find a way to sabotage the undead army on their way out.

In game terms, Fort Rhyker is constructed with hewn stone walls and flagstone floors. See DMG105 for more information on dungeon settings.

0. The Battlefield

As you pick your way through the thinning trees you see before you a flat, rocky plain. Tufts of tough grass and jagged stones dot the landscape. Here and there are shallow craters and scorch marks, left from some battle long ago. About a mile away the silhouette of Fort Rhyker is visible.

If the characters make even a cursory attempt to search the battlefield as they travel, let them find bones—hundreds of men were killed here and left to



rot, or buried in improvised mass graves. There are rusted scraps of armor and weapons here too, but they are all worthless.

1. The Field of Bones

As you pick your way towards the distant fort, the plain begins to slope upwards. Just ahead, a score of skeletons are at work, digging up bones from the battlefield. Two carts, partially full of bones, are parked on the dirt road that winds up towards the fort. A skeletal horse is harnessed to each cart.

In field are 20 Thrall Slaves (18 humanoids and 2 horses) and 2 Thrall Warriors. The Slaves will totally ignore the PCs, even if they are attacked. If the Warriors (who are 20 ft. away) see the PCs, they will immediately move to attack.

As the PC watch—or even as they fight the Warriors—one of the carts is filled to the top with bones, and the Thrall draft horse begins to pull it away. If the PCs decide to try hiding inside one of the bone carts, they will be carried safely all the way up to the entrance to Fort Rhyker, area 2. The trip takes about fifteen minutes.

If the PCs decide to simply follow the road, they will encounter 2 Thrall patrols, each consisting of 1 Lieutenant and 2 Warriors. If they decide to take the long way around and try to sneak past all the Thralls, they still have a 50% chance of meeting one patrol, and they will spend an hour sneaking around.

2. The Gatehouse

A stone keep—Fort Rhyker's gatehouse—sits on the edge of a great chasm. The great gates are open, and inside the small courtyard lie several piles of bones. Four skeletons slowly and methodically pick through the piles, sorting them into smaller piles—skulls, ribs and the like. They do not seem to notice you.

A narrow bridge reaches from the upper level of the gatehouse, spanning the gap between the gatehouse and the fort proper. While the gatehouse looks intact, the years have not been kind to Fort Rhyker; there are gaping holes in the walls, and some of the battlements have collapsed.

The Thrall Slaves sorting the bones will pay no attention to the characters, who are free to explore this area. If the characters hitched a ride in the bone wagons, the horses will haul the empty carts back to the

The Witchfire Trilogy

battlefield once the Thrall Slaves have dumped the cargo out.

The ground level of the gatehouse is fitted with stalls for horses. 3 skeletal steeds will be seen in the stalls. Like the bone sorters, they will ignore the characters. For every 10 minutes the PCs spend in this area, there is a 50% chance that a patrol as detailed in area 1 will emerge from inside the gatehouse.

3. The Dumbwaiter—Middle Level

This cramped room seems dedicated to the operation of a large dumbwaiter. The door to the lift is open, and the tray is large enough for a grown man to crouch upon. There is an iron wheel set into the wall, presumably to move the tray up and down.

Anyone riding the dumbwaiter up will end up in area 4. The noise of the dumbwaiter's operation is considerable—anyone taking the trip will see one Thrall Lieutenant and 1d4 Thrall Warriors if a Thrall Lieutenant in area 7 makes a successful Listen check.

If the dumbwaiter is moved down, the rider will emerge into area 11.

4. The Dumbwaiter—Upper Level

This small, dusty room allows access to the gatehouse's dumbwaiter.

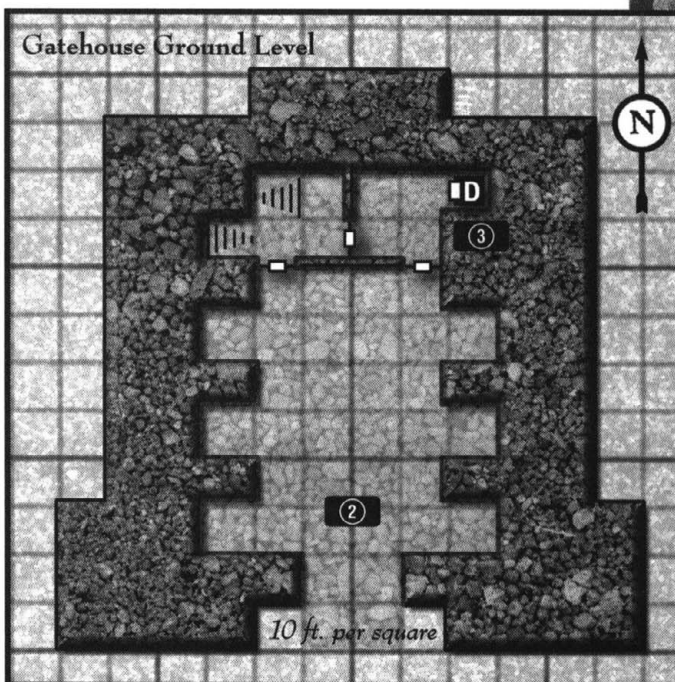
If any character fiddles with the dumbwaiter, the noise may attract Thralls from area 7 as described above in area 3.

5. Armory

Racks of weapons and armor fill this room. Unfortunately, all of the gear is old and run down—rusted blades, dented armor and warped and splintered spears.

If a character Searches the room and makes a roll of DC 14, they find one prize among all the junk—a brass spyglass. It's a fine instrument, well preserved despite its apparent age. It is 1 ft. long when collapsed, has 5x magnification, weighs 5 lbs., and is worth 175 gp. Note that devices like this need plenty of light to operate—the spyglass can't be used in the dark, even if the user has darkvision or low-light vision.

Again, if the PCs make a racket, a Thrall Lieutenant in area 7 may hear and come to investigate with 1d4 Thrall Warriors.



6. Supply Room

Piles of bones are neatly arranged on the floor of this room. They are sorted by type, from skulls to kneecaps. A few barrels hold the longer leg and arm bones.

These are simply spare parts. There is nothing of value here. If the PCs make a lot of noise, the Thrall Lieutenant in area 7 may hear and come to investigate with 1d4 Thrall Warriors.

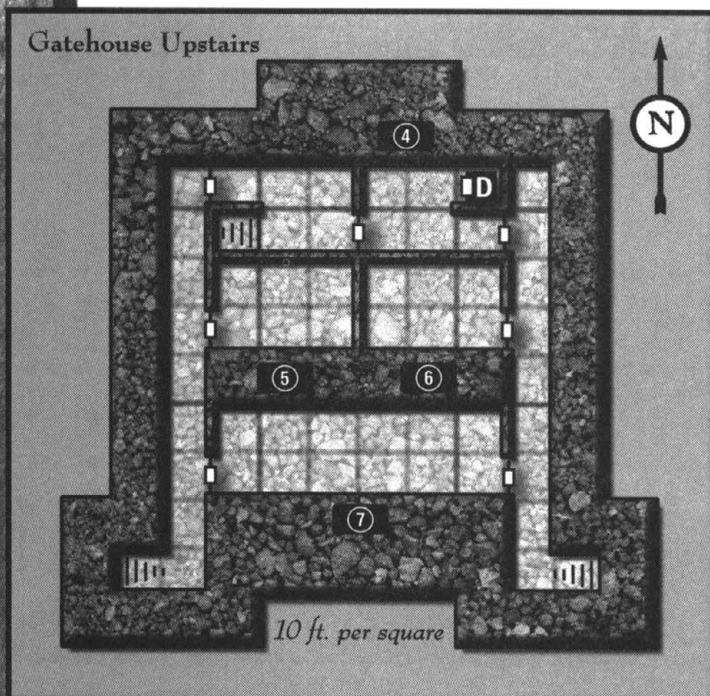
7. Barracks

A group of Thralls stands at attention in the middle of this room. As soon as they see you they raise their weapons and move to attack!

If the PCs have already attracted the attention of the Thrall Lieutenant and his men, there will only be 1d3+1 Thrall Warriors in this room. If they have been quiet, the barracks will hold a Thrall Lieutenant and 1d6+1 Thrall Warriors. The Lieutenant is carrying a longsword +1. The weapon was borne by one of old King Luther Raelthorne's men who died here fighting the bandit army many years ago. It bears this inscription: *May this blade serve you as well as you have served Cygnar—King Luther Raelthorne*

The Witchfire Trilogy

Gatehouse Upstairs



mounts are made so that the dish can be rotated and pointed in any direction. A handle on the back seems to operate the louvers.

This is a signal mirror. The guardsmen at the gatehouse could easily communicate with patrols by shining sunlight towards them with the mirror, and flashing patterns with the louvers. At this time of year, the signal mirror is only useful from the late morning to early afternoon. On a clear day the light from the mirror can be seen for several miles.

Like the telescope, the mirror is too big to be moved away. If it is somehow retrieved, it is only worth about 15 gp. The gold lining is brightly polished, but extremely thin.

10. Stone Bridge

A narrow stone bridge stretches across the chasm. Below, you can see nothing but mist.

In time of war, the drawbridge—concealed below in the mists—would be raised, and this narrow, easily defensible bridge would be the only way into the Fort from the gatehouse. Time has not been kind to this structure. The bridge is on the verge of failing; any character with stoneworking skill, or any dwarf will immediately notice this.

8. Telescope

Mounted to the stone floor at this lookout point is a strange contraption. A series of glass plates are mounted in a tarnished steel framework, and the whole thing is mounted on some kind of rotating base. The device's great glass eye points out towards the battlefield.

The strange object is actually a type of spyglass, which can magnify the view by up to ten times. The fort's guards used it long ago to survey the plains, looking for approaching attackers. The telescope is still functional, though age has rusted the metal and clouded the lenses. It is too big to be easily removed from the fort, though an expedition to retrieve it is practical. Refurbished, it would be worth 750gp.

If anyone uses the glass to survey the old battlefield, they will see something interesting—a lot of vanquished Thrall Slaves and Warriors lying about, their bones in disarray. Any carnage the PCs may have caused will still be in place, but any Thralls that they avoided will now be slain. In other words, it looks like someone else has followed the PCs to the fort.

9. Signal Mirror

Mounted here is a great shallow dish on a jointed, rotating base. The inside of the yard-wide dish is brightly polished gold, and warped wooden louvers are mounted to the front. The



Razorbats

The Witchfire Trilogy

If the characters attempt to cross the bridge, the old stones will groan, and the bridge will begin to flex. Dust and chunks of mortar will begin to fall off, vanishing into the mists below. If the PCs proceed, the bridge will give one final warning, shedding some large stones and trembling violently. Anyone still moving on will find the floor falling out from beneath them, and a Ref. save of 12 will be needed to leap back to a stable point. Anyone failing the check will fall—here's hoping the PCs were sensible enough to belay their point man.

If the PCs want to blow up the bridge, one of the kegs given to them by Captain Helstrom is more than up to the task. The noise will attract unwelcome attention, as detailed in area 26.

11. Drawbridge Annex A

This large room is almost entirely empty. Some ratty sacks and broken barrels are laying about—apparently nothing of value.

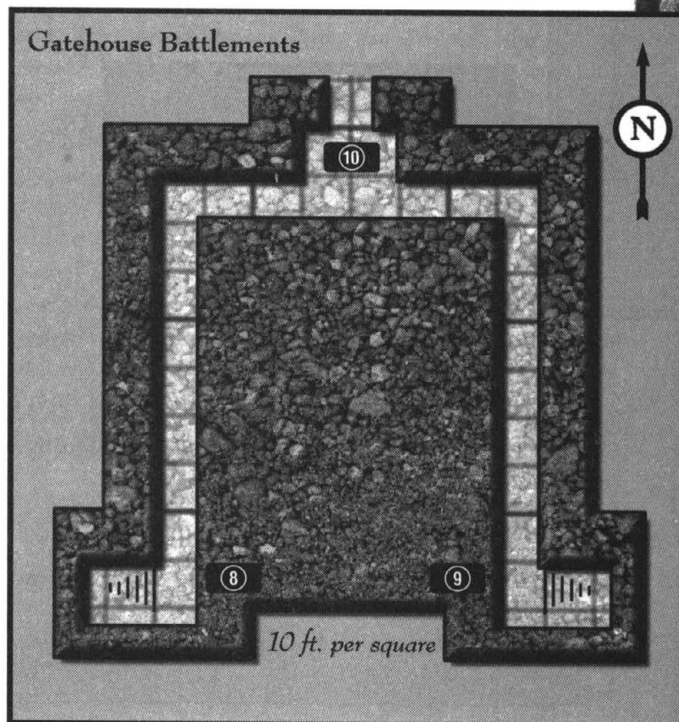
A large iron-shod wooden door stands closed at the north end of the room. In the northwest corner a small wooden door is set into the wall.

The wooden door to the northwest opens onto the dumbwaiter shaft. The heavy door to the north will open, though it is creaky and heavy. Beyond, a wooden bridge stretches out into the mist. It leads to area 14, the drawbridge annex on the other side. Both halves of the bridge are currently down, and the door on the far side is open, though that isn't visible through the fog. 30 feet above is the much narrower stone bridge seen at area 10.

As the PCs walk onto the drawbridge, they'll come under fire from archers above. It's hard to see exactly who the attackers are through the swirling mist that fills the chasm, but the party can tell that about four humans or humanoids are on the stone bridge above, firing downwards. (Note the effects of firing at concealed targets on PH133.)

The wizard Oberen has sent the attackers to slay the PCs. He doesn't want the party to stop Alexia's attack on the city, because he's been working to engineer the event for many years. Luckily for the PCs, Oberen has underestimated them, and the assassins are probably not up to the task at hand.

If the party immediately runs to the far side of the drawbridge, two of the attackers will run across the stone bridge above—if it hasn't collapsed already. In this case the two assassins scamper across and then plunge to their deaths as the rock and mortar gives way beneath them. For theatrical flair, one of the men should land on the wooden bridge near the PCs, killed



by the fall, while the other screams as he falls into the chasm—and screams, and screams. It's a long way down.

If the bridge above collapses the stone debris will knock some holes in the drawbridge. Luckily it's very tough, and it won't be destroyed. It's also a lot wider than the stone bridge, so it's relatively easy to dodge the falling rocks without going over the edge.

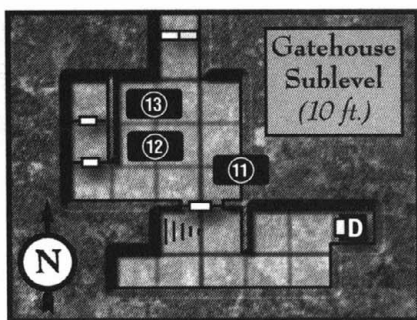
Assassins surviving the collapsing bridge will head down to area 11 and chase the PCs into the fort. If the PCs retreat to area 11 when they come under fire, two assassins will head down to meet them while two stay up on the stone bridge to cover the exit.

Note that it is possible for the party to kill all four assassins at once. If they think fast and attempt to damage the stone bridge the assassins are firing from, they may be able to force it to collapse, which will throw everyone on it to their deaths. To accomplish this they'll need to do about 20 points of damage to the bridge, or cleverly use some spells. It's the DM's call.

The assassins are human first-level fighters, each with 7 hp, AC 12. They are armed with shortbows (1d6 crit x3) and shortswords (1d6 crit 19–20/x2). Each has a tattoo of an eye over a lightning bolt inked on the back of his right hand. Anyone familiar with the history of the Iron Kingdoms will recognize this as the mark of the Inquisition, the feared and hated secret police employed by the recently-deposed King Raelthorne the Elder. Why are Inquisitors involved? Under a different name, Oberen used to be the head of the Inquisition.

The Drawbridge

If anyone gets the idea of blowing a hole in the old drawbridge with the explosive kegs, it has hardness 5 and 25 HP.



Now that Raelthorne the Elder is gone, he's out on his own, a war criminal at large, but still commanding a network of evil, loyal men.

12. Control Room Annex A

The heavy iron door leading to this room stands ajar. Beyond is nothing but smooth stone walls and dust.

In times of trouble, guards could hole up in this room to protect the drawbridge controls. Today it stands empty.

13. Control Room A

Another iron door stands open, admitting you to this room. It appears to house some kind of controls. A giant iron and wood wheel juts from the wall, and a large lever protrudes from the floor.

These are the drawbridge controls. The lever controls the bridge gearing—up, down or locked in place. Currently it is in the middle position, which is locked. “Up” and “Down” markers are scratched into the stone floor, if the PCs clear the dust away and look. The wheel, operated by burly bridge tenders in times past, provided the force for moving the bridge upwards.

Currently, the bridge is down. If the PCs wanted to raise it, it would take a Str check of DC 18 at the great wheel. There is only room for three wheel operators at a time, and they must work for five minutes to fully raise the bridge. It only takes two minutes to lower the bridge.

If the bridge is operated, there is a 66% chance that the aged mechanism will break and the bridge will slam down. If this happens there will be no way to pull the bridge back up. If the characters want to blow up the drawbridge, one of the explosive kegs that Helstrom gave them will be more than enough for the job. Hopefully they'll do this on the way out of Fort Rhyker.

14–16. Drawbridge B

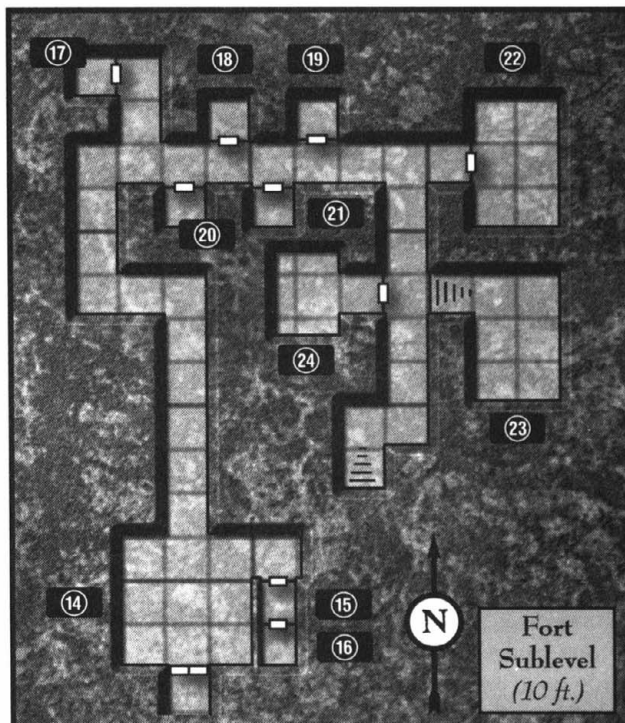
The other side of the drawbridge has exactly the same layout as the gatehouse side. Both halves of the drawbridge are down when the players arrive. Destroying either half of the drawbridge will delay the Thrall army by several hours, as they will need to take the long way around the chasm.

17. The Warden

A large humanoid skeleton sits on an old keg in the middle of the room. On a crate is what seems to be an array of playing cards. As the door opens, the Thrall leaps to its feet and raises its giant cudgel.

This Thrall Lieutenant is the warden. He looks after the Thrall failures, which are locked up in the nearby cells. He'll attack the players, but his intent isn't to kill them—he'll try to subdue them and lock them away. Because he is attacking to subdue, he is at -4 to hit with his club. A successful hit will do $1d6+1$ subdual damage. See PH134–135 for subdual damage.

The warden has a keyring on his belt. It holds one fat iron key for each of the four cells on this level. He's also wearing a magic torc that has the same properties as a ring of protection +1 (DMG 194).



The Witchfire Trilogy

18–20. Prison Cells

A heavy iron door bars entrance to this room. Through a grate in the door, you can see a skeleton pacing about inside the cell. It sees you peering in, and begins clawing at the door, hissing and clacking its teeth.

Three prison cells hold one Thrall Warrior each. These soldiers are “broken.” They don’t obey orders well, so Alexia has them contained here until she can deal with them. There is nothing of value in the cells.

21. Empty Cell

An iron door just like the others in this hallway stands ajar. The cell beyond seems to be empty.

This is an empty cell, and there is nothing at all inside. If the Warden in area 17 manages to subdue the party, he’ll lock them in here. Their weapons will be confiscated, along with backpacks and other containers. The Warden won’t search the party carefully, so he will miss small pouches, objects carried under clothing and the like.

If the party gets locked in and can’t figure out a way to escape, let them wake up and then stew for about 20 minutes of game time. At this point, the Warden will return. He’ll have a chained up misbehaving Thrall Warrior with him, and he’ll open the cell door to put the new prisoner in with the PCs. If the party acts immediately, they will be able to rush by the Warden, who has his hands full with the new prisoner.

Anything taken from the PCs will be placed in area 24, the storeroom.

22. Torture Chamber

A half-dozen skeletons are chained to the walls of this room. The old bones are hanging with their manacled wrists in the air. As you enter the room, all the bony skulls swivel to look at you. A brazier sits in the middle of the room, along with a small pile of papers and books. A human skull lies on the pile of papers.

This is where Alexia works on some of her most special Thralls. The brazier is heating torture implements, and the books and papers are necromantic lore. If she were allowed to finish, these undead would become Thrall Lieutenants or even worse. The necromantic papers detail much of the process of creating Thralls

from corpses and bones. They are very valuable—perhaps 1000 gp to the right person—but the methods and results are unspeakably evil.

The skull that lies on top of the papers has arcane glyphs engraved upon it, much like the Thralls the players have already seen. If handled, it will try to bite whoever picks it up. Its attack roll is at –4, and a bite does 1 point of damage. Once the surprise of the bite is past, the skull can be handled safely. The skull is only capable of biting and laughing in a disturbing, shrill voice. The skull has 2 hp, and can be hit automatically if anyone wants to destroy it.

23. The Gorax Lair

This room has a low ceiling and a damp earthen floor. In the northwest corner a large pit has been dug and lined with ragged moldy sacks.

A gorax makes its lair in this abandoned cellar. It has dug a 50’ tunnel from its pit nest up to the outside of the fort. There is a 50% chance that the gorax is here, asleep in the pit. If not, it is out hunting, and there is a 33% chance every minute that it will return through the tunnel. If the gorax is asleep, it will wake up if it makes a Listen check with a +5 DC penalty.

If the PCs flee the lair, it will not pursue them unless it is below 50% hp. If the gorax has been encountered and killed as a wandering monster already, it won’t be here at all. There’s only one at the fort. If the PCs leave the fort via the tunnel, they will find themselves on the wrong side of the chasm, and it will take them three



Gorax

About The Enemy

The enemy consists of about 500 undead. Most of the army—80% — is made up of basic Thrall Warriors. Another 15% is made up of elite thrall Lieutenants—they are smarter and more powerful. Lieutenants will usually have a small group of Warriors with them, but it's not uncommon to see lone Thralls terrorizing the streets.

About 5% of the enemy units are actually Swamp Shamblers. Alexia had her forces collect these vile undead from the swamp outside the city, as she can't make anything like them. They have a most loathsome ability—anyone slain by a Shambler will rise as a Shambler themselves within just a few minutes! They are the perfect terror troops, and the party should encounter a number of them and their freshly risen progeny over the course of the invasion. It's important to note that the Shamblers almost entirely unintelligent. They have no special allegiance to Alexia, unlike the army she created, and so they are usually chained and led around by the smarter Thralls. (The stats for all the monsters can be found in Appendix A).

hours of travel to walk around it. Anyone exploring the nest in the pit will find the gorax's "shinies"—roll 1d4 times for gems on table 7-5, DMG172. There is a more gruesome find here too... the gnawed remains of Captain Helstrom's missing Watchmen. Their badges are easily recovered. A grave could be dug in this room, using tools from the storeroom (area 24).

25. Battlements

You have reached the roof of Fort Rhyker. This smooth stone area allows access to the creaky stone bridge high over the chasm. To the north, stairs slope down to the fort's large courtyard.

The PCs can walk all the way around the top of the fort, which is wide and smooth. Obviously, soldiers were intended to man this area to repel invaders. A low wall around the battlements helps to conceal PCs on the roof from what lies beneath in the courtyard.

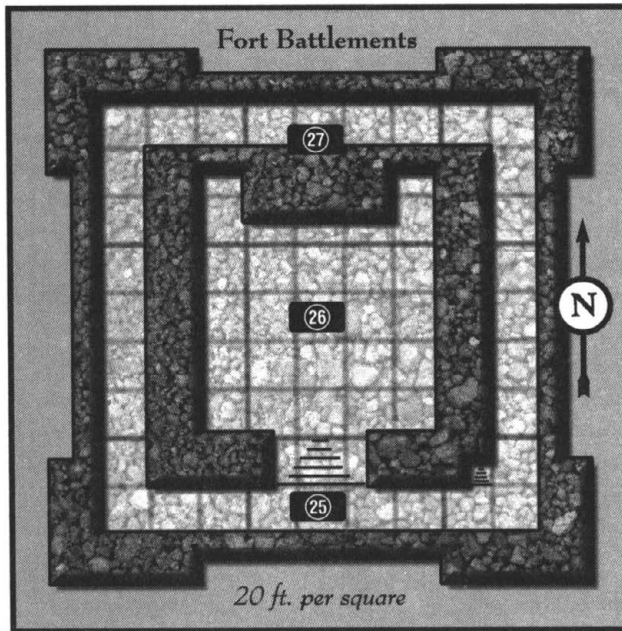
26. Courtyard

Legions of undead stand here in orderly formations. They are armed with a variety of ancient, rusty weapons. Here and there the more burly and well-equipped "lieutenants" walk about, surveying the troops. A handful of undead that resemble zombies are bound with chains, controlled by a lieutenant with a sharp iron prod.

As you watch, a few more Thrall walk out of a door in the north wall of the courtyard and take their positions in the army. There seem to be about five hundred undead total.

Alexia is gathering her troops here. It would be foolish for the party to attack the undead army, even with the explosive kegs that Captain Helstrom gave them. If they do attack, or if they are sighted, a score of Thralls will move up the stairs at top speed to engage the intruders. If this happens the party's only chance is to run back down the stairs and head for the drawbridge or the gorax's tunnel.

The chained zombies are swamp shamblers—a type of undead naturally found in the swamps outside Corvis. They are especially loathsome because people



24. Storeroom

Before you is a cramped room. The walls are lined with wooden shelves and digging tools.

If the players were subdued and locked away by the Warden, their gear is here waiting for them. If they defeated the Warden, there is nothing in this room but bare wood shelves, shovels and picks.

killed by them rise as swamp shamblers themselves after just a few minutes. Alexia must have had her Thralls collect some for the raid on the city, which appears to be imminent!

The doors on the north wall of the courtyard lead to the fort's Great Hall. In the Great Hall, Alexia and the four risen witches are busy creating the last few Thralls for the army. The PCs would never live to pass through these doors, but they can sneak a peek into the Great Hall at the windows, described in area 27.

27. The Windows

An ornate stained-glass window is set into the wall here. The window has been ravaged by the ages, and many pieces are missing or broken. Through the gaps, you can see down into the Great Hall of Fort Rhyker.

Twenty feet below a dozen Thralls are picking through piles of bones, laying out complete skeletons on the marble floor. Alexia Ciannor, accompanied by four female zombies, is conducting some sort of arcane ritual over one of these skeletons—you can see her chanting, sprinkling some kind of dust on the bones, and finally painting a glyph on the skull in red pigment.

With a hiss and a lurch, the skeleton stands up! It takes a rusty axe from a pile of weapons, and walks out the southern door to the courtyard.

As in area 25, woe to the PCs if they attract any attention to themselves! Alexia and the undead witches are very powerful, and the party won't be able to kill them, even if they try throwing one of Captain Helstrom's explosive kegs down into the hall.

As a matter of fact, if they do this, they'll have to clear away part of the stained glass window. The noise will alert Alexia and company, and they'll cast feather fall on the keg as soon as it drops. The PCs will observe their bomb falling ever so slowly towards the floor—if they decide to stick around, the explosion will certainly harm them more than anyone else.

The PCs won't be able to use a bow or crossbow without clearing a larger hole in the window either. They could use a spell like magic missile, but any sort of attack would be unwise. Hopefully, the PCs will decide to head back to Corvis and report all that they have seen!



The Longest Night



Summary: The city has begun its most rowdy festival of the year, but just when things get rolling hundreds of undead begin emerging from the Undercity! The PCs must make their way through the chaotic streets to the Church of Morrow, they become involved with the struggle between Alexia and Oberen.

The last part of this adventure is a chaotic attack on the city. Alexia, with the help of the army of skeletons and the four re-animated witches, will try to steal her mother's corpse (and the magic blade Witchfire) from its resting place at the Church. To cause the most damage and panic possible, she has timed her attack to take place during the Longest Night festival, a time of excess and celebration, when the streets are packed with revelers. During the Longest Night, the streets will be full of people running around in a panic. Thralls and swamp shamblers will be popping up through drains and grates all over the city. They'll be moving towards the Church and hacking up anyone who gets in their way.

Alexia has an unknown ally in her attack—the mysterious wizard, Oberen. He has allowed her to get this far, and to attack the Church, so that he can take advantage of the confusion to steal the Witchfire himself. He doesn't care at all about the body of Lexaria Ciannor, the last covener.

The Longest Night will be a very hectic, non-linear situation. During the chaos there is no telling what may catch the PCs' eye. The DM should indulge them, letting them rescue orphans or whatever else comes to mind, but if they forget about the fifth covener and the Witchfire buried at the Church they should be reminded in some fashion so they can get there in time for the big finish. A visit from one of Father Dumas' acolytes is suggested.

Preparing for Battle

When the party returns to Corvis they'll need to speak to Captain Helstrom. If they talk to the typical Watchmen or city officials, they'll be laughed at. If they check the courthouse, they will find that the guards there can take them to Helstrom, as was promised. If the party for some reason tried to dodge Helstrom, he'll find them soon after the return to the city. If they don't even return to the city, Helstrom and a band of his men will track them down to get the story.

Helstrom is waiting for the PCs in a seedy waterfront bar called "The Falling Star." It's a grimy, rowdy place, and about the last place in the city anyone would expect to find the Captain. He'll grill the PCs about everything they saw and did at Fort Rhyker. At first he may not believe the story about the undead army, but if the characters are persistent and sincere he will trust them. If they've managed to take any engraved bones with them their story will be that much stronger.

Helstrom will assume that the Thrall army is marching on the city. If the PCs have any other theories, he will listen to them, but his first instinct is that the city is under attack. He will use the forces at his disposal to protect the citizens, who will be defenseless, partying when the undead arrive. Unfortunately, he doesn't have the authority to command the entire city Watch, and the politicians that do have been resistant to his pleas for help. It looks like Helstrom's dozen or so right-hand men and the characters are going to be on the front lines of the coming battle!

Based on what the characters saw, and what they know of the terrain between Corvis and Fort Rhyker, it looks like the attackers will arrive in about 5 hours. If the party managed to destroy the bridge, Helstrom will say that they bought themselves another 3 hours or so, since the skeleton army will have to take the long route

around the gorge that protects Fort Rhyker. Either way, the attackers will arrive during the peak hours of the Longest Night festival.

The PCs can use the time in advance of the attack in any way they want. They may wish to lie low and rest, sharpening their blades and memorizing spells. They may wish to go out in the street and spread the word about the coming attack. They may make an impassioned (but futile) appeal to the city government for help—or even go back out into the woods and set traps for the advancing army. Let them try anything. Helstrom will support them with 1d4 of his men if he likes their plans. He may even have another keg or two of explosives to donate to the cause.

If the PCs are especially clever in their plans, they may be able to neutralize a good part of the enemy forces. There's nothing wrong with giving them some rousing successes, as long as the success isn't complete or easily won. The army is too large to be totally defeated by a few low-level characters, and eventually a most of it will reach Corvis.

The Longest Night Begins

The PCs may expect Alexia's undead army to march right up to one of the city gates. That isn't going to happen. Instead, the legions of undead will infiltrate Corvis through the Undercity. There are many entrances to Corvis hidden outside the city walls—Alexia has been cataloging them for months, and she will send her troops in this way. Many of the undead will also enter the city by walking in the rivers and then climbing up onto the streets. If the characters prepare for a massive battle at the city gates, they will be sorely disappointed.

Alexia's plan is to use her troops to plunge the city into a panic. In the chaos, she will visit the Church and steal her mother's corpse—and the powerful blade Witchfire. She'll be accompanied by some of her strongest creations, as well as the four zombified



Swamp Shambler

The Witchfire Trilogy

coveners that she already “rescued.” Her plan is to steal the Witchfire, escape, and use it to fully restore the entire coven to their former selves. Of course, Vahn Oberen wants the blade for himself. He’ll make an appearance at the Church to try and seize the blade at the last moment.

It’s not important for the DM to keep track of every single undead soldier that has invaded Corvis. Instead, the key is to focus on the events happening near the PCs, and the events at the Church. The main attack on the Church will happen about one hour after the invasion starts, but the DM should feel free to alter the timeline a bit as needed.

Following is an opening to the attack, and some quick scenes that the DM can use during the invasion. Let the PCs get involved in any scene that catches their interest. Award XP liberally if the players help the townsfolk—50–100 XP per PC per incident, plus XP from monsters defeated. Stats for the undead can be found in Appendix A.

Just when you begin think nothing might happen tonight, you begin to hear screams over the laughter in the streets. Silence falls over the crowd around you... and then the revelers begin to move, running in panic from something you can’t yet see. As the crowd thins around you, you see several skeletal shapes shambling towards you through the mist!

Warm up the PCs with 1d4 Thrall Warriors. Then let them move about freely, using the scenes below to keep them under pressure and interested.

▶ A runaway coach comes barreling down a narrow street, right toward the party. The horses are wild-eyed with panic, and a dead driver is slumped over the top. A Thrall has the reins and is urging the horses onward! Another pair of Thralls are run over by the coach and ground to splinters under the hooves and wheels. Any PC failing a Ref save of DC 12 will take 1d4 damage and be knocked down as the runaway team clips them.

▶ A dozen dead citizens, dressed in ornate costumes, bob along in a canal. Several more bodies are lashed together into a crude raft. Two Thralls are atop the raft. One is pushing the gruesome boat along with a long pole. The other stands at the bow, looking into the fog. Both are dressed in stolen costumes.

▶ In the harbor a large merchant ship drifts out of control, engulfed in flame. On deck a dozen Thralls skirmish with the surviving crew, who are taking the worst of things. The party can faintly hear the screaming of more crew members, trapped in the inferno below decks. In 1d10+10 minutes, the burning ship drifts into the docks, which are set ablaze as well. In a

few more minutes, the burning ship sinks.

▶ A small warship, flying the colors of King Raelthorne the Younger, has set anchor a hundred yards from the docks. The crew is busying themselves making their cannon ready. As the players watch, the crew fires into the city. A granite and marble bridge with a dozen undead on it is blasted into dust, and debris rains down into the streets. Anyone caught in the debris takes 1d8 damage (Ref save of DC 10 for half damage). Any character making a Spot roll of DC 12 will see 1d4 Thralls climbing up the patrol boat’s anchor chain, unknown to the crew. Without help, the crew may be overcome, putting the Thralls in control of the cannon!

▶ Nearby the party hears a group of women screaming for help. If they investigate, they find four high-society women, dressed in elegant gowns and masks, trapped in a dead-end alley. A Swamp Shambler has cornered them. The women are defending themselves with parasols and decorative daggers, but in a few moments they will be overpowered and killed. If one of the women is killed before the PCs can intervene, she’ll rise as a Shambler herself in 1d4 minutes.

▶ With a hiss of steam, a groan of metal, and footsteps that shake the ground, a nine-foot-tall military steamjack walks around a corner into view. Following it are four Watchmen. The steamjack wields a giant hammer and shield. The Watchmen yell, “Make way! Clear the streets!” as they move by. A bit later, the steamjack is seen again. Its human attendants are nowhere to be seen. Two Thrall Warriors, wearing the Watchmen’s helms, have climbed onto the automaton’s back, where they are hammering away with their swords to no effect. The steamjack plods onward, ignoring the skeletons and the PCs; it is trying to find a Watchman to report to. It will easily defeat any opponent that it comes across. It will also run out of fuel in about 30 minutes. If the party finds it again, immobile, they can refuel it if they can find coal and figure out how to open the fuel hatch.

▶ The PCs see three finely dressed older human males moving together as a group. They are apparently powerful wizards—as they see undead, they blast them with a variety of spell effects. They are also using their powers to extinguish fires. Despite the grim surroundings, the wizards seem to be enjoying themselves, hooting with laughter each time they blast an invader into

The Longest Night

The citizens of Corvis have made the realm’s regular lunar eclipse into an excuse to party. The Longest Night festival sees nearly everyone dressing up in costume and taking to the streets. It’s one day where beggars can rub elbows with magistrates, and everyone cuts loose, hiding behind their masks. This year, the party is getting crashed by an army of five hundred undead who are intent on causing as much damage as possible.

The Witchfire Trilogy

dust. If the PCs speak to them, the wizards will give them 2 glass flasks. If thrown into a fire, the potion in the flask will utterly extinguish it. The potion is very powerful, and can instantly put out very large fire, but it will only be fresh and useful for 1d4 hours. These men are from the Fraternal Order of Wizardry—this could be a good way for the PCs to introduce themselves to this powerful guild.

► A group of 2–4 humans are seen looting shops. The miscreants have a wagon piled high with stolen goods. They will ignore the party unless they are challenged. If a fight breaks out, the looters will flee rather than fighting to the death. (Use the Thug NPC foundation from Appendix B.) If the PCs decide to keep the wagon, any Watchmen they encounter will attempt to arrest them.

► As the party moves through the streets, they come under fire from hidden archers. The PCs will quickly see that a handful of invaders have seized a bridge high above the city streets. Two Thrall Warriors at each end of the bridge are protecting four more wielding longbows. Each archer has a basket of arrows, which they are firing down into the streets at random groups of people. The party can find a path up to the bridge in 1d6 minutes if they try. As they do they'll be subject to one more arrow barrage. If they flee the area they will be subject to at least one barrage, depending on the DM's whims.

At the Church

All of the chaos in the city is a backdrop to the real finale of the adventure—the events at the Church. Alexia is moving in, guarded by her toughest creations. Vahn Oberen is moving in as well, planning on stealing the sword Witchfire from the tomb of Alexia's mother. They will fight soon, and the PCs will be caught in the middle! If the PCs show no inclination to head to the Church, they'll be approached by one of Father Dumas' acolytes. The lad will ask them to come to the Church—the Father needs their help defending it.

Father Dumas is out patrolling the Church grounds when you arrive. He's dressed in his finest battle-gear and he looks like a new man; the threat to his flock has invigorated him. "I need your help," he says. "If you can secure that bridge, my lads and I can hold the others. We won't let one of those bony bastards in here!"

Once the PCs are in place, start turning up the pressure. They should have to fight off 2–4 waves of undead attackers before the grand finale. Vary the composition and timing of the attacks to keep the PCs under pressure. Remember that the goal is not to kill the party; it's to make them sweat.

If the PCs get in trouble, Father Dumas can lend a hand by turning undead, healing, or casting some other kind of spell. There are also 2 first-level clerics on the grounds—they are the Father's acolytes. They will heal the characters as required, and help turn undead if needs be. If one or both of them were killed, it would help to highlight the peril of the situation.

Here are some of the ways that the Thrall army will attack.

- Boats and rafts full to the gunwales with Thralls will sail up to the bridges and use grappling hooks to clamber upwards.
- Units of 6 Thralls (5 Warriors plus one Lieutenant) will march straight across the bridges, directly at the PCs.
- Across the bridge, a squad of Thralls begins to set up a cannon, ballista or other siege weapon. The PCs will have to rush them before they can finish, or else they are in serious trouble!
- A squad of Thralls will guide a pack of Swamp Shamblers towards the PCs' position. These Shamblers were very recently citizens of Corvis, but they were killed by other Shamblers and have risen as undead themselves. Bonus points if the PCs can recognize anyone in the gruesome pack.



The Witchfire Trilogy

The Showdown

Soon, Alexia and Oberen will make their appearance and do battle with one another. It's the DM's job to make the PCs feel like they have an important role in the events to come, without letting them get in over their heads and get killed.

As the battle progresses, you notice that the Church is rapidly being surrounded. There seem to be hundreds of enemies, with more arriving all the time. Suddenly, without a sound, the massed Thrall army begins marching on the Church. They aren't headed for the bridges—no, they are walking straight into the water. As you watch, the undead army vanishes beneath the surface, only to reappear a few moments later at the Church walls. More and more old bones crawl into the water and then up across the backs of their fellows... within moments there is a great pile of Thralls outside the church walls, and then they are spilling over the top, into the courtyard.

For every Thrall the PCs turn or destroy, another appears to take its place. It's clear that soon scores of them will be on the Church grounds. Luckily, the invading Thralls are now ignoring all of the PCs and NPCs. Instead they are marching straight for the tomb of the fifth witch in the Corvis Coven—Lexaria Ciannor, Alexia's mother. The grim granite monument stands near the entrance to the church, a reminder to the congregation that witchcraft will not be tolerated. It is but a stone's throw from where the PCs are standing. The undead circle it and stand at attention, heedless of the PCs, Father Dumas, and the acolytes.

A moment later, Alexia and the four undead witches from the Corvis Coven will fly out of the darkness, pass overhead, and alight at the tomb of Alexia's mother. In a single motion, the massed Thralls kneel. Alexia and her companions surround the tomb and begin casting. They are attempting to break the decade-old

enchantments that seal the tomb, so that they can rescue the fifth and final member of the coven, Alexia's mother. Alexia also intends to claim the magic blade Witchfire, which is sealed away here too.

After a few moments of chanting and gesturing (which amounts to a powerful dispel magic), the tomb will crack open, emitting a flash of violet light. Alexia's mother, still wrapped in her white burial shroud, will float out of the tomb into the waiting arms of her four undead sisters. Alexia herself will reach into the tomb and seize the Witchfire. Her scream of victory is chilling. The PCs will be unable to interfere with the casters' circle; arrows will go astray, and they will be held if they try to approach. At this point, they are simply spectators. As they watch, Alexia raises the blade in triumph, while the four undead witches fly away into the night carrying their fallen sister.

It is at this moment that Oberen makes his appearance. Years of his plans are now coming to fruition, and the Witchfire will soon be his—he hopes.

In a flash of blue light, a wizard appears behind Alexia and thrusts a knife into her back! The Witchfire flies out of Alexia's grasp, over the heads of the kneeling Thralls, and skitters across the cobblestones—straight towards the you. The mythic blade now lays no more than ten paces away. Father Dumas yells, "Take the sword!"

The mysterious interloper who attacked Alexia is borne away from her by a tide of undead bodyguards. You lose sight of him in the chaos.

Alexia approaches you. Pale and staggering from her wound, she still smiles, reaches out to you and says, "Give me the sword. I have to finish what's been started. Can't you see that?" Bright blood has begun to stain her white dress. "Give me the sword and I'll let all these old bones rest. That's what you want, isn't it?" (*continues*)



The Witchfire Trilogy

Behind Alexia, there is a flash of light, a crack like lightning and a puff of smoke from where her attacker was swarmed by her Thralls. Unhurried, he strides out of the circle of shattered bones he has wrought. "Don't listen to her, friends," he says. "Do you really want to give her what she wants? Look what she's done!" He gestures at the Thrall army and the burning skyline of Corvis. "I'm here to protect Corvis. She wants to destroy it. Give me the sword."

The party now has a choice to make. Alexia and Oberen will converse briefly with the party if they are spoken to, but their patience is short. Each demands the blade. The Thrall army waits silently. Father Dumas approaches the group, but Alexia motions him to stay back.

If the party gives the Witchfire to Alexia, she will keep her promise. With a gesture, all the Thralls will collapse into inert bones. She will then curtsy and vanish, off to parts unknown.

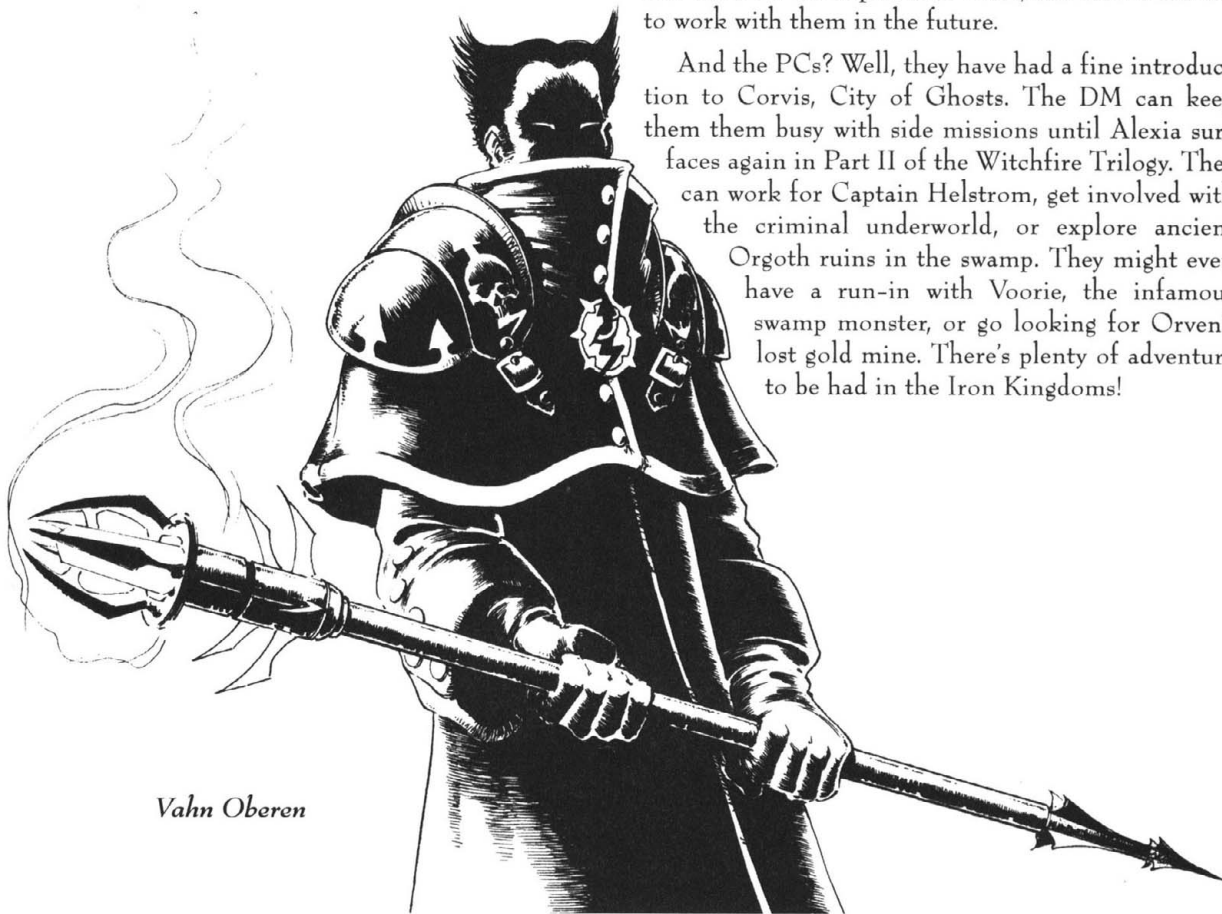
If the PCs choose Oberen, Alexia's Thralls will immediately swarm him. He will savagely attack the

Thralls with the Witchfire and his spells, but the undead army will get the better of him. With his best magic already spent, and dozens of skeletons grappling him, Oberen will fall to the ground cursing. Alexia will take the sword from him, give the PCs a baleful look and teleport away. A moment after she has gone, all the Thralls will collapse, destroyed. Oberen will also have vanished, though the PCs will see a small iron medalion bearing the image of an eye and a stroke of lightning—the same eye as the tattoos on the assassins they met earlier that day.

Wrapping Up

Alexia has retrieved the sword and is off to parts unknown, aiming to reanimate her mother and take revenge on Oberen. (Her exact plans will be explored in detail in Part II of this trilogy.) Father Dumas is grief-stricken that his niece has turned out to be a villainess, but he thanks the PCs for their efforts. Oberen has lost the Witchfire, and he is furious; he'll be keeping his eyes on the PCs from now on, and he's hatching a new plan to regain the sword. Magistrate Borloch has managed to live through the Longest Night, though his expensive home was ravaged by Thralls. He'll also be back for more trouble in Part II. Captain Helstrom has learned that the PCs are dependable folks, and he'll continue to work with them in the future.

And the PCs? Well, they have had a fine introduction to Corvis, City of Ghosts. The DM can keep them busy with side missions until Alexia surfaces again in Part II of the Witchfire Trilogy. They can work for Captain Helstrom, get involved with the criminal underworld, or explore ancient Orgoth ruins in the swamp. They might even have a run-in with Voorie, the infamous swamp monster, or go looking for Orven's lost gold mine. There's plenty of adventure to be had in the Iron Kingdoms!

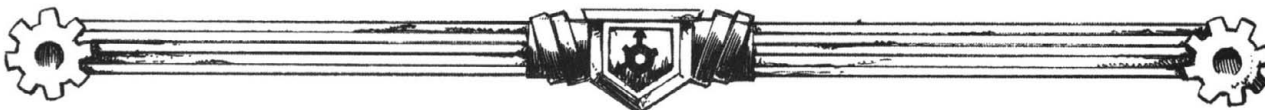


Vahn Oberen



Appendices

Wherein the Dungeon Master may find a trove of great wisdom.



Appendix A: Creatures



Bog Constrictor

Bog constrictors are a muddy green-brown and blend in well with muck and twisted trees. These tough, scaly reptiles normally steer clear of people, but there are occasional attacks, especially on children or who stumble across a nest. The eggs are considered a delicacy, fetching 1d4 gp each, depending on the buyer and the quality.

When the serpent bites it will attempt to grab and constrict its enemy. (Note that improved grab only works on creatures *smaller* than the constrictor.)

Bog Constrictor: CR $\frac{1}{2}$; Medium-sized animal; HD 1d8+1; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC +13; Atk +2 melee (1d4, bite); SA improved grab, constrict 1d2; SQ scent; AL Always N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills & Feats: Move Silently +8, Hide +7.

Treasure: None

Cavewort

Cavewort is a thick, sticky mat of fungus that grows on the ceiling of caverns and abandoned structures. When a warm-blooded creature ventures into the area under the cavewort, it drops clumps of long, sticky tendrils in an attempt to ensnare its prey. The tendrils are covered with digestive enzymes, and deal acid damage to anything caught within them. Prey is digested in place, and the bones and other debris are left behind—a warning to the observant dungeon explorer.

Normally, cavewort survives by ambushing and consuming rodents and other small mammals. However, it cannot distinguish small, easily digestible prey from larger creatures that may injure it. Consequently, it will readily attack adventurers who venture too near. Slashing or burning the cavewort's tendrils will free its victims, but the fungus won't be killed unless the mass on the ceiling is attacked.

In game terms, doing 50% damage to a cavewort will destroy the tendrils, and the last 50% will kill the body of the creature. If a cavewort has lost its tendrils, they will regenerate over 1d4+7 days, after which the cavewort will be hunting again. It takes the fungus 1d10+10 minutes to retract its tendrils once it has dropped them, unless the prey is killed, in which case the tendrils will stay down until digestion is complete in 1–5 hours. Digestion time depends on the size of the prey.

Cavewort can grow in patches as small as 5'x5', or in colonies as large as 300 square feet. An attack consists of dropping a 5'x5' patch of tendrils. A giant cavewort can do this many times, but it can't bring more than one clump of tendrils to bear on a single victim, unless the victim moves under a fresh patch.

A large quantity of smoke will make cavewort placid

The Witchfire Trilogy

temporarily. Adventurers needing to cross a large cave-wort infestation often build a roaring fire and smoke it out; a few minutes of heavy smoke will dull the cave-wort's senses for 2d6 minutes. Also, a torch or other heat source waved under the cave-wort will sometimes (30%) trick it into dropping its tendrils.

Cavewort (5'x5'): CR 1; Medium-size plant; HD 1d8+1; Init +2; Spd 0 ft.; AC +12; Atk +2 melee (1d2, acid); SA Improved grab; SQ Plant; AL Always N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Int –, Wis 9, Cha 2.

Skills & Feats: Hide +6, Spot +2.

Treasure: 1/10th coins; 50% goods; 50% items

Notes: The DM should not scale the Challenge Rating of cavewort up past CR 2. The biggest possible cavewort, at 300 square feet, still isn't worth 12x the base CR value.

Devil Rats

These loathsome rat creatures resemble a cross between a rat and a large monkey. They stand about waist-high to a human, and a row of sharp spines runs down their back. They are fairly unintelligent, attacking only with their giant yellow teeth and not using any kind of tools. Devil Rats usually travel in packs of 5–20, and can sometimes be found in the Undercity of Corvis. They are excellent swimmers.

If half of a Devil Rat pack is killed, the survivors have a 25% chance of fleeing on each subsequent combat round. If this happens they are 75% likely to return and attack again in 1d10+10 minutes, if they can still find the enemy.

Devil Rat: CR $\frac{1}{2}$; Small beast; HD $\frac{1}{2}$ d10; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC +12; Atk +2 melee (1d4, bite); SQ scent; AL Always NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 4.

Skills & Feats: Move Silently +5, Hide +5.

Treasure: Standard

Gorax

A distant relative of the ogre, the gorax makes its ugly cousin look positively sophisticated. Dim-witted and hostile, this creature makes its home in dank holes, venturing forth only to find prey. Gorax often use crude tools to dig out their lairs, but for combat they rely on their powerful claws. They do not speak, though on occasion one may know a word or two of Common.

The typical gorax collects shiny trinkets, just like a crow or ferret. These treasures are always hidden some-

where in its lair, and may include valuable coins, gems or even weapons. In the spring, male gorax will try to court females by giving them these shiny objects, which would be endearing if the creatures weren't so ugly and hostile. A gorax who has lost his "shinies" (perhaps to a thieving adventurer) will wail and moan for several hours—best to give him plenty of room while he grieves!

Anyone who meets a gorax is advised to throw down a handful of coins or other shiny objects and flee; if the gorax fails a Will save of DC 8 the "shinies" will make the beast lose interest in the visitor. Note that if combat has begun, or if there are cubs nearby, this tactic is totally useless and the gorax will fight until death.

Gifted beastmasters have been known to tame young gorax and train them to use simple weapons, but they are difficult creatures to handle. Only a few remain in military service today, as they have an unfortunate tendency to go berserk under pressure—there is a 5% chance of the creature going mad with fear and pain each time it takes damage while it is under 50% hp. A berserk gorax will attack the closest living targets.

Gorax: CR 2; Large Giant; HD 3d8+3; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC +13; Atk +4 melee (1d6+4, claws); AL Usually NE; SV Fort +2, Ref –1, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 5.

Skills & Feats: Listen +2, Spot +2; Run.

Treasure: 100% chance of 1d4 gems

Pygmy Boar

These solitary animals have a well-earned reputation for viciousness. They will attack a party of any size if they feel even slightly threatened. Luckily, the boars found in Widower's Wood are a lot smaller than their cousins elsewhere in the Kingdom of Cygnar.

Pygmy Boar: CR $\frac{1}{2}$; Small animal; HD 1d8+1; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC +12; Atk +2 melee (1d3+1, tusk gore); SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills & Feats: Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Hide +3, Spot +2.

Treasure: None

Razorbats

While most bats are harmless eaters of fruit or insects, the razorbat is a dangerous predator. Hunting in packs of 3–8, these bloodthirsty flyers are capable of killing all but the largest prey. Vicious and fearless, razorbats are hated and feared by all.

The Witchfire Trilogy

A fully-grown razorbat has a four-foot wingspan. The tips of the wings sport a cruel claw, and the elongated tail ends in a sharp spike. Razorbats swarm their prey, slashing with claws and stabbing with tails, until the victim collapses. The attackers then land and feast on the corpse. They are especially fond of barnyard animals such as cows and sheep, and a razorbat infestation can quickly decimate a farm's livestock. They can also easily dispatch the farmer, should he be caught in the open after dark! Often a barn full of razorbats is set aflame, since it's safer than trying to destroy the colony.

Razorbats are notoriously ill tempered. They will kill animals that they have no intention of eating, apparently for the sport of it. They are also fearless and will readily attack all manner of humanoids, especially if someone enters their roost.

Razorbats have poor eyesight, and use echolocation to navigate. Like all bats they are totally at ease in the dark. Interestingly, their tailspike is quite valuable — a fletcher can use it to fashion a +1 non-magical arrow.

Razorbat: CR $\frac{1}{2}$; Small beast; HD 1d10; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC +14; Atk +2 melee (1d4, tail slash); SQ Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Hide +6, Spot +2.

Treasure: None

Swamp Gobber

Widower's Wood is home to an especially nasty species of goblinoid, which the locals call swamp gobbers. Like all gobbers, they prefer to avoid a stand-up fight, but they are known to ambush travelers on occasion, especially in the winter when times are hard. A swamp gobber ambush will almost always lead off with some sort of trap being sprung. A barrage of darts follows, and then the gobbers charge into battle with crude bone daggers. High-ranking members of the tribe will have metal weapons.

Swamp gobbers will almost never attack a group of more than ten opponents, unless they have overwhelming numbers. Their goal in most cases is to surprise the enemy and make off with food and other valuables; they will only fight to the death when they have no choice. They live in small nomadic tribes of no more than 40 individuals—they can't afford to lose all their warriors in a bungled attack.

Swamp gobbers have smooth, greasy skin, and can change color like a chameleon. To make the most of this ability, they wear only ragged scraps of clothing. Fleet of foot, they can also move silently through the most treacherous swamp. As if that wasn't enough, they

can also manufacture primitive machinery and alchemical concoctions with which to produce a thick, white smoke. They use these smoke bellows to create a thick patch of "fog" to provide further cover for their attack. Experienced characters can detect the subtle odor of swamp gobber smoke with an Knowledge (local) roll of DC 12. If a character makes the roll, they are not caught flat-footed if an ambush hits.

There is one tribe of swamp gobbers in the Wood that trades with the humans living in the area. There is a large, flat stone near the Hangman's Tree where goods are exchanged on occasion. The humans leave food or tools on the rock; the next morning they will find high quality skins left in exchange by the gobbers. The gobbers will not approach the trading stone if there are any humans in the area.

Swamp Gobber: CR $\frac{1}{2}$; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC +13; Atk +1 melee (1d4, dagger), +2 ranged (1d4, dart); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Move Silently +3, Hide +3; Run.

Treasure: Standard

Swamp Shambler

It is said by some that anyone who dies in the Wood and is left there unattended will rise again in seven days as a Swamp Shambler. These undead will try to return to their home and slay those who abandoned them. Even worse, anyone they kill will rise as a swamp shambler themselves in just 1d4 minutes.

Swamp folk claim to know how to make a talisman that will prevent a Shambler from approaching. Producing a talisman takes 2d4 days of gathering materials, crafting, and curing. At the end of the time, the DM makes a Craft (talismans) roll. The amount of the roll is the DC of the Will save the Swamp Shambler must make to approach within 50 ft. of the talisman. The protective abilities do not stack; only the strongest talisman in an area will take effect.

Each Shambler may only try to approach a warded area once. Shamblers with an especially strong revenge motivation may get a bonus to their roll of up to +10. For example, there is a swampie legend about a young couple that sneaked into the Wood for a tryst. A gang of bandits attacked the couple, and the cowardly lad fled, leaving his fiancée to her fate. Fearing the worst, he commissioned the finest talisman he could afford, but to no avail. A week later the Shambler that his bride-to-be had become killed him in his sleep. Hearing the screams, the swampies burned the lad's shack to the ground, with the Shambler and victim in

it.

Swamp Shambler: CR 2; Medium-sized undead; HD 3d12; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC +13; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, claws); SA create spawn; SQ undead; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con –, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Climb +4, Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Hide +3, Spot +2; Blind-Fight.

Treasure: None

Swamp Squid

Swamp squids are rare, and are only known to exist in the area around Corvis. They look almost identical to their sea-dwelling cousins, but they can grow up to ten feet long—not counting the tentacles. Like sea squids, they have two extra-long gripping tentacles, with fat sucker pads on the end. These tentacles are 150% of the length of the body. The remaining eight tentacles are the same length as the body. All the tentacles are lined with powerful suction cups, which are ringed with sharp teeth. Swamp squids have excellent camouflage ability, like octopi, and can instantly change color to match their surroundings.

The squid use their excellent camouflage to lie unseen, waiting for prey to pass by. Young squid feed on fish, as well as reptiles and insects that they find in the water. As the creature gets bigger, it starts hunting larger prey—rats, birds, deer and sometimes even livestock that get too close to the water. Land dwellers that are snared are dragged underwater and drowned, then consumed.

When small, swamp squids are a curiosity—and a delicious one at that. Adults, however, can be very dangerous. They will readily attack even human-sized creatures that enter the water or linger near the water's edge.

Swamp squids can discharge a cloud of black, irritating ink when threatened. They can do this three times per day. The ink clouds the water and it will totally obscure vision for four body lengths all around the creature. It also stings the eyes, and it will cause a penalty of –4 Con for 3d6 minutes unless a Fort save of DC 16 is made. Depending on the water currents, the ink will persist for 1–20 minutes.

The ink glands are very valuable (up to 20gp), since the ink has uses for scholars, wizards, alchemists and even chefs of exotic dishes. Swamp squids also have 2d6 bioluminescent nodules under their skin, which can be sold for up to 5gp each to alchemists or wizards. The nodules will glow faintly for 2d4 days after the squid's death.

These creatures have adapted well to the swamp-

lands. They prefer to remain in larger lakes and rivers, but they are also found in stagnant swamp water ponds. It is thought by scholars that they can crawl across dry land from one body of water to another, but no one has witnessed this yet.

Swamp Squid (adult): CR 2; Large beast; HD 2d10; Init +3; Spd Swim 30 ft.; AC +12; Atk +2 melee (0, tentacle grab or 1d4, bite); SA improved grab; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills & Feats: Hide +8, Move Silently +5.

Treasure: Ink glands (20 gp), glowing glands (5 gp)

Note: The squid cannot attempt a bite attack until it has grappled a victim.

Thrall

The Thrall are a large category of undead of varying power. They all have one thing in common—the way they are created. To create a Thrall, a necromancer needs to assemble the required body parts and enchant them, laying glyphs of power on the old bones and rotting skin. A simple skeleton guard will have only a few of the most modest glyphs, while a necromancer's master creation could be covered from head to toe in arcane tattoos yielding terrible powers. It is the glyphs that determine the Thrall's characteristics; the body type is incidental. A "fresh" Thrall is no better than one crafted from aged bones.

There are families of glyphs that determine the Thrall's intelligence, strength, combat skill, resistance to turning and many other attributes. A skilled necromancer can determine much of a Thrall's capabilities just by seeing the runes laid on the old bones. New glyphs spied on a vanquished foe can be examined and possibly added to the necromancer's own library. Laying a glyph on a Thrall is a procedure akin to creating a magic item. It takes a great deal of time, and burns some of the caster's XP.

Despite the unusual method of their creation, Thralls are still undead and are subject to the same rules as any others. They can be turned, rebuked or controlled, as any other undead. The strength of the runes laid on them determines how hard they are to turn or dispel—not the shape of the body.

In this adventure, there are four basic types of Thralls: risen, slaves, warriors and lieutenants. Note that the stats represented here are typical, but by no means the final word. Another necromancer might wish to invest his slaves with more intelligence or speed, for example—thralls are as unique as the necromancers who create them.

The Witchfire Trilogy

Risen are the simplest possible Thrall, and resemble zombies if the source materials are fresh, or skeletons if the source is old. They only dimly perceive their surroundings, and are driven by all undeads' hatred for the living. Risen cannot understand orders or perform useful work—all they can do is wander about in misery, attacking the living when they encounter them. Skilled necromancers have little use for such unsophisticated servants.

Slaves are a step above the Risen. Near-mindless automatons, slaves can be given simple verbal orders, which they will follow without question. They are almost totally unaware of their surroundings, and are incapable of discriminating between other beings.

Warriors are basic combat troops. They are slow-witted, but still far brainier than the slaves. They can easily perceive their surroundings, form simple plans and work together to execute them. Warriors communicate through hissing, teeth clacking and slow gestures. Few of the living understand the speech of the Thralls.

Lieutenants are the smartest and strongest type of Thrall seen in this adventure. Simply put, they are warriors with more hit dice and intelligence. They speak the language of the Thralls, and most of them can croak out a few phrases in Common as well.

Note that no Thrall can be reasoned with or bargained with. They will follow their creator's directions to the letter, even if it means their own destruction.

Thrall (Risen): CR $\frac{1}{3}$; Medium-size undead; HD $\frac{1}{2}$ d12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC +12; Atk +1 melee (1d4, bite); SQ undead; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con –, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 4.

Skills & Feats: Listen +3, Spot +3.

Treasure: None

Behavior: Risen will attack the closest living thing until they are destroyed.

Thrall (Slave): CR $\frac{1}{4}$; Medium-size undead; HD $\frac{1}{2}$ d12; Init N/A; Spd 20 ft.; AC +12; Atk N/A; SQ undead; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 4.

Skills & Feats: None.

Treasure: None

Behavior: Slaves will follow the orders of their maker—simple tasks such as, “place all these bones in that wagon.” They are totally incapable of combat, communication or judgment.

Thrall (Warrior): CR $\frac{1}{2}$; Medium-size undead; HD 1d12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC +12 (+2 natural, armor may also be worn); Atk +1 melee (various simple weapons); SQ undead, +2 turn resistance; AL LE; SV

Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con –, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills & Feats: Climb +5, Hide +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3.

Treasure: None

Behavior: Thrall Warriors will follow the commands of their creator. These creatures are capable of simple problem solving, judgment, communication and teamwork. A group of Thrall Warriors are usually found with a Thrall Lieutenant.

Thrall (Lieutenant): CR 1; Medium-size undead; HD 2d12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC +12 (+2 natural, armor may also be worn); Atk +2 melee (various simple weapons, +1 damage from Str); SQ undead, +2 turn resistance; AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 12, Con –, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +6, Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Search +3, Spot +3, Use Rope +4.

Treasure: None

Behavior: Thrall Lieutenants are relatively intelligent, and can follow complex directions from their creator. They are usually given command of a number of Thrall Warriors.



Appendix B: NPCs



Corvis is a remarkable city, full of scoundrels, heroes and everything in between. In this appendix DMs will find all they need to make Corvis come alive for their players. First will be revealed attributes for some generic NPCs—so DMs have some numbers at hand when needed. Next will be detailed some of the notable NPCs in the city, and any remarkable attributes, possessions or other features they may have.

Generic NPC Foundations

When the players throw down with thugs at the waterfront, or get swindled by a merchant, it's important for the DM to have NPC stats at hand. NPCs come in two varieties: Green and Experienced. These correspond roughly to levels 1 and 3. Higher-level NPCs are of course possible, but they should only be used in plot-driven encounters.

The attributes given for these generic NPCs are average values. DMs can and should tweak the scores to keep the players on their toes. All NPCs attributes are given as if they are human—make sure to add the appropriate modifiers if you use another race.

Thug

Spend enough time in the bad parts of town and you'll meet a thug or three sooner or later! Thugs can be treated as Fighters for all purposes except Class Abilities and Feats, which they lack unless otherwise stated. Almost all the Thugs in Corvis are human males.

Thug (Green): Ftr 1; CR 1; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (leather); Atk +1 melee (1d4/19–20/2x dagger, or 1d6/2x club), +1 ranged (1d2/2x, dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +2 Ref +0 Will +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Climb +1, Swim +3, Intimidate +3; Armor Proficiency (Light), Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Thug (Experienced): Ftr 3; CR 3; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (leather); Atk +3 melee (1d4/19–20/2x dagger, or 1d6/2x club), +3 ranged (1d2/2x, dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +3 Ref +1 Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Climb +2, Swim +3, Intimidate +4, Bluff +2, Knowledge (Underworld) +1; Armor Proficiency (Light), Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Rogue

Not surprisingly, the thriving underworld of Corvis has produced legions of rogues. Refer to PH46 for the details on this class.

Rogue (Green): Rog 1; CR 1; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (leather); Atk +0 melee (1d4/19–20/2x dagger, or 1d6/2x club), +2 ranged (1d2/2x, dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +0 Ref +4 Will +0; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Special Attacks: Sneak attack +1d6

Skills & Feats (Burglar archetype): Appraise +3, Balance +2, Climb +3, Disable Device +2, Escape Artist +1, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Innuendo +1, Jump +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Open Lock +4, Search +2, Spot +2, Swim +1, Tumble +2, Use Rope +1; Alertness.

Skills & Feats (Cutpurse archetype): Appraise +3, Bluff +2, Climb +1, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +2, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Innuendo +1, Intimidate +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Open Lock +2, Perform +1, Pick Pocket +4, Spot +2; Dodge.

Rogue (Experienced): Rog 3; CR 3; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (leather); Atk +2 melee (1d4/19–20/2x dagger, or 1d6/2x club), +4 ranged (1d2/2x, dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +1 Ref +5 Will +1; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Special Attacks: Sneak attack +2d6.

Skills & Feats (Burglar archetype): Appraise +5, Balance +4, Climb +5, Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +2, Gather Information +3, Hide +5, Innuendo +1, Jump +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +5, Search +2, Spot +2, Swim +1, Tumble +3, Use Rope +1; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Uncanny Dodge.

The Witchfire Trilogy

Skills & Feats (Cutpurse archetype): Appraise +3, Bluff +2, Climb +1, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +2, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Innuendo +1, Intimidate +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Open Lock +2, Perform +1, Pick Pocket +4, Spot +2; Ambidexterity, Dodge, Uncanny Dodge.

Merchant

The vast majority of merchants have never lifted a blade in their life, unless it is to appraise it. Consequently, their combat abilities are pathetic and their "level" only has an effect on their skills. Merchant skills increase at (4 + Int modifier)/level.

Merchant (Green): CR $\frac{1}{4}$; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 Atk +0 melee (1d4/19–20/2x dagger); AL various; SV Fort +0 Ref +0 Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills & Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +1, Craft +1 (various), Diplomacy +1, Forgery +1, Gather Information +2, Innuendo +1, Intimidate +1, Knowledge (product line) +3, Profession (merchant) +2. No Feats.

Merchant (Experienced): CR $\frac{1}{2}$; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 7; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 Atk +0 melee (1d4/19–20/2x dagger); AL various; SV Fort +0 Ref +0 Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills & Feats: Appraise +4, Bluff +1, Craft +1 (various), Diplomacy +1, Forgery +1, Gather Information +3, Innuendo +1, Intimidate +1, Knowledge (product line) +4, Profession (merchant) +3. No Feats.

Watchman

The city Watch is composed of capable, well-trained fighters. For the most part they can be treated as fighters from the Player's Handbook. Being lawmen, the Watch will always try to subdue an opponent if possible. Watchmen do have some special abilities—when working in a group of two or more they can subdue opponents more easily. They all also have the Improved Disarm feat, for which they do not need the Int prerequisite.

Watchman (Green): Ftr1; CR1; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (studded leather + small shield); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 subdual/2x sap, 1d6+1/2x club, 1d8+1/19–20/2x longsword); AL LN; SV Fort +3 Ref +0 Will +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Climb +1, Handle Animal +1, Knowledge (Law) +2, Ride +2, Swim +2; Combat

Reflexes, Group Subdual, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative.

Watchman (Experienced): Ftr3; CR3; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 20; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (chain shirt + small shield); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 subdual/2x sap, 1d6+1/2x club, 1d8+1/19–20/2x longsword); AL LN; SA Group Subdual; SV Fort +3 Ref +0 Will +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Climb +2, Handle Animal +1, Jump +1, Knowledge (Law) +3, Ride +2, Swim +3; Combat Reflexes, Group Subdual, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw.

New Feat: Group Subdual [General]

You are more easily able to subdue an enemy when working with other trained combatants.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: If two or more combatants with Group Subdual are attacking the same target and inflicting only subdual damage, each attacker gets one extra attack each round.



Appendix C: Dramatis Personae



Borloch, Ulfass



Magistrate Borloch sits on the city council and is second only to the Mayor in power. He is a thoroughly evil man. He blackmailed the Corvis Coven into doing his evil bidding, so that his personal power would increase by their labors. When the Coven had

outlived its usefulness to him, he had them executed. Borloch was himself manipulated into this by Vahn Oberen, who had his own reasons for wanting the Coven dead by his own hand.

Ulfass Borloch, male Rog 6: CR6; Size M (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 6d6; hp 28 (Toughness x2); Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 leather +1); Atk dagger +4 (+4 Base), +7 ranged (+4 Base, +3 Dex); Damage dagger 1d4; SV Fort +2 (+2 Base), Ref +8 (+5 Base, +3 Dex), Will +3 (+2 Base, +1 Wis); AL NE; Str 10 (+0), Dex 16 (+3), Con 11 (+0), Int 14 (+2), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 8 (-1).

Special Attacks: Sneak attack +3d6.

Languages Spoken: Common

Skills & Feats: Appraise +9 (+7 Rank, +2 Int), Bluff +8 (+9 Rank, -1 Cha), Decipher Script +5 (+3 Rank, +2 Int), Diplomacy +8 (+9 Rank, -1 Cha), Forgery +8 (+6 rank, +2 Int), Gather Information +8 (+9 Rank, -1 Cha), Innuendo +7 (+8 Rank, -1 Cha), Intimidate +8 (+9 Rank, -1 Cha), Knowledge (local) +6 (+4 Rank, +2 Int), Listen +4 (+3 Rank, +1 Wis), Move Silently +5 (+2 Rank, +3 Dex), Profession (Barrister) +5 (+3 Rank, +2 Int), Ride +4 (+1 Rank, +3 Dex), Sense Motive +6 (+5 Rank, +1 Wis), Spot +3 (+2 Rank, +1 Wis); Dodge, Leadership, Toughness x2.

Possessions: As a powerful and corrupt politician, Borloch has a great deal of wealth. He can also get his fat hands on magic items.

Ciannor, Alexia



Seventeen-year-old Alexia is Father Dumas' niece. Her mother, the Father's wife's sister, was the leader of the Corvis Coven, and was executed a decade ago with the rest of the witches. Alexia inherited her magical abilities and has become a powerful sorceress.

In fact, she is a prodigy, having 10th level skill at a young age. She is motivated by a desire for revenge—revenge on Borloch, who orchestrated the trial, and revenge on Corvis, which she considers a wicked city. The first part of her plan is stealing the blade Witchfire. In Part II she will use it to complete the restoration of the coven, and then she will turn her attention to the evil magistrate Borloch.

During *The Longest Night*, Alexia unquestionably does some evil things. She is focused on two things at the moment: revenge and restoring her mother to life. These ideals do cloud her judgement and lead her to abhorrent acts, but Alexia is *not* an evil person at heart. Misguided, certainly—but she will evolve over the course of the *Witchfire Trilogy*.

Alexia Ciannor, female human Sor10: CR 10; Size M (5 ft., 7 in. tall); hp 31; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk dagger +5 (+5 Base), small pistol +5 (+5 Base); Damage 1d4 dagger, 2d4 small pistol; SV Fort +4 (+3 Base, +1 Con), Ref +3 (+3 Base), Will +8 (+7 Base, +1 Wis); AL N; Str 9 (-1), Dex 10 (+0), Con 12 (+1), Int 14 (+2), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 17 (+3).

Languages Spoken: Common

Skills & Feats: Alchemy +8 (+6 Rank, +2 Int), Concentration +12 (+11 Rank, +1 Con), Gather Information +5 (+2 Rank, +3 Cha), Knowledge (arcana) +12 (+10 Rank, +2 Int), Ride +5 (+5 Rank), Scry +3 (+1 Rank, +2 Int), Spellcraft +12 (+10 Rank, +2 Int), Swim +4 (+5 rank, -1 Str), Wilderness Lore +2 (+1 Rank, +1 Wis). Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Maximize Spell, Still Spell, Silent Spell.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/5/3): 0th—*Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Ray of Frost, Read Magic*. 1st—*Charm Person, Color Spray, Magic Missile, Mount, Shield*. 2nd—*Blindness/Deafness, Invisibility, Knock, Leomund's Trap*. 3rd—*Blink, Fly, Lightning Bolt*. 4th—*Arcane Eye, Polymorph Other*. 5th—*Animate Dead*. Alexia also knows more powerful necromantic spells, some of her own design, some learned from ancient texts—for example, the spells that animate her Thralls. Her necromantic skill is prodigious, but the lengthy rituals she has learned are useless in combat. In a pinch, she will only be able to rely on the spells listed above.

Possessions: Aside from her spellbooks and a few gp worth of coins, Alexia has very little.

The Witchfire Trilogy

Dumas, Pandor



The Father is High Prelate of Corvis and a pillar of the community. Father Pandor Dumas' shame is that his wife's own sister was executed as a witch a decade ago. With his wife now dead as well, father Dumas cares for his niece Alexia by himself.

Though he is a man of only 40-some summers his hair is completely gray and his features are craggy. He may look older than his years, but he is still tough when needed. The community likes and respects the Father, who has an excellent reputation in Corvis. Normally Father Dumas carries no weapons or armor. If he needs to do combat he will fetch his large steel shield +1, heavy mace +1 and splint mail +1, for AC 20.

Father Pandor Dumas, male human Clr6: CR 6; Size M (5 ft., 9 in. tall); HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 or 20 with armor; Atk heavy mace +5 melee (+4 Base, +1 heavy mace +1); Damage heavy mace 1d8+2; SV Fort +6 (+5 Base, +1 Con), Ref +2 (+2 Base), Will +8 (+5 Base, +3 Wis); AL LG; Str 12 (+1), Dex 11 (+0), Con 13 (+1), Int 12 (+1), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 15 (+3).

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills & Feats: Concentration +5 (+4 Rank, +1 Con), Diplomacy +4 (+1 Rank, +3 Cha), Heal +6 (+3 Rank, +3 Wis), Knowledge (Arcana) +4 (+3 Rank, +1 Int), Knowledge (Local) +4 (+3 Rank, +1 Int), Stry +3 (+2 Rank, +1 Int), Spellcraft +5 (+4 Rank, +1 Int). Combat Casting, Extra Turning x2, Spell Penetration.

Cleric Domains: Good, Healing

Cleric Spells Known (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1): 0th—*Detect Magic, Guidance, Light, Mending, Read Magic, Virtue*. 1st—*Comprehend Languages, Detect Evil, Entropic Shield, Protection from Evil, Remove Fear, Sanctuary*. 2nd—*Aid, Consecrate, Enthrall, Hold Person, Zone of Truth*. 3rd—*Cure Serious Wounds, Dispel Magic, Prayer, Water Walk*. 4th—*Holy Smite, Restoration*.

Possessions: Father Dumas' only items of note are his shield +1, heavy mace +1 and splint mail +1. He has few worldly possessions and he does not always wear his armor.

Helstrom, Julian



Captain Helstrom is a respected officer in the Watch, and his name is well known among merchants and criminals alike. Many years ago Helstrom was a colonel in the King's army, but Raelthorne the Elder's cruelty and dishonorable actions forced

Helstrom to retire in protest. During the Captain's military career he had many adventures, perhaps the most famous of which is the Talon Company incident.

After a year of wandering throughout Cygnar, Helstrom joined the Watch in Corvis, beginning his career anew.

The Captain is extremely loyal to the new King, and he is actually an agent of Raelthorne the Younger, though no one in Corvis is aware of this. Helstrom's loyalty will be put to the test in Part II of the *Witchfire Trilogy*, *Shadow of the Exile*.

Captain Julian Helstrom, male human Ftr8: CR 8; Size M (5 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 8d10+8; hp 52; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +5 breastplate); Attack longsword +12/+7 (+8 Base, +3 Str, +1 masterwork weapon) melee, or military pistol +11/+6 (+8 Base, +2 Dex) ranged; Damage longsword 1d8+4, military pistol 2d6; SV Fort +7 (+6 Base, +1 Con), Ref +5 (+3 Base, +2 Dex), Will +5 (+3 Base, +2 Wis); AL LN; Str 16 (+3), Dex 14 (+2), Con 13 (+1), Int 12 (+1), Wis 13 (+2), Cha 15 (+3).

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5 (+2 Rank, +3 Str), Concentration +5 (+4 Rank, +1 Con), Forgery +5 (+5 Rank), Handle animal +9 (+9 Rank), Hide +2 (+2 Dex), Listen +2 (+2 Wis), Move silently +2 (+2 Dex), Open lock +4 (+2 Rank, +2 Dex), Spot +2 (+2 Wis), Swim +4 (+1 Rank, +3 Str), Wilderness lore +5 (+3 Rank, +2 Wis); Blind-fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Disarm, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Captain Helstrom possesses a masterwork longsword, which he carried as an army officer. He still uses his Cygnar military armor and pistol as well. All of his gear is kept in perfect condition. The Captain also has a few thousand gp worth of gems and coins from his adventures split between his home and the Bank of Cygnar.

Visit privateerpress.com for more information on how the Captain's pistol works—there's a free PDF file on the Downloads page, along with other goodies like a printable map of Corvis.

Oberen, Vahn



This powerful wizard is the individual ultimately responsible for the execution of the Corvis Coven. He foresaw the rise of the Coven through ancient prophecies, and manipulated Magistrate Borloch into blackmailing and arresting them.

Ultimately, Oberen himself was the witches' executioner. His magic blade, Witchfire, transferred part of the power of each coven into him.

Oberen used to be known as Dexter Sirac, head of Vinter Raelthorne's fear Inquisition. Few outside his trusted ex-Inquisitors know his real identity.

The Witchfire Trilogy

Vahn Oberen, male human **Wiz12**: CR 12; Size M (5 ft., 9 in. tall); HD 12d4+24; hp 49; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, ring of protection +2); Atk dagger +9/+4 (+6 Base, dagger +3) melee, or dagger +11/+6 (+6 Base, +2 Dex, +1 dagger +3) ranged; Damage dagger 1d4+3; SV Fort +6 (+4 Base, +2 Con), Ref +6 (+4 Base, +2 Dex), Will +10 (+8 Base, +2 Wis); AL NE; Str 11 (+0), Dex 15 (+2), Con 14 (+2), Int 18 (+4), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 13 (+1).

Languages Spoken: Common, and a few others that would shatter your mind if he spoke even a single word in your ear...

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +8 (+4 Rank, +4 Int), Concentration +9 (+7 Rank, +2 Con), Gather information +16 (+15 Rank, +1 Cha), Hide +7 (+5 Rank, +2 Dex), Knowledge (arcana) +17 (+13 Rank, +4 Int), Knowledge (local) +14 (+10 Rank, +4 Int), Listen +3 (+1 Rank, +2 Wis), Move silently +2 (+2 Dex), Scry +18 (+14 Rank, +4 Int), Spellcraft +13 (+9 Rank, +4 Int), Spot +2 (+2 Wis); Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Mastery (Change Self, Charm Person, Dispel Magic), Spell Penetration, Still Spell.

Wizard Spells Known (4/5/5/5/4/3/2): 0th—Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance. 1st—Animate Rope, Change Self, Charm Person, Chill Touch, Feather Fall, Identify, Shield, Shocking Grasp, Silent Image. 2nd—Knock, Leomund's Trap, Levitate, Mirror Image, See Invisibility. 3rd—Dispel Magic, Fireball, Fly, Haste, Protection from Elements, Slow. 4th—Charm Monster, Dimension Door, Fire Shield, Improved Invisibility, Polymorph Self, Rainbow Pattern, Summon Monster IV. 5th—Animate Dead, Cloudkill, Dominate Person, Hold Monster, Nightmare, Wall of Force, Wall of Iron, Wall of Stone. 6th—Chain Lightning, Flesh to Stone, Summon Monster VI.

Possessions: Oberen carries a dagger +3 of mysterious origin. The weapon sheds light at his command, and it may have other abilities as well.

He also has a *ring of protection* +2. Should he ever need money, he has access to a great deal of it, along with exotic magic items and hired muscle. Don't mess around with the Head Inquisitor, even if he's retired and hiding from the King's justice!

Wadock, Gunner

Gunner has been working the Fellig-Corvis trade route for over a year. He's a tough but fair taskmaster when the PCs work for him in the beginning of this scenario. Later on, the PCs may want to hire him, or ask him to come along on their adventures.

Gunner knows a lot about Corvis, and he can be a valuable ally. He's also a convenient way for a DM to beef up a party that's under strength.

Gunner Wadock, male human **Ftr1**: CR 1; Size M (6 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 1d10+1; hp 10; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 studded leather, +1 Dex); Attack longsword +2 (+1 Base, +1 Str), or +2 (+1 Base, +1 Dex) ranged; Damage longsword 1d8+1; SV Fort +3 (+2 Base, +1 Con), Ref +1 (+0 Base, +1 Dex), Will +0 (+0 Base); AL LN; Str 13 (+1), Dex 12 (+1), Con 13 (+1), Int 12 (+1), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 10 (+0).

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Climb +5 (+4 Rank, +1 Str), Knowledge (local) +5 (+4 Rank, +1 Int), Diplomacy +1 (+1 Rank), Forgery +2 (+1 Rank, +1 Int), Hide +1 (+1 Dex), Jump +5 (+4 Rank, +1 Str), Listen +0, Move silently +1 (+1 Dex), Spot +0; Combat reflexes, Improved initiative, Toughness.

Possessions: Gunner has his weapon, armor, and a few hundred gp in coins and gems.

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