



AN ADVENTURE FOR 4-6 CHARACTERS OF 3RD LEVEL

BRIDE OF THE DARKENED RIDER

OLD SCHOOL GAME ADVENTURE

KIM C. FRANSEN



COMPATIBLE WITH

**DCC
RPG**



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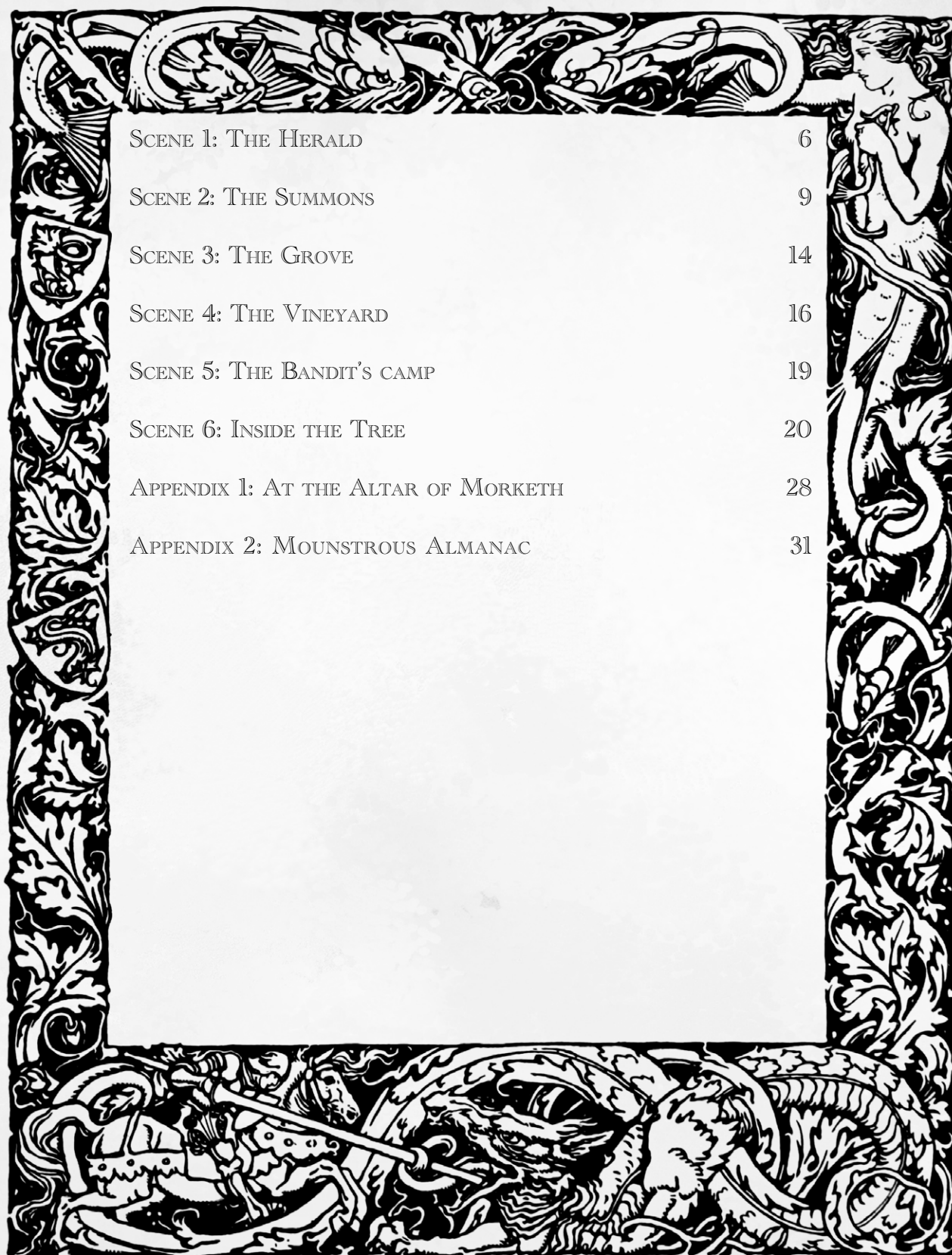
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BRIDE OF THE DARKENED RIDER



“THE FEAST IS OVER, AND THE LAMPS EXPIRE.”

— ROBERT E. HOWARD



BEWARE, YE WHO ENTER HERE

This particular adventure has two sections. The first is an event based part of the game, where the players proceed from one event or scene to the next in a straightforward manner. Each scene or event is self-contained, but has links to the previous and the upcoming events.

The latter half of the adventure, when the characters are finally ready to confront the villains of the adventure is a more classic dungeoncrawl, with pits, traps, monsters and treasure. Make sure you familiarize yourself with both before you start the adventure for your group.

The first part of the adventure, leading up to the final confrontations is designed to lull the characters into a false sense of security with its slow pacing and the encounter with the Corrupted Nature Spirits in Scene 3. The encounter in Scene 4 is designed to slowly start building the sense of "wrongness" as the villains start trying to prevent the characters from making their way to the hideout, and increased upon in each of the following encounters, as the villains dig ever deeper into the perversions of their dark god, to stop the heroes of the tale.

The adventure itself is written for 4-6 3rd level characters, but is adjustable for other levels of play as you see fit.



BACKGROUND STORY

Two of the kingdom's baronies have been at odds and occasionally outright war for centuries, in a blood feud that lost all meaning generations ago. Things have recently changed as the heads of the two noble families have arranged a marriage between the heirs to their baronies, in a move to secure peace and prosperity to the region.

Old habits die hard, and when the two heirs met each other they fell in love. The news has been kept quiet and revealed only shortly before the ceremony as the two heads of the baronies still eye each other warily.

Unbeknownst to the mother of the bride, her favorite minstrel and court jester is in the pay of a local outlaw knight, who had been eyeing up the barony. He and his lover, a powerful enchantress turned to her dark master for help and taking the form of a shadowy bird, she descended upon the poor girl and invaded her dreams with visions of the outlaw knight. Over several nights, she made the young maid obsessed with the knight, and she confided her dreams to the minstrel, telling him of a "shadowy bird that brought a knight to her".

Sending a message to inform the outlaw knight that the maid was ripe, he suggested that the bird was a vision of the future, and she would find this bewitching man if only she left the confines of her quarters.

The following day, she went for a ride in the countryside, where she came across the knight from her dreams. Taking this as a vision from the gods, she ran off into the wilds with him.

The dark bird visited the mansion one more time, scouting the reactions of the family, and, the minstrel happened to see the dark bird. Recognizing it for the horror that it actually was, he has been wrestling with his conscience ever since, and is going mad.



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The knight now plans to marry the maid, and claim her barony once the dust settles from the ruined marriage. Then, when her mother dies, in an arranged accident, he will have his wife killed, inherit the barony and reunite with his lover. His lover has other plans, and she will only accommodate her lover so far, as she intends to make sacrifices of the noble family to her god Morketh.

Of course, the disappearance has not gone unnoticed and, while heralds continue to proclaim the upcoming wedding as happening, hiding the disappearance of the bride, the mother of the bride reaches out for help in finding her missing daughter.

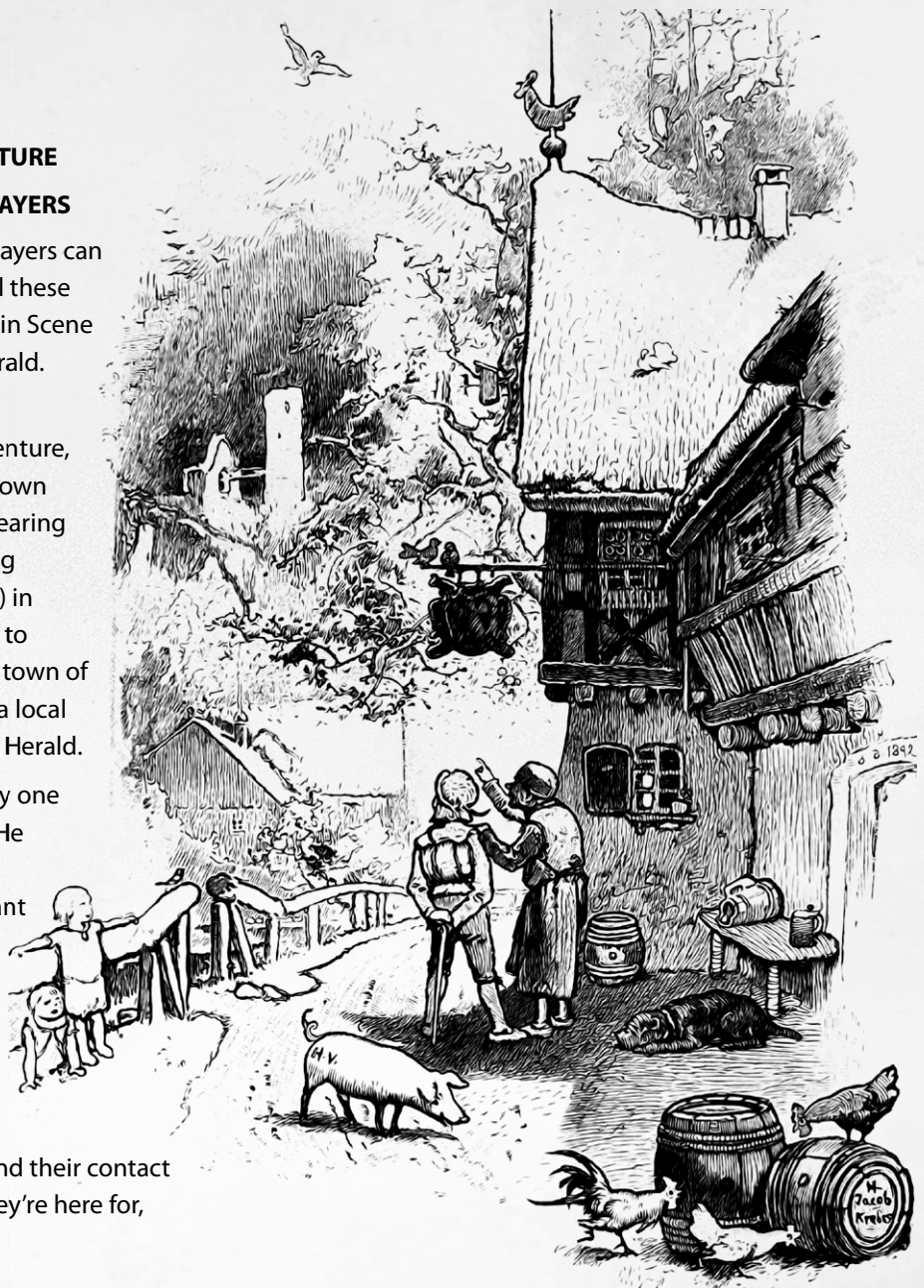
STARTING THE ADVENTURE AND INVOLVING THE PLAYERS

Here are a few ideas for how your players can become involved in this adventure. All these hooks end with the events beginning in Scene 1 where the players encounter the Herald.

- » Having finished their previous adventure, the characters have come back to town to resupply for their next outing. Hearing of dungeons and treasure (resulting in another adventure after this one) in a barony nearby, the players set off to investigate. Once they arrive in the town of Kintcardin they spend the night in a local Inn, and wake up to the calls of the Herald.
- » The characters have been invited by one of their contacts to a local festival. He has hinted that something big is happening and that all the important people of the kingdom will be present. It would be a good time for anyone hoping to get into the higher stratospheres of society to mingle at the event. Arriving in Kintcardin, they hear the local herald proclaiming the wedding, and their contact confirms that it is the event that they're here for,

but that they should settle in for the night. They're awakened next morning to the events in Scene 1.

- » The characters all have homes in and around Kintcardin, so they've become aware of the upcoming wedding over the last few days. The commoners are all happy about it, as they hope it'll bring an end to the strife that's been afflicting both of the neighbouring baronies, and that they'll finally have peace and not risk waking up to war every morning. One morning, the characters are woken up by the Herald, and the events in Scene 1 unfold.





SCENE 1: THE HERALD

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The sun has just passed over the horizon when you hear a clear voice shouting:

"Hear this, hear this! By proclamation of Lady Malysa Florin, ten days hence, it has been declared that her heir, the maiden Taelerys will be married to Lord Heltyn, the heir of house Tafneigh. As such, on that day it is expected that all citizens attend the ceremony, and the day has been declared a holiday," His voice lowers, and you see him walking past a corner towards the local inn "The Pig and Toadstool", with a small crowd surrounding him, apparently discussing his recent message.

If the characters do not approach him in the street, he'll arrive at the inn, shouting the proclamation one final time, before heading inside. Inside, he and the Innkeeper (an old friend of his) engage in a quiet conversation, and anyone nearby who's not interrupting the conversation can hear the words "bride" "not seen" and "odd" from the murmur of their conversation.

Should the characters decide to talk to the Herald (whose name is Jarwick) they discover that he's a friendly and open fellow, who is more than willing to chat for a bit. He has worked for the bride's family for more than 2 decades so he knows them well. Here are some of the most common questions and answers that they might get out of Jarwick.

Read aloud or paraphrase the text in *italics*.

Question: "Who's the lucky couple?"

Answer: *"Oh, you haven't heard? Well, my proclamation of this should be obvious. It's the two heirs of this, and the neighbouring barony. Those two noble houses have always been at odds, but it seems the head of the houses finally decided to bury the hatchet, and they've arranged for a marriage between their heirs, finally uniting the houses, and with a bit of luck, giving the region some peace. I tell you, they used to have wars between them, but at least those days are long gone."*

Question: "How does the couple feel about an arranged marriage?"

Answer: *"Well, I don't know the groom too well, but I've know the bride since she was a wee girl. And I know that to begin with, she was none too happy about it, but when she met the lad, who's quite a strapping and handsome fellow, she seemed to come around. They spent a lot of time together, but that was always supervised, and they haven't seen each other for the last month. It's tradition after all."*

Question: "What's this that's odd or missing?"

Answer: *"You shouldn't have heard that.. I'm not sure I should tell you." He looks meaningfully at his empty cup of ale. **Once the cup's full, he continues:** "Mighty kind of you. Proclaiming is thirsty work. Well, the odd thing is, I haven't seen the young lady for a couple of days. She never used to miss her morning ride, but the last time I saw her go for her morning ride must be three days ago. And as far as I know, no one else has seen her. But every time I've hinted something to the family they've blown me off. Real strange, I tell ya."*

Question: "Anything else unusual?"

Answer: *"Now that you mention it, there is something. The other night, must have been about 3 or 4 days ago, I woke up. And I could have sworn I heard the wings of a giant bird or something. And right after that, someone*



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screaming and crying. And I've heard crying every night since then, but I don't know who it is. I mean, my wife keeps telling me I'm hearing things, but I've lived in that castle most of my life, and I've never heard anything like that before."

After this, he finishes up his cup of ale, and bids everyone farewell, before heading off to continue

his duties. The Innkeeper doesn't know much about it all, but he can inform them that the wars between the two baronies go back generations, and that this would definitely be a step in the right direction. He's even expecting a fair bit of business on the day of the wedding, now that it's turned into a holiday.





SCENE 2: THE SUMMONS

A few hours after the chat with Jarwick, a messenger arrives, carrying a letter for the characters. If none of them are present, it is left with the Innkeeper to hand over to the characters.

The letter reads as follows:

Mercenary Leader,
I hope this letter finds you and yours well and in need of gainful employment. I am not accustomed to dealing with mercenaries, but these are extraordinary circumstances that require action, rather than complacency.

Her grace, the Baroness, commands you and your notable group of individuals to appear before her on a matter of the greatest urgency. She asks that you act with the utmost secrecy as even the merest rumor could spell disaster.

Please present yourselves to me, the chamberlain of the castle at your earliest convenience and I will take you to a meeting with her grace.

Enclosed in this letter is a token that upon presenting it to the guards at the gate, will ensure that you're taken to me immediately.

Darman Thor,
chamberlain

Allow the characters time to prepare, purchase whatever gear they may think they need, and otherwise roleplay. Once they are at the castle, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The castle in front of you is not a particularly large or lavish castle, but to the trained eye it is a true fortress. Parapets abound as do murder holes, and guards patrol the top of the walls. A large portcullis, flanked by two guards in yellow and red livery, leads into the main courtyard, where a large set of double doors can be seen, flanked by another two guards. The men walking the walls and guarding the portcullis eye you warily as you come closer. From the top of each of the 4 towers that make up the 4 corners of the castle, flags carrying the livery of the baroness, flap in the wind.

The guards check over the token for authenticity and escort them up several flights of stairs, into the northernmost tower, where Chamberlain Thor is waiting for them.

A short meeting with the chamberlain, an elderly spectacled man is all that is required. He asks for their names and requests that they follow him as he takes them to the baroness.

Once there he announces them and quietly takes his leave.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The room into which you're led is richly appointed, and the two occupants are well dressed and suited for their surroundings. A large throne dominates the end of the room, with a carved wooden dragon acting as a footrest for the noblewoman seated upon it, fanning herself. She is an elderly woman dressed in a rich, deep red dress with golden highlights. At her foot, sits a dumbstruck minstrel, with a crown of fresh flowers in his long hair. His pantaloons and dress bear the same red and yellow colors as the family's livery and his lute is worn though of good quality.



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As the chamberlain leaves, she gestures to the minstrel who stops playing:

"Greetings. Thank you for accepting our summons and getting here as quickly as you could. As you probably have gathered, it is a delicate matter that I require your services for. As you may have heard, my daughter is getting married in a few days, to a neighbouring baron's heir, a move which we hope will be the start of a new era of prosperity and security for the combined baronies. But now?"

She shrugs and looks at you with some concern, as if hoping to impart the impact of her words upon you through sheer force of will. "My daughter has vanished, and we do not know why. We suspect foul play, as she seemed to be infatuated with the young man that she was to marry. Hence our request to you."

At this point, observant characters will notice a wince briefly crossing the face of Perciwell the minstrel sitting at the feet of the baroness.

"We have left her chambers untouched, so that you can investigate them, and I hope you have her back here quickly, before the wedding at least, so that hostilities do not resume with our neighbours, should they believe that we are going back on the marriage agreement."

At this point the characters are likely to have a few questions, so here are some of the questions they might ask, along with the answers.

Question: "Who was the last person to see her?"

Answer: *"Her chambermaid was the last person to see her. She's been questioned and the girl is at her wits end. She says she went to bed as normal, complaining about having slept badly the last few nights. After that, the maid spent her night with her husband, who is one of the guards, and claims to have not seen or heard anything unusual*

Question: "Has anything unusual happened?"

Answer: *"Not that I believe is related, but Jarwick, my herald, did talk about having heard crying during the night. Nobody else has heard anything though, and he's always had an overactive imagination."*

Question: "Was she unhappy about the upcoming marriage?"

Answer: *"To begin with, yes. But after she met the young man, she was delighted and referred to him as her "Prince Charming".*

Question: "Is there anyone who'd profit from the marriage falling through? Do you have any enemies?"

Answer: *"We have our share of enemies, but none that would dare to work against us at this point. The marriage has the highest ROYAL approval, and none of the nobles would dare risk displeasure at the court over this. The only ones who'd profit from it would be weapons-merchants and then only if war broke out, which is definitely a long-shot".*

Question: "Did she leave anything behind? Is anything else missing?"

Answer: *"Her horse and saddle are gone, so someone must have taken them as well. But now that you mention it, she used to keep a diary when she was younger. Perhaps she still does, that might be in her room."*

Question: "What do we get out of it?"

Answer: *"Do not worry. You will be richly rewarded. How does 200 gold pieces sound for each of you?"*
- The baroness is not used to haggling, so is not open to negotiation. She does hint that the groom's family might be willing to add to that amount, once the marriage is completed.

Once the characters go to investigate the chambers, read aloud or paraphrase the following when they enter the main room (the other room is a lavatory):

The room is well appointed, though not as opulent as the rest of the castle. A large cupboard, chest, a four poster bed,

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desk filled with drawers and a chair fill the room, while red curtains cover the window. Two mostly burnt down candles sit in a candelabra on the desk.

Investigating her chambers yields nothing of interest, except when checking the desk. The drawers are filled with papers, envelopes and writing utensils, while the 3rd drawer has a secret compartment, containing her diary.





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Dear Diary,
... Last night I had a strange dream. A man came to me, wearing black armor, a roguishly handsome figure who spoke sweet words of passion into my ears. Who is this man? I've never seen him before and though I find him enchanting, he is not my Prince charming.

Dear Diary,
I dreamt of the man in black armor again tonight. After last night, I feel like I know him better than I have ever known anyone, yet I have never met him. He fascinates me, and I only wish he was real.

Dear Diary,
Again, the black-armored man came to me. Who is he? I'm now certain that he is real and we spoke of running away together. This is madness, I am betrothed to a wonderful man, but my heart skips a beat whenever I think of my night-time suitor. I hope I dream of him again.

Dear Diary,
Again dreams of him and I riding off together in the pale morning light. I even recognized the grove in which we met. It is only a few miles from here. Is it a sign from the gods? or am I going crazy? I know now that I cannot love another man as I do my Dark Rider.

Dear Diary,
I dreamt again, dreams of my Dark Rider, and this morning I mentioned my dreams to Peraiwell, and he is right. Surely, it is a sign from the gods, and he will be in the grove waiting for me. Tomorrow I will ride for the grove and meet my one true love. Mother would never approve, so I will not speak of it. It may break her heart as we may never see each other again, but I must follow mine. I only hope he is there waiting. Wish me luck diary.

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She wrote in the diary every day and filled it with details from her life, including her infatuation with her "Prince Charming". The last few entries stand out from the rest though. Below are the excerpts as they portend to this adventure. Judges should feel free to add more detail to her normal life.

At this point it is likely that the characters will want to interrogate the minstrel, whether that is from the diary or the look that crossed his face during the interview with the baroness. They can either try to persuade him (a DC 15 Personality check that is trained for everyone) or they can threaten any sort of physical violence. He'll pretend to stand up to it, but the moment anyone applies even the slightest amount of physicality (as little as shaking him) he collapses into a loudly crying heap. (In fact, a few minutes later Jarwick will come to check on him, and reveal that this was the crying he had been hearing during the nights.

Here are a few of the questions and answers that the characters might have for him:

Question: "Who is the Dark Rider?"

Answer: "He's an outlaw called Reeve Adenot. A former knight, who was exiled for killing an opponent who'd surrendered in a duel. I don't know where he originally worked, as his family records have all been destroyed, but he wears that kill like a badge of honor!"

Question: "How did he invade her dreams?"

Answer: "I don't know. I would guess it's probably the witch he works with who helped him do it somehow. All I know is that I was told to let them know when she went out. So I sent them a homing pigeon the night before she left, so he could be waiting for her. Otherwise he was going to hurt me! I never told anyone, because he threatened to kill me if I did!"

Question: "Do you know anything more about the witch?"

Answer: "No, I've never dealt with her. Only him. He caught me at one of the inns once, while he was in disguise and forced me to work for him after that."

Question: "Has he got any allies? Do you know where he took her?"

Answer: "I know he works with a group of bandits. He probably took her back to them. As far as I know they live somewhere to the east, but I don't know where."

Question: "Why are you crying at night?"

Answer: "I... I saw something... The first night after she left, I happened to be up on the walls walking as I couldn't sleep. And I saw this big, black... bird thing in the sky. It landed on one of the towers and vanished. It was... Horrible, like it had things coming out of it where there shouldn't be any!" - Continuing this line of questioning causes him to start gibbering, as he slowly loses his grip on his sanity. Even if the players do not push him further, he will go crazy in a year's time, unless treated.

When asked, anyone local can direct the players to the grove where she likely went, it is a small copse of trees and a small lake approximately 2-3 hours ride to the east. (Some 10 miles).





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SCENE 3: THE GROVE

10 miles east from Kintcardin is the small grove that the bride had been dreaming of, and where she and Reeve met on the morning of her disappearance. As the characters arrive, it is getting late and the grove is the perfect place to set up camp for the night. Once they get to the grove read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The grove that stretches out before you consist of a large stand of trees encircling a small lake. The smell of the fresh flowers and dew envelops you as you get closer and the evening song of birds, humming of insects and gentle croaking of frogs complete the scene. A small ring of stones, surrounding a pile of ashes in it, sits on the eastern shore of the lake.

Anyone investigating the fire will realize that it's a few days old, and a thorough examination will reveal that there were 2 horses here, approximately 3 days ago, ridden by 2 riders, one of whom was wearing armor, as seen by the tracks. The armor-wearer had come from the east, and the other from the direction of Kintcardin. Both tracks lead off to the east after having spent the night by the lakeshore.

As it is late, presumably the characters will spend the night here, at which point they'll be noticed by the dryad Corrydalvae (Corry for short), who takes note of them and decided to keep watch on them, having been smitten by the character with the highest Personality score OR which displays a particular affinity with music or animals.

The grove is not safe, and in the middle of the night (at approximately 02:00) they will be attacked by a small tribe of Corrupted Nature Spirits, 5 of them to be exact, who attempt to sneak up on them during the night. They gain the attention of Corry, who wakes and warns

the character that she's been smitten with, ensuring that the characters are ready for the fight.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The woman standing before you is dressed in a dark green velvet robe, with her black hair flowing down her back. Her bright green eyes twinkle and her pale skin is luminous in the pale moonlight.

"Greetings heroes. My name is Corrydalvae and I am the protector of this grove. I would love to introduce myself a bit more thoroughly, but there seems to be a band of angry spirits heading to your campsite, and I'd rather that they not befoul my grove. Would you be so kind as to pick up your arms and dispose of them? I promise, I'll make it worth your time."





The Corrupted Nature Spirits arrive a turn later, giving everyone time to get ready, but Corry blows off all questions until after the fight, saying that there'll be time for questions later.

5 CORRUPTED NATURE SPIRITS

Corrupted Nature Spirits: Init +1: Atk tiny spear -1 melee (1d6-1) or tiny bow +1 ranged (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d6-1; MV 20' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SP Infravision 60', Corrupt nature (instead of attacking, a Corrupted Nature Spirit can choose to affect wood, warping it temporarily against it's user. Anyone using a weapon made of wood must succeed on a Fort save DC 12 or attack themselves once with their own weapon, attacking themselves with their full normal bonus, but causing -1 die worth of damage compared to normal. A Corrupted Nature Spirit can only use this once per day.); SV Fort -2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C"

After the fight, Corry is a bit more open to them, now having fallen hard for the character's heroism (or cowardice, which she interprets as "wise self preservation").

"I apologize for that rude interruption, but those foul creatures have been a thorn in my side for some time, and my kind do not tend towards violence, so getting rid of them has been troublesome. But may I ask what you're here for? This grove is more often for lovers than men-at-arms, so your presence is unusual to say the least."

If the characters explain what they're looking for, Corry gets a concerned look on her face, and offers up the following information:

"I saw those two a few days ago. And while he seemed to be completely in control of his own senses, I can't say the same for her. There was something odd about the way she behaved towards him, in comparison to how he acted towards her. Almost as if the affection was one way only, and she couldn't see it."

Here are a few of the other questions and answers she can provide:

Question: "Do you know where they went?"

Answer: "They went east. Beyond that I'm not sure. But I may know someone who can help"

Question: "Are you willing to help? And who is this person?"

Answer: "I am willing and able yes." She says with a smile to you (the character she's fallen for). "He's an old friend of mine. Well, he was more than that once, but he's now very old, so now I look after him. My kind doesn't age like yours do, so in his old age I look after him. He used to be a great wizard, and is a font of knowledge, so he can possibly help. He lives at my vineyard which is not too far away, and I can take you there if you wish. It's about half a day's travel, but it is in the same direction as you're already going. Would you like to come to my vineyard and sample my wine?"

Corry doesn't have any other information beyond that, but assuming the characters agree, she'll take them to her vineyard (and the house she's constructed for her old friend (and former lover), which is another 10 miles to the east. She will flit from tree to tree, easily keeping up with any mounts that the characters choose to use.





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SCENE 4: THE VINEYARD

You arrive at the vineyard after noon, with Corrydalvae running ahead of you. The vineyard is luscious with green and red grapes in abundance, and a small white walled cottage in the middle of the vineyard. Benches and a small fountain stand in the courtyard, with water splashing from the fountain, creating a clucking sound in the air and bird song can be heard from the rafters and branches of some of the supports that have been set up to help the vines growing up them. "Welcome to my home" Corrydalvae says "I hope you enjoy your stay here. If you would, you can put your horses over by the fountain, and I will bring some refreshments. Once you've rested a little, I will get my friend for us".

A few minutes pass after they sort their horses, before she brings them refreshments. Should anyone wish to have a look at the vineyard, they find that it is very well tended, and incredibly luscious (as should be expected from something tended by a dryad). The poles and rafters create a multitude of portals that one can walk through to enjoy the vineyard. Close examination reveals that the poles and rafters are in fact still alive, and are giant sized roots.

The roots connect to an old gnarled stump, that is still alive, as Corry has taken the old stump and nursed it back to life over many years, creating her wondrous vineyard.

Once Corry comes back after a few minutes, read aloud or paraphrase the following:



Corrydalvae comes back to you carrying a tray laden with wooden goblet for all of you, as well as a crystal decanter containing a deep red liquid. She hands each of you a goblet and fills your cups with the red wine before filling one for herself.

"A toast to your health and fortune in your endeavours" she says before taking a large sip from her cup.

At this point, the object of her infatuation must succeed on a Fortitude save DC 14 to avoid being affected by the poison that she has laced the cup with.

Poison	Delivery	Fort Save	Damage on Successful Save	Damage on Failed Save	Recovery
Love Potion	Ingested	DC 14	Falling in love with distributor of poison	None, but unaware of poison attempt	Can only be healed via magic.

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As it is the cup itself that is poisoned rather than the wine, only Corry's intended target is affected.

Regardless of whether the character succumbs to the poison or not, Corry is willing to let him go, provided he makes a promise to come back to her as soon as she has been rescued. If he does not visibly succumb to the wine (such as by fawning over her), she makes no further attempt to enthrall him.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following once the characters have drunk up:

"Now, I believe I promised to take you to my old friend. Please have patience with him, as his mind remains as sharp as ever, but his body is frail." Corrydalvae stands up and motions for you to follow her, as she moves inside the cottage.

The room that you are led to is located in the basement of Corrydalvae's cottage. Lit only by candles and the burning embers of an open fire pit, it is sparsely furnished with a small cot and a desk. The desk dominates the centres of the room and the tome sitting on it is massive. A brazier hangs from the ceiling and a skull shaped jar, stands on a shelf amid normal shaped bottles and jars.

An old gnarled man sits at the desk, painstakingly slowly and carefully scribing into the book. "Terrick, dear, I bring visitors" Corrydalvae says and the old man looks up at you with dulled eyes. He briefly coughs and says "Yes, I have seen these in the fire... Pray tell travellers, what brings you here?"

Here are a few of the questions and answers that the old man can provide:

Question: "What can you tell us about Reeve Adenot?"

Answer: "Not much I'm afraid. He was once a skilled and noble knight of the realm, but envy and greed took hold of him and one day, he killed a fellow knight in a friendly duel. He coveted the man's

lands and wife, and when it was discovered that he had murdered a fellow knight, he was exiled and he soon gathered up a group of bandits to his banner, and since then has been making a nuisance of himself wherever he shows up.

Question: "Do you know anything of the witch that helps him?"

Answer: "Do you know her name or can you describe her methods? **A description of the dream invasion or the shadowy bird causes the man's dull eyes to brighten and he answers:** "Yes, I know that one, far better than I would like. Her name is Svige and she was once my apprentice and even lover. This was many years before I met Corry, and I was a vain man at the time, beginning to suffer from the ravages of time. I enjoyed her attentions and I let my guard down. Eventually and inevitably she betrayed me, stealing my magical power, after sealing a pact with a dark god called Morketh. Since then she has tormented me regularly as I escaped and took my knowledge, though not my power, with me. She has since learned more than I taught her, and her ambition could be limitless. Her powers are tied to her methods, and she uses deception and seduction as her main tools, but Morketh has given her access to other powers as well, powers beyond what I have seen. Knowing her, she is likely the one behind Reeve(the bandit lord) and has some scheme that she is working on."

While talking, Terrick reaches over into the skull shaped bowl, and summons up an image of an attractive woman, standing in front of a hideous two-headed beast. "Behold, Svige and her patron, Morketh, or at least as close as our understanding will allow us to see him. This was the final image I saw as I ran from her, as she sacrificed an innocent peasant to him".

Question: "Does she have any weaknesses?"

Answer: "Her powers are tied to Morketh, and Morketh can only reach her through a dark pool that she has created. If that pool was somehow to dry up or even be cleansed of the darkness residing within, I would assume that she would lose her powers."



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At this point Corrydalvae speaks up and goes:

"There's something strange going on. I've got this strange... sensation. . . that something is trying to affect my vineyard. We better go up and have a look."

As you emerge from the cottage, darkness has fallen, but you have not been in the basement for long enough for that to be natural. In the distance, you see several shapes hurtling towards you at great speed. As the shapes come closer, it becomes clear that they are not of this world, created entirely of living shadows.

5 WINGED DEMONS

5 Winged Shadow Demons (type II Demon); Init +1; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 2d8; MV 50' (flying); Act 1d20; SP Dive bombing (on first round of combat, can charge from the sky at double MV and causing double damage); SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C

After the fight ends, the demons fade away into nothing and Terrick is able to confirm them as being Svige's or Morket's creatures, when described to him. Corry then volunteers to take the characters to the camp, which is a day's travel by horseback away. As before Corry will be able to keep up with the horses, flitting from tree to tree.

Question: "Do you know where they are?"

Answer: *"I have kept tabs on her, though not on him. She lives in a cave system deep underground, whose only access point to the surface is through an old hollow tree. Corry has been keeping an eye on it too, and she tells me that there's a small encampment around the tree now, where bandits live. So I would guess they've taken your missing bride there."*

Question: "Do you know how deep the caves go? Or what they look like?"

Answer: *"It used to only be one cave, but she has had minions expanding it. Only someone who's been there since can know what hides underneath that tree or what it looks like now."*



SCENE 5: THE BANDIT'S CAMP

Corrydalvae takes you to a small hilltop, covered in trees and overlooking the immediate area. From the cover you have an overview of the bandit camp. Consisting of several tents, and encircling a large dead tree, there doesn't seem to be much activity. In fact, there only appears to be 4 people visible in the camp. A young woman, two badly dressed men and a dark armored figure. The two men are each leading the other two into the camp, towards the biggest tent. Their horses appear tired as if they have ridden hard for several days.

At the sight of the Corrydalvae grins and says "I might just have helped out a bit here, on catching up. I hope you approve, as I can't do it again the other way. In fact, over the last 2 days where you've been accompanied by me, we've travelled almost twice the distance that you experienced, and so we were able to catch up."

From where the characters are located it is not possible to tell, but the tree is in fact hollow, and the tents, apart from the biggest one, are empty. Part of this is a ruse from Reeve Adenot, to scare off any possible attackers, but the rest is due to his bandit compatriots having been used in some of Svige's rituals. The remaining 2 men are the lieutenants of Reeve, and they believe they stand much to gain from Reeve ascending to baron. In fact, unbeknownst to them, he plans on framing them for the banditry around the area, and having them executed, in order to appear as a stabilizing force in the area, and to obtain royal pardon for the murder of his fellow knight.

Presumably the characters will attack right away, and the fight is quite straightforward. The bandit lieutenants will try to defend the rogue knight and the bride to the best of their ability, but beyond engaging in melee combat they do not do much as such.

Reeve Adnot; Init +1; Atk 1d5+2 Longsword (1d8+1d5+2) or Lance (1d12+1d5+2); AC 19 (Shadow Plate and Shield); HD 4d12; hp 30; MV 25'; Act 1d20, SP: Knight's Challenge (target must make a will save DC 16 or suffer -1 die on attacks and damage), deed dice (1d5, as per Warrior class ability); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C

Equipment: Lance, Longsword, Shield, Shadow Plate (Plate mail made of shadow stuff, see below), 10 gp, 5 sp.

2 Bandit Lieutenants; Init +0; Atk short sword +3 melee (1d6+1) or javelin +5 missile fire (1d6); AC 15; HD 2d8; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP Backstabbing Teamwork (whenever both lieutenants attack the same target, they upgrade their damage dice twice); SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C.

Equipment: Short Sword, Leather Armor

When Reeve is killed read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As Reeve succumbs to your might, his black plate armor comes alive. Inky-black shadows cover his body in seconds and he lets out a long horrifying scream as it consumes him. With an unnatural jerk, his body comes back upright, and his hands, dripping black liquid, reaches for you, as his mouth opens and he lets out a hideous howl of rage.





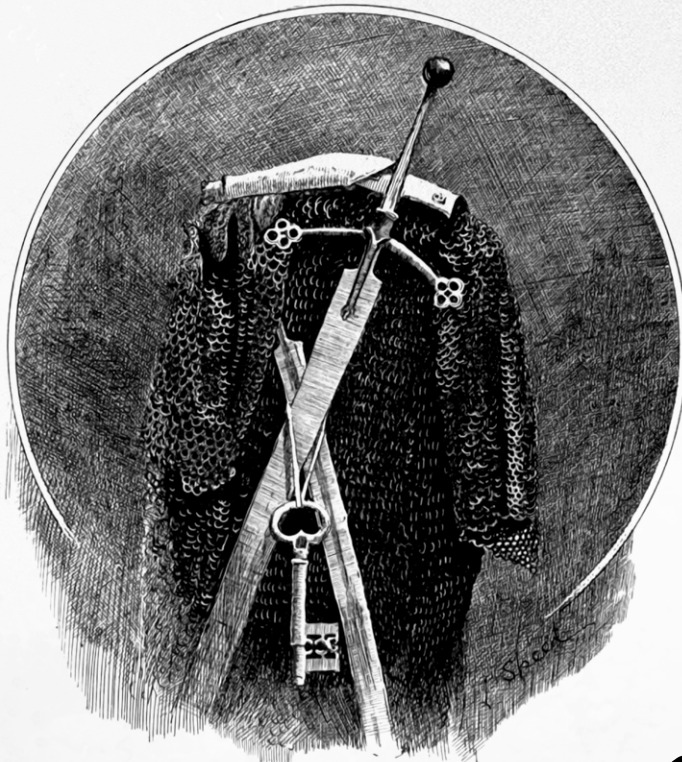
BRIDE OF THE DARKENED RIDER

Shadow-melded Reeve Adnot; Init +3; Atk 1d5+4
Claw (1d8+1d5+4); AC 18; HD 8d12; hp 52; MV
25'; Act 1d20, SP: deed dice (1d5, as per Warrior
class ability), shadow marked (any target hit by a
claw attack must succeed on a Fort save DC 16 or
suffer 1d4 Stamina damage); SV Fort +1, Ref +4,
Will +5; AL C

When the fight is completely over read aloud or
paraphrase the following:

*As Reeve finally falls beneath your might, Taelerys (the
bride) breaks into tears and shouts at you: "How could
you?! You killed the only man that I TRULY loved! You
monsters! I hate you! I HATE YOU!" Shouting this, she turns
around, grabs a sword and moves to attack you.*

At this point the characters should attempt an
Intelligence check to notice that she is still under the
effects of a spell, and she will need to be physically
restrained. Her attacks are hopeless as she has never
swung a sword in her life, and she has no chance of
hitting the characters. That said, the characters could
well end up killing her, as she only has AC 11 and 2
hp. Pretend to roll for her attacks, explaining how they
narrowly miss, but do not let her hit, or use the actual
fumble tables on a low roll, as these do not apply.



SCENE 6: INSIDE THE TREE

When the characters are at the entrance read or
paraphrase the following:

*The tree in front of you died long ago, in some natural
calamity, that has burned most of the leaves and branches
away. Close up it is clear that the tree is hollow, as there is a
large hole in the center of the trunk and the tips of a ladder
can be seen at the edge of the hole itself.*

GENERAL NOTES:

Climbing down the stairs takes the characters down
about 200 feet below ground, and into area 1. Unless
otherwise noted, there are no lights in the area, and
characters will need to rely on their own light sources.
The rooms are 10 feet high with dirt walls. Some will
be different but this will be noted in the description
of each individual room. Please note that all room
descriptions assume that the characters are bringing in
some sort of lightsource. Please find the map on page
27 for an overview.



AREA 1: ENTRANCE

*The area around you is blanketed in darkness. The only
bit of natural light comes from the hole in the ceiling
showing the outside world, where a set of ladders connect
the underground with the entrance in the tree far above.
Scones for torches line the natural dirt walls, but there are
no torches set in them. A single exit in the eastern wall leads
further underground.*

The room itself is empty, but any light sources
brought here are immediately visible to the creatures
located in area 2 who will take up positions by the walls
of that room, to try an ambush. Only creatures openly



crossing their arms over their chests (a gesture of supplication to Morketh) will pass by unharmed.

BETWEEN AREA 1 AND 2:

Between area 1 and 2 is a pit trap with the following stats. It can be avoided by finding and disabling the trap (as described below) or by hugging the southern wall, were a foot and a half of the floor has been left undug, so that the inhabitants can pass safely.

Spiked Pit Trap: A 20' pit is concealed with dirt leaves and sticks (find / disable traps DC 12). Characters who do not find the trap must make a DC 12 Ref save or fall into the pt, suffering 2d6 points of damage. The pit is spiked at the bottom and each character falling into the pit is attacked by 1d3 spikes (Atk +3, 1d4 damage per spike). Getting out of the pit is a climb check DC 10).

AREA 2: GUARDROOM

Note: Before getting to area 2, the character must negotiate the trap set up between area 1 and 2.

This room is in shambles. Debris from old furniture covers the floor of the room, but all of it is so destroyed that it is impossible to tell what they once were, as nothing longer than 2 inches is left. The dirt walls are bare, with empty torch sconces, and shadows dance across the walls, almost as if trying to stay out of your sight.

The room here is free of obstruction with anything that could once have served long destroyed. The room is not uninhabited however, as some of the bandits that were given to Morketh have been stationed here, where these Shadow zombies now guard the entrance to the lair of the enchantress.

5 Shadow Zombies; Init +0, Atk bite +4 melee (1d4+1); AC 10; HD 3d8; MV 30'; Act 1d20: SP undead; Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C

Further details on Shadow Zombies can be found in Appendix 2.

AREA 3: LABORATORY

This room is dominated by an enormous black cauldron filled with black liquid, from which green bubbles occasionally pop. A long wooden table is filled with vials, powders, and other horrible things, along with a big leather bound tome on the table. A single highly-polished skull, with sockets that contain onyx gems sits on the side of the table, as if watching over the room. Low-burning torches hang in sconces around the room and 2 doors, one in the west and one in the east wall lead from here. Unlike elsewhere, some attempt has been made at putting up wooden walls, but the workmanship is shoddy at best.

The liquid in the cauldron is what has caused the the shadow-zombies. Unlike the Shadowliquid in area 9, which requires a human sacrifice, and does not affect the character until after death (but granting other boons as described there), this takes the energy directly from the recipient of the drink and leaves them a zombie husk, under the control of the creator of the liquid. (Svige in this case).

The book on the table describes a series of rituals on how to create the lesser Shadowliquid in the cauldron, but is crucially missing the last 2 steps. Anyone following the ritual and using the ingredients described therein, merely succeeds in killing the imbiber.

Poison	Delivery	Fort Save	Damage on Successful Save	Damage on Failed Save	Recovery
Lesser Shadowliquid	Ingested	DC 16	1d6 points of Stamina damage	2d6 points of Stamina damage	Anyone surviving the poison notices that their shadow is absent for a week, whereupon it returns, though it is forever slightly warped.

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The skull on the table is the most interesting feature. It serves as both a watcher and a communication device. Anyone touching the skull causes Svige to instantly be able to see through the onyx gems of the skull and to cast spells through it if she so wishes, for the next turn. Anyone closely examining the skull will notice two dull red points deep in the gems whenever Svige is in control of the skull. She will wait until just before the characters leave the room and then she will use her Shadow Summon on them, to weaken them as much as possible. (see **area 10** for details on this ability)



AREA 4: PRIVY

This room is bare except for a latrine (leading into a smelly and very full bucket) and a wash basin filled with cold, dirty water.



AREA 5: KITCHEN

The lights are low in this room as only a few torches and an open fireplace illuminates it. A smell of recent cooking permeates the room and the fireplace is burning low in one corner while piles of dishes are heaped on a table along the west and south walls. In the middle of the room is a large table with 7 chairs arrayed around it. Only 2 of them appear to have been used recently. A low snoring emanates from underneath the kitchen table, where a dirty blanket covers a small figure.

Underneath the table is where K'gig keeps a small lair and is currently sleeping. K'gig is the Corpse Eater cook for Svige, and an excellent one in fact. Forced into servitude ever since he was sold to her, he is deathly afraid of her. But he is even more afraid of the Shadowzombies that now roam the area, so much so that he doesn't even dare to leave the underground system for fresh air, keeping only to area 4, 5 and 6 where he believes the light keeps him safe.

Secretly he dreams of opening his own inn and showing the world that Corpse Eaters are not all evil.

Unfortunately, K'gig's definition of not evil does not extend to his cooking, and his favorite dish is human fingerbone soup, although Svige does allow him to cook that for her. He keeps a fingerbone necklace with him at all times. Normally these fingers would be fresh, but ever since the Shadowzombies appeared, he's had to make do with some that he's already cooked soup on.

K'gig is startled when awoken by the intrusion of the players (only waking if they shake him violently), but immediately seizes the opportunity begging for them to free him from Svige, and anyone even showing the remotest interest in him, will be regaled with his dream. K'gig does know the underground area quite well, and can tell them about the secret door leading to Svige's bedroom (area 7), and he's had the run of the place before, knowing the details of traps and treasure in each room. He has never been in area 9, avoiding it due to fear of what lives there, as Svige has threatened to cook him in his own fireplace should he ever go there.

As mentioned, K'gig is evil. More importantly he is also cowardly, and as soon as the opportunity presents itself, he will run away. Should he still be with the party when they encounter Svige, he will cry out in terror and pretend he was only going along with the party to steer them to her, and he will join the fight on her side.

K'gig (Unique Corpse-eater); Init +1, Atk kitchen knife +1 melee (1d4) or +2 rasping tongue melee (1d8); AC 12 (leather kitchen apron); HD 2d8; hp 10; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Infravision 60'; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -3; AL C

Note: the kitchen is dimly lit. Should K'gig be exposed to bright light, he suffers a further -1 to hit.



AREA 6: PANTRY

This room is very cool, almost freezing. Carcasses of various types hang from meat hooks in the ceiling and blood has congealed in puddles around the floor. The area appears to be mostly clean, but the carcasses dangle gently as if stirred by some unseen wind. Disturbingly, as they move, some of the carcasses seem almost alive, and some of them are definitely humanoid in nature.

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The room is indeed clean, because K'gig cleans it every day, by licking up the blood. The room is kept cold by a winter spirit that was captured early on by Svige, but which has been weakened far too much to do anything more menacing than cooling a room, making hanging corpses dangle and moaning loudly, though this fact should not be readily apparent to the players. It will attempt to scare them out of the pantry for its own paltry amusement, by moaning loudly and dangling corpses threateningly, having them bump into characters if they try to navigate the room, and generally try to make them think the area is haunted by a ghost.

Any turn attempt that can affect elementals will automatically destroy the winter spirit. When destroyed the characters will hear a happy sigh escaping the spirit, and the room will immediately start warming up to the ambient temperature of the area surrounding it. At this point the meat will also start decaying so all food stuffs and so on in here will start deteriorating immediately and go bad over the next few days.



AREA 7: BEDCHAMBER

This room is dimly lit, with only the embers of a fireplace in the north-east corner providing the light. Arrayed around the room are also a number of candles that are somewhat burned down from use, but none of these are currently lit. Dominating the room is a large four poster bed, lavishly equipped and looking supremely comfortable. A desk and chair in by the east wall completes the look of the room, with more candles placed upon that table.

This is Svige's bedchamber where she and Reeve spend their time when they're together. The room never goes beyond the dimly lit, as the candles themselves are a trap waiting to happen. Bringing in anything brighter than a single candle, such as a torch summons one of Morketh's devils to the room within 1 round. The candles arrayed around the room are a lure as well, should more than one of them be lit.

Should the area be illuminated with more than the light of a single candle and the fireplace, the following takes place:

Suddenly, the candles around the room all spring to life, with the flames rising higher and higher in a burning inferno. The flames start whirling and a portal opens into some dark hell, and a horned and scaled creature, composed mostly of darkness steps through, wielding a whip menacingly.

Greater Shadow Demon (Type II Demon); Init +1; Atk tentacles +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 16; HD 6d8; hp 34; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Grab (anyone hit by a tentacle must make a DC 14 Ref Save or be grabbed, suffering automatic tentacle damage each round. While grabbing the Greater Shadow Demon grows a new tentacle to attack the next target with), when exposed to bright light, the Greater Shadow Demon becomes vulnerable to non-magical weapons;; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4; AL C

Underneath the bed, in a hidden compartment is where Svige and her lover hide their personal treasure and some of their belongings. These consist of the following: silver kris dagger, golden necklace worth 75 gp and a purse containing 50 sp and 20 cp. The only other thing there is Svige's personal diary, describing her seduction of Terrick and how she started worshipping Morketh, seeking ever greater power.



AREA 8: BATHROOM

This room has torches embedded in sconces around the room, but none of them appear to have been lit recently. In the room is a large copper bathtub and a latrine. The bathtub appears to glow with its own inner glow and is filled with clean steaming water. Two small statues at the foot of the bathtub are shaped in the form of a snowflake and a flame.

The bathtub starts glowing whenever a living being immerses their body in the water, glowing to the equivalent of a torch, bathing the room in a warm atmosphere. The water itself is currently very hot, but



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the temperature can be adjusted by touching the statues at the foot of the bathtub. The longer one holds the statues the warmer or colder it will get respectively, until reaching both frozen or boiling levels. (Causing it to reach these extreme requires holding on to them for 1 minute, and 2 minutes to go from each extreme to the other. Only the creature immersed in the bathtub can change the temperature of the water in this manner). Finally, the bathtub water is automatically cleaned and refilled through a minor enchantment.

The latrine automatically cleans any waste placed in it. (in fact, it sends it to a different plane), once more through a minor enchantment.



AREA 9: DARK LAKE

This area is blanketed in darkness so thick that it's palpable. Even the surface of the lake itself seems to be made of solid darkness. Light itself seems to be absorbed into the surrounding darkness, a flickering candle of hope against the cruel encroaching darkness of the underworld.

The only real reason that the characters have for going here, is to attempt to dispel the darkness, and drive back the evil contained within. The only way to do so is to sail out into the middle of the lake and consecrate it.



AREA 10: THE ALTAR

This area is covered in darkness, though a flickering set of candles set on a large black slab of stone gives a little bit of light, illuminating the pale features of a woman standing behind the altar. A low sonorous song flows from the lips of the woman, causing ripples of cold to run down your back. The hewn timbers underneath the stone slab hold aloft half the altar and the woman, over a lake made of pure blackness. Carved hideous features on the altar proclaims this to belong to some god of the nether, though your vision swims whenever you try to make out the details of the hideous face.

The song stops as you enter the room and the pale woman looks at you. "I am Svige. High Consort of Morketh! Who are you that dare to enter his domain? Who are you that dare to interrupt his plans?!"

Svige is prone to monologuing and will happily oblige the players if they start asking questions, as she believes that she is more than capable of handling them. Eventually though, she will suggest that they surrender and if they do not, she will attack.

Svige; Init +1, Atk +2 Kris-dagger (1d4); AC 14 (shadow armor); HD5d4; hp 25; MV 30; Act 1d20+1d14 (second action MUST be a spell); SP spells (spellcheck +10) - (1st level: charm person, flaming hands, invoke patron, magic missile, patron bond, 2nd level: monster summoning, 3rd level: lightning bolt), shadow summon (causes the shadows of any living creatures nearby to take form and attack the creature they're attached to. They have the same stats as the original creature, but only 1/5 the hit points); SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +4; AL C

When she falls to 5 hit points or below, she will jump into the lake, laughing wildly, only for her body to disappear beneath the black waters. Once she jumps into the black waters, they immediately start churning in the middle of the lake. Less than a minute later, she rises back up.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

From the depths of the lake, Svige rises once more, transformed into a hideous monster. Tentacles replace the lower half of her body, her robe is now in tatters and tentacles sprout from her shoulders, while claws have replaced her hands. She opens her mouth, and black fanged teeth fill her mouth. A hideous laugh issues from her mouth as she exits the water, black water dripping down her form and into the lake.



Svige monster form; Init +1, Atk +8 tentacles (1d8+3) - one attack is resolved per opponent within melee ; AC 18 (shadow armor); HD5d12; hp 50; MV 30; Act 1d20+1d14 (second action MUST be a spell); SP spells (1st level: *charm person, flaming hands, invoke patron, magic missile, patron bond*, 2nd level: *monster summoning*, 3rd level: *lightning bolt*), shadow summon (causes the shadows of any living creatures nearby to take form and attack the creature they're attached to. They have the same stats as the original creature, but only 1/5 the hit points); SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +4; AL C



AREA 11

This stark cell has only a small cot, made of planks, with manacles embedded in the walls. A blanket covers the cot itself, while an empty food bowl rests forlornly on the floor next to the wooden cot.

This area has been left empty for now, but a Judge should feel free to populate the room with any NPC he deems necessary, to plant any future plot seeds.



AREA 12: WAR ROOM

This room is brightly lit, and a map is spread across a large table in the center of the room. A fireplace burns in the northeast corner of the room. On the walls around the room, hang banners carrying the banner of a noble house, though the banners are tattered and burnt in some places.

The map on the table shows the barony surrounding Kintcardin, and includes notes on how Reeve plans to annex the lands of several of the free farmers, renewed and harsher taxation measures as well as plans for burning down a nearby forest to make room for more farmland for whomever holds the title of baron. It also clearly shows a large number of farms being demolished, with no plans for relocating them, all with the goal of adding them directly to the baron's holdings. The map itself is so detailed, that if you as the Judge

are planning to insert secret treasures or rumors, this would be an appropriate place to put them in as Reeve has done a lot of research to ensure that everything is as close to reality as he can make it. The map itself, simply as a map is worth 200 gp.

Aftermath, once the characters have killed Svige:

Once the characters kill Svige, the effects of the potion on Taelerys wears off, and it is as if a pall is lifted from her eyes and she comes to herself:

As the maid begins reverting to herself, you can see her eyes beginning to brighten, and she looks at you in amazement. "What happened? Why did I leave, and who was that man? Oh, no! What about my marriage!? We must head back as quickly as possible! The wedding cannot be far off, and it would be a disaster for it to fall through!"

Corry is waiting for the characters as they exit the underground system, and offers to speed their travel along as she did before. A day's ride, and the characters will arrive in the early morning, the day before the wedding, appearing on a hill overlooking Kintcardin. At this point, the characters are shifted aside with their payment, though the bride does pull them aside and inform them that she would like for them to attend her wedding, and that afterwards, she would see about recompensing them further.

The day following the wedding, they are requested to appear before the bride and groom, who will meet them in a secluded garden in the castle complex.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The young woman who you rescued only a few days hence, is sitting regally, attended to by her husband. As you approach she whispers something to him, and he looks up at you and opens his mouth to speak: "Greetings. My wife has told me all about what happened, and we are eternally in your gratitude. Should you ever need anything, then feel free to ask. In the meantime however, we have been empowered to reward you. Now, normally of course it would be more appropriate for us to reward you as we would our normal citizens, but as you are not considered



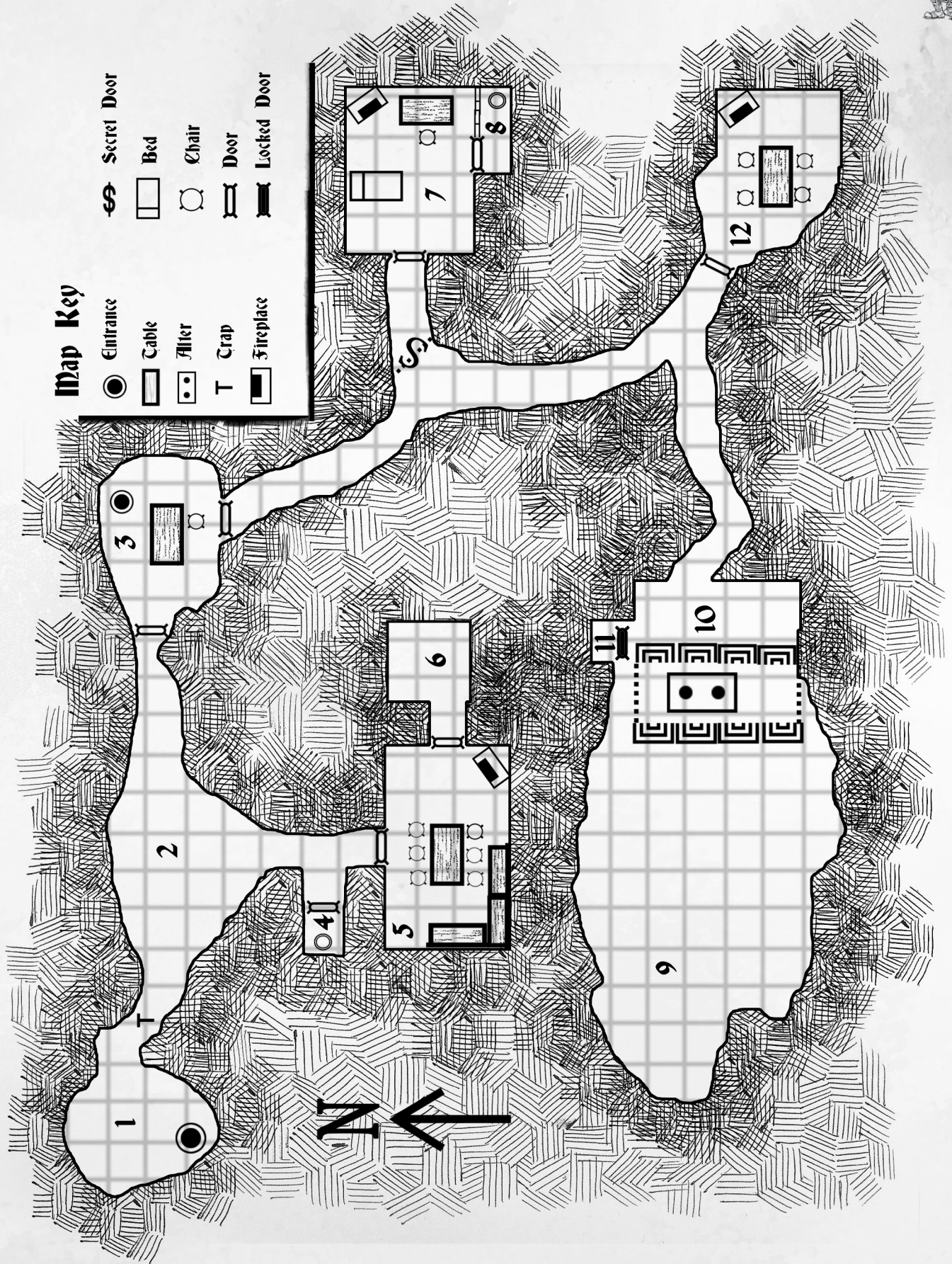
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citizen of our realm, we cannot quite do what we normally would. Instead however, we have decided to award each of you, with honorary citizenship in the city of Kintcardin, complete with orders to build a mansion for you to share. At the same we've also decided to officially knight you. So if you'll take a knee please?"

Assuming the characters do this, his next words are:
"Rise, please, Knights and special envoys of the combined houses of Florin and Tafneigh!"

This is where the adventure ends. Should the Judge wish, then it is entirely possible that the bride and groom have a particular task in mind for them, but the details of that is left for the Judge to decide.







APPENDIX 1: AT THE ALTAR OF MORKETH

MORKETH, LORD OF DARKNESS AND UNSPOKEN PLEASURES

Morketh is the darkness that lives when you turn off the lights, in the black tapestry between the stars themselves. He is the cravings that men have, that no one will speak aloud, and that only a few dare to indulge. Formed from mortal desire in the deepest darkest recesses of Hell, he makes his living there still, allowing only a select few of his disciples to visit and experience pleasures and pains beyond those of mortal ken.

Those that worship Morketh are those who hide their desires from other, murderers, witches and worse. All come to him seeking the ability to hide their activities from view, so even his least deplorable worshipers immerse themselves deeply in various forms of intrigue.

INVOKE PATRON CHECK RESULTS:

- 12-13 Morketh answers the petitioner's plea, but is quickly distracted by the intrigues at court. Shadows cover the petitioner's body granting him a +4 armor class for the next round.
- 14-17 Shadows envelop the caster's enemies. The caster and his allies are unaffected but all other living creatures suffer 1d8 point of cold damage as the shadows drain the life from their warm bodies. The shadows dissipate in 1d6 rounds.
- 18-19 Morketh's power swirls around the petitioner, filling their mind with forgotten knowledge. The caster can recall a previously lost spell or take a +10 bonus on their next skill check.
- 20-23 Morketh decides to directly interfere and sends a Shadow Demon to assist the caster, which

arrives in 1d4 rounds. It obeys the caster's every command and remains in the area for the next hour.

24-27 Morketh allows the caster and up to 4 allies to step through the shadows to any location within 200 miles, chosen by the caster. Both areas must be covered in shadows or darkness or it fails. Before stepping through, the caster gets an immediate impression of whether the area is safe or not.

28-29 Morketh invades the mind of up to 4 casters nearby, instilling in them ungodly pleasures forcing them to do their utmost to hold back from succumbing to these dark instincts, causing 1d4 points of Personality damage. This Personality damage will only return with rest and mediation, and cannot be magically healed in any way.

30-31 Morketh sends a shadow elemental to assist the caster, with it appearing immediately and obeying all commands for 2d4 rounds before disappearing. It has the same stats as an 8 HD Water Elemental (as per page 412 of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics Roleplaying Game*).

32+ Morketh opens the mind of the petitioner to the secrets of the universe. The caster takes 1d4 points of Personality damage, but for the next turn, anyone that the caster observes for a minute has their darkest secret revealed to the petitioner (subject to a DC 28 Will save to avoid having the secrets revealed).



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PATRON TAINT: MORKETH

When patron taint is indicated for Morketh, roll 1d6 on the table below. When a caster has acquired all six taints at all levels, there is no need to continue rolling any further.

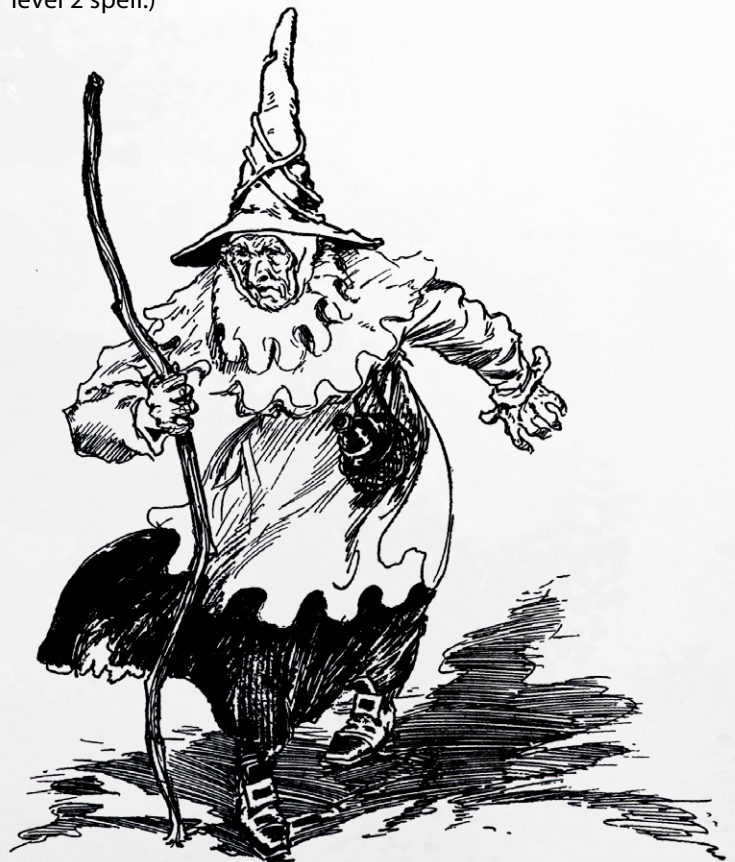
Roll	Result
1	Darkness gathers in the eyes of the caster, causing him to have trouble seeing during the day. Whenever the caster is in bright light, he takes a -2 to all checks involving vision (attack rolls, skill checks and so on). During the night, this is ignored.
2	The caster's shadow comes alive, and starts moving on its own, not following the movements of the caster. This effect is so disconcerting to onlookers that the character suffers a -1 die penalty on all social interactions with people who can see his shadow. Furthermore, some people may mistake him for being a vampire or similar supernatural creature.
3	The caster grows incredibly pale, almost albinolike and sunlight causes his skin to burn. Whenever the caster is exposed to direct sunlight, he takes 1 point of damage per turn while exposed. This can only be avoided by staying indoors, in the shade or being completely covered in clothes.
4	Dark thoughts invade the thoughts of the caster, and perverse pleasures become normal. The caster tries to become intimate with everyone of a different gender, but within the same species, regardless of how inappropriate this may be in the situation. If rolled a second time, the caster no longer cares about species. If rolled a final, third time, gender, species or even whether the object of desire is alive no longer matters to the caster. Everyone and everything is an object of interest.

The caster becomes paranoid and convinced that everyone can read his darkest thoughts and deepest secrets. This causes him to accuse anyone who spends more than an hour with him, of trying to take advantage of him, leading to all kinds of social problems. (This should be adjudicated by the Judge).

The caster's fingers are replaced with tendrils of shadow. This has no mechanical effect, but anyone interacting with the caster is immediately aware of the otherworldly nature of the affliction. If rolled a second time, the arms are affected in the same way as well.

PATRON SPELLS: MORKETH

Morketh guards his secrets jealously and does not grant any unique spells to his followers, instead they gain access to one extra spell of level 1, 2 and 3 once they can cast spells of that level. (For example a 1st level wizard would gain one extra level 1 spell, and once he reached level 3, he'd gain access to one extra level 2 spell.)





BRIDE OF THE DARKENED RIDER

SPELLBURN: MORKETH

Morketh always seeks more secrets, knowledge and power to be added to his hoard, and while the knowledge might seem trivial at times, he is always interested. Sometimes knowledge is not enough to appease Morketh however, and then more drastic measures must be taken

Roll	Spellburn Result
1	Morketh desires the secret of a living being. The caster must learn a secret of another mortal and then whisper this into the wind during the night, as Morketh greedily devours the .
2	Morketh requires the help of a mortal intelligence. The caster can spellburn up to 10 points of Intelligence, Will or Personality points, but need not take any physical action or damage. If he sacrifices the brain of any humanoid, to Morketh before the next moonrise, the character takes no spellburn. If he fails to do so, he takes the full 10 points of ability damage, distributed across the ability scores at the judge's discretion at the conclusion of the next rising moon.
3	Morketh desires the perversion of a mortal. The caster must seduce and encourage another mortal to engage in a sexual activity that is considered deviant and abhorrent by the standards of that mortal's race. (Judge's discretion)
4	Shadowy tentacles and tendrils burst from the ground around the feet of the caster, squeezing the life out of the caster as punishment for his impudence. This cases 1d6 points of stamina damage to the caster, but the spellburn is still successful.





APPENDIX 2: MONSTROUS ALMANAC

Shadow Zombie; Init +0, Atk bite +4 melee (1d4+1); AC 10; HD 3d8; MV 30'; Act 1d20: SP undead; Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C

Shadow Zombies are the lowest form of creature used by Morketh, as they are the shadow infused husks of the mortals gullible enough to succumb to the viles and charms of his favored servants. Having no sympathy for these fools, they are left with only a craving for living flesh and a shadow strengthened body, but no intelligence. Perfect tools for his smarter servants.

Winged Shadow Demons (type I Demon); Init +1; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 2d8; MV 20', fly 70'; Act 1d20; SP Dive bombing (on first round of combat, can charge from the sky at double MV and causing double damage); SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C

Winged Shadow Demons are Morketh's lowest form of demonic servant. On his layer of darkness they serve as messengers for higher ranking demons as well as the first line of defense against any intruders, swarming on them in huge numbers. On the mortal plane they're summoned in obscene rituals to perform harrying attacks against the enemies of the faith, and on rare occasions to serve as familiars to particularly powerful spellcasters.

Greater Shadow Demon (Type II Demon); Init +1; Atk tentacles +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 16; HD 6d8; hp 34; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Grab (anyone hit by a tentacle must make a DC 14 Ref Save or be grabbed, suffering automatic tentacle damage each round. While grabbing the Greater Shadow Demon grows a new tentacle to attack the next target with), when exposed to bright light, the Greater Shadow Demon becomes vulnerable to non-magical weapons;; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4; AL C

Greater Shadow Demons are Morketh's enforcers on his plane of existence. They serve as an unofficial police

force, and their ability to handle multiple intruders comes into it's own when the plane is under attack. In the mortal realms, Greater Shadow Demons are usually summoned for the purpose of guarding existing and important locales, though rare spellcasters sometimes send them on missions that require greater strength than that of the Winged Shadow Demon.

Corrupted Nature Spirit; Init +1: Atk tiny spear -1 melee (1d6-1) or tiny bow +1 ranged (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d6-1; MV 20' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SP Infravision 60', Corrupt nature (instead of attacking, a Corrupted Nature Spirit can choose to affect wood, warping it temporarily against it's user. Anyone using a weapon made of wood must succeed on a Fort save DC 12 or attack themselves once with their own weapon, attacking themselves with their full normal bonus, but causing -1 die worth of damage compared to normal. A Corrupted Nature Spirit can only use this once per day.); SV Fort -2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C"

Corrupted Nature Spirits are former faeries, nymphs, elves and other fey beings with a connection to the wilds that have been corrupted through the exposure to Morketh's dark powers. Tiny, twisted mockeries of their former beauty, Corrupted Nature Spirits hate all living things, but reserve a special hatred for elves, attacking them on sight, to the preference of all other targets.

Corpse eater; Init +1, Atk rasping tongue +2 melee (1d8); AC 10; HD 2d8; hp 10 ; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Infravision 60', light sensitivity (if exposed to bright light Corpse Eaters suffer a -1 to hit; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -3; AL C

Corpse Eaters are related to Ghouls, but unlike Ghouls, Corpse Eaters are still alive, rather than undead. They spend their lives digging through graveyards, eating corpses and offal, using their tongues to crack open bone and suck the marrow out of them. Corpse Eaters do not naturally reproduce but any creature killed by a Corpse Eater's rasping tongue has a 10% chance of awakening the next morning, fully alive, but with an unnatural taste for the flesh of the dead. Corpse Eaters only come out at night as the bright light of the sun hurts their eyes, though they suffer no other ill effects from it. Corpse Eaters cannot be turned by clerics turning undead, as they are still alive.



BRIDE OF THE DARKENED RIDER

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