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# CALL OF THE COLOSSUS



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## Rumours & Hooks

The noble leant forward, his one good eye fixed upon the shrinking informant. "Silence pitiable slud. I know of the tavern incident, I was there, remember? What I want to know is *who* are they? *Where* did they come from? And *what binds them together*, so that I might unbind them."

The scattered party has the opportunity to group up and (perhaps) take down the last few scavenging ogres before combing the battlefield for supplies. After this they are presented with two obvious choices: (i) follow the ogre tracks and rescue the captives (leading to the ancient temple, Womek, and his cultists), or (ii) press on to Therg's End (two days trek), the outpost their caravan was originally bound for.

## Zero Level "Funnel"

*Warning:* This adventure framework is not your usual mini adventure; it is intended for approximately 12 – 16 "zero level" characters (each player controls 4 PCs), the majority of which are not expected to survive. Those that live are awarded with 1<sup>st</sup> Level in a class of the player's choosing.

If the GM already has a developed party, this adventure might be used as a one off experiment, or perhaps to create hirelings or henchmen for the PCs. Alternatively it is easily adapted as an ordinary introductory adventure for low level PCs.

## Adventure Overview

When the adventure begins, the PCs are the only escapees of a caravan massacred by ogres in the Ulgoth foothills. Womek, a mutant sorcerer and cultist, has an arrangement with the *Gruutar* ogre clan to deliver captives to him for sacrifice at the *Colossus*; a 150 ft Temple of *Yargoth* (long forgotten goddess of wealth, commerce, and greed), about a day's march distant. A number of NPC travellers are taken prisoner by the giantkin, and conveyed to the Colossus.

Investigating the Colossus requires facing a number of dangers, including random encounters, traps, monstrous guardians and cultists, as well as the sorcerer Womek.



Heading to Therg's End for reinforcements leads to disappointment. The outpost has been recently raided by barbarians, decimating the population and protectors. With so few guards

remaining, there is no help to be found. Furthermore, half the outlanders are secret cultists (including *Overseer Kinnon*), and careless PCs might end up victims of the sect.

In the best traditions of a funnel, most of the PCs will not survive this adventure. Yet those that do will have braved great peril, fought for not only their lives but the lives of others, acquired treasure, and undergone experiences that transform them into fully fledged level 1 classed characters. Best of all, the process of surviving a funnel forms organic party bonds, “show not tell” backgrounds, and that unique attachment between a player and their “forged by fire” neophyte adventurer(s).

### Special Rules

For LFG, the process for creating zero level characters is outlined below (assuming 4 PCs per player):

1. Roll 4 sets of Attributes.
2. *Luck* is set at 4. HP is 4 + Con bonus. No to hit bonus, reroll pool or skills.
3. Roll 4 times on the *Background* table.
4. Allocate one background to each PC (background might be usable in lieu of skills at the GM’s discretion).
5. Roll for *Bonus Gear*.
6. Choose culture(s) if any.
7. Name your PCs.

As might be surmised, initial character creation is a highly unpredictable affair; which classes might ultimately be available for the player to choose from is subject to the dice and decisions made during the adventure.

Be assured however that this adventure has been crafted to provide opportunities to engage with various class related roles, laying the

foundation to develop into any of the LFG classes (including magic users, monks and artificers). If using PC races other than human, players will need to choose/randomly determine one.

Lastly, (i) when testing to see if a zero level PC is *All Dead* or *Mostly Dead*, they require a successful *Luck* save instead of a Con check, and (ii) when using the *Party Retreat* rule, zero level PCs always treat their *Luck* score as 10.

### 1. Roll for Attributes

In this adventure, attributes are randomly generated by rolling 4d6 and dropping the lowest die. Numbers are allocated in order, that is Str, Dex, Con, Int, Per, Will and Cha. At the GM’s option, one randomly determined attribute is automatically 15 (determine before rolling the remainder).

### 2. Roll on the Background Table

Players roll on the Background table to determine their PCs’ recent history and default starting gear. Characters also start with 1d6 days rations, a waterskin, and 2d4 silver coins.

BACKGROUND		
11	Pickpocket	Knife, Secret pocket
12	Rat Catcher	Spikepole (as spear) Cheese
13	Grave Digger	Shovel (as club) Rope 30 ft
14	Beggar	Crutch (as club) Bitey Dog
15	Trapper	Big knife (as shortsword) Bear trap
16	Cook	Skillet (as club), Spices
21	Fishmonger	Gaff hook (as shortsword) Fishing rod
22	Gardener	Pruning shears (as dagger), Anti-toxin

23	Slave	Sling, Chain 6 ft
24	Brigand	Shortsword, Ale flask
25	Lay Preacher	Staff, Holy symbol
26	Amateur Tinker	Wrench (as club) Crowbar
31	Butcher	Cleaver (as handaxe) Salted meat
32	Street Sweeper	Broom (as staff) Lucky coin (1 use reroll)
33	Farmer	Pitchfork (as spear) 1d3 Chickens
34	Yellow Lotus Addict	Knife, Yellow Lotus powder
35	Outcast	Handaxe, Ferret
36	Mutineer	Cutlass (as longsword) Parrot
41	Beekeeper	Iron bee smoker (as club) Jar of bees
42	Wagoneer	Whip, Lantern
43	Brewer	Iron tankard (as club) Small barrel of spirits
44	Pilgrim	Staff, Scriptures
45	Deserter	Light mace, Shield
46	Miner	Pickaxe (as handaxe) Lantern
51	Weaver	Good scissors (as dagger) Ball of yarn
52	Lamplighter	Wick pole (as staff) Flask of oil
53	Alchemist's Assistant	Knife, Acid flask
54	Organlegger	Bonesaw (as shortsword) Diseased kidney
55	Ploughman	Mattock (as handaxe) Bag of seeds
56	Hunter	Shortbow, 10 arrows Trip wires
61	Busker	Knife, Instrument
62	Swineherd	Staff, Burly Pig (as dog)
63	Novice Apothecary	Surgical blade (as dagger) Healer's kit
64	Baker	Rolling pin (as club) Bag of flour

65	Gong Farmer	Shovel (as club) Wheelbarrow
66	Hangman	Hangman's axe (as battleaxe), 30 ft rope

### 3. Roll for Bonus Gear

In addition to their default starting gear, each PC receives one piece of bonus gear (1d20):

BONUS GEAR			
11	10 ft pole	41	Ferret
12	Javelin	42	Deck of cards
13	Mirror	43	1d3 oil flasks
14	Fireblood poison (1 dose)	44	Parchment, ink and quill
15	2d4 torches	45	Iron pot
16	Backpack	46	Bag of Marbles
21	2d4 spikes	51	Lockpicks
22	Warhorn	52	Battered shield
23	Holy water vial	53	Chain 10 ft
24	Heirloom bastard sword	54	Signet ring (2d6+15 gp)
25	Manacles	55	Compass
26	Sack of flour	56	2d4 candles
31	1d2 firepots	61	60 ft rope
32	Healer's kit	62	Bedroll
33	Tent	63	Fishing net
34	Chalk sticks	64	Tripwires
35	Iron tongs	65	Light Crossbow and 6 bolts
36	Lantern and oil flask	66	Roll on the <i>Trinkets &amp; Curios</i> table

### Ambushed!

From the outset, the PCs are thrust straight into the action; their caravan to the isolated outpost of *Therg's End* has been ambushed by ogres, and the party are the only (free) survivors. But for a

handful of captives taken away by the ogres, the balance of the caravan are dead.

Womek (50s, balding, sorcerer with a corrupted crabclaw arm, when in town he wears a sling as if lame), a cult leader living in Therg's End, has an arrangement with a local ogre clan to deliver human sacrifices to *Yargoth's Colossus*; a nearby temple in the shape of a forgotten goddess.

The ambush location is a thickly wooded area adjacent to a river and 150 ft waterfall. Players roll 1d6 to determine how their each of their PCs survived the massacre:

1. Driven, fell or jumped off the edge of the waterfall, plunging into the river below. Blind luck allowed them to survive when many did not, including the PC's parent, partner, child, or other ward (1d4 or player's choice).
2. Left for dead on the battlefield, rolled off a corpse pyre or accidentally missed by ogre scavengers. Presently playing possum, and hoping for an opportunity to escape into the forest. Lying nearby is the body of a favourite pet, uncle/aunty, niece or nephew (1d4 or player's choice).
3. Driven or fled into the trees, separated from the ogres by an out of control fire. Fortunate winds blew the flames towards their pursuers, allowing the characters to escape. Through the smoke, the PC saw three ogres making off with the caravan master's heavy strongbox (containing a large sum of gold, silver and trade jewels).

4. By sinew and grit, the character drew on reserves of courage they never knew they had, fighting off an ogre before using a horse to escape! Alas, the PC's close friend, mentor, student or good natured rival (1d4 or player's choice) was captured by ogres (dragged from another horse). The PC's mount later succumbed (arrows, struck lame, set loose to act as a decoy, etc).
5. Caravan Master *Harriman* (bald, pock marked and powerfully built), fought a rearguard allowing the PC and others to escape. Harriman and his retinue were slain. His wife *Kiriana* was captured in a crude net, slung over an ogre's back, and carried away shrieking.
6. Unbeknownst to the rest of caravan, the sorcerer *Vorgeist* was secretly among them. Unstable magic caused purple vapours to envelop the west flank, enabling the PC to escape into the trees, but not before inhaling some of the foul mist (Con check or roll for a moderate madness, LFG p.92, and bags under eyes turn purple). Vorgeist himself choked to death.

Depending on their rolls, different PCs will end up in different groups. As fortune would have it, each group of PCs (or lone individuals) are within either sight or earshot of at least one other group or individual, allowing them to reform as a single, larger band when the time is right. Attribute checks might be required to spot friendlies and/or successfully sneak away from loitering ogres at the GM's option.

1d3 Ogres remain on the battlefield, slaughtering the dying, looting corpses, and ensuring the last

wagons burn to ash. The giantkin are fearsome opponents, but widely scattered about the site, and might be picked off by PCs working together.

*Ogre*, AC 12, HD 4+3, Spiked Club 2d8, 19: special, S19 D8 C15 I6 P7 W8 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft. When staggered, an ogre enters a murderous rage, gaining a free attack against every foe within reach. On a 19+ attack roll, the target rolls on the Injuries & Setbacks table (*Luck (Con)* save resists). 10 foot reach.

By and large, the battlefield is a wasteland of smoking carts, charred (and often half devoured) corpses, and damaged gear. Whatever the ogres couldn't (or wouldn't) steal has been bent, smashed or defiled, leaving little in the way of salvage. Clearing an area of ogres however allows the PCs to do a thorough search, granting a roll on the salvage table:

SALVAGE TABLE			
11	Spear impaled in a corpse	41	2d4 candles
12	Leather armor	42	2d10 sp
13	Unexploded Firepot	43	Brooch (2d6 gp)
14	Flask of oil	44	Dented helm
15	1d4 days rations	45	1d4 days rations
16	Backpack	46	Box of nails
21	2d4 spikes	51	Sack of salt
22	Warhorn	52	Splintered shield
23	Child's ragdoll	53	Chain 6 ft
24	Notched longsword	54	Keepsake of friend, etc
25	1d4 days rations	55	Grappling hook
26	Waterproof boots	56	Charred healing herbs

31	2d4 torches	61	20 ft rope
32	Keepsake of friend, etc	62	Bedroll
33	1d4 gold	63	1d4 days rations
34	Mirror	64	Pipeweed pouch
35	Iron pot with heavy lid	65	Heavy Crossbow with 1d4 bolts
36	Lantern (half full)	66	Vorgeist's spellbook



### Where to Next?

After picking the battlefield clean (or simply fleeing deeper into the forest), the party has a decision to make.

In terms of orienting themselves, the PCs know they are about one day's march east to Therg's End, or one week back west to their originating

city of *Crow's Keep*. The ogre warparty (approx 30) made no attempt to conceal their southerly tracks and are easily followed (no check required). Also south, rising above nearby hills, is an ancient and colossal statue; rusting and broken (a woman, missing its head and one arm), towering 150 ft tall. The statue is approximately one day distant.

Depending on the characters' massacre survival rolls, a number of hooks arise with respect to following the ogres (leading to the Colossus): (i) revenge for the attack and slain friends/family, (ii) mounting a rescue effort to free captives, (iii) reclaiming Harriman's strongbox, and/or (iv) reckless curiosity.

Alternatively, the party might head for Therg's End (for their own safety, or to gather reinforcements - in either case they will be sadly disappointed, see p.13). For GMs wishing to add increased time pressure, an Int check reminds PCs that ogres generally eat human captives (after tormenting them for a time).

### Random Encounters

Wherever the party goes, there is a 40% chance of a random encounter in the hills every 12 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 3d4 *Wolves* (LFG p.129) begin tracking the party. They might be appeased with food or scared away with fire.
2. A lone *Griffon* (LFG p.113) dives out of the clouds with a screech, hoping to pick up one of the PCs and fly away with them (dropping them onto rocks before devouring them). It avoids characters with long weapons such as spears.
3. 2d4 *thuels* (barbarians of the xenophobic *White Hoof* clan, LFG p.114) can be heard approaching on horseback, from a nearby ravine.
4. A heavy storm lasting many hours saps the party's strength, turning the ground to sucking mud and slippery pools. 2d4 PCs lose 1 Con (Str check negates).
5. Despite landmarks the party loses its way in a series of narrow ravines, requiring them to double back, wasting half a day's travel. There is a 50% chance of a nest of 2d4 *Giant Trapdoor Spiders* (LFG p.125, Dex vs Perc to notice the trapdoor) lairing in one of the valleys.
6. An injured *Brown Bear* (as *Owlbear* LFG p.120 but 5 HD), with two arrows in her flank, is dying from infected wounds. Her soft moaning can be heard from outside a wide mouthed cave (Perc check). She is in such a state that she barely resists anyone trying to aid her (she swipes at someone once, at disadvantage). If patched up by a PC with a healer's kit or animal/apothecary background (Int check), she swiftly recovers (and might make an appearance later in the adventure as a surprise ally).
7. 1d3 *Giant Worker Ants* and 1d2 *Giant Soldier Ants* (LFG p.99) are carrying some dead ogres back to their nest. Some human snacks would also be welcome.
8. *Tersuda*, an outcast *Cyclops* (LFG p.103, 9 ft, bandaged left leg (25ft speed instead of 40 ft)), is sleeping beneath a low overhang, a sack of coins by his side (2 x Carry Loot, LFG p.136).

## THE COLOSSUS

The Colossus is a towering, 150 ft statue of stained, yellow-orange bronze, heavily corroded with green verdigris and spotted with dark creeper vines.

Once a temple to Yargoth, goddess of commerce, wealth, and accords (a precursor entity to what would later be subsumed into Argona, goddess of wealth, health and happiness), shameful greed and corruption eventually brought the priesthood to ruin. Sacked during a civil uprising, the site was abandoned to rust and decay; a poignant reminder of the evils of excess, and the fate awaiting those who succumb (indeed, the interdiction of male priests of Argona can be traced back to the Yargoth catastrophe).



Long abandoned, the bronze doors sealing the entry tunnel buckled twelve months ago, allowing access for the first time in centuries. *Womek*, a warlock hidden in Therg's End, was the

first to investigate and attune himself to the temple.

Unlocking the secrets of the *Palm of Sacrifice*, Womek soon turned half the outpost into Yargoth worshippers. Cultists experience prophetic dreams that come true if they are willing to pay the price (generally blood sacrifice, often people; see Area 9).

The ogre trail leads to the tunnel entrance at the temple base, then continues southward. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check suggests the giantkin gathered at the tunnel for a time before moving on without their captives (tracks of dragging via ropes/nets end here – the ogres handed over their captives to Womek).

## Entrances

There are two entrances into the temple. The first and obvious entrance is the tunnel (Area 1). Both entrances are protected by a Copper Gargoyle, which likes to perch between the Colossus' shoulder blades. The guardian has keen hearing and will investigate any potential intruders.

*Copper Gargoyle*, AC 14, HD 3+3, 2 Claws (1d3+1), Bite (1d4+1) and Gore (1d4+1), 19: the target's weapon shatters against the gargoyle's supernatural hide (*Luck* save resists), S16 D14 C20 I10 P14 W13 Ch3, L6, Mv 30 ft or 60 ft flying. A natural 1 or 2 attack roll against the Gargoyle requires a *Luck* save or the weapon shatters.

The second entrance is the door to Area 8; (heavily corroded, green and discoloured, can be spotted from ground level with a Perc (Detection) check), situated in the colossus' right bicep. The door has no obvious handle, but a

Perc (Detection) check reveals a hidden switch beneath a false panel.

The door is approximately 90 ft off the ground. Climbing the statue is possible (there are many corroded pockets to act as handholds) but taxing: 3 x Str (Athletics) checks are required to reach it (climbing approx 30 ft per check, or 45 ft on a great success). A failed check means a fall to the ground (and probably death, unless precautions are taken, such as roping to another pc or pitons secured). If the Gargoyle notices climbers, it attempts to snatch them up and drop them at high altitude.

### Area 1 – Entry Tunnel

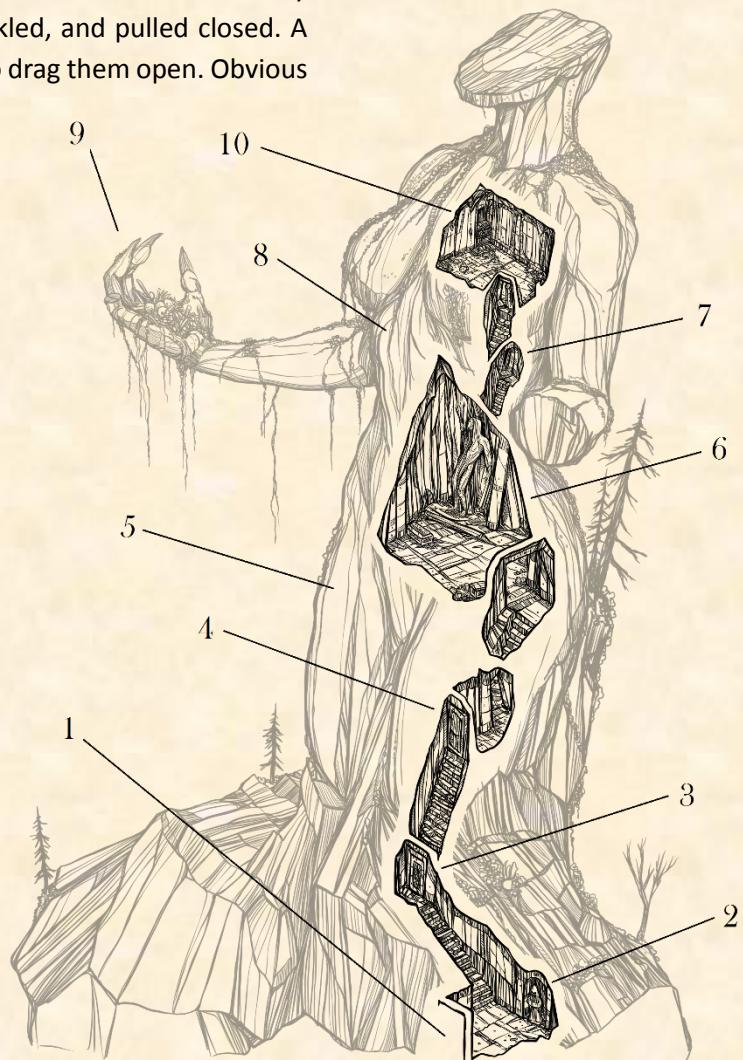
The bronze doors that once sealed the entry tunnel are clearly buckled, and pulled closed. A Str check is required to drag them open. Obvious

scuff marks on the ground suggest the doors have been opened/closed recently.

The interior of the tunnel is cool, lit by flickering candleholders (maintained by Womek and the cult). The tunnel is 10 ft high, 10 ft wide and 50 ft long, the floor lined with rusting, iron plates that clatter or crunch underfoot. Bronze sheets (perhaps once shined to a mirror finish, but now green with corrosion) line the walls. The far end of the corridor opens into a larger chamber.

About 20 ft into the tunnel is a trap; a series of scything blades that swing out from the connecting edges of the wall panels. Womek

### Temple Map



maintains the chamber, which is reasonably clean, and free of the blood of past victims. Careful studying of the walls (Perc (Detection) check) reveals this area is cleaner than most. The trap is sprung via a pressure plate (50% chance), causing 2d6 damage (*Luck (Dex)* save to avoid).

## Area 2 – Narthex

The 20 ft narthex to the temple has an alcove housing a 7 ft idol in the northern wall. Beside the southern wall is a 3 ft copper urn. Stairs lined with bronze panels ascend to the west.

The idol is approximately 7 ft tall, carved of granite, simplistic in form with twin malachite gems for eyes (shades of dark green, 1d4 x 100 gp total). A pressure plate built into the right shoulder of the idol causes it to swing outwards, revealing a closet of 3d6 yellow, hooded robes, adorned with Yagoth's symbol (a trail of coins).

The copper urn is inscribed with prayers to long forgotten Yagoth in ancient common. An Int (General Lore) check deciphers that the words are litanies professing the holiness of tithes, and the unholiness of failing to meet one's spiritual responsibilities.

Placing coins or other small objects of monetary value in the urn invokes a magical boon, gaining 1 *Luck* (may exceed normal maximums, works once only). Inside the urn are 4d100 gold coins. The urn ceases to function if removed from the temple.

PCs ascending the stairs without making an offering, or stealing from the urn or idol, suffer a spiteful curse. Roll 1d4:

1. Ominous thunder echoes from outside (attracts cultists from Area 6).

2. All current light sources in the vicinity are snuffed out and will not relight for 24 hours (other torches etc are fine).
3. Suffers a serious madness (LFG p.91, Will (Arcana) check resists).
4. Roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table (LFG p.58, Midlands p.30).

## Area 3 – Iron Door

This iron door is marked with the icon of a battered shield with wings (an archaic symbol for determination, resilience and persistence). Pulling or pushing on the door will not open it. Instead, the door must be raised up into a vertical recess where it locks in place (Str (Athletics) check, or by depressing a secret stud button on the left border). The door locks into place before lowering itself after 10 minutes. Banging or attempting to break down the door draws attention from Area 6.

## Area 4 – Silver Door

This extremely steep staircase is lined with bronze plates, continuing from Area 2. The door at the top is inlaid with silver (worth 1d6 x 10 gp if extracted) and well preserved, lacking any significant corrosion. It is decorated with a young man's face with eyes downcast (an old sigil for etiquette, manners and respect).

The door is unlocked. Opening it without first activating the safety switch (Perc (Detection) check; depressing both eyes) causes the stairs to drop flat, sending PCs tumbling back down, causing 1d3 points of damage. Furthermore, one random PC lands in the doorway of Area 3 (if still open), which immediately slams closed, automatically crushing the victim to death (*Luck (Dex)* save to roll 1d6 on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table instead of dying).

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## Area 5 – Cells

The secret door in Area 6 reveals stone steps winding 30 ft down into candle lit darkness. Moans can be heard emanating from below. The steps lead to an iron portcullis, sealing 2d6 captives in a 15 ft cell. Most of the captives are injured, and all in a drug addled stupor, in no condition to fight (unless the party is severely depleted already, in which case the GM might make some captives available to fight). One captive is particularly unusual: *Lopai*, a one eyed, 80 year old Shenzu pilgrim with a penchant for cursing (see Aftermath).

There is a 50% chance each of the PC's kidnapped friends/partners/mentors etc are alive, as well as Kiriana (see p.5, and PCs kidnapped by *Therg's End* cultists (if any). If the PCs do not head straight for the Colossus after the ambush, each day of delay increases the risk of death by 5% (max 90%). Check for each potential survivor individually.

Those that did not survive were either eaten by the ogres or sacrificed by Womek in Area 9. Opening the locked cell requires a Dex (Traps & Locks) check and a lockpick, or the key (which Womek carries).

## Area 6 – Worship Nave

In ancient times, only the ordained clergy of Yargoth were permitted into the primary worship chamber. 40 ft square, with a 60 ft ceiling, the walls are hung with panels painted in silver and gold (1d6 x 100 gp if taken), lorded over by an imposing 40 ft statue of *Sersulamor*, martyred High Priest and immortal saint of the Golden Goddess. A sealed sarcophagus is adjacent to the western wall.

3d6 cultists are present here, participating in rituals of blessing and devotion, preoccupied with their chanting, the air thick and hazy with pungent incense.

If the PCs have kept quiet, and disguised themselves in the robes from Area 2, they might take the ritualists by surprise (Dex (Stealth) check). Any attempt to talk to the cultists leads to requests to see their holy brands (coin icon on forearm, see p.13), as the devotees don't recognize the PCs' from prior cult ceremonies.

*Cultists*, AC 11, HD 1, Ceremonial Knife 1d4, 19: poison causes 1d6 extra damage (*Luck* (Con) check for half), S11 D10 C10 I9 P10 W12 Ch10, L 4, Mv 30 ft. The cultists are fanatical and fight to the death.

If Womek hears the sounds of battle below (Perc (Detection) check), he will appear from Area 10 in 1d4+1 rounds to aid his brethren. If the cultists are defeated, 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147) may be looted from the sarcophagus (crumbling remains of Sersulamor).

PCs investigating behind the statue find a concealed stairway leading up (a narrow archway covered with a hanging tapestry, depicting Yargoth raining gold down on her followers).

In the southwest corner of the chamber is a secret trapdoor. If the floor is searched, a particularly uneven floor panel stands out (Perc (Detection) check), which may be opened by pulling on it (see Area 5).

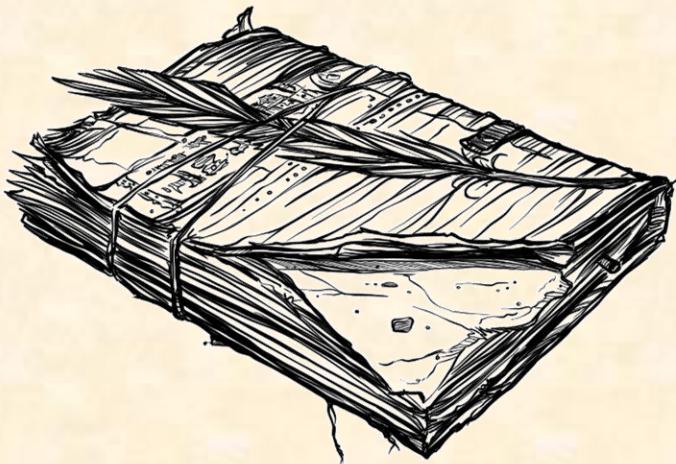
## Area 7 – Flaming Stairs

The final set of stairs is dimly lit, with widely spaced candles. About half way up is a tripwire (Perc (Detection) check at -2 penalty) that causes

a barrel of oil to pour onto the first two people in the stairwell, catching one of the candles, and setting them on fire for 2d4 damage (*Luck (Con)* check for half). If the trap is detected, an *Int (Traps & Locks)* check allows a PC to disarm and scavenge/repurpose the barrel.

### **Area 8 – Secret Entry**

As noted on p.8 there is a secret door allowing access to the temple in the colossus' right bicep (approx 90 ft up). The door is trapped with a swinging log, which activates when the door is half opened (Womek disarms the trap with a safety catch on the inside when he uses it). A character opening the door with their hands is knocked off the colossus and falls to the ground (9d6 damage, *Luck (Dex)* save avoids).



Beyond the door is a steep 30 ft staircase leading directly to Area 10 (the High Priest traditionally used this sacred corridor to reach the *Palm of Sacrifice*). The staircase has shelf recesses containing candles, but they are unlit. At the top of the stairs is a door with a pull handle.

### **Area 9 – Palm of Sacrifice**

The enormous clawed hand of the Yargoth Colossus cradles the bones of several recent sacrifices; some of whom were

friends/mentors/relations of the PCs until butchered by Womek - see the captives entry in Area 5). If the bones are sorted through, 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.141) may be retrieved.

The Hand is enchanted and the source of the cult's power. When a person is ritually sacrificed, all genuine cultists receive a vision of what they must do to make a prophetic dream come true (typically blood sacrifice, beast or human). The cultists inevitably develop signs of madness, and if exposed long enough (as Womek is), mutation. The true source of this "blessing" is uncertain and left for the GM to determine.

### **Area 10 – Golden Sanctum**

The main door to the sanctum is inlaid with gold (worth 2d6 x 20 gp if extracted), adorned with iconography of coins falling into cupped hands (one of Yargoth's symbols). The door is unlocked. There is also a secret door in the western wall, which may be opened by pressing on a golden panel (careful inspection reveals handprints, leads to Area 8).

The room beyond is 25 ft by 20 ft, with a 10 ft ceiling, lined with panels of tarnished gold (worth 2d100 + 100 gp) and lit by a hanging lantern. A broken bookshelf is in the northwest corner, and Harriman's strongbox beside the southern wall (locked, may be picked or broken open with sufficient time/crowbar, 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure, LFG p.140).

If the party have been quiet, Womek is here kneeling over a drugged captive, cutting runic symbols into their flesh in preparation for sacrifice (50% chance it is an NPC related to a PC). A Dex (Stealth) vs Perc check (at disadvantage for Womek) will allow the party to take him by surprise.

If Womek knows the party is coming, he casts *Strength* upon himself (+4 bonus on melee damage instead of +1), and then stands at one side of the door, hoping to ambush them.

*Womek*, AC 12, HD 5+1, Heavy Mace (1d8+1) and Claw 1d6+1 or spell, 19: Womek invokes a word of power; roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table (LFG p.58, Midlands p.30), S13 D15 C9 I14 P9 W14 Ch14, L8, Mv 30 ft. May choose from the following spells three times per combat (5<sup>th</sup> level): *Magic Missile, Cure Light Wounds, Hideous Laughter, Charm Person, Web, Strength, Ritual Magic, Monster Summoning I.*

On Womek's person is the key to Area 5 and a pouch containing one dose of *Blackbile Fugus* tincture (highly rare, potent hypnotic, if imbibed victim enters a drug addled stupor for 2d6 hours, Luck (Con) save resists).

If the bookshelf is searched, a hidden compartment behind it (Perc check) may be found. Within is the *Nova Scriptoria*, or Book of Stars, containing the discoveries of an anonymous, long dead Yargoth Confessor (spell casting exorcist), worth 2d4 x 200 gp to the right collector. A PC interested in becoming a 1<sup>st</sup> level magic user may do so gleaning secrets from this tome (see Aftermath).

### **THERG'S END**

Therg's End is 18 months old, with about 50 current residents. When the PCs arrive, the outpost's situation is precarious; almost all the guards are dead, and less than half the original number of occupants remain. Without the caravan's men and supplies, there is every chance the outpost will have to be abandoned.

Additionally, about half of the residents are secret Yargoth cultists, fanatically loyal to Womek and his teachings. Every cultist is marked with a coin brand on their forearm; ostensibly part of "traders' guild", but in reality a sign of their devotion to the lost goddess of greed.

If Womek is dead when the PCs arrive, all of the resident cultists have received a vision of his death. This will create some tension/confusion among them (who will be the new cult leader?), and they will be suspicious of the PCs.

*Guard*, AC 14 (chain & shield), HD 1, Longbow 1d8 or Sword 1d8, 19: as weapon, S14 D10 C12 I10 P12 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. The guard's shield may be used to negate one attack (LFG p.40).

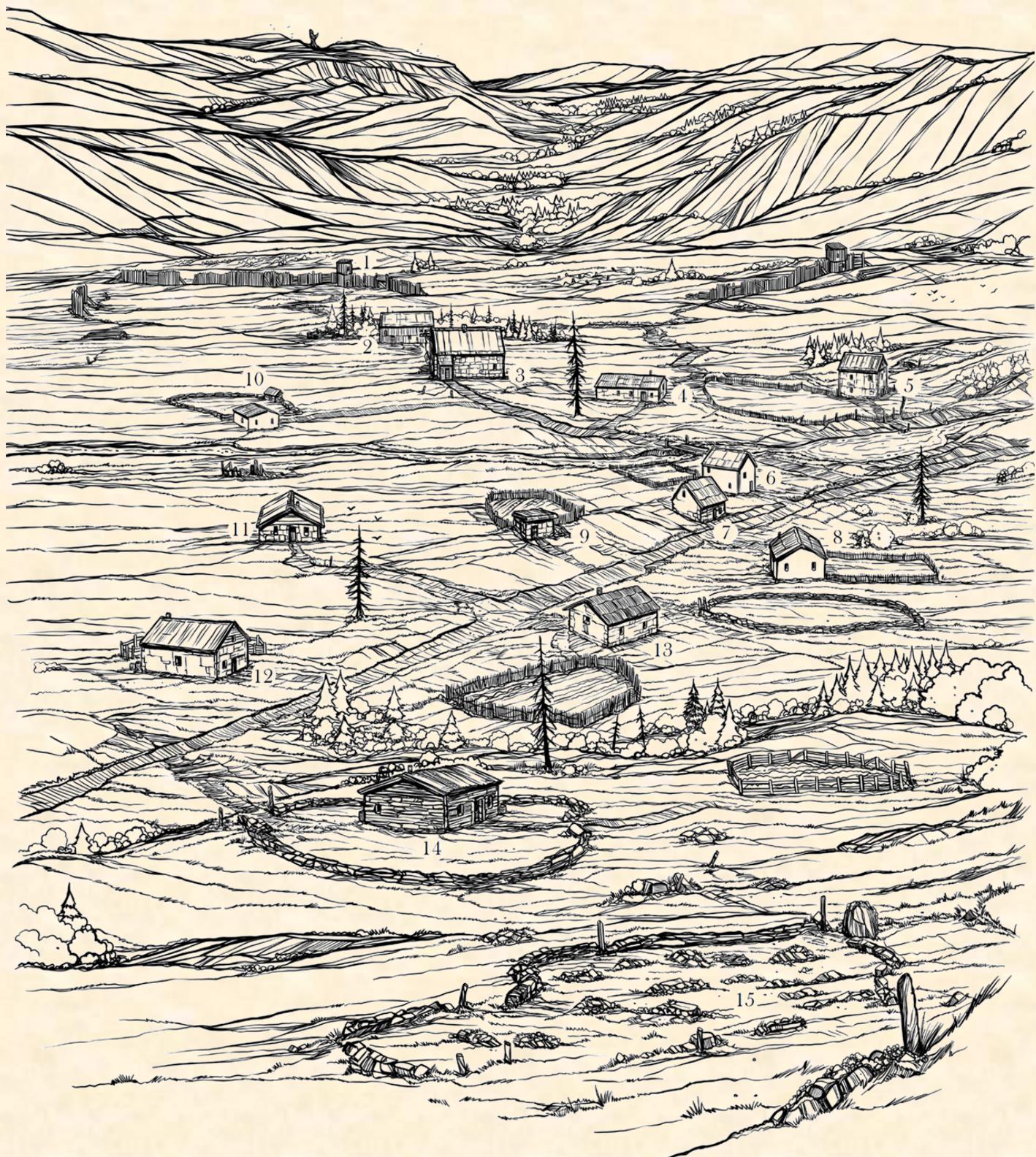
*Outlander*, AC 10, HD 1d4 hp, Club or Big Knife 1d6, 19: another outlander comes to aid this one, S10 D10 C11 I10 P10 W10 Ch10 L3, Mv 30 ft.

*Cultist*, AC 11 (leathers), HD 1, Knife 1d4, 19: the cultist invokes Yargoth, 50% chance of rolling on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table, S10 D10 C11 I10 P10 W11 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. Cultists are fanatical and immune to morale checks.

### **Area 1 – Wooden Palisade**

The original 8 ft wall was burned down by barbarian invaders a month ago, and is in the process of being rebuilt, this time with 15 ft sentry towers. Work is far from complete but each tower provides three quarters cover for archers (+4 AC). With the depleted guard numbers, there is only 1 archer keeping watch in each tower.

Outpost Map



## Area 2 - Barracks

*Captain Sully* and her 2d6 guards are all that remain of the 45 men-at-arms once protecting Therg's End. The captain was expecting reinforcements with the PCs' caravan, and is visibly shaken to learn none survived the ogre assault. Sully explains that they cannot hold the outpost with so few, and they will likely have to abandon the settlement. The barracks includes some basement cells. Ordinarily, there would also be a cache of spare weapons and armour, but these have already been distributed to residents.

## Area 3 – Brass Badger Inn

*Overseer Kinnon* (short, moustached, grim and humourless, unfond of dwarf related jokes), controls the outpost, and is also owner of the *Brass Badger Inn*, along with his wife *Ymelda*. Importantly, both are Yargoth cultists loyal to Womek. A still and full barrel of *Widow's Grin* whiskey may be found out back.

With so few residents, the tavern is empty apart from the PCs, whom the owners are grateful to receive as guests (there are plenty of rooms upstairs). Kinnon & Ymelda are genuinely distressed at the ambush (they knew of Womek's arrangement with the ogres, but slaughtering the entire caravan was never agreed to!), and project stoicism in their resolve to rebuild. An Int or Perc (Insight) contest vs either NPCs' Cha suggests they are hiding something (body language cues, slightly faltering voice, odd twitch in the neck, etc).

The pair are always on the look out for new sacrifice victims, and might target any late night drinkers, loners or suspicious investigator types with a sleeping draught (Con check or comatose; they end up a captive in Area 5 of the Colossus,

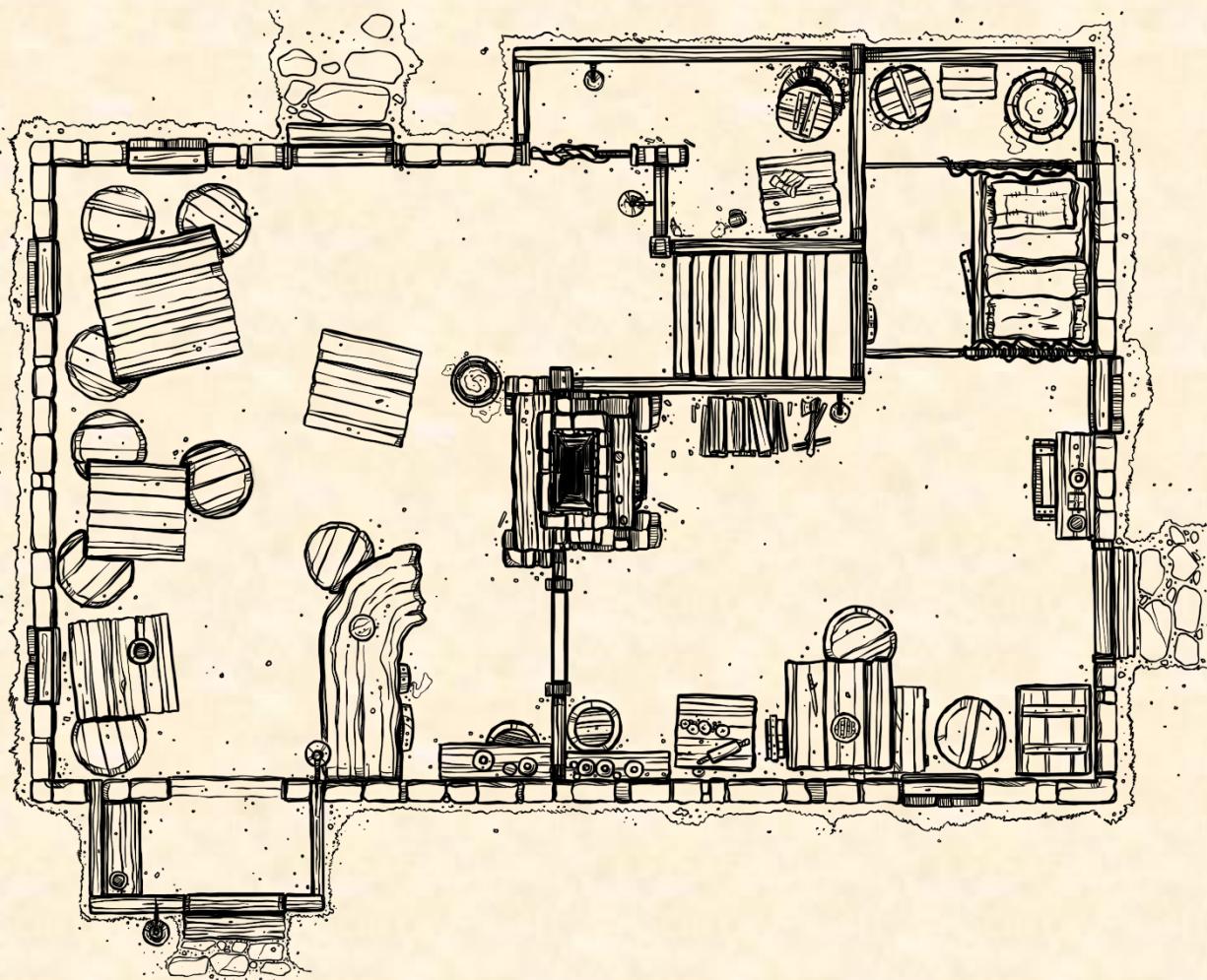
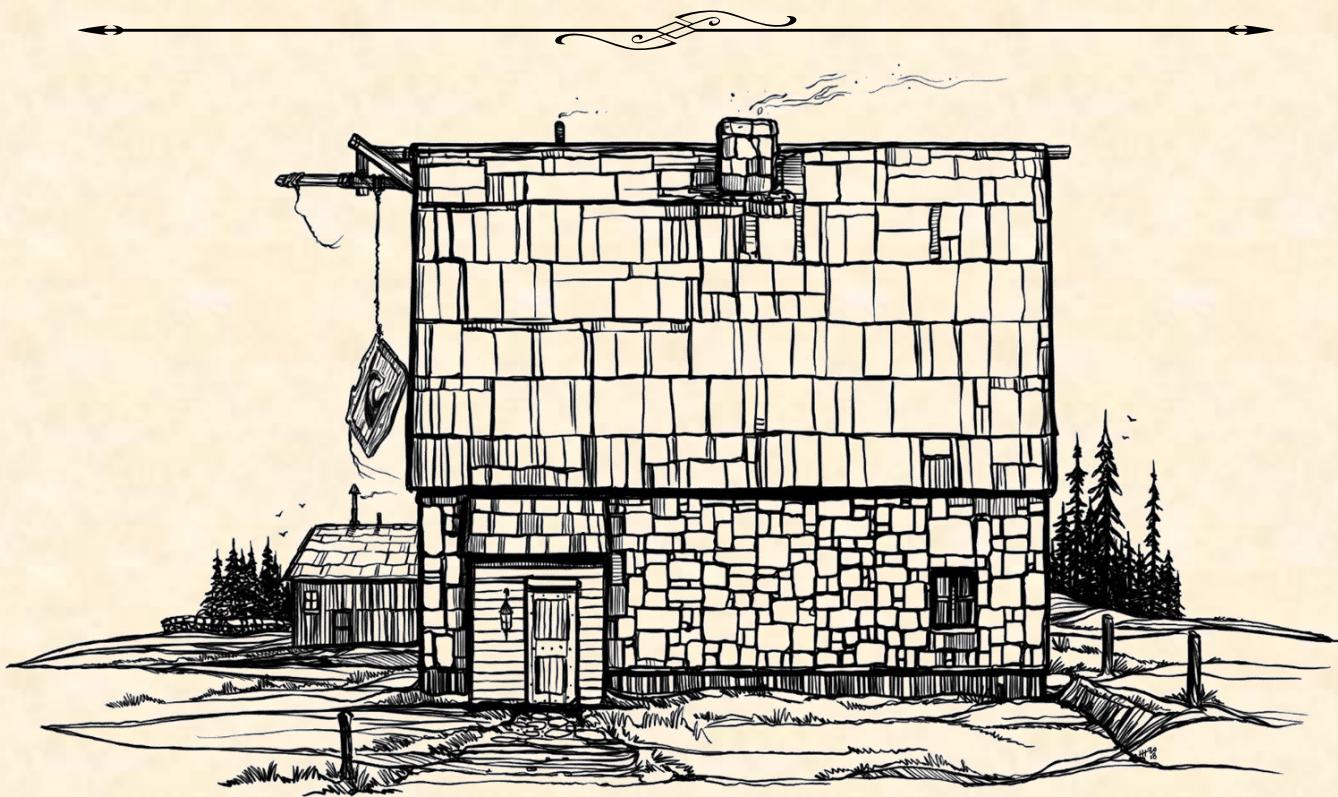
delivered there by *Calix* (see Area 9) – treat as an NPC until/if they are rescued). If the owner's bedroom is searched, two yellow robes adorned with coin icons may be found hidden beneath their mattress (symbols of Yargoth).

## Area 4 – Hugo's (General Store)

Hugo (medium build, clean shaven, purple vest, always smoking a pipe) runs the general store, which always smells of pipeweed. The place is crowded with shelves, but without the latest caravan shipment, most of them are empty. Hugo is one of the cultists, probably the most avaricious man in the outpost, and his prices exorbitant (twice normal).



Hugo will be (genuinely) outraged that the caravan was destroyed, and keen to ensure sacrifices are swiftly made to help maintain his uncanny prosperity. If possible, he will hatch a plot with *Kinnon*, *Ymelda*, *Tybalt* and *Calix* to deliver one or more of the PCs for sacrificing.



If the PCs want to buy or trade, use the following percentages to determine whether Hugo has the goods available:

- Common: 70%, quantity 1d6
- Uncommon: 40%, quantity 1d3
- Rare: 10%, quantity 1

### Area 5 – Miners’ Domicile

4d6 miners live in this double story domicile, lead by *Leanora* (albino Karok, hulking female with Str and Con 15, blunt and impatient). Half of them are secret Yargoth cultists (but not Leonora, who would be quick to brain them or throw them in the barracks’ cells). The miners avoided the barbarian slaughter because they were in the hills prospecting for silver. Every now and then, a miner dies in a freak “accident” (ritually murdered by cultists). Searching the home reveals a handful of yellow cloaks with coin symbology concealed beneath some floorboards (Yargoth vestments).

### Area 6 – Herbalist

Two herbalists *Ercan* (6 ft, rail thin) and *Gijord* (northerner, long blond beard, black cloak), and their families live in this house, collecting rare herbs in the nearby woods and hills. They are normally escorted by a handful of guards, but recently have been forced to make short expeditions alone. They can supply healing herbs (as Healer’s Kit) and anti-toxin for trade or reasonable prices. PCs affected by sleeping draughts or similar can be cured here.

### Area 7 – Weaver

The charming *Einid* (20s, brunette female, athletic, easy manner) and her twin children, live and work as weavers, making clothes and baskets. Einid’s husband *Gray* died in a tree

felling accident six months earlier (a dream prophecy of *Tybalt* come true, see Area 13).

### Area 8 – Potter

*Burty* (*Burton*) the potter (stubbled alcoholic, fond of whiskey, rotund, often wearing an apron) and his extended family live in the pottery, which has shelves of bowls, plate, jars, urns etc. PCs interested in creating Molotov cocktail devices could do so with whiskey (from Area 3), rags and some of Burty’s jars (throw 40 ft, 1d6 fire damage in a 5 ft area).

### Area 9 – Archaeologist (Womek’s home)

*Womek* lives here masquerading as an archaeologist, making armed expeditions into forgotten places in the search for lost relics. The sorcerer struck gold in *Therg’s End*, gaining access to the Colossus and a ready supply of sacrificial victims.

The house is locked and empty of people (Dex (Traps & Locks) check to open, or by breaking (Str check). If the PCs visit here, Womek is at the Colossus (with a number of cultists assisting him on an “expedition”; either engaging in blood rituals or dead if the party have dealt with him).

Searching the house reveals a box beneath a wardrobe false floor (trapped with a poison needle; Luck (Con) check or dead (Perc (Detection) check to spot, Dex (Traps & Locks) check to repurpose the device or harvest 1 dose of poison). Inside the box are 1 x Valuables, 1 x Carry Loot and a hooded, yellow robe with coin icons (Yargoth vestments).

### Area 10 – Stables

The stables and horse yard are overseen by *Calix* (dark skinned Nydessian, dyed blonde hair, thick beard, reckless extrovert), a longtime member of

Yargoth's sect. He currently has 2d6 horses and is happy to trade or sell them at reasonable prices. From time to time, the Overseer has Calix convey drugged captives to the Colossus for sacrifice. A thorough search of the stable loft reveals 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136), yellow Yargoth vestments, blood stained ropes, and a set of manacles.

### Area 11 – Abandoned Blacksmiths

The old blacksmith's is currently abandoned; the last family member suddenly perished a week ago due to disease, and the property is in limbo, awaiting the Overseer's decision as to what to do with it. Salvageable weapons and armour have already been handed out to inhabitants, but there are enough materials to forge one object or tool such as a crowbar, spear or axe head, caltrops, crude manacles, etc.

The blacksmith's daughter, *Riann*, was gifted with an inventive mind, and left a number of insightful charcoal drawings, schematics and formulae in a journal in her bedroom (including a partial formula for something referred to as "firepowder"). Indeed, one of her successful devices may still be found in the smithy (a sword pommel in a box, that shoots a small dart 20 ft by pressing a trigger stud; no damage itself, but might deliver poison). A PC interested in taking the Artificer class might unlock their potential with the journal (see Aftermath).

### Area 12 – Leatherworker

Leatherworker *Sulraa* (6 ft, 50's, tireless energy, red haired Thuel (barbarian) female, broken common), rents here with 3d6 others (mostly labourers). Most of the house are cultists, including Sulraa, who has personally murdered a number of people to receive her blessings (inc her unflagging endurance). Sulraa's money

pouch is crafted from the skin of her mentor *Rinnley* (the interior bears parts of his nose and eye, a loathsome keepsake that she likes to caress from time to time). A search of her locked valuables trunk reveals a hooded, yellow robe with coin icons (Yargoth vestments).



### Area 13 – Beekeeper

*Tybalt* the beekeeper (thin, large lips, receding hairline, often wearing his heavy work robes and hooded mesh veil). An early cultist, Tybalt's bee colony has greatly prospered and his honey prized in Crow's Keep.

Eight months earlier, Tybalt's prophetic dreams led him to a monstrous *Skull Mask*, buried at the base of a dead tree. Wearing the mask turns the user into a frenzied half man, half wasp horror, with enormous compound eyes and buzzing wings. "Yargoth" has conveyed to Tybalt that if he murders at least one of the PCs, his dreams of making *Einid* his wife (Area 7) will come true. If the party split up, the beekeeper will seize his chance if he thinks he can get away with it.

Wasp Monstrosity, AC 13, HD 4+1, Stinger 2d4 + poison (*Luck* (Con) save or paralysed for 2d6 rounds) and Claw 1d4+1, 19: target is severely stung, roll 1d6 on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, S19 D15 C12 I5 P13 W16 Ch7, L7, 30 ft or 60 ft flying. If there are no enemies to fight, but the duration has not yet expired, the wearer must make a Will check to resist attacking an ally and end the transformation.

The mask is hidden in an empty wax pot. If worn, the user immediately feels angry and aggressive. If attuned (takes several weeks), the wearer may spend an action to transform into the *Wasp Monstrosity* (duration 2d6 rounds, usable once every 2d6 months). Activating the mask automatically requires a roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table. A PC interested in taking the Barbarian class (but without an appropriate background or other event), might find this ancient relic unlocks their inner rage (see Aftermath).

### Area 14 – Hunters’ Hall

2d6+2 hunters live here, some with families (statistics as *Outlander*, but with longbows), and 2d6 hounds. Half of the hunters are new cultists (might be turned, with the right persuasion). A search of the premises garners 1 x Carry Loot but no yellow robes (they are stored in Area 2 of the Colossus).

*Hound*, AC 12, HD 1+2, Bite 1d4+1, 19: target is knocked prone, S13 D14 C15 I2 P12 W10 Ch6, L4, 60 ft. Advantage when tracking and on attack rolls when flanking.

### Area 15 - Graveyard

Many recent burial mounds and cremation urns mark this large graveyard. Perusing the headstones reveals epitaphs such as “All are

*equal before Baal*”, “*Here lies Wendolyn Cinders; Hunter of Monsters and Men*” and “*Vengeance is a pit, justice a door*”.

PCs wanting to rob the graves will find 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136) and a *cold iron* longsword buried about the various plots. One recent corpse however is swollen with foul gas and *flesh grubs*. If disturbed, the corpse ruptures, showering the PC with the flesh burrowing grubs (*Luck* (Con) check or the PC dies in 1d4 rounds when the grubs reach their heart. Only fire or acid can kill the grubs, but requires an Int (Apothecary) check to apply correctly, and causes 1d4 damage to the subject in the process).

### Aftermath

Without Womek to hold the cult together, the last sect members turn on each before being ousted and hung by the remaining outlanders. In this case, Therg’s End is almost certainly abandoned, and the site razed by barbarian, ogre and skorn forces.

If Womek lives, the outpost thrives and expands, rising to 90% cultists. The sect spreads to the closest city, swiftly recruiting followers from the poor and merchant quarters. With time and increasing popular support, the cultists leverage the Church of Argona into recognizing Yargoth as a lost saint of *The Starmaiden*, legitimizing their place in Midlander theology. The truth behind “Yargoth” is left to GM determination.

As far as the surviving PCs are concerned, they gain 1st level in a class of the player’s choice. Players and/or GMs preferring a clear connection between the PC’s actions and their chosen class might consider the following (in addition to the PC’s background):

- **Artificer** – Disabling/repurposing any traps, detecting/opening any secret doors, “*MacGuyvering*” any other object to assist the party (eg Molotov cocktails in Outpost Area 8), Studying *Riann’s* schematics journal (Outpost Area 11).
- **Barbarian** – Fighting enemies, handling real weapons, showing fury or rage especially during combat, decrying sorcery, feats of athleticism, pathfinding, tracking, hunting, wilderness survival.
- **Bard** – Fighting enemies, handling real weapons, inspiring or entertaining the party/NPCs, wearing armour, learning/spreading new culture, tales or lore.
- **Fighter** – Fighting enemies, handling real weapons, showing leadership, feats of athleticism, wearing armour.
- **Magic User** – Tainted by Vorgeist’s purple cloud, cursed by the magic idol (Colossus Area 2), being affected by a *Dark & Dangerous* magic effect, studying the *Nova Scriptoria* (Colossus Area 10).
- **Monk** – *Lopai*, the elderly easterner in Colossus Area 5, is willing to teach one PC his dying order’s secret fighting techniques. Whether Lopai passes away of natural causes shortly thereafter is left to the GM to determine.
- **Ranger** – Fighting enemies, sneaking around, spotting dangers/secret doors, spotting clues, pathfinding, tracking, hunting, wilderness survival, sneaking or assisting the injured bear (p.7).
- **Rogue** – Fighting enemies, sneaking around, spotting, disarming, or repurposing traps/secret doors, spotting clues, looting, stealing, opening locks, being deceptive, climbing things.



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