

# ADVANCED ADVENTURES MODULE #40

## The Horror of Merehurst

by Joseph Browning

AN ADVENTURE FOR FIRST LEVEL CHARACTERS



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## THE HORROR OF MEREHURST

The island of Merehurst was once a bustling center for trade. The mines from high mount Ynyswel provided a steady source of mid-grade peridot and the lowlands provided the perfect growing conditions for grain. This natural bounty built a town near the southern shore of Merehurst, where the great isle sloped more gently to the sea. But this was not to last, for in one single deadly night sixty years ago all the people and the animals of the town died - collapsing where they stood. The neighboring villagers of Coombe claimed that the miners dug too deeply into Ynyswel and the spirit of the isle was offended. The island gained a fearsome reputation and only the bravest would dare set foot upon its forested grounds.

Now, terror has again stricken the sea village of Coombe! Strange noises flow off the water from Merehurst and the once-constant lights from the Coyle farm haven't been seen for days. There is terror in Coombe, and mutterings that the eld horror on Merehurst is stirring. Many villagers blame Lavel Coyle and his elven wife Darsee Silvertree for settling upon the cursed isle and fear that the ire of the spirit within the mountain will once again rise with disastrous effect.

Yesterday strange lights were seen in the sky over the island and Ynyswel started smoking. The villagers can wait no longer. Brave adventurers must be found who are willing to investigate the Isle of Merehurst to either appease or oppose what lies behind the latest mysterious activities.

**STOP! If you plan to participate in this adventure as a player, then stop reading here. Prior knowledge of this module's contents will only spoil your enjoyment of the game.**

**Notes for the Game Master:** The Horror of Merehurst is an adventure for 6-10 characters of first level. It is essential that the party contain at least one (preferably two or three) clerics as the island is infested by the undead and their turning ability will prove highly valuable. Additionally, at least one spell caster capable of **detect magic** or **read magic** will prove useful, as there are important magical runes that may remain indecipherable otherwise.

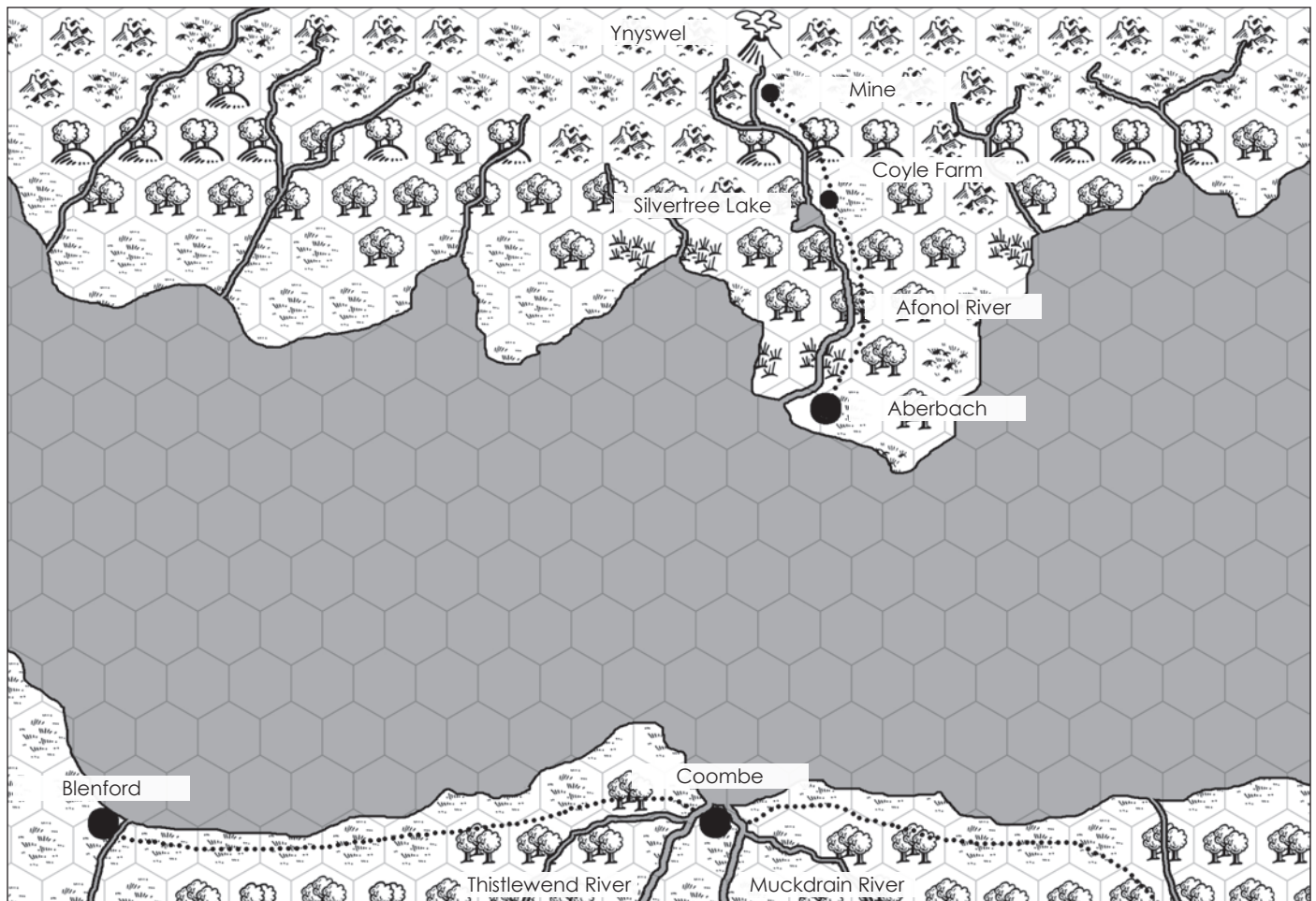
## MEREHURST ISLAND

Merehurst is a medium-sized volcanic island rising from the sea and located in colder temperate climes. Merehurst isn't very big, roughly fifty square miles, and the top of Mount Ynyswel towers almost 4,000 feet above the waterline. Ynyswel hasn't erupted in several hundred years, but when it released the cloud of noxious gas about sixty years ago it was funneled down the Turnfel Valley suffocating all in its path. It rolled through the town called Aberbach and depopulated it; now the town has disappeared into the growing forest and only a few ruined stone buildings remain around the town center.

Ynyswel's caldera is partially collapsed and it slopes more gradually to the south. From that direction it is a rough and tiring climb to the top, but from all other directions the skills of a mountain goat are required for ascent. In the caldera is a small lake whose waters are unpleasant to the tongue, but not toxic. There are many small vents in the caldera, spewing out noxious vapors. Even with these noxious vents, the caldera is a relatively hospitable location, packed with woods, small animals and birds. It is about a quarter mile downslope from the caldera that the mines of Merehurst burrow into the great mountain.

## SOUTHERN MEREHURST ISLE

ONE HEX EQUALS ONE EIGHTH MILE



**Merehurst in Campaigns:** The Isle of Merehurst can be easily placed into any campaign featuring a sea coast. It can be the starting point for characters that are still wet behind the ears or can serve as a side trek for slightly more-experienced characters. For GMs wishing to use The Isle of Merehurst as a stand-alone adventure, it is suggested that PCs are approached by Coragath (a priest at Coombe) with the task of exploring Merehurst to determine the fate of Lavel Coyle and his family along with the status and condition of the mines. Coombe locals can see much of the island from the lake, but the mines and the entire caldera area are hidden from sight.

Coragath offers 100gp per person willing to accept the task, along with free room and board at the Geased Goblin Inn and the right to loot the ruins of Aberbach. Obviously, rowboats will be provided the PCs for the almost two mile trip. Coragath informs those who accept the offer that he's recently been to the ruins of Aberbach and encountered some undead (skeletons, zombies) there so they should prepare for such encounters.

## THE VILLAGE OF COOMBE

The small village of Coombe is mostly a human settlement, but there's normally a rather large contingent of gnomes in the Geased Goblin Inn at any particular moment hailing from the nearby gnome settlement of Blenford. Outside of the village center are a dozen or so large local farms, but Coombe relies mostly upon

fishing for its sustenance. Along the shore are several warehouses where the daily catch is brought in and processed. The fish are sized and placed into barrels filled with salt. The barrels are made locally and most of the villagers not involved in directly fishing are involved with barrel making or lumbering.

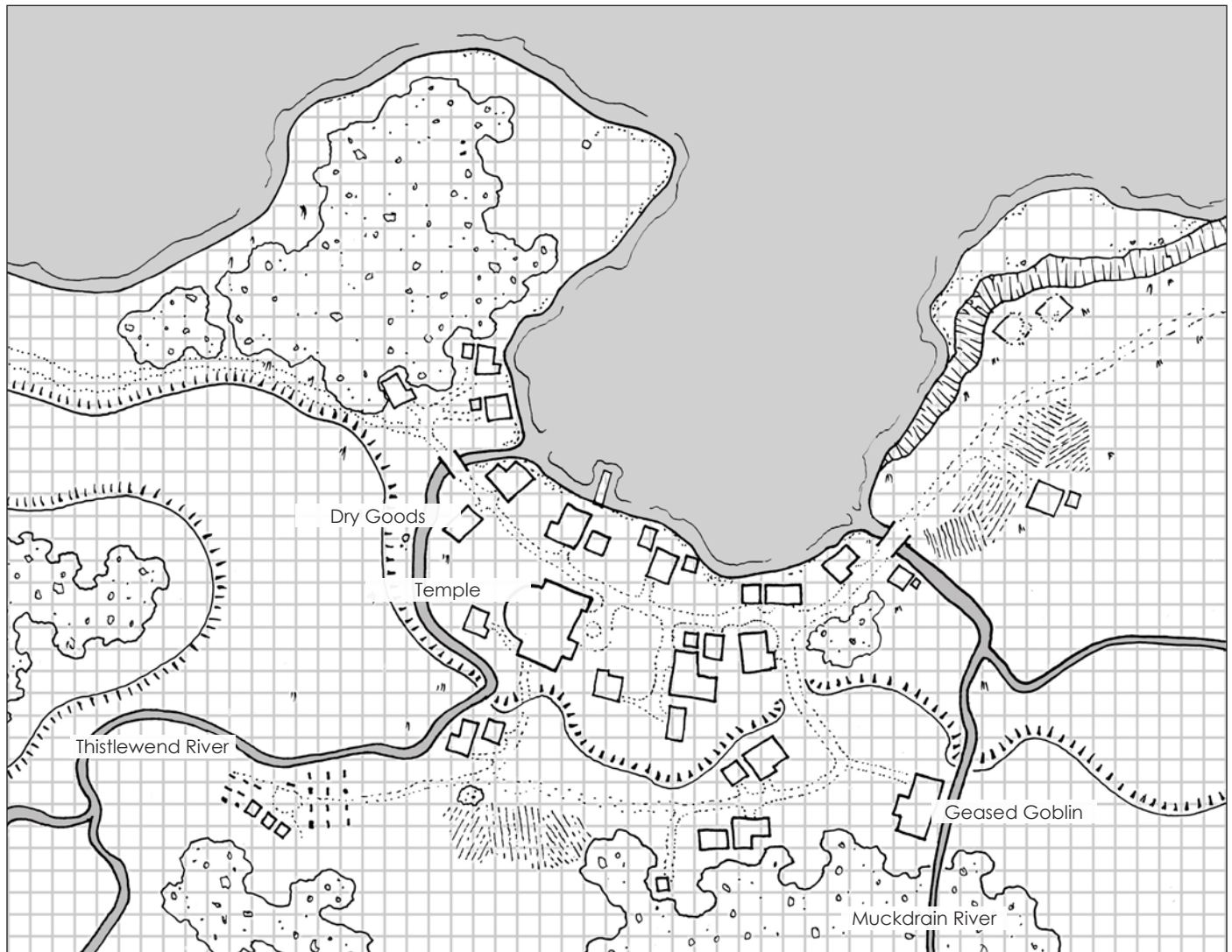
Coombe's location on the trade route between the gnomes of Blenford and the larger human settlements to the south and southeast means that a goodly selection of foodstuffs make their way to the plates of the locals: The Geased Goblin is known throughout the area as a location where the tongue will be well pleased by a stay.

**The Geased Goblin Inn:** This successful three-story inn is the social center of Coombe. The proprietor of the fine establishment is an elderly goblin named **Cogunz** who was geased decades ago to lead a just and productive life. He staggered into Coombe and managed to convince the locals to let him live. He served food in the tavern for little pay and a roof over his head and was eventually taken under the wing of the local cleric. Through long discussion with the priest, Cogunz came to understand his geas as a blessing instead of a curse. He quickly set about amassing as much wealth as possible to purchase the tavern in which he worked, and luck was on his side, finding him the proprietor within a handful of years.

The natives of Coombe are very protective of Cogunz as his doddering years approach rapidly, and some hold him as an example that the goblin tribes west of Blenford could eventually learn to see that barbarism is a lesser choice. Cogunz himself has

## COOMBE

ONE SQUARE EQUALS 20 FEET



made a few proselytizing trips to the west, but he quickly gave up, realizing that he enjoyed the comforts of civilization and abhorred his fellow goblins completely. Cogunz has promised to pass the inn on to a worthy member of the community when he dies, but he has not named a successor (although Aideen Teig is widely believed to be such) and his will is safely held under lock and key by Coragath.

The Geased Goblin is now mostly run by **Aideen Teig** and her two sisters, **Ena** and **Fainche** (human females, LG, 0-level, HP 3 each, DAM 1-3 with knives). They dwell in the upper story suite and take care of Cogunz who now comes down to the common room only a few times a week. The sisters arrived in Coombe as younglings, but their parents caught sick and died. Cogunz took them in and raised them as best he could. They maintain a tightly run schedule and the inn hums along on traders coming down the Thistlewend and Muckdrain rivers. There are always travelers at the inn, resting and drinking before continuing their journey by sea all the way east to the island seaport of Finholm two days away. The Greased Goblin's prices are as follows:

Breakfast, normal 10 cp  
Breakfast, quality 1 sp, 3 cp  
Lunch, normal 12 cp  
Lunch, quality 3 sp  
Dinner, normal 13 cp  
Dinner, quality 3 sp, 5 cp  
Dinner, superior 1 ep

Ales, various quality 2-10 cp  
Beer, various quality 4-20 cp  
Wine, average 4 gp per bottle  
Wine, quality 10 gp per bottle  
Whiskey, 5 cp per shot

A common room accommodating 20 at 1 sp per night (roll 1d20 upon arrival to see how many spaces are already occupied)  
2 single rooms at 1 gp per night (roll 1d2 upon arrival to see how many are occupied)  
4 double rooms at 10 sp per night per head (roll 1d2 upon arrival to see how many are already occupied).  
2 triple rooms at 10 sp per night per room (roll 1d2 upon arrival to see how many are already occupied).

**The Temple of Oriandar:** Lead by **Coragath** (human male, CG, 5th-level cleric, AC 10 or 2 when equipped for combat, 27 HP, DAM 2-7+1 with **footman's mace +1**), the local temple of the sea deity is favored by all members of Coombe. Coragath keeps his plate and shield in his quarters, but carries his mace wherever he goes. He normally has the following spells ready: **command** (x2), **cure light wounds** (x2), **protection from evil**, **detect charm**, **hold person** (x2), **know alignment**, **speak with animals**, **cure disease**. Coragath is a former adventurer who settled down a decade ago into a rural temple that would place fewer demands upon his time. He's talkative and outgoing, but not a hard worker, and he knew he'd rather spend more of his time socializing than organizing. He leaves most of the daily running of the temple to his assistants, who are both starting to feel the call of the road and adventure. He expects them to leave within a year.

Coragath's two assistants, **Dragora** and **Evmarva** (human females, CG, 2nd level clerics, AC 9 or 4 when equipped for combat, HP 13 & 12, DAM 2-7 with footman's mace), live with him in the temple and take care of the needs of the people. They normally have the following spells ready: **command**, **cure light wounds** (x2), **protection from evil**. They leave their chain and shield in the temple as well.

All three are well-liked by the locals and their advice is constantly sought after—the sea plays an important role in the daily life of Coombe. Any of the three will heal injured locals free of charge, but require a tithe of 50 gp (or some other compensation) per **cure light wounds** spell from outsiders.

Coragath has been concerned with Lavel Coyle and his family for several months now. He even secretly ventured towards their house three weeks ago, just as the leaves were changing color, but turned back after encountering a few skeletons and zombies in the ruins of Aberbach. Although they didn't present much of a risk to him, he's not foolish enough to spend the night alone when such dangers lurk, and if the undead was stirring on the island his duty lay with returning to Coombe and protecting it if the problem turns out to be larger than expected.

**Durgan's Dry Goods:** **Durgan Hillguard** (gnome male, LN, 1st-level fighter, AC 7, HP 7, DAM 1-8 with longword) runs the dry goods shop in Coombe. He retired from adventuring after his first outing—he was the only of his group to survive and he lost two fingers in the process. Hillguard's selection is greater than what one would expect from the small village. He stocks common food goods, utensils, and hardware as Coombe lacks a blacksmith—the nearest one is a gnome in Blenford, and he's racist against the humans of Coombe, charging them double what would be normal.

At any moment, Hillguard has a chance to have the following items of interest to adventurers. The GM should assume any goods the locals would desire are available and price them accordingly.

Type of equipment	In stock chance
Armor (each type)	25%
Common melee weapons	65%
Rare melee weapons	15%
Common missile weapons	75%
Rare missile weapons	15%
Clothing	75%
Lighting equipment	85%
Miscellaneous	25%

**Acquiring Henchmen or Hirelings:** Acquiring henchmen or hirelings for a trip to Merehurst will prove a hard affair as the locals are generally unwilling to travel to the island. Travelers through the Geased Goblin provide the best chances, and gnomes are the most-likely of those to sign on with the characters as they don't share the same superstition regarding the island that the local humans do.

If the characters try to acquire gnome henchmen, they'll pick from a pool of 1-4 fighters, 1-4 thieves, 1-2 illusionists, and 1-2 multiclassed (fighter/thief, fighter/illusionist, or illusionist/thief). Even this small number will dry up if more than a few henchmen or hirelings don't make it back from a previous expedition.

**Travelling to Merehurst:** Coragath provides the characters up to two large rowboats (seating 6). If another is desired, it can be found, but a 50 gp deposit is required to provide access: if lost, another 100gp will be required to pay it off. Rowing against the eastward current of the sea here means it takes about a half-hour to arrive at the mouth of the River Afonol and then several minutes more to the ruins of Aberbach.

Afonol is a quick moving river, and travel up it by rowboat requires a lot of effort. Only a half-mile per hour upstream is possible. Downstream is much easier and faster: five miles per hour without rowing, ten with. When the mines were still producing, boat traffic upstream was done via a towpath along the eastern bank: it was just easier to drag an unloaded boat back up the river by foot.

## THE RUINS OF ABERBACH

A little less than an eighth of a mile up the Afonol River, the ruins of Aberbach rise from the now-forested land. A few riverine piles that once held docks remain in the water. The people of Aberbach tamed the Afonol into several different canals that stretched through the city, but now only a single canal leading into the city heart remains. The other canals have filled in over the years, but the deepest (the one near the center of the city) still holds water,

albeit only waist deep. The walls of the canal are 6 feet above the water line; this makes exiting a boat difficult excepting at AREA 1, where steps descend to the water.

Once a flourishing city of 2,000, Aberbach is now nothing more than ruins encroached upon by an expanding forest. Much of the city is grass and forest covered rubble, and only a section near the city center contains buildings that stand, some including multiple floors. The city has been looted several times over the years and anything that remains is either valueless, hard to move, hidden, or recently deposited.

**Wandering Encounters:** check once per hour after the characters exit their boat; a 1-2 on a 1d6 indicates an encounter, then roll 2d6 for specific encounter with 2d4+1 x 10 indicating how many feet away the encounter begins.

- 2 - 1 wight (AC 5, MV 120 ft., HD 4+3, HP 18, ATK 1, DAM 1-4, SA energy drain)
- 3 - Strange and Unusual (see below)
- 4 - 1-4 zombies (AC 8, MV 60 ft., HD 2, HP 12 each, ATK 1, DAM 1-8)
- 5 - Strange and Unusual (see below)
- 6 - 1-4 skeletons (AC 7, MV 120 ft., HD 1, HP 5 each, ATK 1, DAM 1-6)
- 7 - Critter (see below)
- 8 - 1-4 skeletons (AC 7, MV 120 ft., HD 1, HP 5 each, ATK 1, DAM 1-6)
- 9 - Strange and Unusual (see below)
- 10 - 1-4 zombies (AC 8, MV 60 ft., HD 2, HP 12 each, ATK 1, DAM 1-8)
- 11 - Strange and Unusual (see below)
- 12 - 1-2 ghouls (AC 6, MV 90 ft., HD 2, HP 10 each, ATK 3, DAM 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, SA paralyzation)

**Critter:** A multiplicity of different critters travel among the ruins. Some make their homes in the ruins (indicated in the entry) and should be subtracted from encountered therein. Roll 2d4 for critter and then 2d4+1 x 10 indicating how many feet away.

- 2. 2-8 giant rats (AC 7, MV 150 ft., HD 1-4hp each, HP 2 each, ATK 1, DAM 1-3, SA 5% disease chance)
- 3. Huge spider from AREA 5 (AC 7, MV 180 ft., HD 2+2, HP 11, ATK 1, DAM 1-6, SA Paralyzation poison (2d10 hours) +1 on save, surprise on 1-5)
- 4. 2-5 fire beetles from AREA 12 (AC 4, MV 120 ft., HD 1+2, HP 5 each, ATK 1, DAM 2-8)
- 5. 2-8 giant rats (AC 7, MV 150 ft., HD 1-4hp each, HP 2 each, ATK 1, DAM 1-3, SA 5% disease chance)
- 6. 2-4 giant ants (AC 3, MV 180 ft., HD 2, HP 8 each, ATK 1, DAM 1-6)
- 7. 4-9 wild dogs (AC 7, MV 150 ft., HD 1+1, HP 6 each, ATK 1, DAM 1-4)
- 8. 2-8 giant rats (AC 7, MV 150 ft., HD 1-4hp each, HP 2 each, ATK 1, DAM 1-3, SA 5% disease chance)

**Strange and Unusual:** With the stirring of the eld horror under Merehurst, the ruins of Aberbach are now thoroughly haunted. Strange and unusual things occur with surprising frequency. Roll 1d12 and consult the below tables for the result and discard or reroll if the result isn't compatible with the PC's current surroundings.



## Day

1. A character notices his shadow isn't completely mimicking his movements.
2. A single leaf appears to be blowing against the wind.
3. A normal rat approaches the party in the open and dies in front of them.
4. A freshly severed hand is seen crawling nearby. It dissipates if touched.
5. Blood drips from the leaves of a tree.
6. A symbol composed of three overlapping triangles is found etched in the soil.
7. A white butterfly flutters near a spell caster before exploding into talc powder.
8. A flopping fish appears far from the water.
9. The smell of rotting flesh wafts over the party.
10. Something's moving in the underbrush.
11. A small rock moves causing a character to stumble.
12. 9 dead crabs are found: points in a pattern of three overlapping triangles.

## Night

1. A light source (torch, lantern, camp fire) whistles and blows out.
2. Murmurs and thuds indicate the sounds of approaching zombies.
3. A pair of red eyes is seen by a party member, but quickly disappear.
4. The temperature suddenly drops and the party can see their breath.
5. A terrible scream splits the night, waking any sleepers.
6. Powerful thumps occur, as if a very large biped is walking nearby.
7. Briefly it seems like the characters can't catch their breath, waking sleepers.
8. A character hears his name whispered from behind him.
9. Clicks and clacks indicate the sounds of approaching skeletons.
10. Sounds of a person suffocating float towards the party.
11. Lightning bugs put on a dance —forming a pattern of three overlapping triangles.
12. A light source (torch, lantern, campfire) turns green and hisses.

## KEY TO RUINED ABERBACH

1. LANDING: Stone steps descend to the waterline at this location. There are several remaining boat ties still in working condition. Four **giant leeches** lurk here, feeding upon the occasional animal that comes to drink. They attack any moving creatures upon the steps, surprising on a 1-3 during the night but not during the day.

**Giant leeches** (4): (SZ: S (x2), L (x2); AC 9; MV 30 ft.; HD 1, 2, 3, 4; HP 4, 10, 13, 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1hp per HD; SA 50% chance of disease fatal in 2-5 weeks; AL N).

2. BARRACKS: This large building once barracked a troop of 40 soldiers who were tasked as the town guard. They lived and bunked as a group in the large rooms of the lower level while their commander lived above. Currently the room is occupied by five **zombies**.

**Zombies** (5): (SZ: M; AC 8; MV 60 ft.; HD 2; HP 10 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; AL N)

- 2A. The doors to this room are stuck (open doors check required). This room was the kitchen for the troops. Only the original furniture remains: anything of value was looted long ago. A look up the chimney however shows a loose brick. Behind the brick is a metal box containing 26 pieces of small gold and silver jewelry (earrings, rings, necklaces, etc.) totaling 1,240 gp. The cook for the soldiers was a thief and this his hidden stash.

- 2B. The stairs here are in bad shape and have a 50% chance to give way if more than 100 lbs. is placed upon them. Any

dwarf or character with a background in masonry will be able to easily discern this. A falling character will suffer 1-6 hit points of damage.

2C. The door to the commander's room is stuck (open doors roll required). The room is open to the outside and a small flight of **stirges** has claimed it as their nest. They're nocturnal hunters who travel into the northeast when the sun descends—they've learned to avoid the ruins of the city as several of them have recently been killed by the various predators within. Beneath the nest and almost covered by a large pile of stirge guano is a corpse of a past adventurer. Among the remains is a **short sword +1**, 36 gp spilling from a rotted pouch, and two deep blue spinels worth 500 gp each.

**Stirges** (4): (SZ: S; AC 8; MV 30 ft., 180 ft. flying; HD 1+1; HP 5 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA attack as 4HD creature, blood drain 1-4 hp; AL N)

3. GEM MERCHANT'S GUILD: This massive building was once the center of the thriving mercantile life of Aberbach. All of the peridot coming out of the mines under high Ynyswel went through this building where it was graded, cut, and polished. Of all places in ruined Aberbach, this is the one that seen more than its fair share of looters passing through. All of the doors here still work: a testament to the quality of the original work.

3A. Both doors into this room have been forcefully opened for this was gem storage area. Nothing of value remains here among the racks (which look like bookshelves) lining the walls except for the carved copper plates indicated the value of each type of gem placed behind them which have somehow been overlooked by everyone. There are 24 of these labeled plates, each worth 1 sp.

3B. These two rooms were once the greeting and business rooms. Now it houses 6 weaken **skeletons** upon which a **yellow mold** has grown. The skeletons have almost been turned to dust by the yellow mold's slow digestion. Any hit on a skeleton destroys it and has a 50% chance of setting off the yellow mold's spores unless a torch or other fire-based-attack is used.

**Skeletons** (6): (SZ: M; AC 7; MV 120 ft.; HD 1; HP 1 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA covered in yellow mold, 50% chance to release spores if injured; AL N)

3C. The doors to this room are made of metal and locked. The locks are rusted, making them -10% to pick. Breaking them open is done at a -2 penalty. The majority of the work of the guild was performed in this room. A dozen tables and chairs litter the room, each with a rotating abrasive wheel upon which gems were cut, shaped, and polished. Unfortunately for the looter, this room has been entered via a hole in the roof, and anything easily-portable and of value taken away. The hole is also the home of a mantari who will attack any who enter the room below. The abrasive wheels (5 lbs. each) could be detached from their mechanisms and sold to a gem cutter for 100 gp each, however.

**Mantari**: (SZ: S; AC 9; MV 180 ft. flying; HD 1+1; HP 8; #AT 1; Dmg special (the difference between the target's CON and 19); AL NE)

3D. This room is still unlooted: whoever created the hole in the roof of AREA 3C was apparently satisfied enough with their loot they didn't do the same to this area, also closed by rusty-locked metal doors of the same type describe in AREA 3C. This room holds valuables that were traded to the guild, and which the guild used to distribute to its members as special gifts. The room holds four locked containers:

A long wooden chest with six bolts of a rich burgundy silk (150 gp each, 10 lbs. each).

A long wooden chest with two tapestries of hunting scenes (200 gp each, 30 lbs. each).

A teak wardrobe (150 gp) containing twelve woolen cloaks trimmed with ermine (100 gp each, 3 lbs. each)

A small chest containing a chess set of ivory and ebony (400 gp).

4. RUINS OF ROBESON HOUSE: Little more than a ruin, this one great house is entirely open to the weather as only the eastern part still stands. Searching through the rubble yields a small iron box fitted into one of the still standing walls behind a loose stone. Within the iron box is 54 gp, a **dagger +1**, and a **potion of gaseous form**.

5. RUINS OF DOAN HOUSE: Only one room of this house remains relatively intact and all three doors into this room are jammed (open doors at -1). It has been previously looted of valuables through a broken window however, and only piles of rotting furniture remain. These piles have been grouped into a single large nest held together by spider silk from the **huge spider** that lairs here.

The spider has learned an unusual trick: it places any newly paralyzed victims on top of the tower (AREA 5A) trussed up as bait to lure in descending crows, vultures, or stirges as additional prey, biting the victim again if they awaken before drawing down some birds. Over the years, and several generations of spiders, a small pile of treasure has been scattered atop the tower: 17 pp, 38 gp, 54 ep, 141 sp, 159 cp, a 500 gp base topaz, a 100 gp base pink pearl, a 10 gp base rhodochrosite, and a bone scroll case containing a **scroll of read magic** and **magic missile**.

**Huge spider**: (SZ: M; AC 7; MV 180 ft.; HD 2+2; HP 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA paralyzation poison (2d10 hours) +1 on save, surprise on 1-5; AL N)

6. GRAIN WAREHOUSE: This large structure was once the primary grain warehouse for Aberbach. Most of the town's grain passed through here and a cursory glance at the interior structures (rotting wooden bins set serially over one another) demonstrates this to anyone familiar with grain storage. After the vapor cloud passed through killing everything in path, the few giant rats that survived raided this location, causing a massive explosion of the giant rat population. The subsequent famine that followed littered the area with starved rats. When the elder horror started stirring, the skeletal remains rose from the ground and consumed the flesh of some local animals, adding it to their own. They are now **zombirats** (see new monsters): of which six reside in this area.

**Note**: If any of the PCs are killed by zombirats and their corpses left behind, the rats will consume the bodies, transforming into ghoulrats the next day. The ghoulrats will then try to pursue the PCs, seeking to consume more of them with the eventually goal of becoming wightrats (requiring the consumption of 10 additional corpses).

**Undead Giant Rat, Zombirat** (6): (SZ: S; AC 7; MV 90 ft., 30 ft. swimming; HD 1+2; HP 10, 8, 7, 6 (x2), 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA 10% disease chance; AL N)

6A. The wooden door to this area is stuck and a small gnawed-through section allows the zombirats to pass freely. It also once held grain, but now three **zombirats** are within.

**Undead Giant Rat, Zombirat** (3): (SZ: S; AC 7; 90 ft., 30 ft. swimming; HD 1+2; HP 10, 7, 6; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA 10% disease chance; AL N)

7. **RUINS OF STONEHALL:** Only a tiny bit remains of the once-opulent mansion of Stonehall. A single room, open to the weather serves as a temporary house to a **giant tick**. The tick's taken to this location as its empty door frame has given way, providing a perfectly tick-shaped hidey hole over right over the entrance. The tick drops upon anything that moves below.

**Giant tick:** (SZ: S; AC 3; MV 30 ft.; HD 2; HP 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA 1-6 hp blood drain, 50% chance of disease fatal in 2-8 days; AL N)

8. **RUINS OF ERNALT'S TOWER:** This building was once a six story tall tower build by Ernalt, the mayor of Aberbach when it fell. She was a retired adventurer who valued defensibility, so her tower was only accessible by an exterior wooden stair that entered on the second level of her tower. Unknown to all but her stonemasons, she built a secret basement along with a secret door that entered it. It has remained unlooted.

Much of the remaining tower is covered by moss that obscures the two arrow slits Ernalt built into the defensible basement as well as the secret door. The slits can be discovered as a normal secret door, while the secret door is only discovered on a 1 in 8. The basement contains:

Eight 50 gallon barrels of fresh water: amazingly still drinkable, but stale-tasting.

Four 50 gallon barrels of red wine: tasty and worth 300 gp each, but weighing 450 lbs. each.

Four 50 gallon barrels of salted fish: still good and worth 50 gp each, but weighing 350 lbs.

An open barrel containing 4 spears, 100 arrows, and two composite longbows.

A locked treasure chest containing 100 pp and 1,500 gp.

9. **UNSTABLE BRIDGE:** This stone bridge is unstable and collapses if more than 200 lbs. is placed upon it, dropping any into the water below atop the newly-dropped stones. This causes 1-3 hit points of damage and draws the attention of the **giant lizard** concealed in the thick mud and shallow water just south of the unstable bridge.

**Giant lizard:** (SZ: L; AC 5; MV 150 ft.; HD 3+1; HP 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA a to hit roll of 20 deals double damage; AL N)

10. **THE CLEMET HOUSE:** This house is in remarkably good condition, the best of all the remaining structures in Aberbach. The house has remained unlooted due to the efforts of two **smoke mephits** (named **Mezzit** and **Fezzit**) that served the Clemet family for generations. They wait atop the house in the old pigeon coup, invisible, and descend to confront any who attempt entry. They've been fearsome protectors over the past lonely



decades, but they are now quite tired of their obligation (to protect the house from intruders) and are searching for a way, anyway, out of it. They do not immediately attack approaching PCs. Instead Mezzit drops his invisibility to parlay with any who approach the house while Fezzit prepares his breath weapon if needed. If the PCs can figure out some way to satisfy the mephits that their job is done, they'll take the offer, even if it a rather flimsy one.

If players gain entry to the house, they'll find the skeletal remains of the Clemet family (all 5 members) huddled in the first room (upon the bodies are 3 gold rings worth 300 gp, and a **ring of protection +2**). There is much to salvage from the house, even if the Clemets were not as wealthy as they once were. In total there are 6 pieces of furniture worth 1,200 gp, 12 paintings worth 6,500 gp, a collection of flatware and silverware worth 600 gp, and salvageable rugs and tapestries worth 1,000 gp. As GM, you'll need to adjudicate the weight and encumbrance of this large group of items.

**Mezzit & Fezzit:** (SZ: M; AC 7; MV 120 ft., 150 ft. flying; HD 3; HP 19 &15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2, 1-2; SA breath weapon; AL NE)

10A. The sleeping quarters of the Clemet family contains 3 pieces of furniture worth 300 gp, 6 paintings worth 2,000 gp, and rugs, tapestries, and clothing worth 300 gp. Under the bed is a locked chest containing: 452 gp, 235 sp, a **longsword +1**, a suit of elven chain mail (elf-sized), and a small ivory box (worth 100 gp) containing 6 rings worth 450 gp, 12 sets of earrings worth 1,200 gp in total, and a **potion of healing**.

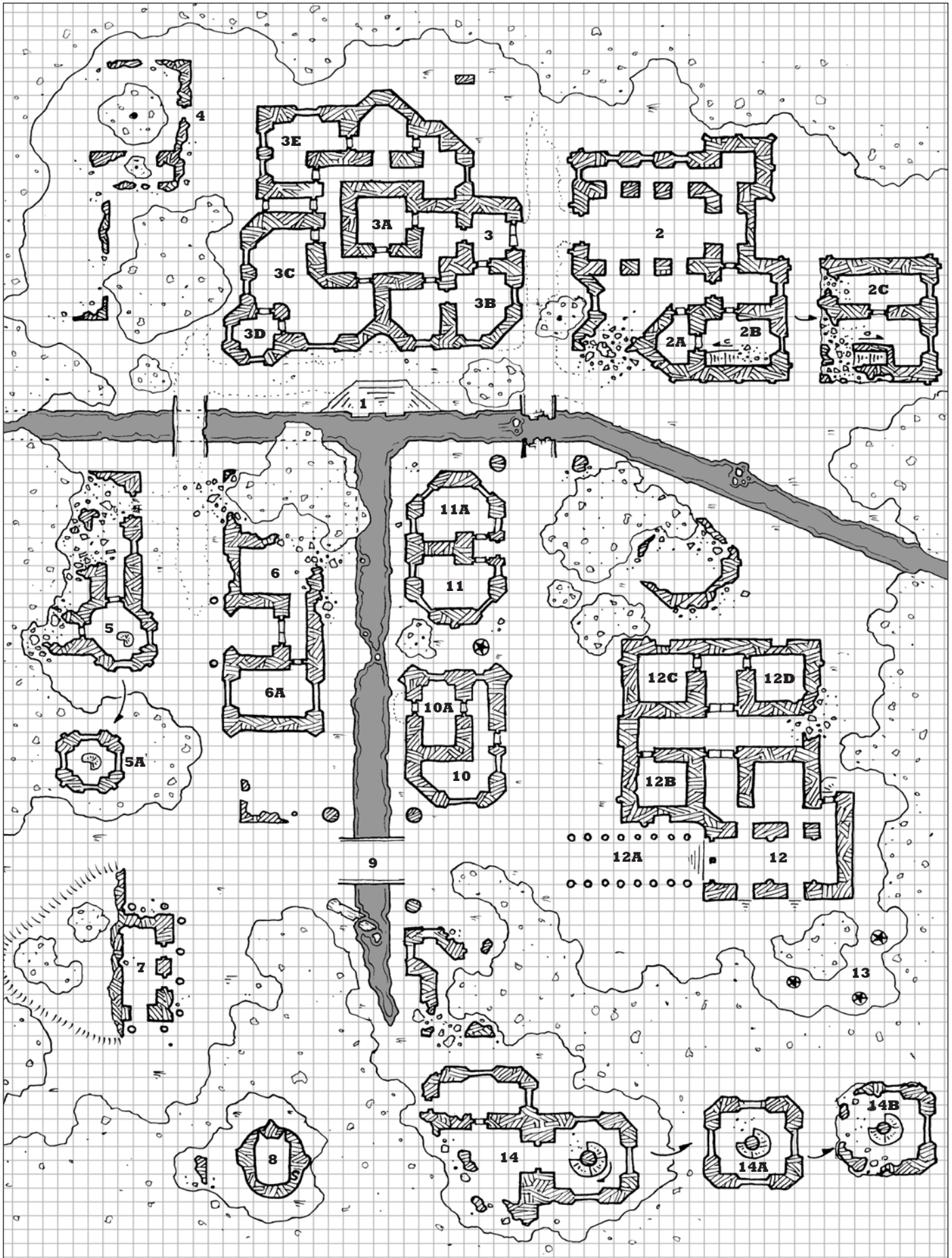
11. **ARMOT'S EXOTICS:** Wilhem Armot owned and ran this store, selling rare-wood furniture and finely-crafted housewares. The store was looted long ago, but a loose stone in the floor behind the counter (detect as concealed door) reveals a water-tight iron box. Within the box are two four-pound bricks of the finest hashish, each worth 4,000 gp if one can find a buyer.

11A. **EXOTICS STORAGE ROOM:** This structure is in decent shape, with a roof that has only a few holes. It was used to store the exotic imports displayed in the prior room. Almost all within has been looted away, except for a massive cabinet that covers the entire southern wall used to hold the housewares. If disassembled, the cabinet could be reassembled elsewhere for a fine price of 650 gp.



# THE RUINS OF ABERBACH

ONE SQUARE EQUALS 10 FEET



12. TEMPLE OF GRANDIN: The first temple erected in Aberbach, this small temple to Grandin (LG Goddess of Luck and Fertility) is now the last temple standing in Aberbach. It is in remarkably good shape (it's lucky, after all!) and it still has a roof that's actually keeping the water out. The holy statue of the goddess (formerly in the northern niche of the covered courtyard) was looted long ago, exposing a cavity in the floor now claimed by a nest of **fire beetles**.

**Fire beetles** (10): (SZ: S; AC 4; MV 120 ft.; HD 1+2; HP 10, 9, 8, 5 (x5), 4, 3; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; AL N).

12A. PERISTYLE: A double row of columns leads from the grounds up a grand stair to the covered courtyard where the temple ceremonies occurred. Worshippers would process through the southern row of columns in a snake-like motion, up the stairs, around the covered courtyard, pausing in front of the holy statue for a brief prayer, and then process outward, again via a snake-like movement through the northern row of columns. A clear path is still worn into the earth and the stones of the covered courtyard after so many years of daily use.

12B. PRIVATE PRAYER ROOM: The door to this room is solid stone, and locked. This doesn't mean the area is unlooted, however, as it's locked only because the wag who first found the key on the body of the high priestess thought it humorous to raise the hopes of any looters who followed in his footsteps. The room once contained a small solid gold statue of Grandin along with a ceremonial bed upon which fertility rites were practiced. The chamber is now empty, everything haven been taken.

12C. ACOLYTES ROOM: This room once housed three acolytes and their possessions. It has been fully looted.

12D. CHAMBER OF THE HIGH PRIESTESS: This was once the private chambers of the high priestess, and it too has been looted long ago. However a loose stone in the southern wall (detect as secret door) has remained overlooked: behind lies a purse with 135 pp, a second purse with 127 gp, a third purse with twenty-four 50 gp gems, and an **elixir of youth**.

13. GROVE OF STATUES: This small grove was once a public garden featuring four massive marble statues of a miner, a lumberjack, a gem cutter, and a merchant. Currently only three remain, the merchant statue having been looted only to fall apart between AREA 10 and AREA 11. Each statue is quite valuable (5,000 gp), but remarkably hard to move and demonstrably fragile.

14. TOWER OF THE ASTROLOGER: Aberbach was favored by the presence of a famous Astrologer (Doria the Seer) who drew daily crowds to hear her proclamations regarding the future. For many years Doria made good trade until about a week before the venting of the volcano. At that point she refused any guests and was only seen atop her tower peering into the great vastness above through her glass. The day before the eruption, Doria suddenly left Aberbach to parts unknown, taking most of her wealth with her. This caused quite a stir, and a few of her most-faithful followers left with her, but most remained, believing she had a vision to follow, but one that would result in her return: after all, she wasn't selling her prophecy.

14A. The stairwell leading from the ground floor to this area is blocked by a make-shift door which sticks, but opens with some effort. The windows on this level are still in place, and a single pane is cracked open above a bronze brazier (worth 50 gp but heavy) that's filled with old ash. A finely carved wooden bed (100 gp) covered with several blankets made of scrap cloth stands next to the brazier. Under the bed is a small chest containing the following: 11 pp, 121 gp, 53 sp, and five 50 gp gems.

14B. The top of Doria's tower has been converted into a summoning circle by what remains of **Darshee Silvertree**. She has so far been unsuccessful in all her entreaties, excepting for one wherein a quasit named **Grubu** the Hornless answered the call. A pile of bright red and yellow leaves is strewn about the top of the spiral staircase—they plan to set these afire when reaching the end of their current ceremony.

Depending on how quiet the PCs have been, Darshee and Grubu will either be in the midst of a summoning ceremony and subject to surprise or they'll have heard the PCs and taken what little cover remains on the tower to hide and observe. If they determine the PCs to be too formidable to assault, either from the heights of the tower or in closer quarters, they'll flee towards the Lake Farm to gather up the Children of Coyle as a defensive force and prepare there.

Darshee Silvertree is no longer truly alive: her dead body is animated by the will of the elder horror under Merehurst. This is slowly transforming her into something as yet undetermined, but currently she's lost all her hair, her skin and eyes have changed, and the first lines of the symbol of three overlapping triangles has appeared upon her forehead. She no longer casts spells as a normal magic user and instead has a pool of spells from which she chooses. She can cast any of her known 1st-level spells three times a day, and any of her known 2nd-level spells twice daily.

**Darshee Silvertree:** (Once-elven female magic-user ; AC 7; HD 4; HP 15; Dam 1-4+1; S9 I16 W13 D15 C16 CH15; AL CE) Possessions: dagger +1 (glows a crackling yellow if evil is within 50 feet), cloak of protection +1, gold and chrysoprase belt (2,500 gp), gold and chrysoprase cloak clasp (500 gp).

Magic user spell pool:

First: **detect magic, hold portal, identify, jump, magic missile** (two missiles), **push, read magic, spider climb**  
Second: **forget, invisibility, ray of enfeeblement, web, wizard lock**

**Grubu the Hornless, Quasit:** (SZ: S; AC 2; MV 150 ft.; HD 3; HP 18; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2, 1-2, 1-4; SA Dex loss on hit, polymorph self, fear, detect good and evil; SD 20% magic resistance, regenerate 1 hp per round; AL CE)

## THE LAKE FARM OF LEVEL COYLE

Lavel Coyel and Darshee Silvertree broke ground for their lake-side farm 16 years ago. They chose a place near the lake where they had an unobstructed view of the mainland, providing them the pleasure of watching the torches of Coombe twinkle against the sea during the night. It was a wise choice for other reasons as well.

The lake, which they renamed Silvertree Lake, is fed by a waterfall and it is the farthest boat-navigable point on the River Afonol. This meant that building materials were easily transported up from ruined Aberbach, and it didn't take too much time for a solid stone house to arise on the shore of the lake: Coyel was raised by a stonemason/carpenter and learned much of the trades before deciding upon the life of an adventurer. Over the years, the house expanded until it was a large residence, suitable for the 7 half-elven children the pair quickly had: two pairs of twins within three years was surely a blessing!

Such was not to be, for only about a week ago Lavel Coyel slew his entire family as they lay asleep in their beds. He then dragged the bodies, one by one, up to the mines. There the enchained horror took over the body of Darshee Silvertree, twisted the bodies of the eldest three children into three separate horrors, and raised

the four youngest children into the undead creatures known as Children of Coyle.

Coyle and Darsee built the farm from the mixed materials, resulting in the foundation and first three feet of the structure being stone, and the remainder trimmed logs, formed and fitted with care. The interior furnishings are also all hand-made and, although fully-functional, of no real value. The GM should assume that each room has furnishings appropriate for its function (ie. a bedroom with have beds, a night stand, and some sort of storage for clothing). Only items of note or with value are explicitly mentioned in the text.

## KEY TO THE LAKE FARM

1. SILVERTREE LAKE: A family of **nixies** (lead by **Nokker** and **Nikki**) recently settled in this surprisingly deep (90 ft.) lake about 8 months ago, planning to raise a family and start a nixie community. They were initially shy of the Coyle family, but eventually warmed to them given their strong elvish background. Initially there were some arguments regarding whether or not Lavel should rightly be their slave, but his promise of a small monthly supply of peridot assuaged their concerns and they have been friendly ever since. The nixies haven't noticed any unusual happenings at the farm as they're not due their next "gift" of peridot for a few more days.

If any of the PCs spend more than a turn or two upon the banks of the lake, one of the nixies investigates, expecting to find one of the Coyle family fishing. Once it becomes clear that the PCs are not members of the Coyle family, the scouting nixie returns to gather their family, seeking to enslave some humans to help with the "heavy lifting" required in building their new underwater home.

**Nokker & Nikki:** (SZ: S; AC 7; MV 60 ft., 120 ft. swimming; HD 1-4 HP; HP 4 & 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger), 1-3 (dart); SA powerful charm; SD 25% magic resistance; AL N)

**Nixies** (8): (SZ: S; AC 7; MV 60 ft., 120 ft. swimming; HD 1-4 HP; HP 3 (x3), 2 (x3), 1 (x2); #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger), 1-3 (dart); SA powerful charm; SD 25% magic resistance; AL N)

2. THE COPSE: This small copse of woods was frequently visited by Darsee. In the center of the copse, Coyle built a small bench for his wife, and there she would commune with the trees in the few daily moments she had free of responsibility. One of the young trees nearest the bench has gained a quasi-sentience, becoming semi-awake: a druid character will immediately recognize the tree for what it is and if continued daily meditation occurs at Darsee's bench, the tree will fully awaken as a young treant after an additional year of effort.
3. PORCH: The stone foundation of the house isn't continued here in wood, resulting in a stone semi-wall enclosing the area used by the family as a porch. Coyle carried pack after pack of gravel up from the river and placed it, creating a nice level area upon which the family's rustic external furniture stands. The small gate to the porch is latched, but easily opened.
4. BEDROOM: This room was shared by the two older children, Amon and Rumil, with one sleeping on the western wall and the other on the eastern. Both beds are soaked in blood and a trail of blood leads out of the room through the northern door to the playroom (AREA 5). The elder children enjoyed sleeping in "the open" in the elven way, and Coyle appreciated their apparent indifference to temperatures that he found uncomfortable as a sign of strength and toughness.
5. PLAY ROOM: During the day the little ones would play in this room. It is filled with two playpens, and hundreds of building

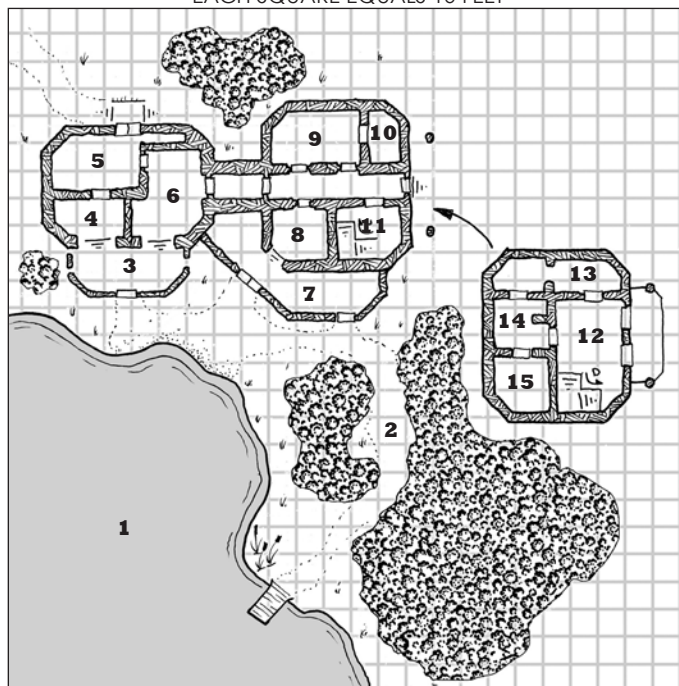
blocks Coyle carved by hand. Another trail of blood leads from the living room (AREA 6) through this room and out the door to the trail heading up to the mines as Coyle dragged his remaining family this way.

The doors leading out back of the house are unlocked and a well-worn trail leads away from the house up to the mines. Traces of blood remain on the trail, but much has been washed away by rain.

6. LIVING ROOM: Open to the porch (AREA 3) via few small steps the family spent much of their time together in this room when rain prevented them from spreading out between the two areas. It is populated by a brazier (used mostly by Coyle as the rest of the family was fairly indifferent to the cold) and several chairs along with a lushly embroidered sofa (worth 400 gp, but quite heavy).
7. DINING ROOM: The family took most of their meals in this long gangly room that was originally the porch of the cabin before it was expanded. Nothing here is out of the usual, but in a cupboard is a set of 16 pieces of fine flatware, valued at 25 gp per piece.
8. KITCHEN: The kitchen is a purely functional place featuring a clay oven in which quick flatbreads were cooked along with spears of chicken. Looting the larder results in 3 lbs. of spices (15 gp a pound), and 8 remarkably sharp and high quality kitchen knives (10 gp each).
9. BEDROOM: The eldest child, Ciridan, occupied this large room. The bed is soaked in blood, and a trail of blood leads out of the room and down the hall to the west towards the living room (AREA 6). In a standing closet a locked teak box holds 300 gp in uncut peridot which Ciridan was eventually going to learn how to cut gems upon, once his father built the necessary cutting tables and found the needed tools.
10. STORAGE: Excess or seasonal goods are stored in this area. A large cabinet system takes up the eastern wall in which are large amounts of dried food (enough to feed the family for three months). A smaller cabinet on the south wall holds several blankets, along with extra clothing and bedding.

## LAKE FARM OF LAVEL COYEL

EACH SQUARE EQUALS 10 FEET





11. LOWER LANDING: Linking the upper level of the house to the lower, this area is mostly empty except for a collection of artistic blown glass displayed upon a series of shelves. There are 12 pieces that range in value from 50 gp to 200 gp. All total, the value is 3, 500 gp. The floor is covered with blood, as the bodies of Darshee and the four youngest children were all dragged through this area.
12. READING ROOM: This large room is filled by a large reading table, upon which the entire family would gather to both individually read and to hear each other read. Next to the table is a bookshelf with 45 books (each worth 15 gp) filled with artistic stories and tales of high adventure. A trail of blood leads from both of the doors down the stairs where the bodies of the four youngest children were dragged from the bedroom (AREA 13) and Darshee's body from the master bedroom (AREA 14). Small footprints are found in the blood here and appear to go to the northern door (AREA 13). If listened at, shuffling noise can be heard coming from the bedroom (AREA 13).
13. BEDROOM: This wide and narrow room was the bedroom for the four youngest children, **Tilfa**, **Hilma**, **Gregor**, and **Halfir**. They still occupy this chamber in undeath, going through the motions of playing with their toys. The doors are closed.
- Children of Coyle (4):** (SZ: S; AC 8; MV 120 ft.; HD 3+3; HP 18, 15, 13, 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2); SA fear; SD immune to sleep, charm, hold, and cold; AL CE)
14. MASTER BEDROOM: Lavel Coyel and Darshee Silvertree claimed this room in the house for themselves. It is filled by a large bed now soaked with the blood of Darshee. A trail of which leads out of the room into the reading room (AREA 12) where Coyel dragged her downstairs, through the entire house, and eventually all the way to the mines.

A combination armor/weapon stand rests in the northeastern nook. It contains a suit of **chain mail +1**, a **shortsword +2**, a long bow, 40 arrows, 10 **arrows +1**, and a silvered longsword. Beneath the stand is a locked wooden chest containing 345 gp, 758 sp, a small mahogany box, and 1,200 gp worth of uncut peridot. In the box is Darshee's family's wedding gift to her: a gold necklace bejeweled with a six gems of different color (diamond, ruby, sapphire, emerald, amethyst, and topaz). Each of the gems are worth 1,000 gp each, but the necklace as a whole is worth 8,000 gp.

15. STUDY: This room is undamaged and bloodless, still in the state one would have found it before Coyel snapped. Within is a reading desk, a small bookshelf with a dozen books, and a large locked wooden chest. The books contain titles on forestry, animal husbandry, but are mostly artistic works in elvish, several of which are unsuitable in nature for the reading room. Each is worth 25 gp.

Within the chest is 189pp, 456 gp, a wand of magic missiles (44 charges), a **potion of water breathing**, a **potion of healing**, and a scroll with the following spells: **find familiar**, **jump**, and **read magic**. A water-tight, locked iron box is also within the chest containing Darshee's spellbook: **detect magic**, **hold portal**, **identify**, **jump**, **magic missile**, **push**, **read magic**, **spider climb**, **forget**, **invisibility**, **ray of enfeeblement**, **web**, **wizard lock**.

## THE MINE ON HIGH YNYSWEL

The mines from high mount Ynyswel provided a steady source of mid-grade peridot for many years, helping bring prosperity to the town of Aberbach down near the mouth of the Afonel. The stone here is very hard, and the output of a miner was measured in inches per week so the mine remained rather small even though it was quite profitable. The original mine was a pit mine on the surface, but once skilled miners entered the picture, the mine became a shafted mine. It started as a single gallery, but after time, moved into multiple galleries with two entrances.

Atop the surface a solid stone structure was built to store wood and tools and act as the office of the mine, but as the mine expanded and a second structure built, it was relegated to only wood. The second structure contained another storage area, an office, and a stone-covered area containing a large winch mechanism for a descending platform upon which miners and ore could descend and ore ascend.

When Lavel Coyel "re-opened" the mine, he fixed the winch and platform to make retrieving the ore easier for a lone worker. He also hammered in pitons throughout the winch shaft, allowing him to ascend and descend between the eastern galleries while he accessed the mine proper via the old entrance ladder near the woodshed (AREA 1).

## KEY TO THE MINE

1. WOODSHED: This stone outbuilding was the original mine headquarters, but it was repurposed into a storage shed for the wood needed within the mine. Its roof is still intact and walls sound, but the door has been ripped off by a bear based upon the marks upon it a few feet from the entrance. Lifting the old door up reveals a sapphire and gold necklace worth 1,500 gp deposited here decades ago in the dung of the bear that ripped off the door. The interior is a mess and it obviously once served as a den. It's currently empty and the remaining wood within is only usable for firewood, having lost its strength through exposure.

Next to the woodshed is the first shaft that descends down to the old mine (AREA 4) via an iron ladder hammered into the



stone. The ladder shows a lot of wear, but is still in remarkably good condition. The soil around the shaft bears the imprints of Lavel Coyel's comings and goings, with most going down the shaft here, but some show him passing by this shaft heading towards the building a little higher up.

2. STORAGE ROOM: As the mine expanded, more storage was needed and this part of the new stone building was set aside for that purpose. The room has obviously been looted, as there's no sense of order among the remaining items, mostly composed of old tools that need new handles and rope and rigging materials. Two picks seem to be in workable order with stout handles.
3. OFFICE: Lavel Coyel repurposed this room when he started working the mines. Using the old desk and table within the room he turned it into a processing chamber, where he'd break the larger chunks of ore containing peridot into smaller pieces, and eventually down to raw quality. About 1,000 gp worth of raw, uncut peridot is pushed into a small pile on the repurposed table along with the various tools used in this process.
4. OLD MINE: The original mine is now guarded by two **walking eyes**, all that remains of the eldest child of Lavel and Darshee. They eyes were placed here to give forewarning of approaching enemies. If the PCs are seen by the eyes (who are currently lodged into cracks in the walls and remaining still: 75% chance to be undetected), the Horror of Merehurst (AREA 9) is also made aware of them. The eyes attempt to surprise and repel intruders. The Horror will join combat in 5 rounds if either of the eyes are destroyed, seeking to attack a stronger party while weakened from a recent combat.

**Walking Eye (2):** (SZ: S; AC 8; MV 120 ft., 20 ft. climbing; HD 1+3; HP 9, 7; #AT 1; Dmg Special); SA cause light wound ray to 50 ft., surprise on 1-4; SD Surprised only on 1, 75% chance to remain undetected when still in shadows; AL CE)

5. UPPER GALLERY: The older gallery of the new part of the mine, the upper gallery is now covered in dimly glowing purple runes. Coyel has etched these into the walls, working his way downward to the lower gallery (AREA 7) where he's nearing completion. Any PC studying the runes for longer than 1 round must save versus petrification. A success means the PC blinks and looks away (floor or ceiling), while a failure means the PC is compelled to look another round with another subsequent save required.

If **detect magic** is cast upon the runes, they detect as extremely powerful magic, and the caster must save vs spells or be

stunned for 2-5 rounds. If either **read magic** or **detect magic** is cast upon the runes, they appear to flow and coalesce into a long diatribe about ancient prisons and long injustices being removed taking two rounds to completely understand. During this period, the viewer doesn't have to make saving throws.

All of the runes in the mine can be excised or destroyed with a pick or other suitable tool at the rate of one rune per hour. After a rune is excised, the Horror (AREA 9) immediately charges towards this area arriving in 3-6 rounds. Any incised rune would need to be recut by Lavel Coyel (AREA 9).

6. MIDDLE GALLERY: The middle gallery is much like the upper gallery (AREA 5) excepting that the runes are ebon and ruby in color. Any PC studying the runes for longer than 1 round must save versus poison or suffer a -1 on all rolls due nausea for 1 turn. A read magic in this area continues the story, but this time the reader learns that the authorial voice refers to itself as "*Glezigth: the World Destroyer.*"
7. LOWER LANDING: This area, like the preceding two is covered in runes, the ones here glow a golden color, but have no ill effects upon viewers other than causing a sense of unease and mild fear. **Detect magic** or **read magic** in this area assaults the reader with a save vs death magic: a failed save renders him unconscious for 1-4 hours. If the PCs do not attempt to be quiet here (for instance, they try to force the door into AREA 8), the horror from AREA 9 will approach and attack within 2-5 rounds.
8. DEEP STORAGE: The door to this area is stuck, requiring a successful open doors check. Inside is a store of wood transported down the elevator and kept here for quick access along with a grouping of 8 miner's tools (picks, shovels, and helmets upon which candles can be placed).
9. TUNNELS OF THE HORROR: The runes here glow a silver color, and pulsate as if to the rhythm of two off-beat hearts, and the runes here cannot even be read by **detect magic**, a **read magic**, or even a **comprehend languages** for that matter, having grown so foreign, so alien, that even magic cannot breach the gap. **Lavel Coyel** has been working here for days on end and is nearing the last of his strength. He has only 4 hours of work left to free the eld horror beneath (4 more runes to inscribe), but the issue has been cut to close to the chase: every hour he has a 50% chance of losing 1 hit point, and with only two points left, there's a chance he won't succeed. Coyel will not attack or defend himself: he lives only to carve runes. A cure disease cast upon him has a 50% chance to cure his illness, while an exorcise spell immediately sets him free.

**The Horror of Merehurst:** (SZ: M; AC 6; MV 90 ft., 20 ft. climbing; HD 4+1; HP 21; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10); SA drain WIS and INT; SD Surprised only on 1; AL CE)

**Lavel Coyle (F6):** (SZ: M; AC 10; MV 120 ft.; HD 6; HP 2 (max 54); #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (pick); AL CE (once NG))

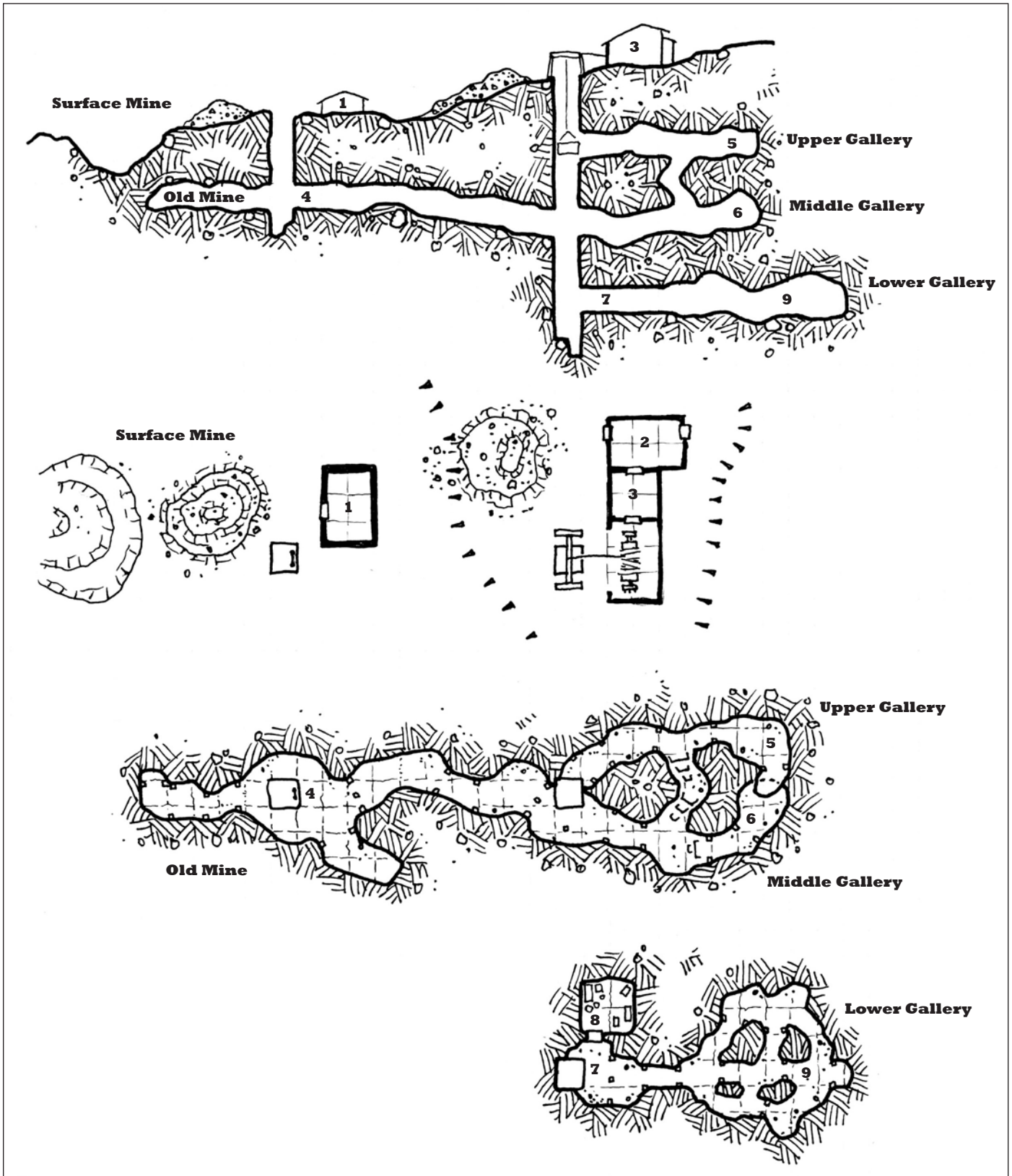
## POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

There are several possible outcomes to The Horror of Merehurst. The most-likely is that the PCs manage to sabotage the rites that unchain the eld horror within the island, ensuring that it does not rise. This can happen even if the party "fails" as Coyle may prove to not have enough health left to finish carving his runes. If Coyle succeeds, a great elder evil is freed from its binding and the volcano on Merehurst explodes as it rises. The creature shunts himself off towards the Abyss, where it aims to claim as many layers as its own and again make the demons (and then the devils, and then the daemons) again submit to their elder masters.

## HERE ENDS THE HORROR OF MEREHURST

# THE MINE ON HIGH YNYSWEL

ONE SQUARE EQUALS 10 FEET



## APPENDIX A: NEW MONSTERS

### CHILDREN OF COYLE

SIZE: Small (3-4 ft. tall)  
MOVE: 120 ft.  
ARMOR CLASS: 8  
HIT DICE: 3+3  
ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE: 1-2  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Fear  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: None  
RARITY: Very rare  
NO. ENCOUNTERED: 4  
LAIR PROBABILITY: None  
TREASURE: None  
INTELLIGENCE: Semi  
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil  
LEVEL/X.P.: 3 / 105 + 3/hp

*General information:* The four Children of Coyle are nearly-mindless puppets controlled by the eld horror lurking under Merehurst. They appear much as they did in life, but their glowing red eyes betray their unholy nature. They typically carry small tokens of their prior life, such as stuffed animals or other toys. Those looking into their eyes experience the terror and fear they felt when their father killed them, and all who do such must save vs spells or flee for 2-5 rounds. Those who save are only immune to the fear for 2-5 rounds before it creeps back upon them necessitating another save. The fear only ends with two successful saves or after the sufferer experiences a cumulative turn of it.

The Children are turned as ghouls and are immune to sleep, charm, hold, and cold-based attacks.

*Physical description:* The Children appear as zombie-like children, albeit in a state of only slight decomposition.

### THE HORROR OF MEREHURST

SIZE: Medium (6 ft. long)  
MOVE: 90 ft., 20 ft. climbing  
ARMOR CLASS: 6  
HIT DICE: 4+1  
ATTACKS: 1



DAMAGE: 1-10  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Attribute drain  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Surprised only on 1  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: None  
RARITY: Unique  
NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1  
LAIR PROBABILITY: None  
TREASURE: None  
INTELLIGENCE: Low  
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil  
LEVEL/X.P.: 4 / 160 + 3/hp

*General information:* The Horror is a guardian made from the flesh to two corpses. Sent from an otherworldly eld horror, it guards the one whose work will eventually break the chains of its master. It attacks with a strange simultaneous claw/bite attack and via its gaze. Once per round it fixes two of its eyes upon a target, who must save vs spells or be drained 1-3 points of INT and WIS. The drain is temporary (regained at 1 point per day of rest), but any creature that is drained down to 0 in either INT or WIS becomes a mindless servitor of the Horror, doing as telepathically commanded. Since it has four eyes, it can target two separate victims in a single round, but it cannot "double up" on a single target. Any mindless servitors descend into comas if the Horror is destroyed, but start to regain their lost abilities as above.

*Physical description:* The Horror is just that, a travesty of flesh transformed from two corpses. All that remain of untouched from the source flesh are their eyes, swollen to the size of grapefruit and attached to a mouthless "head" on flexible protrusions. The "rear" end of the horror is its mouth, tucked between two strong pinchers that arc upwards not unlike a scorpion's tail. The Horror is propelled forward on six flexible protrusions tipped by latching nails.

### UNDEAD RAT, GHOULRAT

SIZE: Small (3 ft. long)  
MOVE: 120 ft., 60 ft. swimming  
ARMOR CLASS: 7  
HIT DICE: 2  
ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE: 1-4  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Disease (5%), paralysis (2-8 turns)  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: None  
RARITY: Very rare  
NO. ENCOUNTERED: 2-20  
LAIR PROBABILITY: None  
TREASURE: None  
INTELLIGENCE: Semi  
ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil  
LEVEL/X.P.: 2 / 40 + 1/hp

*General information:* Ghoulrats are developed undead from zombirats who managed to slay and eat a man-sized opponent of average intelligence or greater. They add the flesh of the corpse to their own, transforming into a ghoulrat the next day. They are semi-intelligent and fond of group tactics. Their bite has a chance of causing disease (5%) as well as paralyzing as does ghoul, but only for 2-8 turns. They share the ghoul's immunity to sleep and charm spells. If they consume 10 man-sized opponent of average intelligence or greater they transform into the final type of undead giant rat, the wightrat.

*Physical description:* Ghoulrats look like emaciated hairless giant rats with eyes that flash emerald green when exposed to light.

### UNDEAD RAT, SKELIRATS

SIZE: Small (3 ft. long)  
MOVE: 120 ft.  
ARMOR CLASS: 7  
HIT DICE: 1

ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE: 1-3  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: Disease (5%)  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: None  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: None  
 RARITY: Very rare  
 NO. ENCOUNTERED: 2-20  
 LAIR PROBABILITY: None  
 TREASURE: None  
 INTELLIGENCE: None  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral  
 LEVEL/X.P.: 1 / 10 + 1/hp

*General information:* Skelirats are the animated remains of giant rats. They are mindless, attacking anything that moves. If they manage to kill a large enough animal (roughly the size of a medium-sized dog or larger) they add some of the creature's flesh to their own and transform into a zombirat the next day. They turn as skeletons.

*Physical description:* Skelirats look like skeletal giant rats.

### UNDEAD RAT, WIGHTRATS

SIZE: Small (3 ft. long)  
 MOVE: 120 ft., 60 ft. swimming.  
 ARMOR CLASS: 6  
 HIT DICE: 2+2  
 ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE: 1-4  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: Disease (5%), energy drain  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: None  
 RARITY: Very rare  
 NO. ENCOUNTERED: 2-20  
 LAIR PROBABILITY: None  
 TREASURE: None  
 INTELLIGENCE: Low  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil  
 LEVEL/X.P.: 3 / 110 + 2/hp

*General information:* The final stage of undead rat development, wightrats live only to kill and raise their victims as zombies. The bite



of a wightrat has a chance to cause disease, but more fearsomely it may drain an energy level if the victim fails a save against death magic. Any human drained of life energy rises as a zombie under the control of the wightrat. Wightrats are turned as ghouls, and are immune to sleep, charm, hold, and cold-based attacks.

*Physical description:* Wightrats look like hairless giant rats with eyes that permanently glow ruby red.

### UNDEAD RAT, ZOMBIRATS

SIZE: Small (3 ft. long)  
 MOVE: 90 ft., 30 ft. swimming  
 ARMOR CLASS: 7  
 HIT DICE: 1+2  
 ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE: 1-4  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: Disease (10%)  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: None  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: None  
 RARITY: Very rare  
 NO. ENCOUNTERED: 2-20  
 LAIR PROBABILITY: None  
 TREASURE: None  
 INTELLIGENCE: Animal  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral  
 LEVEL/X.P.: 2 / 30 + 1/hp

*General information:* Zombirats are developed undead from skelirats who managed to slay and eat some local animals. Zombirats have a very primitive sort of intelligence (akin to dogs) and are capable of using group tactics against prey. They seek out intelligence flesh to consume to add to their own, transforming into ghoulrats. Just a single human-sized corpse is enough to transform 10 zombirats into ghoulrats. Zombirats turn as zombies.

*Physical description:* Zombirats look like zombified giant rats.

### WALKING EYE

SIZE: Small (1-2 ft. tall)  
 MOVE: 120 ft., 20 ft. climbing  
 ARMOR CLASS: 8  
 HIT DICE: 1+3  
 ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE: Special  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: Cause light wounds ray  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: None  
 RARITY: Very rare  
 NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-2  
 LAIR PROBABILITY: None  
 TREASURE: None  
 INTELLIGENCE: Low  
 ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil  
 LEVEL/X.P.: 2 / 40 + 1/hp

*General information:* Walking eyes were created by the eld horror lurking under Merehurst as scouts and lesser guards: whatever they see, the horror of Merehurst sees. Walking eyes attack with a cause light wounds ray with a range of 50 ft. They are surprised only on a 1 and they surprise on a 1-4. When unmoving and in shadows, they have a 75% chance to remain undetected.

*Physical description:* A walking eye is composed of a single half-elfen eye dangling from six-legged, crustacean-like body.

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## The Horror of Merehurst

The island of Merehurst was once a bustling center for trade. But this was not to last, for in one single deadly night sixty years ago all the people and the animals of the town died - collapsing where they stood. The neighboring villagers of Coombe claimed that the miners dug too deeply into Ynyswel and the spirit of the isle was offended. The island gained a fearsome reputation and only the bravest would dare set foot upon its forested grounds.

Yesterday strange lights were seen in the sky over the island and Ynyswel started smoking. The villagers can wait no longer. Brave adventurers must be found who are willing to investigate the Isle of Merehurst to either appease or oppose what lies behind the latest mysterious activities.

If you enjoy this adventure, look for future releases in the **Advanced Adventures** line from Expeditionary Retreat Press.



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# Advanced Adventures

## The Horror of Merehurst

By Joseph Browning



An OSRIC™ module designed for  
6-10 adventurers of FIRST LEVEL

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