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Shadow Over Pendleton



By Geoff Gander

Shadow Over Pendleton

A Classic D&D adventure for 3 to 5 characters, levels 3 to 5

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ABOUT THIS ADVENTURE

Shadow Over Pendleton was written in 2000 as a side adventure for the author's campaign, which was set in the world of Mystara™; it was revised substantially for a convention in 2005. Additional information has been provided to make this adventure easier to insert into any campaign. The encounters are structured such that a party of 3–5 characters of levels 3–5 (for a total party level of 15) should be able to complete this adventure, yet find it challenging. It is highly recommended that the party include a cleric, or have access to some form of healing.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is intended to be incidental to a larger campaign, and assumes that the PCs are en route to Darokin City in search of adventure. This element, however, is not essential to the plot; the PCs merely have to be going somewhere else. As such, the DM may wish to alter references to place names, but the village of Pendleton and the surrounding region may be inserted easily into any campaign world.

The village of Pendleton (population: 108) is normally a quiet place, named after Pentel, who settled in this region with his family about 400 years ago. Over the years, more people came to till the fertile soils of the region, and later still commerce arose as the first merchant caravans between Darokin City and Dolos began using the village as a safe rest stop. Pendleton (as the place became known) was also a place to visit for healing (both physical and spiritual), because of the presence of Cranstal Abbey, which was built roughly 300 years ago, to the north of the village. Times were good, and before long Pendleton was a prosperous town.

The town's fortunes turned for the worse over 100 years ago, when the abbey was taken over by a new abbot. This abbot, who claimed to be a refugee fleeing persecution in Glantri, brought with him strange lore and dark secrets,

and was in fact a cultist of the Outer Beings, a group of powerful entities hideous to imagine, who had long ago been imprisoned in other dimensions by even greater powers. He had been led to Cranstal Abbey by his masters to excavate an ancient temple, which lay buried beneath the abbey, in order to further their own plans. The abbot corrupted the senior clerics, and began recruiting young men from Pendleton to serve as sacrifices as well as initiates, whom he put to work excavating the temple. All the while the townsfolk thought their sons were kept in seclusion because of their religious studies, and pilgrims continued to come to the abbey for healing, never questioning its source. A malaise had spread over the lands surrounding Cranstal Abbey and Pendleton, and some people began to speak of the region as blighted in some way. Caravans began to stop in the town less frequently.

Events came to a head a few years after the new abbot's arrival, when one young cleric uncovered the truth behind the abbot's actions, and sought to prevent his master from succeeding in his mad quest. He started a fire, which soon blazed out of control, destroying Cranstal Abbey and killing everyone inside it. Although the influence of the Outer Beings had been lifted, Pendleton's doom was sealed. With the destruction of the abbey those who sought healing went elsewhere, and the caravan traffic never really picked up again. As a result, people began to leave the town for brighter futures elsewhere, a process that has continued until the present day. Now, Pendleton is a shadow of its former self, its people eking out a living from woodcutting, raising livestock (the fields are not as productive as they once were), and selling simple goods to the few caravans that still stop here.

A few hours before the PCs' arrival, a small horde of goblins attacked the village, doing considerable damage and abducting a large number of villagers. Having taken what they wanted, the goblins returned to their lair beneath the ruined abbey, which they

discovered several years ago. The goblins have attacked Pendleton and other villages before, but never in such an organised fashion. The reason for the change in behaviour is that the goblins' shaman, a worshiper of the blasphemous Outer Beings, has been inspired by his obscene masters to seek out the buried temple and continue the work started over a century ago. Driven mad by dreams of glory, the shaman has incited the goblins to capture as many villagers as possible, and force them to excavate the temple.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The following text may be read aloud, or paraphrased, to introduce the players to the adventure.

Darokin City! The greatest mercantile city of the Streef River, heart of the Republic of Darokin, and more importantly, the city where you hope to land your next job as caravan guards. Some friends back in Selenica told you that new trade routes were being opened up out west, through country rife with bandits, orcs, and less savoury inhabitants—and the city was the best place to get in on the action. So here you are, a day out of Dolos, looking forward to a quiet trip up the road to the capital.

It seems things are not so promising for everyone. Up ahead you see pillars of smoke—far too much to come from ordinary wood fires. Rounding a bend in the road, you see the smoke's source—a burned village! Although there is no sign of fighting still underway, the smouldering ruins, slaughtered livestock in the fields, and wandering, dazed villagers are proof that it happened recently.

The PCs should investigate, and try to help the villagers; the DM may wish to describe scenes of injured villagers trying to dig through the debris of collapsed homes for their loved ones, extracting burned bodies from ruins, and putting out the last remnants of the fires if the players make no move to help. Some of the

What the shaman does not know is that the temple, due to its very nature, has weakened the laws of reality where it is located, and that any large ceremony honouring the Outer Beings might be enough to allow them to reach out from their prison dimensions and influence the world directly—something that will likely destroy the goblins and much of the surrounding countryside. Of course, the Outer Beings hope this will come to pass; the goblins are simply tools to bring them one step closer to freedom, just as the abbot was.

villagers may even ask, or beg, the PCs to help them. If the PCs offer to help without prompting, award each of them a bonus of 100 experience points at the end of the adventure. In addition, the villagers will be so grateful that they will offer the PCs free room and board at the inn as long as they stay.

Once the DM has determined that the PCs have helped out enough, they are approached by the village headman, Thomas Thurlowe. Thomas thanks them on behalf of his people, and tells them what happened. The DM can describe the attack outlined above. Thomas also mentions that nine villagers— young men for the most part—were abducted by the raiders, and 11 more were killed. The villagers managed to kill six of the goblins—their bodies have already been burned. If asked about the goblins (e.g., where their lair might be), Thomas will respond that, although the attacks always come out of the north, from the Darkwoods, he does not know where they live exactly. At that remark, the PCs will hear someone muttering about the “old troubles” coming back.

If asked about the “old troubles,” Thomas and most of the villagers will be evasive, muttering about how unwise it is to talk about such things and tempt their return. One older man, Col, will step forward and offer to tell the PCs what he knows:

"I can't say as I can speak for everyone here, but if ye want te know about the 'old troubles', then ye should learn. The Immortals willing, mayhap as ye'll be the ones te put a stop to it.

"I heard tell of it meself as a young lad from old Adela up the trail. She was old even then, I tell ye! I remember her tellin' me, 'Col, don't ye be goin' in the Darkwoods, for that's up Cranstal way! That's where the old troubles started when I was young! People disappearin', strange noises in the night, an' thet chantin' at Midwinter . . . there's evil in them woods, here afore Pentel built his hall, afore the time of the old Darokin kings. It's stronger 'n' any of us. Why do ye think no orc is seen hereabouts? They know, I tell ye, they know. Ye just stay here an' don't go forth—the trouble ended last time on its own, mayhap it'll do so agin.'

"I didn't believe her, mind; none of us did. Crazy old woman, prob'ly older 'n' she ought to be, livin' close te the woods like she does. Funny that her house never got attacked, though."

If asked about Adela, one of the villagers will say the following:

"Adela, now, she's the wise woman an' healer 'round here—the oldest soul in these parts, as far as I know. Can't say as I know how old she really is, but she says as she remembers when the republic came te be, an' that's a good seventy years gone. Long as I can remember she's lived up the trail by herself, near them woods. Rarely comes te town, 'cept te heal someone or give some potion or charm te one of the ladies. Sometimes she gets some lad te go up her

way an' cut some wood, or some girl te gather herbs or do some gardenin'—always pays 'em, mind, with what she makes or with some old coins. Good enough sort, I s'pose; she's saved lots of folks and brought many babes into the world. Mayhap it's true that she knows some of the old ways, what folk believed many years gone. If ye want te know about local lore, she's the one te see."

Knowing that the PCs are adventurers, and hoping that they have at least some sympathy for his people, Thomas will ask them if they are willing to rescue the abducted villagers, if they are still alive. He does not offer a reward (again, he hopes to appeal to the PCs' good natures, because Pendleton has very little money), but he is prepared to offer each PC 20 gp of his own money should they ask about payment. The villagers will also do their best to provide the PCs with provisions if asked—Pendleton's only inn, The Coach House, survived the raid, and the innkeeper will be happy to provide food, wine, or any other basics. The village blacksmith will also offer to repair weapons and re-shoe horses.

Assuming the PCs agree to undertake this mission, they should, after seeing the destruction and hearing what the villagers have to say, be interested in visiting Adela to learn more—ideally in the hopes of gaining enough information to track down the goblins. Anyone in Pendleton can give the PCs directions to Adela's home. She lives further up the trail, roughly a half hour's walk to the north. If the time is evening or late afternoon, the PCs will be advised to spend the night in Pendleton; the Darkwoods, and the lands around it, are thought to be haunted by restless spirits who will steal the souls of any trespasser they can catch. No one will force the matter, however, should the PCs insist on embarking right away.

THE DARKWOODS

The Darkwoods, so named because the trees are tall and grow close to each other, is a sinister-looking place that few locals will visit after dark. Legends abound with tales of horrific monsters lurking in the forest's depths, preying on anyone foolish enough to spend the night there. Although the only monsters living in the forest today are the goblins, the Darkwoods were home, before the founding of Pendleton, to a reclusive clan who worshipped the Outer Beings. Shortly before the first settlers arrived in the area, the Darokinian king at that time, Ansel III ("the Soldier"), ordered that it be pacified so that it could be settled. The clan fought fiercely, but was annihilated by the Darokinian army. The forest, always a gloomy place, took on a more forbidding aspect among the settlers, once fanciful tales of the battles and the clan began to spread. A series of deaths over the following years (the result of sporadic banditry, unexplained hunting accidents, and run-ins with wildlife) convinced many settlers that the clan had used evil magic to return from the dead and take up residence in their forest home once more, while others were certain that some of the clan had escaped the army.

Over the years, even these stories became forgotten, and the people living in the area simply thought that the Darkwoods was an evil forest. The unfortunate fate of Cranstal Abbey only served to reinforce this notion, as people saw it as retribution for trying to build too strong a presence too close to the forest. Now, the only people who live near the Dark Woods are Adela Marlin, and her assistant, Soranna.

Adela's stone cottage is small, and set back from the trail. The land here is slightly hilly, becoming more so towards the Darkwoods proper, which lie further to the north, but several stands of trees are nearby. The cottage sits at the end of a narrow path, bounded on both sides by herb gardens. Clearly visible on the front door is a carving of several strange-looking runes within a circle. The runes, if examined, will prove to be unlike anything



seen before. They are magical, and any spellcaster will get the impression that they signify protection, and the warding off of unwholesome influences.

Should they decide to knock on the door, Soranna, a young, dark-haired girl from Pendleton who is training to be a wise woman—and Adela's replacement after her death—will greet the PCs cautiously. She will relax considerably if the PCs tell her why they are there, but will still watch them closely. The PCs will be led through the cramped sitting room to the back of the cottage, which serves as both a kitchen and bedroom for the two women.

The rich scents of many dried herbs greet you as you enter this moderately sized room in the cottage. In the middle of the room is a sturdy iron wood stove, and to your left the walls are covered with shelves and cupboards. To your right are two simple, small beds and a washstand. Overhead, cured meat and dried flowers and spices hang from the rafters.

Your attention is drawn to a small, old woman sitting in a chair by the stove, dressed in a plain dress and shawl, sipping a cup of tea.

Seeing you, she quietly places her cup in her lap, and regards you evenly.

"Ye come te ask about the goblins and their ways, do ye?", she asks.

The PCs might be caught off guard that Adela knows why they are here, but it should be clear that she is willing to help them. Assuming the PCs confirm her suspicions, the DM may read the following, or paraphrase:

"Well, p'raps 'tis time someone went up an' did things right, fer once. The goblins live north o' here, near where Cranstal Abbey once stood. Always, when they came down te rob us, they took prisoners—an' not a one of 'em ever came back, I tell ye! There's them that says they take only the young an' strong fer slavery, workin' 'em 'til death, but I knew some that say they do other things with 'em—things that ought not te be said."

If asked about those unmentionable stories, or the "old troubles" mentioned by the villagers, Adela will look pensive for a moment, as though she was choosing her words carefully, and say the following (the DM can paraphrase if desired):

"'Tis said that in the old days, afore Pentel came te these lands and settled 'em in the name o' the ol' king, there were folk livin' in the Darkwoods. They wouldn't accept the king, an' so he sent his army an' killed 'em all, they say. That would have been the end o' it, but for the stories that came out.

"They say the forest folk worshipped monsters, that demanded bloody sacrifices an' evil rituals, acts so evil that no one would write 'em down. These monsters were happy so long as the rituals were kept, but they say the woods got darker after the evil folk were killed an' there was no one to worship them—people disappeared, an' worse things. So no one ever went into the woods after dark.

Even when the abbey was around, people left the forest alone, and times were good, they say.

"Things got bad when I was a girl. People who went near the woods disappeared, an' were found later all cut up, like some beast had eaten 'em. An' there were noises in the woods at night, like somethin' bein' dragged through mud, an' whistlin' sounds, too. There's some that say the ghosts o' the forest folk, or even the monsters they worshipped, did it. Others said it was the priests that started it. Wasn't a soul who'd tell me what the priests did, but I listened when they spoke in low voices. I think the priests poked their noses where they oughtn't te have done, an' mayhap they found an ol' forest folk ritual or somesuch. There's evil in the abbey ruins, I tell ye."

If the party asks Adela about the abbey, she can tell them this (or the DM may paraphrase):

"The abbey? Mmmm . . . hardly anyone 'round who'd as say somethin' good about it! I remember, when I was a girl, how it was when the abbey was still 'round. 'Twas a queer place. Weren't none who'd go there on their own. I heard tell that the place weren't right—'twas too quiet, no birds, no animals about, save for the chantin' o' the priests who lived there. An' they say it weren't normal chantin'—the words didn't make no sense, an' many who'd heard it got scared.

"But the priests never hurt a one o' us. There was one priest who came down te the village now an' then, te get food an' suchlike, an' te recruit new boys every year. He always wore a big, black cloak—not a fancy trapping on him. I only seen him but a couple o' times, but every time he never said a word te anyone. All quiet-like he came in an' bought what he needed, and left without a word. But always, always I remember a couple o' things about him—he always had a funny

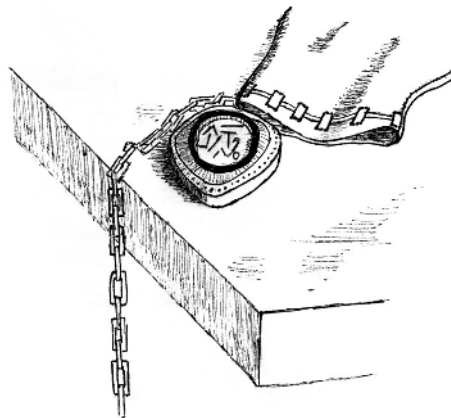
DARKWOODS WILDERNESS ENCOUNTER TABLE

1-2	Random forest animal. The DM should roll 1d6: 1-2: 1d4 rabbits (AC 5, HD ½, hp 1 each, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1 bite, D 1, Save NM, ML 5, AL N) 3-4: 1d2 raccoons (AC 7, HD 1, hp 2 each, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 bite, D 1d3, Save NM, ML 5, AL N) 5-6: 1d2 deer (AC 7, HD 2, hp 6 each, MV 240' (80'), #AT 1 gore, D 1d4, Save F1, ML 5, AL N) Animals will try to avoid the PCs if possible. PCs may try to kill them for meat.
3	Black Bear (AC 8, HD 5, hp 35, MV 120' (40'), #AT 2 claw/1 bite, D 1d8/1d8 or 1d10, Save F4, ML 10, AL N). The bear is foraging, and will try to avoid the PCs if possible, but an unfavourable reaction roll, or hostile behaviour on the part of the PCs, could provoke it to attack.
4	1d4 Giant Weasels (AC 7, HD 4+4, hp 25 each, MV 150' (50'), #AT 1 bite, D 2d4, Save F3, ML 8, AL N). The weasels are looking for easy prey, and will attack the PCs if they pass a morale check, or if the PCs appear to be wounded. There is a 25% chance that the weasels' lair is nearby. If so, an additional 1d6 weasels will be there, as well as 1d8 young (who will not fight), and possibly some treasure. In the latter case, DMs should roll under Treasure Type "V".
5	2d4 Giant Ants (AC 3, HD 4*, hp 25 each, MV 180' (60'), #AT 1 bite, D 2d6, Save F2, ML 7, AL N). The ants are foraging, but will attack the PCs if encountered. There is a 25% that the ants' nest will be nearby, where 4d6 giant ants will be present. If the PCs manage to search the nest, the DM should roll under Treasure Type "U".
6	2d4 Goblins (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4 each, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C). These goblins are scouting the lands around their lair. They will attack the PCs on sight, firing a volley of arrows before closing in with their swords and axes. Because of the gloominess of the Darkwoods, the goblins suffer no attack roll penalties if encountered during the day. Should the battle go against the goblins, they will try to retreat to their lair and raise an alarm. They have no treasure.

smell, didn't smell good, like meat that's gone off. An' he also shuffled a bit wherever he went. He never showed his skin, neither—his hood was too low drawn, an' his hands were always covered with bandages o' a sort.

"Those boys who went up te the abbey, they never came back, once the priest chose 'em. I remember it well, 'twas always Midwinter, on the longest night that he came te see us. Walked into the centre o' the village, an' waited. The boys'd come out, an' he'd jest choose, an' they jest went back with him, an' the families got some gold coins for their troubles. All that ended, once the abbey burned down."

Adela can tell the PCs very little about the fire, as she was only a young girl at the time, and remembers little of the incident. All she can say is that the fire burned so brightly that the skies around Pendleton were lit with red that night.

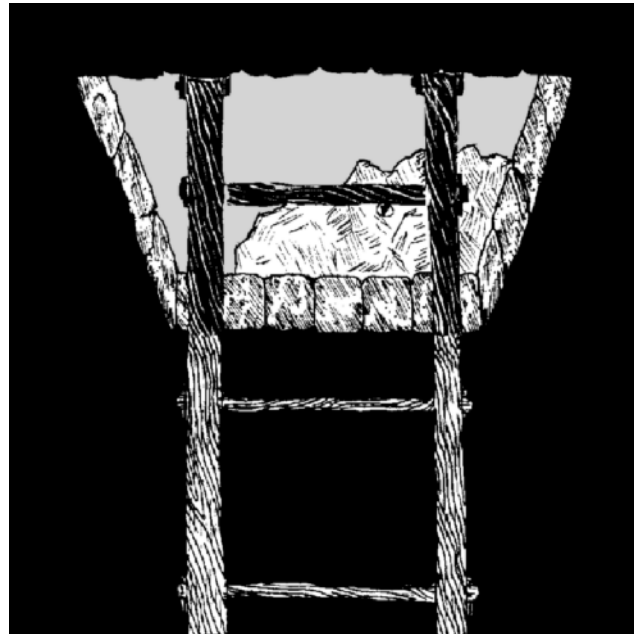


Regardless of what the PCs ask Adela, it should become clear that the goblins have gone to the abbey, and that the party must follow them there. If the PCs ask Adela for directions to the abbey, she will provide them (the journey time to the abbey will be reduced by one-quarter). Just before they leave, Adela will

retrieve a leather bundle from one of the cupboards. Adela tells the PCs that, although ancient evils are said to lurk in the Darkwoods, there are protections against them, and sends them on their way. The bundle contains an old sword (a *baneblade*) and two amulets (*amulets of protection* vs. *Outer Powers*). Observant PCs (those who make a halved Intelligence check) will notice that the symbol on the amulets is the same as the inscription on Adela's door. If asked about the items, Adela will only say that she found them when she was much younger, and discovered on her own that they offered protection against the evils of the forest.

The ruins of Cranstal Abbey are roughly six miles north of Adela's cottage, following a narrow trail that becomes heavily overgrown. During the journey to the abbey, the DM should roll for wilderness encounters as per the standard rules. Whenever a 1 is rolled, the table on the preceding page should be consulted to determine what sort of encounter occurs.

Once the PCs have traveled far enough, or once the DM has determined that enough time has passed, the PCs will arrive at the ruins. There is not much to see—none of the walls are more than three feet in height, and the interior is heavily overgrown. PCs with tracking skills should be able to track the goblins to an area that is filled with heaps of freshly cut stone (a dwarf, or a PC with the mining skill, will be able to determine this). Concealed behind one



rubble pile is a rusted metal plate, which covers a wooden ladder that leads down into darkness. The goblins have never been tracked to their lair, and therefore see no need to hide the entrance.

If the PCs search the ruins, they can find a dagger of similar make to the sword provided by Adela (a *baneblade*), and a small cluster of warm quartz-like crystals (*evilbane essence*). An adventuring party that knew about the Outer Beings sought, and failed, to locate and destroy the buried temple, leaving both of these items behind.

BENEATH THE ABBEY

Unless otherwise specified, the walls, floors, and ceilings of the catacombs are of dressed stone, having been constructed at the same time as the abbey, and all rooms and tunnels have seven-foot ceilings. When it was used by the clerics, this level was well lit, but the goblins have no need of bright lighting; as a result, the PCs will find many rusted, empty wall sconces throughout the cellar portion of this complex.

Despite the goblins' best efforts, they have not managed to keep their lair free of the occasional pest—the DM should roll for random encounters as per the standard rules. When rolling for wandering monsters, the DM should use the following table whenever a 1 is rolled on a d6:

CATACOMBS WANDERING MONSTER TABLE

1-2	3d6 Giant Rats (AC 7, HD ½, hp 2 each, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1 bite, D 1d3 + poison, Save F1, ML 8, AL N). The goblins' lair is home to many giant rats, which live off of their hosts' garbage. Some, however, prowl the tunnels in search of other food—they will attack the PCs if they outnumber the party by 2 to 1 or greater.
3-4	1d4 Carrion Crawlers (AC 7, HD 3+1*, hp 18 each, MV 120' (40'), # AT 8 tentacle or 1 bite, D paralysis or 1, Save F2, ML 7, AL N). Carrion crawlers normally scavenge for food, but will attack the PCs if approached or if the odds are in their favour.
5	1d6 Giant Centipedes (AC 9, HD ½*, hp 3 each, MV 60' (20'), # AT 1 bite, D poison, Save NM, ML 7, AL N). Giant centipedes will normally not attack the PCs unless disturbed.
6	1d6 Fire Beetles (AC 4, HD 1+2, hp 9 each, MV 120' (40'), # AT 1 bite, D 2d4, Save F1, ML 7, AL N). Fire beetles are unlikely to attack the PCs unless cornered, preferring to scavenge what they can, instead.

ABBEY ROOM DESCRIPTIONS

1. Entry Chamber: A wooden ladder leads down into this musty 30' square room from the ruins above. Eight goblins are present (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4, 5, 4, 3, 4, 6, 4, 3, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C), resting; they will be alert if the PCs made a lot of noise aboveground. If the goblins lose more than half of their number in battle, one of them will ring a bell next to the door, which will alert all goblins in rooms 2-4. The goblins have a total of 72 cp.

2. Diamond Room: Remnants of frescos depicting a great pilgrimage are visible on the walls of this octagonal room. Three sets of closed, unlocked double doors lead north, west, and south. There are seven goblins (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4, 4, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C) in this room, who will be resting unless the PCs are making a great deal of noise, or if the alarm in (1) was sounded. The goblins have a total of 63 cp.

Immediately behind the northern door is a pit trap (20' deep, filled with spikes at the bottom). If the trap is undetected, the first person stepping over it must make a save vs. Death Ray or take falling damage plus 2d4 additional points of damage from the spikes. After the trap is triggered, a regular Dexterity check is sufficient to step around it.



3. Round Room: Remnants of sketches and light inscriptions are evidence that this room was to be adorned in a similar fashion to (2). Scattered about this room are grimy sleeping mats, and to the left of the northern door is a pile of bones (which upon inspection are human and dwarven). Also present in this chamber are six goblins (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C), two of whom are armed with crossbows. In combat, the crossbowmen

will take up positions next to the northern door and fire upon intruders while being protected by their fellow guards. The goblins have a total of 57 cp; one of the crossbowmen also has a *quarrel +1*, which he will use only if the battle lasts more than five rounds, or if more than three guards are killed.

Even if the alarm in (1) is not sounded, the goblins will notice immediately if the pit trap north of (2) is triggered, after which no surprise will be possible against them.

4. Guard Post: This is a small niche set into the hallway, measuring 10' square. Set against the inner wall is a simple bench, upon which eight oil flasks are arranged. There are four goblins (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4, 4, 3, 5, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C) stationed here, armed with crossbows and hand axes. If the alarm in (1) was raised, or if the PCs made a lot of noise in the other rooms, the guards will be waiting for them. Otherwise, they may be surprised as per the rules. In combat, the guards will fire upon any intruders, trying to keep them from advancing while other goblins from other rooms attack from the rear. If any of the PCs come within 10' of the guard post, one goblin will begin lighting the oil flasks and throwing them. The goblins have a total of 33 cp; one of them carries the key to the storage room (5).

5. Storage Room: The door to this room is locked—the key is carried by one of the guards in (4). This dusty, rectangular room measures roughly 30' by 50', and was used by the clerics for general storage—a practice that the goblins have continued. It is here that they store much of their loot from caravans and from Pendleton. The PCs may find the following:

1. 8 torches
2. 5 crates of average quality linen
3. 1 crate of iron rations (enough to feed one person for 3 months)
4. 10 barrels of ale (2 of which were owned by the clerics of Cranstal Abbey)
5. 3 casks of average quality Thyatian wine (each worth 25 gp)
6. 9 large sacks (empty)
7. 7 small sacks (empty)
8. 1 small sack containing 3 wheels of cheese
9. 1 medium-sized painting (weighing 50 cn, worth 40 gp)
10. 1 full set of fine silverware (worth 30 gp)
11. 2 small carvings of swans (each worth 5 gp). A collector or professional appraiser will notice an artist's marking on each one identifying them as being made by Feldel Merendyr of Alfheim, who was a famous carver (each swan will be worth 100 gp if so identified).
12. 1 fine lady's travelling hat (worth 12 gp)
13. 4 cloaks
14. 33 assorted boots and shoes
15. 7 crossbows
16. 120 quarrels
17. 200 arrows
18. 14 normal shields
19. 5 small shields
20. 23 short swords
21. 16 axe heads
22. 1,000 arrowheads

In addition, there is a secret door in the southwest corner of the room, which is triggered by pushing a loose brick. Doing so opens a narrow passage to the secret treasure vault (6).

6. Secret Treasure Vault: This room, measuring roughly 20' square, was where the clerics of Cranstal Abbey kept their wealth before they became corrupted; its existence is unknown to the goblins. The walls are covered with paintings depicting labourers clearing a forest and constructing a great abbey. Resting against the south wall are two large, dusty chests, flanked by two metal statues of warriors.

If the PCs touch the chests without uttering the password beforehand (now lost), the statues (AC 2, HD 4*, hp 24, 24, MV 30' (10'), #AT 2 punch, D 1d8/1d8 + special, Save F4, ML 11, AL N) will animate and attack. The chests are locked, but not trapped, and contain 4,731 cp and 337 gp.

7. Anteroom: This octagonal room, measuring roughly 30' square, once served as a chamber where senior clerics would purify themselves before entering a private chapel. Defaced paintings on the walls depict clerics ritually bathing themselves. In the north wall is an empty font that once contained holy water. Any water placed in the font will be cleansed of impurities, and be made holy. Holy water created in this fashion will remain so even if removed. This action may be performed only once per day. A pair of imposing double doors lead west.

There are six elite goblin guards here (AC 5 because of Dexterity, HD 2, hp 10, 9, 8, 8, 6, 7, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save F2, ML 9, AL C), armed with hand axes. They will never desert their posts, but will sound an alarm by banging on the doors if more than half of them are killed, alerting the goblin king and his personal guards in the throne room (8). The goblins have a total of 62 sp.

8. Throne Room: This rectangular chamber was once used by the senior clerics to don ceremonial robes worn only for worshipping in

the private chapel (9), and to burn special incense. The goblins have turned this room into their tribal throne room. A large wooden cushioned chair (looted from a caravan long ago) sits by the western wall, flanked by two large tapestries depicting hunting scenes.

The goblin king (AC 4 due to Dexterity, HD 3, hp 19, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon +2, D 1d6+2, Save F3, ML 9, AL C) is here, attended by his personal guards (AC 5 because of Dexterity, HD 2, hp 7, 7, 6, 8, 8, 6, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save F2, ML 9, AL C). The guards, always alert and prepared for battle, are armed with spears; the king wields a *short sword* +1. If the battle begins to go against the goblins, the king will order his guards to create an opening in the PCs' lines through which he can escape to rally the goblins in the common room (10) for a counterattack. The guards have a total of 58 sp, and the king wears a silver ring inset with a finely polished piece of amber (worth 100 gp).

If the PCs make a successful search behind the tapestry to the left of the throne, they will notice a button in the wall, which will open a secret door to what was once the private chapel (9) if pushed. The throne is very heavy (800 cn.) but is finely crafted – it would be worth 45 gp if sold. The tapestries are slightly faded, but in good condition, and are each worth 70 gp. Each one weighs 300 cn.

9. King's Chamber: This large chamber is entered through a pair of richly carved oaken doors, which are closed, but unlocked. When Cranstal Abbey still stood, this room was the private chapel where the most senior clerics would perform special rituals. The walls are adorned with defaced frescoes depicting scenes of worship. At the south end of the room is a dais, where the altar once stood, but which is now where the goblin king's bed (a pile of furs) is located. At the base of the dais are the remnants of a cooking fire, scattered bones, and bits of burned meat. A large number of giant rats (AC 7, HD ½, hp 1x7, 3x5, 4x4, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1 bite, D 1d3 + disease, Save F1, ML 8, AL N) are feeding on the refuse. They will not attack the PCs unless approached.

Hidden in the sleeping furs is a small wooden box, of gnomish make, which can be opened only by pressing the three tiny metal buttons on its lid in the correct sequence. Two successful halved Intelligence checks are sufficient to accomplish this. Inside the box are the goblin king's personal treasures—a silver brooch inset with two tiny sapphires (worth 200 gp), a plain gold ring (worth 80 gp), two tiny rubies (worth 625 gp and 300 gp), and a pouch containing 6 pp, 19 gp, 22 sp, and 78 cp.

10. Common Room: This room was in the process of being excavated when the clerics of Cranstal Abbey were killed in the fire a century ago. The northern half is dressed stone, but the southern half is a cave which the goblins have expanded somewhat over the years. Several cooking fires provide illumination. The dominant impression the PCs will experience upon entering this room is the overpowering stench of filthy sleeping pallets, overcooked meat, and unwashed bodies.

Occupying this room is the bulk of the goblin tribe, comprising 26 adults (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 2x2, 3x5, 4x11, 5x6, 6x2, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C), and 13 children (1 hit point each – they will not fight). Half of the adults are armed with spears, while the others are armed with hand axes. The goblins have a total of 12 sp and 87 cp on their persons.

11. Temple: Two sets of double doors bar entry into this chamber. Neither is locked, and the PCs will be able to hear chanting coming from within. The east and west walls bear evidence of having been decorated with frescoes depicting robed men worshipping a divine being, but many of these have been defaced or painted over crudely with images of violence. This rectangular room is lined with battered pews that face a dais in front of the southern wall, upon which stands an altar of shiny black stone. Above the altar, on the southern wall, there is a painting of a creature that is both bizarre and horrible to behold (a representation of the Outer Being known as Yurrgh-Thal). Any PC who studies the painting intently must make a saving throw vs. Spells or

be stunned with fear for 1d4 rounds; otherwise they will be shaken but unaffected. DMs who use the author's optional rules for insanity [available at <http://pandius.com/insanity.html>] may use them here, in which case viewing the painting requires a check against a Horror Rating of 3.

This room used to serve as a private chapel for lower-ranking clerics, and its religious function has been retained by the goblins, but for much darker purposes. It is here that the goblin priest and his acolytes make their sacrifices. When the PCs enter, there is a robed goblin standing behind the altar, facing the painting on the southern wall and chanting in a guttural language (Carnifex). Kneeling before the altar are three more robed goblins, who are also chanting. Tied to the altar is a young man (one of the people abducted from Pendleton).

The PCs have one round to act before the goblin priest completes his ritual. For added drama, the DM can give the players very little time to decide what their characters will do. If the PCs manage to kill the priest during that round, the ritual will still be sufficiently complete to allow the corruptor to enter the room, but it will take five rounds to materialise instead of one—this could buy the PCs some time.

Just before the corruptor arrives, a glowing hole appears in the southern wall where the painting is located, through which a large, horrible, manlike creature steps. The goblins will then withdraw from the altar so that the corruptor can accept the sacrifice—the victim will be crushed to death by the creature's tentacles over the next two rounds, after which numerous mouths will open all over the corruptor's body to devour the corpse—a horrible sight. If the DM is using the author's optional insanity rules, each PC must make a sanity check against a Horror Rating of 5. Otherwise, the DM may make a ruling on how the PCs might react to such a gruesome event.

Assuming that the PCs do battle with the corruptor, its statistics are as follows: (AC 3, HD 6***, hp 42, MV 120' (40'), #AT 2 bash/1 choke or special, D 2d6/2d6/1d8 or special, Save F6, ML

10, AL C). The goblin priest (AC 5 due to Dexterity, HD 3*, hp 15, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save C3, ML 7, AL C) and his acolytes (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4, 6, 5, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C) will also join the battle; they are armed with maces. The priest can also cast *cause light wounds* on one opponent, for 1d6+1 damage. During the battle, the corruptor will try to corrupt any weakened goblins or PCs, especially if it becomes wounded. Should any pawns be created, they will be directed to fight the strongest remaining opponent(s). Only the priest carries any treasure—a gold medallion (worth 200 gp) bearing a likeness of

Yurrgh-Thal. Although nonmagical, the medallion seems to radiate an unwholesome aura; any PCs who wears it will have all their rolls penalised by -1 (even if they remove it afterward), until they are *blessed* by a cleric of 9th level or greater.

If rescued, the prisoner (named William) will thank the PCs, and ask to be led to safety as soon as possible. The DM should award additional XPs if the PCs figure out how to do this while continuing the mission. If asked about the catacombs, William can tell the PCs about the lower delvings (basic layout and how many prisoners are there), but not much else.

THE LOWER DELVINGS

If the PCs pass through the southern doors leading from the diamond room (2), the walls quickly become rough-hewn and the ceiling uneven in height. There is also far more dampness in the air here, with patches of moss and lichen growing in areas where foot traffic is infrequent. A short flight of crudely carved steps leads down to the lower delvings, which were started by the clerics and then greatly expanded by the goblins.

LOWER DELVINGS RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

1-2	1d6 goblins (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4 each, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C). These goblins are performing routine tasks, and not expecting an attack. If they are not surprised, they will attack the PCs, and sound an alarm if the fight goes against them (they will run to the nearest group of goblins and alert them).
3	1d2 Crab Spiders (AC 7, HD 2*, hp 12 each, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1 bite, D 1d8 + poison, Save F1, ML 7, AL N). These spiders are rather hungry, and see the PCs as a potential meal.
4-5	1d6 Oil Beetles (AC 4, HD 2*, hp 13 each, MV 120' (40'), #AT 1 bite + 1 oil spray, D 1d6 + special, Save F1, ML 8, AL N). Oil beetles are a food source for the troglodytes and goblins—they are unlikely to attack the PCs unless cornered.
6	1d4 Troglodytes (AC 5, HD 2*, hp 12 each, MV 120' (40'), #AT 2 claw/1 bite, D 1d4/1d4/1d4, Save F2; ML 9, AL N). The troglodytes moved into the lower level not long ago and now make their home in the mines, but they often wander in search of food. The goblins have made peace with them, but the PCs are fair game.

12. Niche: This is a tiny niche carved into the living rock, containing a simple wooden stool. Evidently, this is a guard post. Low moaning can be heard (coming from the torture chamber, room 13).

13. Torture Chamber: This room, hardly more than 10' square, was hewn out of the living rock by the goblins to serve as a prison and torture chamber; although it more often serves the

latter purpose. In the southeast corner is a small vat of boiling oil, while in the southwest corner there is a fire pit in which a set of hot irons rest. Bolted into the east wall are several sets of manacles. Near the door, on the east wall, keys to the manacles are hanging on a peg.

Three prisoners, men taken from the village, are here. Two men (Alric and Emond) are chained to the east wall, while a third (Braddel) is hogtied next to the fire pit. Also in the room are the goblin torturer (AC 6, HD 1, hp 8, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon+1, D 1d6+1 due to strength, Save F1, ML 7, AL C) and one guard (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C), who are preparing to have some fun. Both goblins are armed with short swords, but neither has anything of value.

If freed the prisoners will explain that they were captured several weeks ago while hunting in the forest. Since then they have been forced to work in the mines, though the goblins are not interested in ores or valuable metals; instead the prisoners are forced to dig in a large chamber for some unknown purpose. Those who rebel are sometimes sent to the arena (16), or they are tortured. While extremely grateful to be free, the prisoners are too weak to fight, and will ask to be led to safety as soon as possible. Depending on how the PCs react, the DM may wish to award additional experience points for good ideas in devising a way to keep rescued prisoners safe while the party is still adventuring.

14. Mines: This area is riddled with tunnels whose walls contain the occasional vein of silver and gold. The mines were started by the clerics shortly before the new abbot corrupted them, but then their efforts were directed towards locating the lost temple. The goblins have no interest in exploiting the mineral wealth here, as they, too, are focused on excavating the temple.

Should the PCs complete the adventure, they may wish to mine the gold and silver themselves afterwards. If none of them are dwarves, or have any experience in mining, they will have to hire someone with the required skills to oversee the effort, as well as miners to extract the ore. Given the bad memories associated with the goblins, no one from Pendleton will help. The total gold and silver in the mines would be worth 9,500 gp, and would take a total of 400 person-days to

extract and refine. Regardless of how many people are hired for such an effort, at least 150 days will be required to extract all of the gold and silver. In addition, the PCs would have to pay the workers, and ensure they are sheltered and fed while they are working.

15. Excavation Pit: By the light of many torches staked into the ground and wedged in the rock walls, the PCs will see that the floor of this large, rough-hewn chamber is ten feet below the level of the mines, and can be reached safely with one of two ladders leaning against the ledge. Labouring in the pit are eight prisoners (young people taken from Pendleton during the last raid), overseen by six goblin guards on the ledge, armed with crossbows and short swords (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4, 5, 6, 4, 5, 7, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6 or 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C). The goblins have no treasure.

If freed, three of the prisoners (Merrim, Allendra, and Bors) will be willing to accompany the PCs and help fight the goblins, if asked. The DM should treat them as 1st level fighters and generate their attributes. Unless the PCs equip them, they have no armour or weapons, save their mining picks (which do 1d4 damage). The remaining prisoners will want to leave the catacombs as soon as possible but will be content to wait in a secure area if the PCs can guarantee their safety. If asked about their work, the prisoners will say that they have been forced to excavate the chamber in order to find something, but the goblins never told them what it was. The prisoners were never allowed to leave the chamber (the ladders were pulled up by the guards when the prisoners slept), unless they were hauling excavated rock under guard to the ruins above; they know nothing of the layout of the catacombs beyond areas 1, 2, 13, 14, and 15.

16. Arena: Loud growling noises, as well as shouts, can be heard as the PCs make their way along the tunnel leading to this room. The light in this room will also be apparent to the PCs well before they arrive.

This rough-hewn chamber is roughly 100' long, and almost as wide. Several torches wedged in the rock walls provide enough illumination to see the entire room, as well as the large pit in the centre. The pit is a steep-sided depression, 15' deep, which is reachable by a narrow hand-carved staircase at its east end. There is what appears to be a winch system on the north and south edges of the pit, each of which is connected to a crude portcullis in the north and south walls.

Seven goblins (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4, 3, 5, 5, 4, 3, 5, MV 90' (30'), #AT 1 weapon, D 1d6, Save NM, ML 7, AL C), armed with spears and short swords, are seated around the edge of the pit, jeering and throwing garbage at three men fighting two white apes (AC 6, HD 4, hp 30, 26, MV 120' (40'), #AT 2 punch, D 1d4/1d4, Save F2, ML 7, AL N). The men, formerly of Pendleton, were captured by the goblins several months ago while hunting near the Darkwoods. Some of the goblins wanted some entertainment, so a number of them, with their king's permission, went to the excavation pit and selected three worn-out prisoners to die in the arena.

If the PCs do nothing, the white apes (who have been driven mad by their cruel captivity), will kill the three men in fairly short order. The DM should treat each man as AC 9, Str 13, with 4 hit points, rolling attacks each round as per normal combat rules. The only weapons available to them are rocks or their bare hands. If the PCs intervene there is a 50%

chance each round that the white apes will recognise the ensuing confusion as an opportunity to escape, and force their way towards the exit. They will attack anyone in their path, but only in order to get them out of the way. Otherwise they will fight anyone who attacks them. If rescued, the prisoners (Etric, Stannel, and Gregor) will be extremely grateful to the PCs, but will not offer to join them. Instead they will ask to be led to the nearest safe location. They can provide the same information as the other prisoners.

17. North Cave: This foul smelling chamber barely measures ten feet square, and is filled with detritus. The PCs can enter the cave by raising the portcullis with the winch located on the ledge above the entrance. This is where the white apes are kept when they are not fighting for the goblins' amusement. There is nothing of value here.

18. South Cave: This chamber measures little more than ten feet square, and appears empty. The PCs can enter the cave by raising the portcullis with the winch located on the ledge above the entrance. This is where prisoners are held prior to being released into the arena. Although there is nothing of value here, a careful examination of the walls will reveal a handful of hand-carved messages, mainly desperate, asking for protection and deliverance, and for some force to intervene and crush the goblins.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE

Upon their return to Pendleton, the PCs will be greeted as heroes if they have succeeded, or they will be consoled if they failed. If the PCs managed to rescue all of the prisoners, award the party 50 experience points per villager; otherwise, award the party 25 experience points per villager rescued. The people will be so happy to see their relatives free again that they will not ask the PCs to return any valuables that had been taken from them by the goblins. Each PC who decides to give some of his or her newfound wealth to the village will receive an additional experience point per gold piece given.

Beyond any material rewards the party may have amassed, they will always be welcome in Pendleton afterwards if they succeeded, and will be given free room and board for as long as they wish. In addition, the PCs' story will be told, and retold, for generations to come in this region.

Finally, depending on how the PCs treated any freed prisoners who were willing to help them in battle (in particular Merrim, Allendra, and Bors from the pit), one or more may ask to accompany the party in their future adventures. The DM (or the PCs) should decide which party member(s) should take one or more of them on as henchmen. Out of gratitude for being freed, none of them would ask for any financial support, aside from money for basic arms and armour, and an agreed-upon share of any future treasures. In addition these henchmen will always have a +1 bonus to any morale checks, on top of any other bonuses, arising from their loyalty to the PCs, so long as they are treated well.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

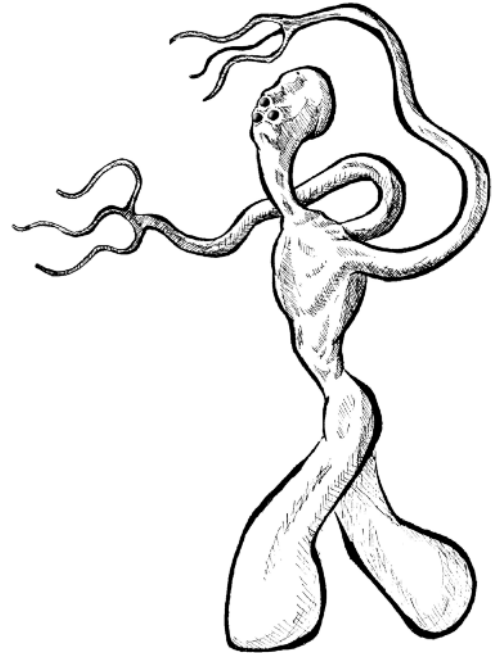
Even if the PCs succeeded in their quest, there are a number of things they could still pursue in the area. A short list is below.

- **The Temple:** The ancient temple remains buried under the ruins and the Outer Beings will wait for another susceptible person to come along, whose mind they will fill with fantastic visions so that their causes might be furthered, starting another cycle of terror. It is likely that the temple remains undiscovered, in which case it could serve as a campaign hook for higher-level PCs who could encounter some of the more powerful servitors of the Outer Beings and find themselves in a race against time to destroy the temple once and for all.
- **The Darkwoods:** Perhaps some of the local legends are true—the spirits of the forest clans still walk the forest at night, seeking vengeance. The PCs could be asked to investigate a series of mysterious disappearances near a recently discovered burial mound (and explore the ancient tomb that lies beneath it). Or restless undead might suddenly plague the region and the PCs must put a stop to them.
- **Humanoids:** Word will spread of the PCs' success—even to humanoid ears. If they ever find out that the evil of Cranstal Abbey has been ended, orc or hobgoblin clans might decide to move into the area. It would be up to the PCs to lead a defence of the region.
- **The Outer Beings:** The PCs should now be aware that there are forces in the world that are incredibly ancient and strange and, whatever their true intent, it is not likely beneficial to what they hold dear. This adventure could start off a mini-campaign to uncover as much information as possible about these forces—the Outer Beings—so that the PCs can arm themselves with information. Some clues have already been provided in this adventure, but the logical next step would be to learn more about the local legends, and perhaps seek out scholars for more information (possibly a perilous adventure in itself). This could lead to the discovery of the ancient temple.

NEW MONSTERS

Corruptor (Herald of Akh'All the Unmentionable – Lesser Servitor)

AC: 3
HD: 6*** (L)
MOV: 120' (40')
#AT: 2 bash or 1 choke or 1 corrupt
D: 2d6/2d6, 1d8/round, or special
#APP: 1 (1d2)
ML: 10
Save: F6
AL: C
TT: Nil
Int: 12
XP: 950



Corruptors are the souls of especially fanatical worshippers of the Outer Beings, who have been “rewarded” with new physical forms with which they can further their masters’ causes. They are sometimes sent to the Prime Plane in response to the prayers of cultists, to serve as messengers from the Outer Beings, to preside over important sacrifices, and to guard temples or treasures considered important by their masters. They are roughly 10’ tall and humanoid in form, with long arms extending in ropy tentacles, a bulbous torso and legs, and a half-formed head with no features except for three small black eyes that migrate slowly all over it. Their bodies are made from a greyish-black, protoplasmic substance.

In combat, corruptors can bludgeon an opponent twice per round—if both tentacles hit, the victim will automatically begin suffering choking damage every round thereafter, unless a successful Save versus Death Ray is made. A corruptor cannot attack anyone else while choking a victim, but they will break off attacks if necessary and otherwise try to fight strategically—i.e., they will not attack a visibly weakened foe when stronger ones are around, and will use their underlings (primarily the corrupted, but also any nearby lesser servitors and cultists) whenever possible.

The special attack of the corruptor is its ability to corrupt an enemy. To do so, the corruptor throws some of its own plasm at an intended victim. If the attack hits, the victim suffers 1d6 points of suffocation damage per round. The plasm may be burned off (as with green slime), cleansed with *holy water*, or removed with a *wish* or *remove curse* cast by a cleric of 8th level or higher. If the victim dies of suffocation, he or she will be completely enveloped by the plasm, and will rise in eight rounds as a pawn under the corruptor’s control (see description of the corrupted, below). During this transition period, the victim’s body is dissolved by the plasm, but the body can be saved—and the victim *raised*—if 20 or more points of damage is inflicted on the plasm (which has an AC of 6). No damage will be done to the body if this is attempted. If the body is completely dissolved, the victim’s soul, or essence, will be lost forever.

Due to their plasmic nature, corruptors can force their way through the tiniest cracks, although this takes a long time to do. Furthermore, their alien natures render them immune to *sleep*, *hold*, and *charm* spells, and they may only be hit by weapons made from *red steel*, or those enchanted with a +1 or better. Corruptors also radiate an aura of *fear*, as per the spell, within a 20' radius. As with all servitors of the Outer Beings, corruptors are vulnerable to the substance known as *evilbane* essence in all its forms, suffering 1d8 points of damage per round while in contact with it.

Note: If the author's optional insanity rules are in use, this creature has a Horror Rating of 10.

Corrupted (Pawn of Akh'All the Unmentionable)

AC: 6
HD: 2* (M)
MOV: 60' (20')
#AT: 2 bash
D: 1d8/1d8
#APP: 1d4 (3d4)
ML: 11
Save: F2
AL: C
TT: Nil
Int: 3
XP: 25

Pawns of Akh'All, often called "the Corrupted" by those who know of the Outer Beings, are those killed by the special attack of a corruptor who have risen again after their remains were destroyed during the transition to their current state. In appearance, they are humanoid lumps of foul smelling, greyish-black protoplasm. They have no discernable hands or feet, but are capable of producing small tendrils when finer manipulation is required. Their heads are little more than half-formed lumps growing out of their torsos, and they possess no facial features. Pawns are always the same size as they were in life; most are human-sized. Having lost all vestiges of their former selves during their transition, pawns are simple, soulless creatures who unquestioningly serve the corruptor who transformed them, and through it the Outer Beings.



In combat, a pawn will try to bash the nearest foe to death with its two arms, and once it has engaged an enemy, it will pursue him or her relentlessly unless commanded to do otherwise. Pawns can also be commanded to block enemies from advancing, stage fighting withdrawals, act as sentries, and other simple tasks. Generally, once given an order, they will follow it until told to do something else.

Being composed of matter that does not originate on the Prime Plane, pawns have no need of sleep, drink, or food. Furthermore, they are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells. As with all servitors of the Outer Beings, pawns are vulnerable to the substance known as *evilbane* essence in all its forms, suffering 1d8 points of damage per round while in contact with it.

Note: If the author's optional insanity rules are in use, this creature has a Horror Rating of 2.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Amulet of Protection vs. Outer Powers

These amulets are often crafted by spellcasters who know about the Outer Beings and their minions, and who wish to have an extra measure of protection. They function in a very similar manner to *amulets of protection*, but the key difference is that these amulets will protect their wearers only from attacks made by lesser servitors of the Outer Beings. They do not offer protection against human, demi-human, or humanoid worshippers.

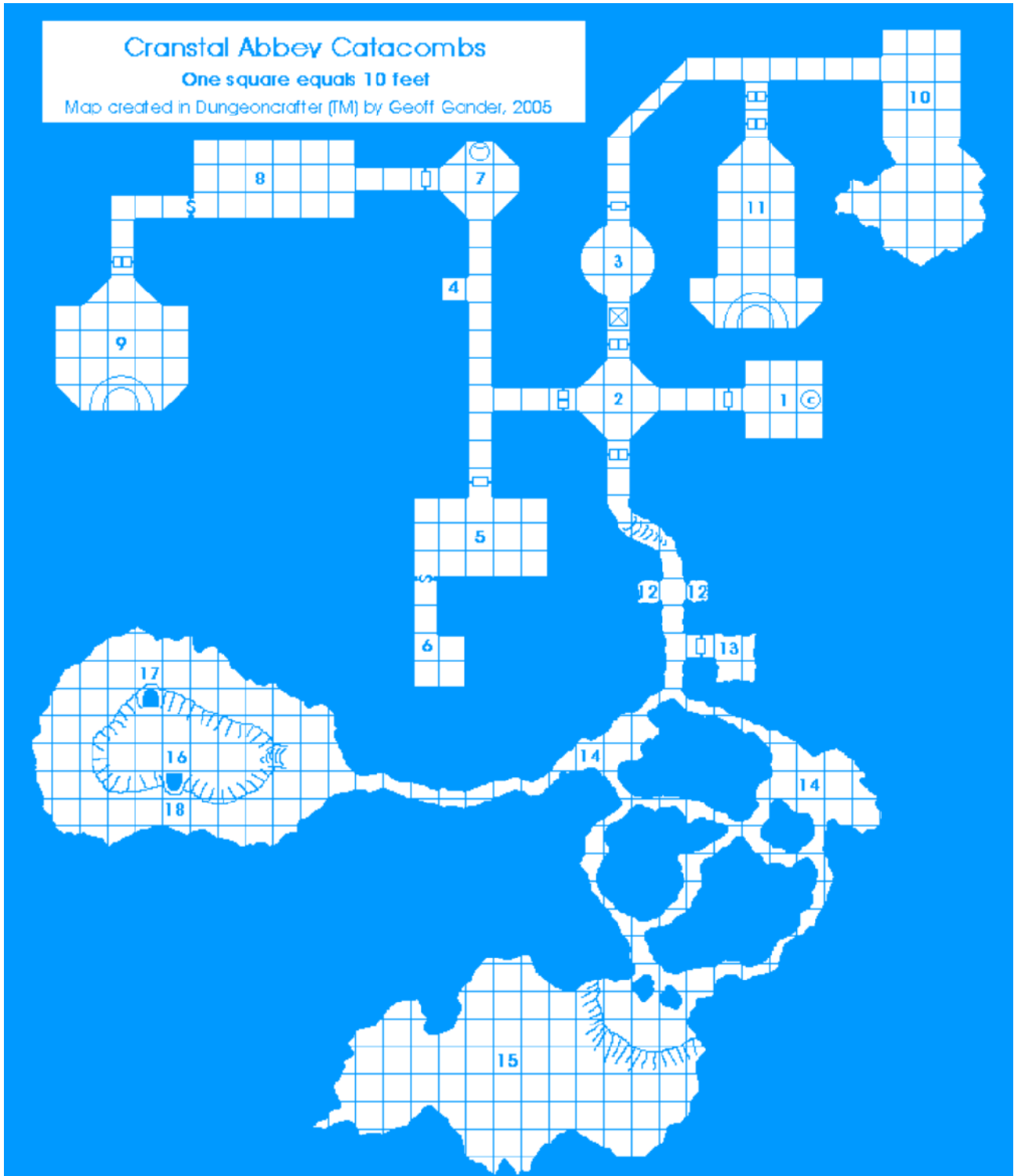
Baneblade

Baneblades are swords crafted specifically to fight the followers of the Outer Beings, many of which are immune or highly resistant to mundane weapons. Produced according to little known clerical rituals, these weapons are often entrusted to champions for the purpose of eliminating a specific threat. *Baneblades*, unlike other magical weapons, have no plus value in combat. They do, however, allow the wielder to strike an opponent that could normally only be hit with a *red steel* or +1 weapon (such as many servitors of the Outer Beings). Their added bonus against such creatures is that, being partly composed of *evilbane essence*, *baneblades* inflict 1d8 damage *in addition to* any normal damage. Mundane enemies take normal damage only.

Evilbane Essence

Evilbane essence is but one of many names for a very rare magical substance that is deadly to the servitors of the Outer Beings. Theorists have long speculated that, given the otherdimensional origins of the Outer Beings and their ilk, *evilbane essence* must similarly be non-native to the Prime Plane. In this they are correct—it was created in another dimension by the Immortals, who, although forbidden from interfering directly in worldly affairs, nonetheless wanted to provide their followers with a means of protecting themselves from the Outer Beings. It is, literally, composed of the fundamental structure of three-dimensional reality, and embodies all that is rational in the cosmic sense (and thus is in opposition to the Outer Beings).

In its raw form, *evilbane essence* resembles tiny clear quartz crystals, but within can be seen shimmering star shaped patterns that produce their own faint radiance. It is often ground into fine glittering powder, which is then combined with other substances in various ways to imbue them with powers against the Outer Beings. This is commonly done to create *baneblades*, weapons capable of harming the lesser servitors of the Outer Beings. *Evilbane essence* is also used to create protective potions and scrolls, and is a component of many powerful spells.



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