

THE ICE KINGDOMS



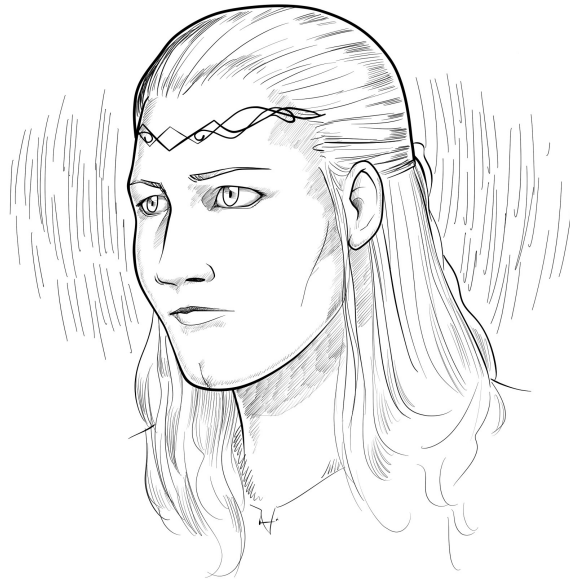
THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

ROLE PLAYING ADVENTURE

BY
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AN ICE KINGDOMS ADVENTURE

THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS



An adventure for 4–6 characters levels 1–2

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CONTENTS

Cover	1
Table of Contents	3
List of Figures	4
1 Introduction	5
Running the Adventure	5
Background	5
Tenebrous	7
Random Encounters	9
2 Encountering Elsa	10
A Game of Hounds	11
Tentacles at the Door	12
3 The Temple of Khoss	13
A Face to Remember	14
4 Elsa's Prey	15
General Research	15
Luka	15
Tracking Elsa	16
Fortune Tellers and Witches	16
Rathgar and Volfric	16
5 Sins of the Past	17
The Gardens of Woe	17
The Innocent Man	18
6 Cast Out Your Demons	20
Outside the Keep	22
Stormgard Keep, Ground Floor	23
Stormgard Keep, Upper Floor	28
7 Characters	33
Elsa	33
Luka	33
Rathgar	34
Volfric	34
8 Bestiary	35
OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a	47

LIST OF FIGURES

6.1 Stormgard Keep, Level 1 20

6.2 Stormgard Keep, Level 2 31

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The Girl with the Demon Tattoos is an open-ended adventure. The characters (and therefore players) are not required to take any action, nor forced down any path. There is a very loose timeline, which Game Masters can alter as needed. The adventure is meant to be incorporated into a free-form opening game session for low-level characters, but it can be scaled up for higher levels.

Ideally, the GM will be familiar enough with the plot and the characters (both PC and NPC) that he or she will be able to “wing” much of this adventure on the spot, using the provided scenes as benchmarks. It can be divided between several sessions, or finished in one night of play; as part as a campaign, or as a one-shot to break up normal games. The characters may already know Elsa or they may encounter her for the first time at the start of the adventure. The characters themselves can change the course

of the adventure significantly, since some characters have a better chance to gain information on the victims or have better skill at handling combat.

This adventure begins in Tenebrous. It is a small village in the shadow of Arfhrdheim’s bustle. Other encounters and events can easily be incorporated or mixed into the timeline of this adventure.

BACKGROUND

Twenty years ago, war raged across Thanegard as several upstart warlords came to blows when a minor thane died heirless. This bitter feud over the succession was largely fought between two clans of Einheriar warriors—the relatively poor Widsith and the aggressive and expansive Ashlannach. The conflict between these two large groups drew in many smaller subgroups and allies.



Left to right: Lars, Rudric, Volfric, and Rathgar



INTRODUCTION

The war was brutal. The Ashlannach terrorized their opponents with unusual brutality, slaughtering and enslaving entire families. They even took the chance to subjugate and enslave the Huirdu, whom they believed bore Pohjola's taint. In the end, however, Widsith might prevailed, and the Ashlannach finally reaped the evils their elders had sown. Many sins were repaid in the cruel reprisals that concluded the conflict. Five years of war left the two clans terribly and bitterly divided.

Many children were left orphaned on both sides. Many of them swore revenge. Some perished. A few overcame the past and contributed to the rebuilding of their clans and communities. At least one made a deal with a devil. This is the story of Elsa Thalfardot.

Elsa's father, Thalfar, was a minor lord and a secret practitioner of sorcerous arts. Entrusted by the Ashlannach clan with the ruined keep of Stormgard, Thalfar uncovered dark and hidden secrets there. He conducted strange and terrible experiments on both Widsith captives and unfortunate Huirdu, and he conversed with ancient horrors and demonic powers.

As the war ended and the Widsiths neared the keep, six of Thalfar's trusted guards turned against him. The traitors killed Elsa's father and mother, before turning the keep over to the Widsiths.

In frustration, fear, and desperation, Elsa fled. She secretly took a handful of her father's notes and planned her revenge. After many years of searching, Elsa found the means to enact her revenge. Summoning a dark being of unknown origin, Elsa offered her body and soul to the demon in exchange for the power to gain revenge on her enemies. The demon K'hargaroth bound to her flesh the souls of 17 other demons, each bound to her by a rune tattooed on her flesh. Once all the demons have been released, Elsa will die, and her demonic patron will inherit her soul.

All of Elsa's remaining targets live in or around Tenebrous. They are four of her father's former personal guards.

Demons and devils are generally treated as different creatures. However, in the Ice Kingdoms mythology there's really no differences other than their alignment. Demons and devils (and any other offshoot of them) come from the Abyss and are physical, spiritual, and mental manifestations of evil. They often serve evil gods and powerful arch-fiends (demons or devils who have evolved into near godlike beings). While there are no good or neutral aligned demons or devils, they do have good and neutral counterparts. In the cosmology of Eorðan these are the fae (neutral) and the angelic (good). The Angelic are represented in the Ice Kingdoms by Uthin's Shield Maidens.

THE TATTOOS

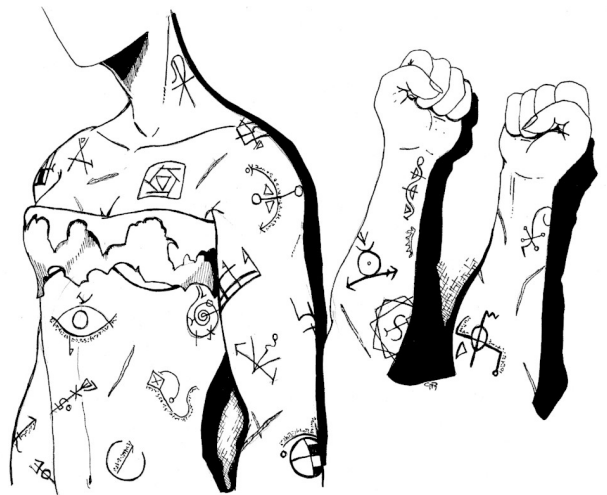
Each tattoo is a binding rune that keeps a demon locked within Elsa's skin. To summon forth a demon, Elsa must cut a tattoo on her body, severing its complete form. Elsa incurs 1 hit point of damage when she releases a demon in this way. Her hit points recover normally with healing and time.

If Elsa takes ordinary damage, there is also a chance of one of the tattoos being severed and a demon being released. If the attack is from an edged or piercing weapon (sword, knife, arrow or explosion), the chance of releasing a demon is equal to ten times the amount of damage she suffers. So if she suffers 3 points of damage, there is a 30% chance of a demon being released. If it is a non-edged/cutting attack, the chance is equal to the damage she suffers.

However, if the demons are released unceremoniously in this way—without using the ceremonial dagger or uttering the demon's name—they are only unleashed for one round (see Temporary Demon Effects Sidebar below).

Burns do not release the demons. In fact, burns damage the runes, removing the spell from her body and sending the demon back to hell. For every 3 points of burning damage she suffers, one tattoo is removed. If she is killed by fire, no more demons emerge. Submerging her in holy water and drowning her completely also removes the curse.

If Elsa is killed, she will explode in a vortex of fire and brimstone, inflicting 2d6 damage on everything within 18 feet (the number of feet is equal to her Charisma score.) Characters can make a saving throw vs breath weapon to reduce this damage to a single 1d6.



INTRODUCTION



TEMPORARY DEMONIC EFFECTS

Whenever Elsa is hurt and suffers a demon release from one of her tattoos, roll on the following chart for the effect. Each effect is presented in six categories: The type of attack/demon, the THACO used to determine if the effect hits its target, the number of targets attacked, the damage the attack does, and the number of rounds the effect continues to be present. A listing with a save is resolved as a saving throw against the appropriate category.

Table 1.1: Temporary Demon Effects Table

d100	Effect	THACO	Targets	Damage	Duration
01–10	Acid Blood	10	1d4 – 1	1d4	1d4 Rounds
11–20	Black Tentacles	13	1d6	1d3	1d6 Rounds
21–30	Swarm of Bees	4	All	1	1d4 Rounds
31–40	Erupting Fire	10	1	1d6	1 Round
41–50	Floating Skull	13	1	2d6	1 Round
51–58	Fanged Maw	8	1d3	1d6	1d4 Rounds
59–67	Insect Pincer	11	1d2	1d8	1d2 Rounds
68–76	Sulfuric Wind	5	1d8	2d6	1d4 Rounds
77–84	Poison Gas	Save*	All	1d4	1 Round
85–93	Needle Spray	9	1d6	1d4	1d6 Rounds
94–00	Demonic Cry	Save†	All	1d8	1 Round

*Against poison. A successful save results in half damage, a natural 20 results in no damage.

†Against petrification. A successful save results in no damage.

TENEBOUS

The adventure begins in Tenebrous, a small village on the road between Arfhrdheim and the coastal city states. Tenebrous is home to the famous Gardens of Woe, an ancient and mysterious collection of large standing stones, where men condemned for the most severe crimes are crucified. The village is also home to the family of those punished on the stones—those sentenced to the stones often have their families exiled, and they have no choice but to take up life in Tenebrous—and also to the few survivors of the stones and those who seek to make a profit off the stones. Charlatans and fortune tellers crowd the village on holy days to sell good luck charms, relics and blessings to protect the poor and downtrodden residents who live in its squalor.

Tenebrous has a small inn (a long house that has space for a few guests), several homes and several farms, along with the broken remains of old temples and long houses. There is no true economy in the village, which survives largely on scraps and alms. Without passing travelers, members of the local Temple of Khoss, or the occasional handout from the Solemn Watch, the crowds would starve. When the adventure begins, the rabble huddled in the village is becoming even more fearful and desperate. Snow is falling in Tenebrous, and the poor and homeless know no deadlier enemy than winter's cold touch.

Thane Rollo rules over the immediate areas of Tenebrous through a weakening truce with several other local lords.

Perhaps the characters work for him as part of his household guard or maybe they work for a rival lord, acting as diplomats to the feast celebrating Rollo's birthday. Rollo won this truce eight years ago in a holmgang between himself and Thane Cnut of Wayne. While Cnut was killed in the duel, Rollo lost his left eye. By the terms of the holmgang, Rollo won a ten year peace. But now Cnut's eldest son, Havildur, is marshalling his forces and plotting his revenge. Moreover, the area was connected to the conflict farther south by kinship and alliance. Rollo is a member of the Widsith clan, while Cnut was among the leaders of the Ashlannach.

Tenebrous is currently under the leadership of Brother Hath, an exiled thief from Arfhrdheim who claims to have discovered a new way of life. He is unable to control the people of the village, especially when it is overrun with hundreds of poor and wretched. Brother Hath also has a rival named Fenrik, who is also an ex-thief. Fenrik is wanted by several bandit groups in Arfhrdheim and the coastal city states, and even in the small village of Ainhild near the Vanir Mountains.

Stormgard Keep is an abandoned military fortification located several days (4-5 days on foot, 3 on horse) east of Tenebrous. It was abandoned after one of the many inter-clan wars common in the Ice Kingdoms.

If they are not careful, the characters can get caught up in the politics of Tenebrous. Food riots, fights, assaults, kidnappings, muggings, murders, and other horrible acts



INTRODUCTION



are all too common. Things are especially volatile now that Havildur, son of Cnut, is in the area with his forces looking for any opportunity to take advantage of the lax security of Thane Rollo's realm. Elsa and the hauntings at Stormgard Keep are not the only problems in the region; a GM could set many other adventures in the area.

Thane Rollo: AC 4 (chain mail and shield), **Move** 12, **HD** 6 (d10; 40 hit points), **THACO** 15 (14 with long sword), **Attack** 1 or 3/2 long sword (1d8 + 3), **Size** M, **Morale** 16, **XP** 270 (6th level fighter), **Ability Scores** Strength 16, Charisma 15.

Havildur, son of Cnut: AC 5 (chain mail and shield), **Move** 12, **HD** 5 (d10; 34 hit points), **THACO** 16 (15 with spear), **Attack** 1 or 3/2 spear (1d6 + 2), **Size** M, **Morale** 16, **XP** 175 (5th level fighter), **Ability Scores** Strength 15, Charisma 17.

Brother Hath: AC 7, **Move** 12, **HD** 7 (d6; 25 hit points), **THACO** 17, **Attack** 1 dagger (1d4), **Size** M, **Morale** 12, **XP** 270 (7th level thief), **Ability Scores** Dexterity 17, Intelligence 12, Wisdom 15, Charisma 16.

Fenrik: AC 10, **Move** 12, **HD** 9 (d6; 31 hit points), **THACO** 16, **Attack** 1 short sword (1d6), **Size** M, **Morale** 11, **XP** 420 (9th level thief), **Ability Scores** Dexterity 13, Intelligence 15, Charisma 15.

TEMPLE OF KHOSS

The Temple of Khoss is run by Brother Mikkell and his assistant Brother Arns. Here they conduct secret rituals to divine the prophecies of the victims of the Gardens of Woe. This often includes falsely accusing local residents of crimes so they can be sent to the stones. Brother Mikkell

INTRODUCTION



doesn't know it, but Brother Arns is actually a cultist of Pohjola. Arns has considerable influence on Mikkell and uses it to further his secret agenda. He will do whatever he can to rush the characters out of the temple, even giving them information about Volfric and his whereabouts.

Brother Arns has connections with a band of Wraith Elves he is trying to lure into the region to cause havoc for Tenebrous. Arns is not above sending assassins—disguised as fellow brothers of Khoss—after the characters if he objects to their questions.

Lars was also one of Brother Arns' followers. While Rudric was not a member of the secret cult, his work with Lars deciphering scripts hidden in the Temple's libraries has contributed to the cult's activities. It may be Brother Arns who secretly aided Elsa in her pact with K'hargaroth.

Brother Mikkell: AC 10, Move 12, HD 7 (d8; 43 hit points), THACO 16, Attack 1 short sword (1d6 + 1), Size M, Morale 14, XP 975 (7th level priest), Ability Scores Strength 13, Intelligence 15, Wisdom 17, Charisma 18.

Brother Arns: AC 7, Move 12, HD 4 (d8; 26 hit points), THACO 18, Attack 1 short sword (1d6), Size M, Morale 16, XP 270 (4th level priest), Ability Scores Dexterity 17, Intelligence 15, Charisma 15.

Typical Serving Brother of Khoss: AC 10, Move 12, HD 1 (d6; 5 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 1 short sword (1d6), Size M, Morale 11, XP 35 (1st level bard).

Assassins: AC 9, Move 12, HD 2 (d6; 10 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 1 short sword (1d6), Size M, Morale 11, XP 120 (2nd level thief), Ability Scores Dexterity 15.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

As the characters explore the areas surrounding the adventure they will risk a number of random encounters that may interfere with their investigation and adventuring. Use the table below to determine standard random encounters. In general, every 6 to 8 hours there is a 1 in 6 chance of having a random encounter. GMs may opt to not have random encounters, determine what the encounter is without rolling, or decide to have a random encounter even without rolling. They are also not required to keep within the 6 to 8 hour time frame.

Bandits: The characters encounter 1d6 bandits. These bandits may be a raiding party, camping, or they may be seen entering or exiting some sort of cave or other "dungeon". There is a chance the bandits are secretly working for Brother Arns, Brother Hath or Havildur. Roll a single d8 (1: Brother Arns, 2: Havildur, 3–4: Brother Hath, 5–8: unaligned). All bandits are either 1st level thieves or 1st level fighters.

Vargs: The characters encounter 1d3 vargs. The vargs may be on the hunt or being chased by a hunting party (consisting of 3d4 0 level human hunters).

Weather: The weather takes a turn. This often results in a serious snowstorm causing the characters to halt their movement for the night (roll for random encounters every 2 hours during the storm). This storm lasts for 2d6 hours. Any encounter will probably involve some sort of fight for shelter. If you are using a ruleset with expanded weather rules (such as the Ice Kingdoms Campaign Setting main book) you may wish to consult those rules for any weather changes.

Patrol: The characters encounter a patrol of soldiers serving either Havildur (1–3) or Rollo (4–8). The patrol is made up of one leader (2nd level fighter with 15 hit points) and the rest are 0 level warriors (6 hit points each). They wear scale mail, have shields and use short swords and spears. Half of Havildur's men have light crossbows instead of spears. It is possible the patrol belongs to Brother Arns or a rival temple.

Assassin: One of Brother Arns' assassins is encountered. Is the assassin after a character? Or someone else? Or is the assassin on the run from a patrol?

Godi: The characters encounter a low level priest (3rd level) who can heal and treat wounds (up to two). There is a 1 in 8 chance a godi is a follower of Brother Arns.

None: There is no encounter.

Table 1.2: Random Encounter Chart

2d10	Encounter
2–5	Bandits (1d6)
6–7	Vargs (1d3)
8–9	Weather
10–12	Patrol (Havildur) (2d4)
13–15	Patrol (Rollo) (1d6 + 3)
16–17	Assassin (1)
18	Godi (1)
19–20	None

CHAPTER 2: ENCOUNTERING ELSA

The adventure begins at the longhouse of Thane Rollo One-Eyed, where the characters are enjoying a feast. While the characters are drinking their mead and ale or gnawing on the joints of mutton, one of them will encounter Elsa. She is a quiet, yet very attractive young woman. She sits alone in a corner, staring absently at the painted walls.

To attentive characters, Elsa will seem conspicuous. Despite the warmth of the hearthfire inside the longhouse, she continues to wear her furred cloak and scarf and gloves. Her drink has not been touched and she talks to no one, not even to the young men flirting with her. If a character approaches her, she does not notice them other than to say hello or offer some other passive greeting (if a character passes a Charisma check). If they become offensive or aggressive, she will try to leave the table, though she will remain in the longhouse. A careful conversation with Elsa can reveal the following information: Her name is Elsa Thalfardot, her parents died in the feud between the Ashlannach and the Widsith, and she has only recently come to Tenebrous.

If no conversation can be bridged, the PCs should be given a chance to make Wisdom checks or other information gathering rolls (whether they are aware of it or not) and you should be able to give the following clues: A thin sliver of blood can be seen trickling down Elsa's arm. Her black boots appear to have blood on the heel. You should cover this information by throwing out red herrings about other guests of the longhouse.

A character that passes a Wisdom check will notice that Elsa is staring at man in his early 50s across the room. Any questions about him will be answered with, "I think he is someone my father knew."

The characters can learn more about the man easily. He is well known to the other patrons of the inn, or they may even approach him directly. Elsa herself will not give away any extra information about him, and she will eventually



leave the inn alone.

The man is commonly called "Brother Lars." He is a chronicler and researcher at the Temple of Khoss. Lars himself is not a priest, merely a man well versed in languages and lore. He spends most of the money he earns on drinking. In his drunken moments, he has discussed

THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS



with many patrons his role at the temple as a researcher. He brags about his studies of prophecy and fate, and generally overstates his importance in the Temple of the Doom God. Recently, he had an unusual meeting at the inn with a man who is known to be a thief and associate of Fenrik. An acolyte usually accompanies Lars to the inn but waits outside and escorts him back to his room at the Temple. He is not well liked.

A GAME OF HOUNDS

It is also very important that someone play some hounds with another elderly man. This old man is Luka, and may or may not be known already to the characters. Even if they already know him, they do not know much about him. Luka is a veteran of the war, and despite quickly ap-

proaching the age of 75, he shows no sign of slowing down. What stands out most about Luka are his twisted and deformed wrists, which look scarred and broken. Luka is also a casual practitioner of dark arts, but primarily in research only and very much in secret.

During the course of the game, Luka will say a few cryptic things, "you have a decent astrological sign for this day" or "your hands say so much about your fate in this world." But most tellingly he will tell the adventurers, "the innocent person is not always so innocent."

To play out the game, have the player who partakes in the match make an Intelligence roll. If the character succeeds, it means he or she played the match well and was well liked by Luka, temporarily gaining a secret blessing from the old man. This blessing is a +1 on their next dice roll.



THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

You can actually break out a checkerboard for this, or some other game board, if you prefer. Allow yourself, as Luka, to take two moves every second turn and the player to play normally.

rune tattoo common amongst Ashlannach warriors during the war.

If the characters do not seem interested in following up on the murder, Luka will approach the PCs and tell them, "this man knows a truly innocent soul." If the characters still have no interest in the events or on following up the GM has several options. They could continue the adventure without pushing the characters to the next scene and hope the characters find themselves back on the right track. The GM can put this module down and create a different adventure or start a different module. The GM can elect to have Thane Rollo round up the characters and put them in charge of the investigation. It is best to let the players decide the actions of their characters, however, and not railroad them into the story.

As they exit the back room, the characters are met by a young, frail acolyte who offers to take them to the dead man's home.

TENTACLES AT THE DOOR

At some point in the night, Lars will vanish into the back room, and Elsa will also disappear shortly after. A short time later, the characters will hear a loud crash from the back room, followed by urgent and desperate screams.

Anyone who rushes to the back room will find the door jammed shut, taking a Strength roll to break open. Once the room is breached, the characters near the door will be assaulted by a number of black tentacles, covered in blood and a clear white ichor. There is one tentacle per player character plus one additional tentacle. These tentacles are thrashing about blindly, their purpose complete. Therefore, they suffer a -3 to attack and damage rolls on the first round of combat. As they acquire new targets and begin self-preservation, the penalty is reduced by 1 every round until it returns to 0.

Tentacles: AC 3 or 8, Move 6, HD 2 + 2 (11 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 slam (1d3), Size L, Morale N/A, XP 175, Special wrestling, drag, squeeze (1d6), see page 44.

If the tentacles are defeated, they hit the floor and dissolve into a blackish, foul smelling slime that begins to be washed away by water spraying from a row of busted barrels and buckets. In the middle of the room lies the body of the old man Elsa was watching, torn limb from limb. His chest is ripped open, showing ribs and organs, and his head is twisted at an odd angle. Blood is splattered across the walls, floor and ceiling. The window along the wall and above the row of barrels has also been broken, and, with a proper skill roll (some sort of investigation or perception skill), the players can notice that the blood on the broken window does not match the splatter effects of the rest of the blood in the room.

The victim turns out to be Lars. Searching his body, the characters will find two keys. The first key seems to be a very common type, the kind used on most doors, but the second appears to fit a smaller lock. Another check of the body will reveal a tattoo on the man's forearm. It is the double "R"



CHAPTER 3: THE TEMPLE OF KHOSS

The ruins around the Temple of Khoss house the dregs of Tenebrous. Currently, they are home to a large population of dislocated people, including poor workers, runaways, and young drifters, from musicians to secret cultists. As the characters arrive at the temple, the snowfall begins to

melt into a light drizzle, covering the streets around the temple with wet and foul smelling puddles. Entering the temple is hardly an improvement. Long neglect and disrepair make it seem as if more rain is falling inside it than outside on the streets. The Temple of Khoss does not see

many visitors—most people fear the dread God of Dooms.

The acolyte will show them to Brother Lars' room, but they must remain quiet so not to invite the wrath of the Doom Lord.

Lars' quarters are located on the western wing of the temple and can only be reached by taking a set of stairs. A brief yet foul smelling time later the characters arrive at his door. It has a small wooden box clumsily nailed to it. The box has two names carved onto its surface: Lars and Rudric. A Wisdom check will reveal clawed marks along the edges of the door and floor.

Entering the rooms, the characters are confronted by a horrid sight. A man's decapitated body lies on the floor, his head nowhere to be seen. His face, however, has been peeled away and hangs on the wall nearby. Blood covers the room. Another Wisdom check will reveal cloven hoofprints in the blood, as well as what appear to be small boot heels. A character with healing can determine that the man has been dead for three hours or so (characters can use an Intelligence check if all else fails).





THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

A FACE TO REMEMBER

Upon first noticing the face impaled to the wall, the eyeless lids of the face will open and the mouth will drop open. The remains of face begins to wail a guttural and voiceless scream, so loud and shrill that the characters cover their ears or otherwise move away from the shriek.

The face left behind on the wall is a Shrieking Head (see page 41).

Shrieking Head: AC 7, Move 0, HD 3 (14 hit points), THACO 17, Attack none, Size S, Morale 12, XP 120.

Shrieking Heads give off an ear-piercing shriek whenever someone enters the room for 1d3 rounds. The noise will attract the zombies in room 10, if they are haven't been dealt with already.

Aside from the loud scream the Shrieking Head does no damage. However, if the characters are there uninvited or have previously crossed paths with the assassins working for Brother Arns, or otherwise have gained the ire of the Temple of Khoss, the guards the scream undoubtedly attract will be a problem.

The acolyte will identify the man as Brother Rudric, and the characters will also find two keys on the body, similar



to the ones that Lars carried. One key opens the door to the dwelling and the other fits a smaller lock. They will also find the double "R" rune on Rudric's arm. Rummaging through the room, the PCs can find very little of use. The two men seem to have owned only two things—a set of bunk beds and a large wooden chest secured with a small lock. The chest is locked, but the characters can pick the lock, break the chest, or use Lars' or Rudric's keys to open it.

Opening the chest, the characters will find documents that reveal the two men to be former guards at a keep no one has ever heard of, along with several scrolls. Some of the scrolls detail a secret contract between seven men.

Careful observation of the scroll will reveal the writer of the scroll as Thalfar, which is written on the back, as well as the names of six other men: Lars, Rudric, Rathgar, Solden, Volfric and Hrothdor.

There are five main ways to track down more information on these men: conduct independent research at the library at the Temple of Khoss, find the thief who was seen meeting with Lars, contact a fortune teller or witch, track down Elsa Thalfardot herself, or ask Luka.



CHAPTER 4: ELSA'S PREY

By this point, the player characters should realize that Elsa is hunting down former guards of the keep. Whether or not they know why is an entirely different matter. Some may assume she is hunting them for revenge for their crimes against the Thanelands. Others may deduce that she is killing them to avenge her father, which is the truth. Whether the PCs pity her, agree with her, or want to save the last few men on her list is entirely up to them.

GENERAL RESEARCH

However they proceed, the characters can learn that, of these men, two others are known to still be alive (Rathgar and Volfric) and one is confirmed dead, crucified in the Gardens of Woe as a criminal during the trials that

followed the war (Solden). The last (Hrothdor) is an unknown. Rathgar and Volfric both live in Tenebrous. Volfric is a member of the Solemn Watch that guards the Gardens of Woe. Rathgar is a fortune teller in one of the Huirdu camps outside the city.

Until recently, both Rudric and Lars worked as researchers for the Temple of Khoss. A quick visit to the priests of the temple will reveal that both men have been absent for over a week, ever since they received a new batch of journals and letters they were assigned to document.

Research through the village, either at the longhouse or another public area, will reveal that the events took place at Stormgard Keep. Stormgard Keep was abandoned long before the war, though the Ashlannach occupied the ruins during the conflict.

LUKA

Luka has a wealth of information, but all from the supernatural and superstitious nature. He knows of a story of a girl who watched her father betrayed and murdered by his own men and vowed revenge. He knows of a secret keep where some studied the arts of and engaged in demonic rituals and human sacrifices. The keep hoarded a wealth of archaic and arcane literature and tomes stolen by Thalfar. He knows too that some of these books were missing when the keep was finally liberated by the Widsiths. Characters visiting Luka will be offered protection runes on their weapons. Luka will paint red and black runes on one weapon per character. These weapons will act as +1 weapons until Elsa is killed or saved.





THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

TRACKING ELSA

Tracking Elsa is not easy, unless the characters have some sort of magic, psychic, or other power to track mystical energies. However, clues gathered in the encounter with Elsa do reveal she recently arrived in Tenebrous. Quick use of contacts, money or charm can indeed track down that Elsa Thalfardot came in a few nights ago but this will take a few hours to research. Her invitation to the feast at the longhouse of Thane Rollo, incidentally, was actually for a man named Kroner who, among other things, runs a small farmhouse not too far from Tenebrous. Again, this information may take a few hours or several days to gather.

A visit to the farmhouse will reveal that Elsa is indeed staying there. She is not there, however, when the characters arrive.

After a few moments of questioning or conversation, the housekeeper will inform the characters the Elsa left earlier in order to “find old family friends”.

In truth, Elsa has gone to the Gardens of Woe, where Volfric serves as a member of the Solemn Watch. She is a fortunate hunter—she arrives just as Rathgar shows up as well.

FORTUNE TELLERS AND WITCHES

The Gardens of Woe are surrounded by hermit-monks, reclusive godi, and fortune tellers. These individuals are either true ascetics attempting to reach a higher level of understanding or charlatans attempting to earn coin off the bewildered, lost, bereaved or otherwise emotionally compromised visitors to the Gardens. These individuals may be able to add insight or give clues about Stormgard Keep, Elsa, or the conflict between the Widsith and Ashlannach. One in particular, Aelorin, is actually a true sorceress who dwells in a cave not far from the Gardens. She was once an advisor to Thalfar, but has remained hidden in the years since the conflict. Her powers have weakened over the years, but her intellect is still sharp. If the characters can find her, she can assist them in their assault on Stormgard Keep, or on any number of other possible adventures and problems.

Aelorin: AC 10, Move 12, HD 6 (d4; 16 hit points), THACO 18, Attack 1 dagger (1d4), Size M, Morale 11, XP 975 (6th level mage/4th level priest), Ability Scores Intelligence 15, Wisdom 17.

Charlatans: AC 10, Move 12, HD 1 (d6; 6 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 1 dagger (1d4), Size M, Morale 11, XP 65 (1st level bard).

RATHGAR AND VOLFRIC

Rathgar has heard about the deaths of Rudric and Lars. They had only recently contacted him. Rathgar has deduced that an old curse set on them by young Elsa is coming true, dooming the five men to horrible deaths. He has decided to find his old friend Volfric and hopes that, with his aid, they can defeat the curse.

The letters and journals that Rudric and Lars found belonged to Thalfar, Elsa’s father. And while they mostly detail arcane and magical things from Thalfar’s time at Stormgard, the recently deceased chroniclers—and later Rathgar—came to the realization that the last few dozen pages were penned by someone else: Elsa Thalfardot herself. In these pages, Elsa reveals the basic shape of her plan for revenge, commanding the help of demons by learning their names, and binding them to her own skin. The last entry was from a few months ago, when the journals were apparently lost to Elsa on one of her many visits to Tenebrous.

If the characters visit Rathgar at the Huirdu camp, they will find a gentle old man who is polite but elusive about his past. He denies any knowledge of the other guards, their whereabouts, or what has happened in the past few days. Despite these denials, a careful search will reveal a hastily written note in his tent detailing the death of Brother Lars. He will eventually refuse any more questions and insist the characters leave. He will then depart his tent in a hurry, carrying a bundle of wrapped packages, which obviously hold scrolls. The characters can easily follow him to the Gardens of Woe, where he plans to meet with Volfric.

CHAPTER 5: SINS OF THE PAST

THE GARDENS OF WOE

As one travels toward Tenebrous, lines of large stones rise up on the horizon. As all men of the Thanelands know, these are the rocks of the Gardens of Woe. The Gardens are a fearful place, where men are punished for the most severe crimes by the cruel practice of crucifixion. Many a sorcerer and traitor have met their fates bound to those ancient rocks.

These rocks are not to be dismissed or disrespected. To that end, the city of Arfhrdheim and the village of Tenebrous founded the Solemn Watch, to stand guard over the stones, ensuring that no one desecrates the sacred land or soils the sacred ceremonies of the trials of the stones.

The stones stand upright, reaching three or more meters high, though none exceeds four meters. Arranged in rows like a garden, the roughly two hundred stones face eastward, in five columns. Each stone has four chains which are made of what is believed to be dwarven-forged metal. The condemned are chained to the stones by each of their limbs. Their bodies are bent into a broken X, left to the sun and wind and sky for punishment.

Ancient Thanelaw states that any man who lies upon the stones for three days and lives is absolved of his guilt. Few survive. In fact, most criminals are chained to the stones during deep winter. They freeze to death long before they die of thirst. Anyone caught giving these men water is put on a stone in the gardens as well.

There are many Gardens of Woe in the Ice Kingdoms, but the one near Tenebrous is the largest. Others consist of only a single stone. There are several of these single and twin stone gardens in this region. Most do not possess the "magic" of the sacred ones.

However the characters get to the Gardens of Woe, the events that follow pretty much remain the same.

Upon arrival at the Garden, a guard spies Rathgar and approaches him. He seems angry and stern. The players



can easily deduce this is Volfric. He shouts at the man to leave, that he is finished and wants nothing to do with the keep or the girl anymore. Before the two meet, however, a wicked wind picks up and it begins to rain. The sky darkens as clouds block the sun (or moon).

A few dozen meters away, Elsa can be seen approaching the men. They both spot her and look on in terror as she rips off her cloak revealing her nearly nude body, covered in scars and tattoos. In one hand she holds a ceremonial knife. Shouting out a handful of demonic words, she slashes at two tattoos and the blood spurts forth from



THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

her wounds. Where blood from one wound splashes to the ground, the earth begins to liquefy and bubble. Within a few seconds the ground gives way and a pig-headed humanoid form made of black rock, water and blood stands up and rushes toward Rathgar and Volfric. Both men scream.

The other wound gushes forth blood that flows up into the sky and takes the form of hawk made of blood and fire. It likewise flies toward the men.

The characters must check for surprise.

Besides Rathgar, Volfric, and the PCs, the fight also includes six members of the Solemn Watch. After the first target (Volfric or Rathgar) is killed, any further killing blow by a demon should kill one of these NPCs. Elsa will vanish during the fight, but a Wisdom check will have the players noticing her running down a dark path back into Tenebrous.

Solemn Watchmen (6): AC 6 (studded leather and shield), Move 12, HD 2 (d10; 16 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 long sword (1d8) or 1 short bow (1d6), Size M, Morale 15, XP 120 (2nd level ranger).

Rathgar: AC 10, Move 12, HD 3 (d6; 16 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 dagger (1d4), Size M, Morale 9, XP 120 (3rd level thief).

Volfric: AC 5 (chain mail), Move 12, HD 2 (d10; 15 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 long sword (1d8), Size M, Morale 11, XP 65 (2nd level fighter).

Blood Hawk: AC 10, Move 6 (fly 18), HD 1 (5 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 2 claws (1d2) and 1 beak (1d4), Size S, Morale 20, XP 120, Special +1 or better weapon needed to hit.

Rock Demon: AC 7, Move 12, HD 2 (9 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 2 slams (1d6), Size M, Morale 20, XP 175, Special +1 or better weapon needed to hit.

Volfric and Rathgar do not have to die here; in fact they could both live. The information on the spy, the innocent man, and his curse upon them can be learned in many ways. Perhaps the characters find it in a journal or diary? Perhaps Volfric tells them in his tent while wracked with fear and sadness? Maybe they find out from Luka or even Elsa herself? Don't think you have to wait until the demons attack to reveal the information. Perhaps Elsa attacks Rathgar at his tent or Volfric at home. Adapt and adjust as you need to.

THE INNOCENT MAN

It is imperative that either Rathgar or Volfric survives the encounter long enough to tell their story to the characters. In these final moments, the characters will learn that the last man was not truly one of the guards, but a spy instead. He was a nobleman who disagreed with the Ashlannachs and joined the Widsith in order to preserve his homeland.

Aided by Widsith adventurers, this spy infiltrated Thalfar's forces and revealed the location of the keep and other information to his allies.

It was the spy who persuaded the guards to denounce the black arts that Thalfar was practicing at the keep. He instigated the revolt of the guards and their defection. However, the spy refused to take part in the murder of Thalfar and his wife. It was he who helped Elsa survive by hiding her during the rampage. In retaliation, the guards captured, tortured, and murdered him. In his final moments, he cursed them to face the demons of their sins and declared that he would be avenged by the blood of their victims!

Eventually the dying man—be it Volfric or Rathgar—will reveal the spy's name as Kroner.





CHAPTER 6: CAST OUT YOUR DEMONS

Having confronted Rathgar and Volfric, Elsa has little else to do but deal with her own demons and her lost soul. Her plan is simple. She will return to Stormgard Keep and commit suicide by slashing as many of her tattoos as she can before she passes out (or dies) and then wait to bleed to death. However, she does plan to spend some time adoring her father in the keep reading his notes. This will give the characters time enough to reach her.

You can use Stormgard Keep on its own, or insert it into another location or setting. The major change you as a GM would have to make is to replace the encounter on level two in room 6a. If they aren't meeting Elsa there, replace her with some other worthy antagonist. An evil mage or someone possessed individual of your own design or a monster of equal ability.

If using Stormgard Keep on its own use the introduction text below, or a variation of it, when the characters finally arrive at the keep.

Note: As game master you can relocate the final encounter anywhere you want; she may be in an abandoned building, by the river, at a shop, in a temple or graveyard or any other suitable location. It may be hours later, immediately after Volfric or Rathgar's confession about the spy, or days later, as needed to fit your timeline and plot. Whatever happens, her final release of the remaining demons should not occur until the characters are present.

To find Elsa, the characters must travel to Stormgard Keep and search the ruins and dungeons. The keep is three days' travel on horseback and four or five days on foot. The characters will need either a guide or a map. Many people will be baffled that anyone is looking for the keep. It has been buried under snow and muck for at least a decade. Only Elsa knows that the keep was raised from its watery grave by K'hargaroth, as part of his pact with her. For this reason, the keep is crawling with demons in his service.

You approach the site, coming over a rise, and find it right where the old man said it was: nestled in a shallow clearing that has since become a muddy swamp. The

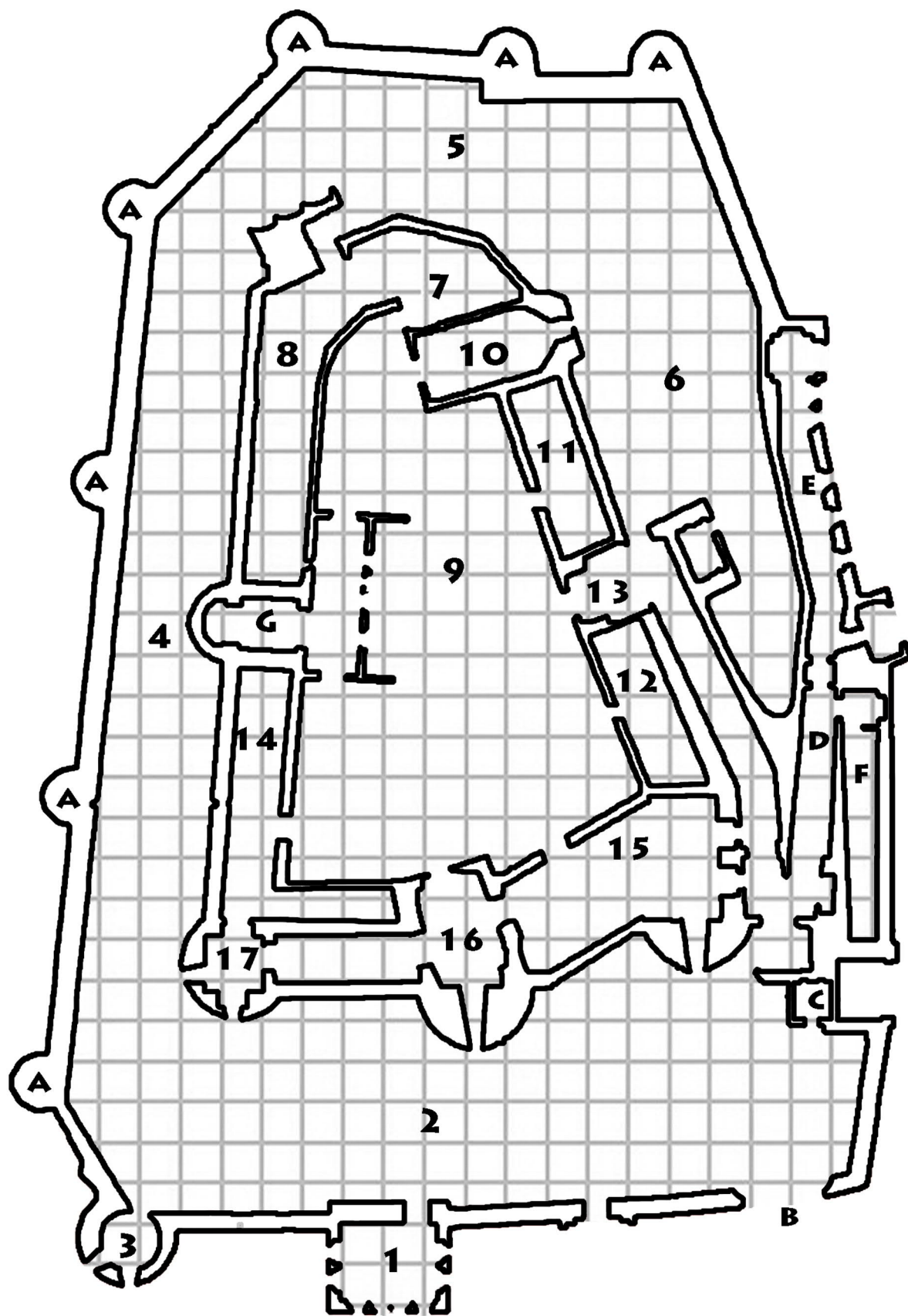
walls that once protected the keep are in various states of collapse and partially submerged in a stagnant pool that all your instincts tell you to steer clear of. But if the old man was right about the location of the keep, perhaps his stories of treasure could be true as well.

What you assume to have been the gatehouse is little more than a pile of stones and beams. The building retains only the shape of what it once was, a twenty five foot square outline of the previously formidable hold. The remains of a roof, propped up by failing timbers,

Table 6.1: Key to Stormgard Keep, Level 1

Entry	Description	Encounters
1.	Gate House 25' × 25'	Stirges
2.	South Courtyard 200' × 50'	Sub-demons
3.	Main Guard Tower 15' × 15'	Stirges
4.	West Courtyard 30' × 190'	Green Slime
5.	North Courtyard 150' × 40'	Giant Rats
6.	East Courtyard 55' × 70'	Wailing Wind
7.	North Gate Yard 40' × 20'	Green Slime
8.	Stables 20' × 80'	Giant Rats' Nest
9.	Inner Courtyard 75' × 130'	Wailing Wind
10.	Chapel 20' × 35'	Sub-demons
11.	Prison Cell 15' × 40'	Skeletons
12.	Prison Cell 15' × 40'	Skeletons
13.	Torture Chamber 20' × 20'	Rot Grubs
14.	Barracks 15' × 60' and 45' × 10'	
15.	Lower Hall 50' × 30'	Sub-demons
16.	Inner Keep Gate House 20' × 30'	
17.	Tower Base 15' × 20'	Imp/Quasit
A.	Guard Tower 10' round	
B.	Broken Wall 20' long	
C.	Supply Chamber 10' × 10'	Green Slime
D.	Storage Hall 10' × 60'	
E.	Abandoned Docks 10' × 90'	Strangle-weed
F.	Armory/Smith-room 10' × 65'	
G.	Well-room 25' × 15'	Lemure

Figure 6.1: Opposite Page: Stormgard Keep, Outside and Ground Floor





THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

has kept the rain off but can do nothing for the sinking foundation. Keen ears can make out soft chirps and rustles of a nest somewhere in the northernmost corner.

Conveniently, only one of the walls fell inward, scattered over the rotted and sagging wooden floor that forces your party to be nimble on their feet, at once to avoid the debris, but also having to test each step as you proceed forward, lest the floor splinter and dissolve beneath your boots. The beams supporting the floorboards have long since rotted, and each step gushes yet more mud and water between the cracks.

Where the gatehouse meets the walls of the keep is a heavy oak door, well made, but gray with age and exposure. The hinges seem well preserved, with a patina that rust doesn't seem to have penetrated.

OUTSIDE THE KEEP

A. GUARD TOWER

These towers are 20 feet high and look over the 17 foot wall of the keep. They are simply a set of ladders allowing guards to ascend to a protected platform enabling them to look out over the countryside near the keep. From here a guard can engage the enemy with bow/crossbow fire or with long polearms. Most of the guard towers are in disrepair, with broken or rotten ladders (20% of falling when used for 1d6 damage, Dexterity check for half damage) while the platforms are in ever worse repair (chance of collapse from platform is total weight on the platform divided by 10, same damage as falling from a ladder).

B. BROKEN WALL

The shattered walls can be passed over with some effort. A Dexterity check will get a character over the wall in 1d4 rounds. A failed check will also get the character over the wall but they will suffer 1 point of damage per point the check failed by and the number of rounds to get over the wall will be increased by the same value. A second Dexterity check can be made to reduce the damage by half, but not to alter the time it takes to get over the wall. A thief or other character with the proper climbing skills can make a climb check before any attempt to use their raw dexterity. If they succeed, they get over the wall in 1d4 – 1 rounds (minimum 1 round) If they fail, they can then make the initial Dexterity check.

C. SUPPLY CHAMBER

This 10' × 10' room was once a room of supplies. It is a dark, dank room filled with debris and green slime. Everything is coated in green slime, including the walls and ceiling.

Green Slime: AC 9, Move 0, HD 2 (9 hit points), THACO 19, Attack see below, Size S, Morale N/A, XP 65, **Special** cannot be harmed by most weapons or spells, but suffers damage from cold or fire, and is killed by a *cure disease* spell.

A creature with green slime on it must cut away the affected area, amputate the affected limb, or die in 1d4 rounds (and be converted to green slime: no *raise dead* or *resurrection* possible). It can also eat through wood (slowly) and metal (quickly—a metal item will be consumed in 1d6 rounds). Only stone can stop it.

D. STORAGE HALL

The storage hall would have once been a place to store excess goods; it is now a muddy roofless hallway with a clear view of the night sky. The corridor descends as it travels northward. To the east, several open doorways lead to a series of abandoned docks, where the water from the local river floods the base of the storage hall.

The storage hall is roughly 10' wide and 60' long before emptying out into the docks of area F.

E. ABANDONED DOCKS

Once connected to a series of waterways that led to the minor rivers of the area, these wooden docks are long abandoned and neglected. The wooden piers extend out over a water sodden bog, collapsed and rotten. The stagnant water stinks even in the cold weather of the Ice Kingdoms. An occasional bubble breaks the surface of the otherwise motionless water. Long, thick, and thorny strings of plant life infest the water and twirl around portions of the docks in a stranglehold.

Characters that linger here may fall prey to the strangeweed that infests the docks. Strangeweed lies still until suddenly lashing out with its fronds and attempting to grapple its foes. Grappled foes are either squeezed until they die or held underwater until they drown.

Strangle-Weed: AC see below, Move 0, HD 1 (6 hit points), THACO see below, Attack 1 slam (1d8), Size

THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

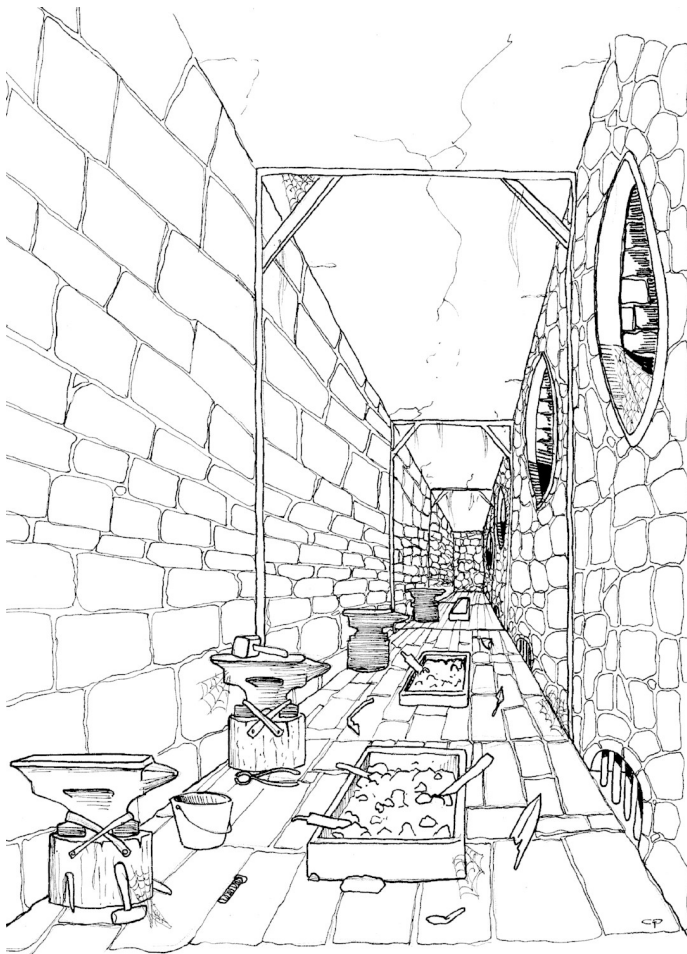


M, **Morale** N/A, **XP** 175, **Special** constriction, +3 to surprise, immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, *polymorph*, and mind-influencing spells and effects.

Strangleweed must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict in the same round and every round until the target gets free. Strangleweed deals 1d6 points of damage with a successful grapple attack against man-sized or smaller opponents. A victim of the grapple can escape by using their action to make a Strength check at -2.

F. ARMORY

Filled with anvils and smithing tools long useless from rust, neglect, and rot, this long hall is about 65' long and 10' wide. Fire pits dot the floor in every ten feet or so, and vents open along the east wall. Everywhere, broken metal



weapons and tools litter the floor. All evidence seems to indicate that this hall was once used by the keep's blacksmiths and armorers.

G. WELL-ROOM

This 25' × 15' well room has a large opening facing east toward a muddy open top hallway with a clear view of the night sky (even if it is covered in rain and clouds). There is a smaller exit facing the inner courtyard to the west. The center of this stone wrought room is a rock and mortar well. The well is circular in shape and is roughly 5' across. The stone walls of the well stand about 3 foot off the ground. There is an old bucket attached to rotten rope lying on the floor near the well. Slosy sounds of water can be heard from the dark well. Above the well room in the ceiling is a 3' × 3' circular hole peering up into the second story of the keep. It is dark and nothing can be seen (see room 3 of level 2). As the characters approach the well they are attacked by the slimy, gelatinous tentacles of a lemure.

Lemure: AC 7, **Move** 3, **HD** 3 (14 hit points), **THACO** 19, **Attack** 1 slam (1d3), **Size** M, **Morale** 20, **XP** 270, **Special** regenerates 1 hp/round, immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells, cannot be destroyed except by *blessed*, *rune*, or holy items or weapons.

STORMGARD KEEP, GROUND FLOOR

1. GATE HOUSE

Roughly 25' × 25', this square room is made of stones carved from the nearby hills and mountains. The southern wall is a crumbled ruin, and the eastern and western walls are not any better. The once wooden floor is now a mess of rotted splinters and mud. The northern wall houses a single heavy wooden door on the eastern edge. The stone, wood and thatched ceiling above is dark and the chirping of insects and birds is loud. Those who step into the gate house sink nearly an inch into the dirty mud beneath their feet.

If anybody approaches the large wooden door, a rustle of feathers and wings erupts from the ruined ceiling above as a flock of angry black birds swoop out of their nests and swarm their prey.

Stirges (10): AC 8, **Move** 3 (fly 18), **HD** 1 + 1 (6 hit points), **THACO** 17, **Attack** 1 bite (1d3), **Size** S, **Morale** 8, **XP** 175, **Special** attacks as a 4 HD crea-



THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

ture (already calculated in THACO), after first hit it drains 1d3 damage per round with no further attack needed, once it has drained 10 hit points it will depart.

2. SOUTH COURTYARD

The south courtyard is large, running east to west. It could easily be 200 feet from one wall to next and at some points reaching 50 feet from the outer wall to the south to the inner wall of the north. Three towers of the inner wall can be seen to the north; one on either end of the wall and one directly in the center about 40 feet from the gate house behind.

The sky above the south courtyard is darker than it was just moments ago outside the keep. The earth is dry and yet soft. It isn't quite mud, but it feels different from the ground elsewhere in the area—almost like walking over graves.

The wall to the south has an entry into the gate house. Large sections of it are missing further toward the east. On the wall to the west there are two towers, one equal in size to those on the main keep, and another, 30 feet north, that is much smaller. The south courtyard rounds the inner keep on the west, while the northeast corner hosts two doorless entryways.

As the party crosses the muddy courtyard, a flash of shadow and red rushes across the walls. Something small is watching.

As the characters investigate—or flee or prepare, or whatever—they are attacked by 5 sub-demons.

Sub-demons (5): AC 10, Move 12, HD 1 (6 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 2 claws (1d2) and 1 bite (1d4), Size S, Morale 20, XP 120, Special +1 or better magical weapon required to hit.

3. MAIN GUARD TOWER

This once mighty tower is a shambles, only extending upwards 15 feet before ending in the remains of a collapsed tower. The rotted wooden stairs allow one to climb high enough to see over the lands that Stormgard Keep once protected. The area within the tower is a tighter 15' × 15' space, even less in many places, because of the collapsed stairs and ceiling. There is very little mud inside because the floor is a mixture of stone slabs and rotted creaking wood. The creaking of wood is soon replaced by the screeching of birds as a swarm of angry black birds



swoop out and flock around the party, slashing with their beaks and claws.

Stirges (10): AC 8, Move 3 (fly 18), HD 1 + 1 (6 hit points), THACO 17, Attack 1 bite (1d3), Size S, Morale 8, XP 175, Special attacks as a 4 HD creature (already calculated in THACO), after first hit it drains 1d3 damage per round with no further attack needed, once it has drained 10 hit points it will depart.

4. WEST COURTYARD

This courtyard is another large stretch of muddy and wet land. Though far narrower than is comfortable, it seems that the space between walls is at times less than 15 feet, with the widest gap between walls being at most 20 feet. Along the western wall run a series of smaller towers roughly every 30 or so feet. To the west is the outer wall of the main keep house, standing upwards to fifty feet high in places. The muddy courtyard continues for about 100 feet until opening into the north courtyard. Puddles of mud

THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS



cover the ground, and sparse and stringy grass struggles to survive in patches. The sullen water is coated in a darker green moss. The occasional bubble spews up from the water to belch out a foul odor.

As the party nears the middle of the courtyard a strange series of green globs and drops begin to rain down. Each party member must make a Dexterity check or be hit by green slime.

Green Slime: AC 9, Move 0, HD 2 (9 hit points), THACO 19, Attack see below, Size S, Morale N/A, XP 65, Special cannot be harmed by most weapons or spells, but suffers damage from cold or fire, and is killed by a *cure disease* spell.

A creature with green slime on it must cut away the affected area, amputate the affected limb, or die in 1d4 rounds (and be converted to green slime, no *raise dead* or *resurrection* possible). It can also eat through wood (slowly) and metal (quickly—a metal item will be consumed in 1d6 rounds). Only stone can stop it.

5. NORTH COURTYARD

Another large open area that runs 150' × 40'. This area is not as muddy as the other courtyards, and the foundation of the keep's road and pathways allow for better footing and movement. To the southeast, another large courtyard is present while an entryway into the keep is on the inner wall to your south (the north wall of the keep). The guard towers continue along the outer walls with three of them running along the northern outer wall.

A series of wooden planks begin to cover the ground when you get within 20' of the keep's inner walls. It seems that the ground was originally covered with the wood, probably for the ease of moving wagons and horses around the naturally muddy terrain. The only way into the keep is to cross this wooden roadway. Another pile of wood rests in a heap of rubble along the wall to the south. It looks like a collapsed set of stairs that at one time connected to some doors on the second floor of the keep (see room 5 of level 2). As the characters walk across the wooden planks they can hear something moving underneath and are suddenly set on by several large and angry rats.

Giant Rats (10): AC 7, Move 12, HD ½ (d4; 3 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 1 bite (1d3), Size S, Morale 6, XP 15.

6. EAST COURTYARD

This is the smallest courtyard of Stormgard Keep. The east courtyard is 55' × 70' with a large open area. Besides the two guard towers on the north wall in the north courtyard, the east courtyard houses no other guard towers. However, it does lead to an opening in the eastern side of the inner keep. The terrain becomes more rocky and stony the farther one travels into the east courtyard. As the characters reach halfway across, a strange wind begins to pick up. The howl of this wind seems to begin in the spine and travels up the back, leaving the body cold and shaking.

Wailing Wind: The Wailing Wind is treated as the 4th level wizard spell *fear*, with the center of the courtyard considered the caster.

7. NORTH GATE

The north gate is a roughly 40' × 20' area room with an open roof, save for a series of three apparently wooden beams that cross across the top of the gate room creating an extended Y shape. Scaling ladders line the walls, allowing passage up to the north wall for a lookout over the north and east courtyards. The ground is paved with cracked cobblestones. Weeds grow rampantly through the crevices between stones, and piles of feces are scattered across the area. Partially decomposed rats can be found in several areas. On closer inspection, they appear to be slightly digested.

To the east is a large opening into the keep, while to the south is an opening into the inner courtyard.

After a few moments roll 1d6. That many drops of green slime fall from the timbers above the gatehouse. Each party member must make a Dexterity check or be hit by green slime. If there are fewer party members in the group than the number rolled, then the excess green slime falls harmlessly to the ground.

Green Slime: AC 9, Move 0, HD 2 (9 hit points), THACO 19, Attack see below, Size S, Morale N/A, XP 65, Special cannot be harmed by most weapons or spells, but suffers damage from cold or fire, and is killed by a *cure disease* spell.

A creature with green slime on it must cut away the affected area, amputate the affected limb, or die in 1d4 rounds (and be converted to green slime, no *raise dead* or *resurrection* possible). It can also eat through wood (slowly) and metal (quickly—a metal item will be consumed in 1d6 rounds). Only stone can stop it.



THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

8. STABLES

This area of the keep seems to be a long tunnel. About fifteen feet into the tunnel, the stone walls are covered in wooden planks. The tunnel is about 20' wide, and the ceiling reaches about 20' above. The last 60' of this 80' chamber is divided into a series of wooden corrals, and it quickly becomes evident that this was once the stables of Stormgard. Debris from rotting wood falling from the ceiling, corrals, and walls cover the floor, as do the bones of many dead horses and a few skeletons of their former masters. All the bones appear to be gnawed on.

Spending too much time in this room or needlessly searching the debris will result in the party being attacked by a pack of giant rats.

Giant Rats (10): AC 7, Move 12, HD ½ (d4; 3 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 1 bite (1d3), Size S, Morale 6, XP 15.

9. INNER COURTYARD

The inner courtyard is a magnificent place, or at least it once was. The ground seems to be composed of nicely carved and smoothed stone inlaid with intricate artwork. The elaborate patterns of colored stones (no gems) are now covered in mud, feces, pools of stagnant water, and worms. The walls of the inner keep are covered in ivy and other vines, most of them thorny, brown or black. Four shattered doors can be seen leading into the keep along the eastern wall, while there are two on the western wall and two more on the southern wall. In the middle of the courtyard, near the middle of the western wall, is a series of low stone walls, the remnants of some chamber or room that no longer exists.

As the party reaches halfway across, a strange wind begins to pick up. The howl of this wind seems to begin in the spine and travels up the back, leaving the body cold and shaking.

Wailing Wind: The Wailing Wind is treated as the 4th level wizard spell *fear* with the center of the courtyard considered the caster.

The Inner Courtyard has entryways/exits into areas 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and G.

10. CHAPEL

This horse-shaped room is a wreck. Pews lie shattered and broken all across the floor, their wood long infested with termites and other vermin. Stained glass windows depicting the Thanic Gods are shattered and splintered. A stone altar, adorned with gold and silver inlays, is collapsed and broken at the end of the chapel hall. A staircase lies collapsed in the north eastern corner. The chamber it leads to is now blocked by a large and locked trap door (see room 6 of level 2). The only item left undamaged is a large painting behind the broken altar. The painting depicts three demonic humanoids dancing around a fire. The room is unusually warm.

The chapel is approximately 20' wide × 35' long.

The painting is magical. The three demons are actually rune-trapped demons. When the adventurers approach the painting, the room grows even warmer and a gust of wind blows out any light source that is not magical in nature. A series of creaking sounds echo around the chapel. As the party looks around, no one notices the three demons vanishing from the painting. When they look at the painting again, they must roll for surprise. Almost instantly, the three demons launch an attack from different directions (from the left, from the right and from above).

Sub-demons (3): AC 10, Move 12, HD 1 (6 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 2 claws (1d2) and 1 bite (1d4), Size S, Morale 20, XP 120, **Special** +1 or better magical weapon required to hit.

11. PRISON CELL

This room is 15' wide × 40' long and made of large bricks and mortar. The brick walls seem to be made of individual bricks, each over 2' × 2' in size (and the walls seem thicker than other areas of the keep). The walls are lined with metal plates bolted into the brick. These plates appear at the base of the floor and again about five feet above the base, spaced every five feet along the side and back wall. Each plate has a metal ring attached and from the rings dangle chains and manacles. Nine sets of manacles still hold the skeletal remains of former prisoners. The center of the room has a circular drain. The drain is covered by a steel grate.

Any character entering within 2 feet of the skeletons will be attacked. (Check for surprise). Once the first attack is made, the skeletons will rise up, and their chains will fall to the ground. They will then attack the party.

THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

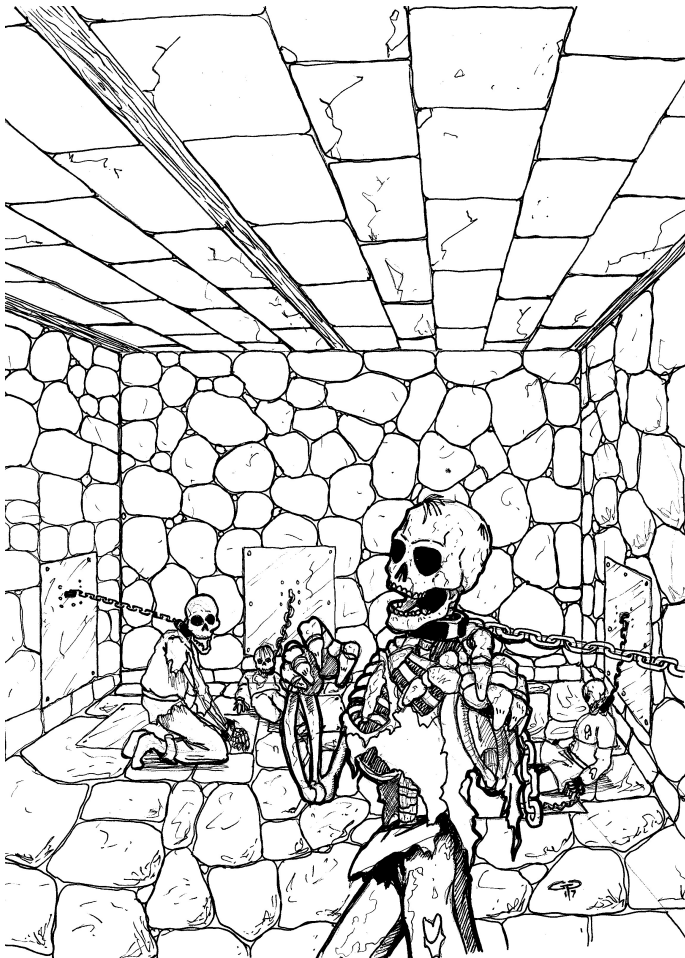


Skeletons (9): AC 7, Move 12, HD 1 (5 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 weapon (1d6), Size M, Morale N/A, XP 65.

Any character who enters within 2 feet of the skeletons will be attacked. (Check for surprise). Once the first attack is made, the skeletons will rise up and their chains will fall to the ground, freeing them. They will then attack the party.

12. PRISON CELL

This room is 15' wide × 40' long and made of large bricks and mortar. The brick walls seem to be made of individual bricks, each over 2' × 2' in size (and the walls seem thicker than other areas of the keep). The walls are lined with metal plates bolted into the brick; these plates appear at the base of the floor and again about five feet above the base spaced every five feet along the side and back wall. Each plate has a metal ring attached and from the rings dangle chains and manacles. Seven sets of manacles still hold the skeletal remains of former prisoners. The center of the room has a circular drain. The drain is covered by a busted steel grate, its metal bars bent in various directions.



Skeletons (7): AC 7, Move 12, HD 1 (5 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 weapon (1d6), Size M, Morale N/A, XP 65.

13. TORTURE CHAMBER

This room (20' × 20') houses a host of torture devices and implements of pain. Old hooks, pins, and other blades still hang on the walls. Other tools are scattered on the floor. In the center of the chamber is a large rack, while the south wall is lined with three sets of stocks.

Rot Grubs: AC 9, Move 1, HD 0 (1 hit point), THACO N/A, Attack 0, Size T, Morale 5, XP 15.

Upon contact with a living being, rot grubs will begin to vigorously burrow deep into the body. Fire must be applied to the site of contact at once in order to prevent the rot grubs from burrowing further. This application of flame inflicts 1d6 hit points of damage per instance. If not stopped immediately, within 1 to 3 turns the rot grubs will find the heart and kill their victim.

14. BARRACKS

This long "L"-shaped room is full of old beds and chests once used by the garrison of this keep. The beds, now rotten and crumbled, are low framed rectangular wooden frames filled with moldy straw and wool. The chests near each bed are simple wooden boxes. There are twenty beds and forty chests. No items of value can be found in either. The main section of the barracks is 15' wide × 60' long, while the extended section of the "L" shape is 45' long × 10' wide.

At the bottom of the "L", on the western section, is a doorway to the south that leads to area 17. The large door looks unharmed by weather, age or neglect and it follows the special rules for the western door in area 15.



THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

15. LOWER HALL

The Lower Hall is a 50' × 30' chamber, empty of everything save the large torn tapestries covering every wall. The tapestries are worn, molded and torn to such extent that their patterns and artwork are long lost to the viewer. The floor is solid stone, made in 2' × 2' blocks sealed with mortar. An eerie laughter fills the hall as the characters enter. Looking around, the characters can see to the east two openings in the wall leading into a shadow filled tunnel. To the west, an exit is barred by a large door that looks unharmed by weather, age or neglect. This door is locked but can be picked (or bashed open) with a -10% penalty.

To the southeast, there is a fortified gate, where the remains of a ballista sit rotting and useless. Several large bolts sit on the ground, covered in worms and termites.

As the characters approach the western door, they are beset by nearly a dozen small demons.

Sub-demons (10): AC 10, Move 12, HD 1 (6 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 2 claws (1d2) and 1 bite (1d4), Size S, Morale 20, XP 120, Special +1 or better magical weapon required to hit.

16. INNER KEEP GATE HOUSE

The Inner Keep Gatehouse controls the small-gated South Courtyard entry, as well as controlling travel from the inner courtyard to the tower base and access to the second floor of the keep. It is roughly 20' × 30' in size and made of large 2' × 2' stone slabs, in the walls, domed ceiling, and floor. The gate to the south courtyard is a double sized door about 7 feet wide, which leads to a doorway that narrows to about 3 feet. This gatehouse opens to the north to the inner courtyard, to the east to the lower hall, and to the west to a hallway and slight stairwell leading up to the lower base of the tower. Each exit is sealed with similar doors (see area 15 for opening rules).

Four soldiers, now rotting skeletons, lie on the cold stone floor, crumpled next to their weapons.

17. TOWER BASE

At the top of a short flight of stairs lies the entryway into the tower which leads to the second level. The stairs are made of white marble and, unlike the rest of the tower, are very clean. The room around the tower base is an oval chamber roughly 15' × 20'. Despite the darkness prevalent elsewhere in and around the keep, this room is brightly lit, though no source of this light can be found or seen.

As the characters approach the large door at the top of the stairs, a shimmering red and green flash of light en-

velopes the door in a hazy purple fog. As the smoke clears, a strange small creature sits in front of the doorway. The creature is a demonic mockery of humankind; A shriveled, two foot tall human-like creature with goat-like legs, small stubby wings on its back and a long, withered scorpion-like tail. The hands of the monster end in long black talons, and its face is a twisted image of a human child—fat and yet skeletal.

The imp will prevent anyone from passing through the doorway. Before anyone can attack, the creature will shout "None of you can have the girl!" When it speaks, it hisses and meows like a cat, yet the sound of a rattlesnake seems almost constant.

The imp is armed with two scrolls. The first scroll has the *magic missile* spell and the second scroll has the *sleep* spell.

The tower base can be entered from areas 14 and 16.

Imp: AC 2, Move 6 (fly 18), HD 2 + 2 (13 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 stinger (1d4), Size T, Morale 9, XP 1,400, Special poison; spells; regenerate 1 hp/round; immune to cold, fire, and electricity; silver, magical, or rune weapons required to hit.

The imp's attack is a poisonous tail stinger; characters struck must save vs poison or die. The imp saves as a 7th level fighter. It can cast *detect good*, *detect magic*, and *invisibility* at will and *suggestion* one time per day. It can also *polymorph* into two of the following forms: spider, raven, rat, and goat. In these forms it can use the attack forms of that creature.

The tower base is treated as if it were under a *protection from good* spell.

STORMGARD KEEP, UPPER FLOOR

1. TOWER HALL

Arriving at the top of the stairs, the characters can see that the second level of the keep is in as much disrepair as the first, except the floor seems to be sturdier, with less mud and other refuse from the storm. The second level of the tower has several large chunks of the wall missing and a large open window facing west. The window was once covered with stained glass, but whatever imagery the glass held has long been shattered. Another window peers out over the south. Still intact, this window depicts two shield maidens of Uthin, who stand on either side of the rune of Uthin. To the east, a busted wooden door leads into a hall (room 12), while on the north wall is a closed wooden door (room 2). The busted door bars entry, but is easily moved while the northern door is unlocked.

THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS



2. GREAT HALL

The great hall is a 60' long chamber that is 15' wide. Both walls are covered with portraits of former rulers of the Stormgard Keep, which the years have decayed beyond recognition. A bug-infested carpet lies the length of the floor. The ceiling is a series of wooden arches.

The great hall has two exits, one going north to the over-well (3) and one going south to the tower hall (1).

3. THE OVER-WELL

The over-well is a conical shaped room that overlooks the well below (see G on level 1). A hole in the middle of the stone floor (3' × 3') opens directly over the well. In years past, a rope and pulley system allowed those on the second floor to retrieve water without descending to the ground floor. The over-well has two exits directly opposite of each other with the port to the well between them. An exit to the north leads to the gallery (4) and one to the south to the great hall (2).

4. THE GALLERY

This 20' wide by 80' long room holds an assortment artefacts, mostly broken and ruined statues. At the southern entryway, however, there are two shield maiden sculptures standing guard armed with curved swords and shields. These are actually Caryatid Columns. They will attack anyone who passes through the southern door.

Caryatid Column: AC 5, Move 6, HD 5 (22 hit points), THACO 15, Attack 1 sword (2d4), Size M, Morale 20, XP 420, Special +4 bonus to saving throws; normal weapons inflict half damage, magical weapons inflict normal damage but with no magical modifiers.

Weapons have a 5 in 20 chance to shatter when hitting a caryatid column, reduced by 5% for each magical plus (minimum -5%). Casting *stone to flesh*, *transmute rock to mud*, or *stone shape* on the columns will destroy them if they fail to save.

5. SERVANTS' QUARTERS

This 40' × 20' chamber once housed the keep's non-military personnel. Several old beds and chests are scattered across the room. These were ransacked long ago. Much of the debris has been piled up in the northeastern area of the room, stacked nearly to the ceiling in a 10' long, 10' wide and 10' circular pile. This pile is the nest for a giant snake.

Along the northern walls are two exits that would have led to wooden balconies a few decades ago, but now the balconies and stairs leading to them are just rubble on the ground below (see level 1 area 5).

Giant Snake: AC 5, Move 9, HD 6 + 1 (28 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 1 tail lash (1d4) and 1 bite (2d4), Size L, Morale 11, XP 650.

There is a chamber exit to the south. If the characters are coming from area 6, this is the first area they see. This chamber is roughly 20' × 15'. From it, a doorway opens to area 5 on the northeast side and on the southeast side to area 6. The chamber has a series of small pews with a stone podium beside the north exit. This was used as a place of worship for the servants.

6. CHAPLAIN'S QUARTERS

This 20' × 35' room is the second level of the chapel. The old staircase in area 10 of Level 1 leads into it. An old bed is situated along the north wall, with a chest at the foot of the bed. A silver holy symbol of Uthin lies on the bed. A skeleton dressed in priestly robes and livery stands in the center of the room, almost dancing. Wind blows everywhere.

Entering this room, the characters can hear a ruckus coming from the bell tower of the chapel. A series of metal rungs are embedded on the southern wall and lead up to the belfry.

The chest contains 23 sp and 10 gp. It is unlocked.

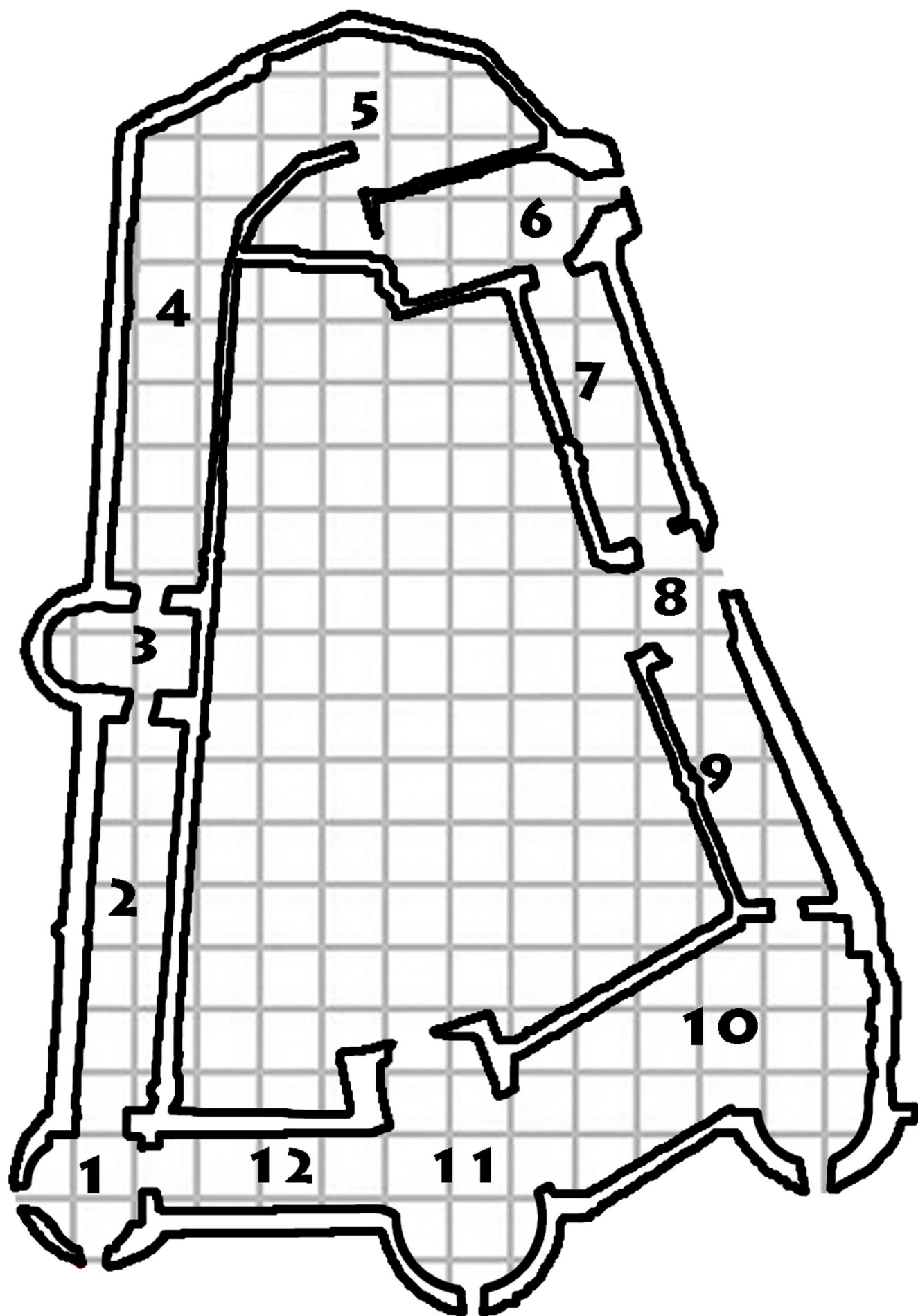
The priest of Uthin is a zombie. It will attack anyone who tries to climb to the bell tower.

There is an exit on the south wall to room 7 and on the west wall to room 5a.

Zombie Priest: AC 8, Move 6, HD 2 (9 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 slam (1d8), Size M, Morale N/A, XP 65, Special always strikes last.

6A. THE BELL TOWER

This 20' × 35' room used to house a great bell, looted long ago. It is a rotted wooden structure surrounded by loosely placed bricks and some decaying mortar. The room is empty save for the hovering form of Elsa. Sitting with her legs crossed, she floats five feet off the ground. All around her swirl strange colored winds, each streaming with fire and smoke, strange demonic faces peering from the flames. Her tattoos glow in the dark room. Some seem to bleed



THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS



while from others seep colored winds that join the howling chaos of the room.

Upon seeing the characters, Elsa will slash a tattoo on her belly releasing a spray of blood that turns into little four armed, monkey-faced, winged implings that attack all the characters. There should be two implings per player character, with an additional 1d4 appearing the next round and one final impling appearing the third round. Elsa does not flee—she wants to die, provided Volfric and Rathgar are dead (or she believes they are dead.) She will fight the characters with her ceremonial dagger.

When Elsa is reduced to less than 5 hit points, K'hargarothe, the chief demon that possesses her soul, will become enraged. He will take note of the characters involved in the fight and swear his revenge. As Elsa dies, the image of K'hargarothe will be seared into the minds of the characters, forcing a saving throw against magic. If successful, the characters suffer 1d4 hit points of damage from insanity. Failure results in the loss of 1d6 hit points. However, being touched by the demonic mind will immediately increase the character's experience points by 1d4 × 100. In addition, K'hargarothe will temporarily materialize as a haze of fog, ectoplasm, tentacles, horns, spikes, fire, and brimstone. In this form, he will battle the characters for 1d3 rounds before he is sucked into a vortex which destroys the bell tower (6a), chaplain's quarters (6) and chapel (level 1, 10.)

To escape this area, the characters must pass a Dexterity check every round of the fight and every round they are in the chapel, chaplain's quarters, or bell tower. It takes 1d4 rounds to escape this area once a character decides to leave it. Roll for each character. Each failed check results in

the player suffering 1 hit point damage, and a temporary reduction of 1 in Dexterity.

As a GM, you need to be prepared to describe the mayhem that is going on and what is getting in the way of the characters as they try to escape—debris, tentacles, suction from the vortex, fire, water or even something more mundane (oh damn, a bench!)

Once the characters have escaped the area, ensured Elsa is dead, and watched K'hargarothe vanish, the adventure (as written) is over. However, the characters may now have to deal with the local militia, temples, or any other issue that may arise after their involvement in the events at the keep. They may have defeated a demonic infestation, but others are more likely to notice the vortex that sucked the ruins into the Abyss.

7. LIBRARY

This long hall appears to be a library of sorts. It is 15' × 40' with both the walls to the east and west lined with book shelves. These shelves are largely empty now, with decaying tomes and books scattered across the room, each in a state of erosion, either soaked through with water and mud or burnt to a near crisp. This room was obviously once on fire, as scorch marks sear the ceiling and the northern wall. The north door is a burnt husk of wood, nearly sealed in place from whatever fire besieged the chamber. Entering the room from the north is an issue, as is leaving to the north. The door takes a break doors roll at −2 (−10%) to force it open; there is no lock to pick. A *knock* spell will send the door to the ground with a loud thud (the same as if it were knocked over by brute strength). Either way, the door falls over and a swarm of spiders erupt from the timbers of the door and the frame that once held it. Each character within 5' of the door when it falls will be covered with 1d4 spiders.

Entering the south or leaving through the south entrance is easy: there is no door.

A bag of 25 gold can be found in this room, as can a spell book with the following spells: *color spray*, *dancing lights*, *flaming sphere*, and *wraith form*.

Spiders: AC 8, Move 12 (web 9), HD 1 – 1 (4 hit points), THACO 20, Attack 1 bite (1), Size T, Morale 10, XP 65, Special swarm bite, poison.

Each swarm of spiders makes one attack. For each spider past the first, the swarm bite gains a +1 to hit bonus (so if there are 4 spiders the bite is at +3 to hit).

Poisoned characters must make a saving throw vs. poison or suffer a +1 penalty to AC, a −1 penalty to attack, and a −3 penalty to Dexterity with respect to Dexterity checks for 1d4 + 1 rounds.

Table 6.2: Key to Stormgard Keep, Level 2

Entry	Description	Encounters
1.	Tower Hall 20' round	
2.	Great Hall 60' × 15'	
3.	The Over-Well 20' round	
4.	The Gallery 20' × 80'	Caryatid Columns
5.	Servants' Quarters 40' × 20'	Giant Snake
6.	Chaplain's Quarters 20' × 35'	Zombie Priest
6a.	The Bell Tower 20' × 35'	Elsa
7.	Library 15' × 40'	Spiders
8.	Chamber of Screams 20' × 20'	Shrieking Heads
9.	Laboratory 15' × 40'	
10.	Court Chambers 50' × 30'	Zombies
11.	Kitchen 15' × 50'	
12.	Welcome Hall 40' × 15'	

Figure 6.2: Opposite Page: Stormgard Keep, Level 2



THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

8. CHAMBER OF SCREAMS

The walls in this roughly 20' × 20' somewhat circular room look melted and eroded, bubbles in the walls give the room an eerie look, as if hundreds of tormented faces are peering at the characters. The rickety floor is easily seen through and it can be seen that this room resides directly over the torture chamber (room 13, level 1).

The room is barren other than the north entry, which has no door and leads into the library (room 7) and the south entrance which leads to the laboratory (room 9) which is a simple wooden door.

Within a few moments of entering the room, the faces in the walls begin to wail and scream as if they were shriekers (see shrieking heads below). There is no way to stop the shrieks except to run through the room. Anyone running through the room suffers one round of attacks from a shrieker. Anyone walking suffers the attack for two rounds. Lingering, of course, will prolong the exposure.

Shrieking Heads: AC 7, Move 0, HD 3 (14 hit points), THACO 17, Attack none, Size S, Morale 12, XP 120.

Shrieking Heads give off an ear-piercing shriek whenever someone enters the room for 1d3 rounds. The noise will attract the zombies in room 10, if they are haven't been dealt with already.

9. LABORATORY

The laboratory is another hallway lately converted into a room. The laboratory houses many semi-magical experiments and items. Magic using characters can find items here to act as components for 1d3 first or second level spells. The GM should be imaginative when providing these items and not just leave a shopping list of ingredients lying around.

The room is 15' wide and 40' long with a 5' × 5' table at the exact center of the room, with another table close to the north door (about 10' away). Both tables are littered with vials (some still bubbling), tomes, powders, cages with animal bones, and other scientific and alchemical devices and equipment.

The room smells of sulfur, and it is warm and dry. It is the only room in the keep untouched by the weather outside.

10. COURT CHAMBERS

This is the court chambers, the great hall of Stormgard Keep, where the lord of the keep held dances and banquets of honor. A throne sits in the southeast corner of this 50' × 30' room, while the walls are lined with collapsed and broken tables, each 5' long and 3' wide. In the middle of the room five pairs of zombies dance, still wearing the remnants of their once noble robes. The zombies continue to dance, though no music fills the hall.

The characters can avoid conflict with the zombies by sticking to the walls, but once the characters step into the dance floor the zombies turn and attack them.

Zombies (10): AC 8, Move 6, HD 2 (9 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 slam (1d8), Size M, Morale N/A, XP 65, Special always strikes last.

11. KITCHEN

Though technically a new room, the welcome hall extends through the kitchen connecting it with the court chambers. The kitchen is separated from the welcome hall by two short walls, about 15' apart. Each wall is roughly 2' high with openings every 5 feet to allow passage from one side of the kitchen, through the welcome hall and into the other side of the kitchen. Large tapestries once divided the kitchen sections from the welcome hall.

The north kitchen is roughly 10' × 20' and was used for the baking breads. The south kitchen is roughly 15' × 30'.

12. WELCOME HALL

The welcome hall is located on the eastern side of the tower hall (room 1) and connects with the kitchen (room 11.) Only a carved archway connects the hall and the kitchen. The welcome hall is a 40' long hallway roughly 15' wide. It was once used as a place of reception for the visitors and guests at Stormgard Keep. Large windows look over the outer and inner courtyards, with long red curtains hanging from steel rods. These curtains were once elaborate, but now they hang tattered and covered in mold and mildew. The floor is decorated in a series of colored tiles, red, blue, white, and green, forming unknown shapes and forgotten symbols.

The room is bone chillingly cold. A near constant wind seems to blow from the eastern door to the western door, though the wind does not extend beyond either.

CHAPTER 7: CHARACTERS

ELSA



Having watched her parents executed at a young age by her father's own trusted men, Elsa has had little normalcy in her life. The only daughter of athane and the only child (who was not a prisoner) at the keep he supervised, Elsa was exposed to the very heart of cruelty and evil. Her father taught her that she was of a blessed blood line and the prisoners at the keep

were the degenerate spawn of a filthy, godless, and inhuman race. Elsa still believes this.

Before her parents died, Elsa was also exposed to the occult and supernatural studies performed and researched at the keep. After their deaths, she turned to these secrets. Stealing letters, documents, tomes and scrolls from her father's library, Elsa began her quest for revenge. She studied with masters of the occult and sorcery for the past fifteen years. Finally, two years ago, she reached her goal. She managed to make a pact with a powerful demon, who marked her body with the tattoos that imprison the demons within her skin and bind them to her bidding.

Elsa is a fragile young woman, both beautiful and intense. Within her own skin, the demons scream and thirst for violence. A tall, thin and beautiful young blond in her mid-twenties, Elsa looks like she could fit in with the youth of Tenebrous if she only tried. Her only desire is revenge and she is willing to give her life and her soul for it.

Elsa: AC 7, Move 12, HD 5 (d6; 21 hit points), THACO 18, Attack 1 dagger (1d4), Size M, Morale 12, XP 270 (5th level Bard), Ability Scores Strength 7, Dexterity 17, Intelligence 13, Charisma 16.

Bard Skills

CW 65%, DN 20%, PP 20%, RL 50%, Lore 40%.

Bard Spells

- 1st level: *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *read magic*
- 2nd level: *know alignment*

Tattoos: see pages 6 and 7 for how to properly handle Elsa's tattoos.

LUKA



Luka, son of Hylla, is an enigmatic old man. Well versed in life and war, Luka has survived 75 years of turmoil in the Thanelands. He owes part of that luck for surviving to his birth gift of second sight, something he inherited from his Huirdu grandparents. Luka has always had a natural insight and compass to guide him through tough times. However, his natural closeness to the supernatural has led him to have a very isolated life with very few friends and no real family.

Most days, Luka spends his time either in public locations playing hounds and other games with travelers or in his shop where he sells items related to the bizarre, supernatural or unexplained. A primary focus of his shop are books and transcripts of bygone eras and the curiously strange shopkeep he employs, Grenz, who is in actuality a Kaozling (see page 39).

Luka is a gentle old man. He is willing to help those in



THE GIRL WITH THE DEMON TATTOOS

need, but, because of his close connection to the supernatural world, he never gets too close or friendly to anyone. Even Luka does not realize that he is actually a Pohjolan.

Luka will not personally get involved in the adventure beyond providing information. However, it is possible for Luka to be used as a recurring NPC if the GM desires.

Luka: AC 10, Move 12, HD 5 (d4; 15 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 dagger (1d4), Size M, Morale 14, XP 420 (5th level mage).

Mage Spells

- 1st level: *detect magic, empathy, rune blessing*, wizard mark*
- 2nd level: *ESP, know alignment*
- 3rd level: *feign death*

RATHGAR



Rathgar is a man haunted by his past, a past so real to him in his daily life he continues to study it and use it in the local Huirdu camps.

Rathgar was the senior guard at the keep when Elsa's father commanded it. He was also the first guard persuaded to turn against Thalfar and kill him.

It was also Rathgar who figured out that there was a spy in their midst that led to the murder of Kroner. Kroner's aid allowed Elsa to escape and now to enact her curse.

Recently Rathgar was contacted by Lars and Rudric about the notes they found in Thalfar's journal. This led Rathgar to realize Elsa was ready to enact her revenge.

With their deaths, Rathgar is afraid. He has decided that he must contact Volfric and find a way to save them.

Rathgar: AC 10, Move 12, HD 3 (d6; 16 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 dagger (1d4), Size M, Morale 9, XP 120 (3rd level thief).

VOLFRIC



Volfric is a big and beefy brute of a man; a truer thug has never been seen. Volfric is cruel and takes great pleasure in others' discomfort. He loves rude comments and leering stares as much as inflicting physical pain on others. He was strongly disliked at the keep, even by the other guards, primarily for his cruelty to animals and people alike.

If any one of the guards was likely to throw the first strike on Thalfar, it was definitely Volfric. After the murder of Thalfar and the subsequent killing of Kroner, he escaped to the Widsith. He plied his trade as a guard and thug, eventually becoming a member of the Solemn Watch, where he delights in

inflicting further harm on those who attempt to enter the Gardens of Woe.

He wants nothing to do with Rathgar and does not believe that the girl (Elsa Thalfardot) is any threat to him. If confronted with the information that she is hunting him before the main encounter at the Garden, it would not be out of character for Volfric to try to kill Elsa himself. However, it would also be conceivable that he might kill the wrong girl.

Volfric: AC 5 (chain mail), Move 12, HD 2 (d10; 15 hit points), THACO 19, Attack 1 long sword (1d8), Size M, Morale 11, XP 65 (2nd level fighter).

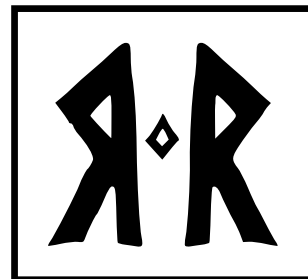


Figure: Double "R" rune of the Ashlannach Warriors

CHAPTER 8: BESTIARY

CARYATID COLUMN

Climate/Terrain:	Any
Frequency:	Very rare
Number Appearing:	1d12
Organization:	Solitary
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	0
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Armor Class:	5
Movement:	6
Hit Dice:	5 (22 hp)
THACO:	15
Attack:	Sword (2d4)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 5
Special Traits:	Saving throw bonus, damage resistance
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Man-sized (7' tall)
Morale:	20
Experience Points:	420

The caryatid column is akin to the stone golem in that it is a magical construct created by a spellcaster. Caryatid columns are always created for a specific defensive function. The caryatid column stands 7 feet tall and weighs around 1,500 pounds. Its smoothly chiseled body is shaped as a beautiful woman. The column always wields a weapon (usually a longsword) in its left hand. The weapon itself is constructed of steel, but is melded with the column and made of stone until the column animates. When melded, the sword is likely to be overlooked (Wisdom check at –5 to see it).

Caryatid columns are programmed as guardians and activate when certain conditions or stipulations are met or broken (such as a living creature enters a chamber guarded by a caryatid column). A caryatid column attacks its opponents with its longsword. It does not move more than 50 feet from an area it is guarding or protecting.

Magical weapons inflict normal damage but with no magical modifiers and all normal weapons inflict half damage. Weapons have a 5 in 20 chance to shatter when hitting

a caryatid column, reduced by 5% for each magical plus (minimum –5%).

Caryatid columns are immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, *energy drain*, or death from massive damage and are immune to any effect that affects constitution or health (such as disease or *cause wounds*), unless that effect targets objects. Caryatid columns have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Caryatid columns receive a +4 bonus on saving throws against any spells that can affect it (see text below). A caryatid column is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud*, *stone to flesh*, or *stone shape* spell instantly slays a caryatid column if it fails its saving throw. A *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points.

A caryatid column's body is chiseled from a single block of hard stone, such as granite, weighing at least 1,500 pounds. The golem costs 30,000 gp to create, which includes 1,000 gp for the body. Assembling the body requires a successful Craft (sculpting or masonry) check. The creator must be at least 16th level and able to cast arcane spells. Completing the ritual drains 600 XP from the creator and requires *geas/quest*, *limited wish*, *polymorph any object*, and *shatter*.



BESTIARY

FIEND, IMP

Climate/Terrain:	Any (the Abyss)
Frequency:	Very rare
Number Appearing:	1
Organization:	Solitary
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	8–10
Treasure:	O
Alignment:	Lawful evil
Armor Class:	2
Movement:	6, fly 18 (MC 1)
Hit Dice:	2 + 2 (11 hp)
THACO:	19
Attack:	Sting (1d4)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 7
Special Traits:	Alternate form, attack type immunities, poison, regeneration, spells
Magic Resistance:	25%
Size:	Tiny (2' tall)
Morale:	8–10
Experience Points:	1,400

Imps are born on the Abyss and often serve as familiars to powerful spell casters, demons, and other malevolent creatures. Imps not in such service prefer the wandering life, traveling Erdegard in search of opportunities to further whatever nefarious goal they harbor.

Imps appear as a very small, hairless humanoid with enlarged ears, noses, lips, eyes, and chins. They stand about 2 feet, 6 inches, have small leathery wings, two small fangs, and a tail ending in a wicked stinger. Although these parameters seem to suggest a rather homogenous look, no two imps look identically alike.

Imps despise standard toe-to-toe combat. If an imp's master requires the imp to engage in melee, the imp may acquiesce but it prefers to gain the upper hand by more cunning means. Imps prefer to learn about potential enemies and use *invisibility* and *polymorph* to get close and gather information. They often cast *detect magic* in an area while invisible to gauge the gear of an enemy. When actually in combat, imps employ a staggered strategy every other round of invisibility and attacks with their vicious stinger. This allows them to move about invisible before attacking. The staggered rounds help them to position for a strike, wait to strike at the beginning of their next turn and then fly away to cast invisibility again next round. An successful sting by an imp injects a poison into the victim who must make a poison save. Failure instantly slays the victim.

An imp can assume an animal form whenever desired. Each imp can assume one or two forms from the following

list: goat, giant spider, raven, or rat. Imps regenerate 1 hit point per round. An imp may cast the following spells whenever desired—*detect good*, *detect magic* and *invisibility*. Imps are immune to cold, electricity, and fire. They are also immune to any weapon that is neither magical nor silvered. Imps enjoy 25% magic resistance. They make all saving throws as 7th level fighters.

Imps will respond when a summon familiar spell is cast by someone they feel is worthy to receive their companionship. At that point, an imp begins to assume the role of "familiar", but in reality, the imp is slowly taking control over its master. The telepathic and empathic link that is formed allows the imp to covertly cast suggestion when necessary, but it also allows the imp to share its spells and other powers with the master (including its 25% magic resistance and regeneration). This link dissipates beyond 1 mile and the imp becomes so attuned to the master after a short while that if the link is lost the master temporarily loses 1 level based on his reliance on the imp's sensory inputs. If a master's imp is slain, the master actually loses 4 levels until he gains another imp familiar.



FIEND, LEMURE

Climate/Terrain:	The Abyss
Frequency:	Common
Number Appearing:	10d10
Organization:	Horde
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	2-4
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Lawful evil
Armor Class:	7
Movement:	3
Hit Dice:	3
THACO:	19
Attack:	Slam (1d3)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 3
Special Traits:	Regeneration, spell immunity
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Man-sized (5' tall)
Morale:	See below
Experience Points:	270

Primal forms of evil, lemures are damned to spend eternity in the Abyss, but occasionally seep through to other realms, especially in locations where vile deeds occurred. Vaguely humanoid, with crude arms and heads, lemures take on a ooze like form, often lying in a pool of water or other liquid, waiting to strike. Constantly in pain and driven insane, lemures will attack anyone coming close to them.

Lemures can only be destroyed by blessed, rune, or holy items or weapons. They regenerate 1 hit point per round. They are immune to all forms of *sleep* or *charm* spells.

FIEND, SUB-DEMON

Climate/Terrain:	The Abyss
Frequency:	Common
Number Appearing:	5d100
Organization:	Horde
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	2-4
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Chaotic evil
Armor Class:	8
Movement:	6
Hit Dice:	1 (5 hp)
THACO:	20
Attack:	By weapon or 2 claws (1d2) and 1 bite (1d4)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 1
Special Traits:	Immune to non-magical weapons, immune to mind-affecting spells
Magic Resistance:	10%
Size:	Small (3' tall)
Morale:	See below
Experience Points:	120

Sub-demons are the unfortunate souls of the damned sent to the Abyss. They are semi-intelligent, driven by instinct to attack the living and those that are not fiends using their fangs and claws. They are treated as undead for purposes of *sleep*, *charm* and other similar spells, and may be turned as 3 hit dice undead. When destroyed they collapse into a pile of ooze which reforms into a new sub-demon in a day. They can only be truly destroyed if a fiend of a higher order feeds on them.

Unlike other fiends, these sub-demons have no innate power to cause *darkness* or similar abilities. They are invulnerable to normal weapons and require a +1 or better magical weapon to hit, but they can be harmed by rune covered weapons as well as silver and iron.

Sub-demons can vary as seen with the Rock Demon and Blood Hawk Demon summoned by Elsa at the Garden of Woe. Refer to their stats on page 18 of this adventure, otherwise they follow the rules for standard sub-demons.



BESTIARY



FIEND, BLOOD HAWK DEMON

Much like the rock demon, the blood hawk demon is a manifestation of the demonic powers imprisoned in Elsa's skin.

The blood hawk demon appears as a mixture of solidified blood and fire. The blood forms a muscular bird form, and the fires form a series of ill placed feathers.

Unlike the rock demon, the blood hawk demon does not ignore the characters. It will attack them if necessary, but it is mainly a distraction to allow the rock demon to kill its prey.

FIEND, ROCK DEMON

The rock demon is the manifestation of the evil hell powers within Elsa. It has taken the shape of an pig-headed humanoid, made from the earth and rocks around the great gate. Pieces of wood and metal protrude from its body, while a continual flow of "blood" seems to keep the creature's "joints" wet with fluid.

The rock demon takes little or no notice of the characters, focusing on its mission to kill Rathgar and Volfric.



BESTIARY



K'HARGAROTH

The Demon of Woe, K'hargaroth has been a plague to mankind since the early days of civilization. Coming from a corner of the Abyss bent on selfish revenge and sacrifice, K'hargaroth has plied his trade of soul binding, empowering many would be avengers who eventually damn themselves to K'hargaroth's living torture.

When K'hargaroth is denied the soul promised him, he becomes an enraged shadow of his true power. Eventually, he comes to term with his loss and refocuses his own desires for revenge on those who cost him his prize. Characters who cross K'hargaroth's path will certainly see him again, in one life or another.

K'hargaroth can become a long term foe, but K'hargaroth is a tricky foe. Not elusive and distant like other demons, K'hargaroth takes things personally and is relentless in claiming his revenge, but he desires his targets to suffer greatly first.

KAOZLING

Climate/Terrain:	Any fire (Elemental Plane of Chaos)
Frequency:	Very rare (common)
Number Appearing:	1 (2d8)
Organization:	Familiar (band)
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	11-12
Treasure:	Special
Alignment:	Chaotic neutral
Armor Class:	2
Movement:	12
Hit Dice:	2 + 1 (10 hp) to 5 + 4 (27 hp)
THACO:	19 to 15
Attack:	By weapon
Saving Throws:	Fighter 3 to Fighter 6
Special Traits:	Immunity to fire, spells
Magic Resistance:	15%
Size:	Man-sized (5' tall)
Morale:	13-14
Experience Points:	420 (2 + 1 HD), 650 (3 + 2 HD), 975 (4 + 3 HD), 1,400 (5 + 4 HD)

Kaozlings are other-worldly diminutive gnomes cursed by the forces of chaos and illusion. Descended from a clan of cursed gnomes, the kaozlings live their lives as the playthings and servants of powerful extra-dimensional beings, usually fiends or powerful spirits of Pohjola. The only true escape for a Kaozling is to serve as a familiar for an Eordan based sorcerer or other magic user.

Kaozlings may be duty bound to follow their master's whim but they secretly scheme and plot their freedom. They earn temporary freedom after faithfully serving their masters. The duration of their freedom is equal to the time they serve a master on Eordan. Therefore they are dedicated to faithfully serving their masters for as long as possible, even if they resent these masters.

Kaozlings are immune to fire, can cast *light* at will as a 4th level caster, and can temporarily enchant an item with magic once per day (treat as magic but with no bonuses or other special abilities, but weapons thus enchanted can hurt creatures only hit by magical weapons). In addition they know 1d6 spells each of 1d6 level. Spells much be earth, fire, illusion or crafting based.



BESTIARY

RAT, GIANT

Climate/Terrain:	Any
Frequency:	Common
Number Appearing:	5d10
Organization:	Pack
Activity Cycle:	Night
Intelligence:	2-4
Treasure:	(C)
Alignment:	Neutral evil
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Armor Class:	7
Movement:	12, swim 6
Hit Dice:	1/2
THACO:	20
Attack:	Bite (1d3)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 1
Special Traits:	Disease
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Tiny (2' long)
Morale:	5-7
Experience Points:	15

Giant rats are filthy vermin that tend to infiltrate graveyards, underground labyrinths and dungeons. They will live just about anywhere that they can find food, and they define food rather liberally. Rats eat just about anything, including other rats, but giant rats are somewhat intelligent and pick their meals carefully so as to avoid resistance. This explains their penchant for graveyards; the eating is free so long as they avoid any ghouls. Giant rats have black or brown fur and white underbellies.

Giant rats attack with their bite. There is a 5% chance per successful attack that the victim may contract a debilitating disease. The victim is granted a save vs. poison to avoid the effect.

ROT GRUB

Climate/Terrain:	Any land
Frequency:	Uncommon
Number Appearing:	5d4
Organization:	Swarm
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	0
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
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Armor Class:	9
Movement:	1
Hit Dice:	0 (1 hp)
THACO:	N/A
Attack:	None
Saving Throws:	Fighter 1
Special Traits:	See below
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Tiny (1" long)
Morale:	5
Experience Points:	15

These diminutive vermin crawl off carrion and infest living hosts. They cause a fatal illness unless cured or killed. When first encountered, a Wisdom check can be made to avoid them entirely. If this check is failed, the grubs have contacted the victim and penetrated the skin. Once this occurs, the victim may make a Wisdom check. If successful, they notice strange burrowing below the surface of their skin. Upon contact with a living being, rot grubs will begin to vigorously burrow deep into the body. Fire must be applied to the site of contact at once in order to prevent the rot grubs from burrowing further. This application of flame inflicts 1d6 hit points of damage per instance. If not stopped immediately, within 1 to 3 turns the rot grubs will find the heart and kill their victim.



SHRIEKING HEAD

Climate/Terrain:	Any
Frequency:	Rare
Number Appearing:	3d10
Organization:	Band
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	0
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Armor Class:	7
Movement:	0
Hit Dice:	3
THACO:	17
Attack:	None
Saving Throws:	Fighter 3
Special Traits:	Shriek
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Small
Morale:	Special
Experience Points:	120

Created through the dark arts of sorcery and demon binding, shrieking heads are a gruesome testament to the power of otherworldly fiends. Crafted from the heads of defeated enemies and sacrificed to the shadowy evil spirits beyond the void of Pohjola, these heads are staked to poles, nailed to walls, or otherwise placed to serve as watchers, alarms, and if necessary, warnings for intruders. Often created after battles and left to weigh heavily on the souls of their surviving allies and families, foul practitioners of dark arts savor the terror these barbaric totems cause.

Shrieking heads give off an ear-piercing scream whenever they "feel" light within 30 feet or there is movement within 10 feet. They continue to shriek for 1d3 rounds, with a 50% chance to attract a wandering monster, guards, or other unwanted attention each round.

Other than their scream, shrieking heads have no attack.

Shrieking heads can be made with a 2nd level necromancy spell available to both clerics (priests) and wizards (magic-users or mages), but not druids, bards, rangers, paladins, or illusionists (or any other non-necromancer wizard specialist).

SKELETON

Climate/Terrain:	Any
Frequency:	Uncommon
Number Appearing:	3d10
Organization:	Any
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	0
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Armor Class:	7
Movement:	12
Hit Dice:	1 (5 hp)
THACO:	19
Attack:	By weapon
Saving Throws:	Fighter 1
Special Traits:	Damage resistance, spell immunities
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Man-sized (6' tall)
Morale:	Special
Experience Points:	65

Skeletons are the bones of humanoid creatures, animated by energy from the Negative Energy Plane. They bear no flesh, musculature, or ligaments and are held together through magical force. Skeletons vary in size, depending on the race of humanoid that the bones came from. As mindless constructs of necromantic magics, skeletons have no interactions with other creatures, except to follow commands from their creators. With no intelligence to guide them, they carry out all instructions as literally as possible, and are typically unable to follow commands more complex than a few phrases.

Skeletons can follow simple commands of up to 15 words, given by their controller from no more than 60 feet away. The language used to speak the command makes no difference, as long as it is a real language and the correct words are spoken aloud. Skeletons attempt to obey immediately and literally.

Their ability to follow commands while lacking language skills is similar to the way magical items activate when the proper command words are spoken.

A *speak with dead* spell cast to contact a skeleton has the same effects and limitations as if cast upon a non-animated dead body. Depending on the circumstances of its animation, the life force may or may not be aware that its body has been animated.

Their only remaining natural sense is a crude sense of touch. They have the magical sense of *detect life force*, *detect motion*, *detect solid objects* and *detect vibrations* with a 60' range.

Skeletons are commonly created in places where the



BESTIARY

dead are abundant, such as graveyards or battlefields. Their creators often task them to guard remote and abandoned locations. While they are certainly capable of guarding inhabited locations, their presence is not tolerated by civilized folk.

When commanded to attack, skeletons do so in the most obvious ways possible, without regards to strategy, intelligence, or fear. Skeletons never check morale. Slashing and piercing weapons inflict only half damage against skeletons, and they are corporeal undead without sight or hearing for purposes of immunities. They are vulnerable to holy and unholy water, suffering 2d4 points of damage per vial that strikes them.

SLIME, GREEN

Climate/Terrain:	Subterranean
Frequency:	Rare
Number Appearing:	1d6
Organization:	Colony
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	0
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Armor Class:	9
Movement:	0
Hit Dice:	2 (9 hp)
THACO:	19
Attack:	0
Saving Throws:	Fighter 1
Special Traits:	See below
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Small (2'–4')
Morale:	10
Experience Points:	65

An occasional dungeon hazard, green slime is some sort of vegetable or fungoid or hybrid of the two that grows in dark, damp, and higher areas ready to drop on unsuspecting victims. These drops fall from the vibrations caused by nearby creatures.

When a drop of green slime contacts exposed flesh, it quickly dissolves flesh and converts it to more green slime. Green slime slowly eats through wood, but can dissolve metal in 1d6 rounds. However green slime cannot devour stone, rock, and other earth based material.

Most weapons and spells cannot harm green slime. However fire and cold can harm green slime, and it can be killed by a *cure disease* spell. Otherwise green slime must be cut away (skinning flesh, amputating a limb, etc.), or the victim will die in 1d4 rounds (and cannot be raised or resurrected as they are now a pool of green slime).

SNAKE, GIANT

Climate/Terrain:	Any
Frequency:	Uncommon
Number Appearing:	1d2
Organization:	Solitary
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	1
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Armor Class:	5
Movement:	9
Hit Dice:	6 + 1 (28 hp)
THACO:	15
Attack:	2 (1d4) and (2d4)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 7
Special Traits:	Constriction, poison
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Man-sized (10'–20' long)
Morale:	11
Experience Points:	650

Known as Thane-Snakes in the Ice Kingdoms, giant snakes are carnivorous and can be found deep in the earth beneath the Ice Kingdoms. Some are captured and trained as pets and guards by the forces of Pohjola and other evil powers. Giant snakes are not just enlarged versions of regular snakes, they are a distinct species of their own, believed to have been created as a mix of ordinary cobras and boa constrictors, mixed with sorcery and evil.

Giant snakes occasionally drop from above to ambush their prey, wrapping their bodies around a victim and attacking with both their bite for 1d4 points of damage and constriction for 2d4 points of damage. Once they have their victim in their coils it is difficult to escape. It takes an open doors Strength test to escape and this action counts as the victims full round. Attacks that are directed at the snake may harm the victim (subtract the attack roll from 20 and use this number as the attack roll to hit the constricted victim, with no Dexterity or shield bonuses to their armor class and a further 2 point armor class penalty).

The bite of the giant snake is quite poisonous. A bite victim gets a saving throw to negate the poison but otherwise suffers a further 1d8 damage and –1 (cumulative with other failed poison saves) on all combat rolls, ability checks and other actions (d20 based, the penalty should be adjusted to fit the proper dice being used).



SPIDER

Climate/Terrain:	Any
Frequency:	Common
Number Appearing:	3d10
Organization:	Swarm
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	1
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Armor Class:	8
Movement:	12, web 9
Hit Dice:	1 – 1 (4 hp)
THACO:	20
Attack:	Bite (1)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 1
Special Traits:	Poison
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Tiny (3" body)
Morale:	10
Experience Points:	65

Deadly spiders are generally brown to black, with a bulbous hairy abdomen and thin legs. Giant spiders come in different sub-species, each with a different color, but having the same bulbous appearance. Deadly spiders can be found anywhere, but usually congregate in forests and large cavernous areas. They are often pets or in the protective care of a giant deadly spider.

Deadly spiders are web spinners and tend to wait near a system of webs for a meal to haphazardly drop in. Once something becomes stuck in the web, many deadly spiders will crawl to attack at once. If encountered away from its webs, a deadly spider will keep its distance from its target, preferring to move away after an attack with a bite.

Most deadly spiders attack in swarms. Each swarm makes one attack, but for each spider past the first the swarm bite gains a +1 to hit bonus (so if there are 4 spiders the bite is at +3 to hit). Poisoned characters must make a saving throw vs. poison or suffer a +1 penalty to AC, a –1 penalty to attack, and a –3 penalty to Dexterity with respect to Dexterity checks for 1d4 + 1 rounds.

STIRGE

Climate/Terrain:	Forests or subterranean
Frequency:	Uncommon
Number Appearing:	3d10
Organization:	Cluster
Activity Cycle:	Night
Intelligence:	1
Treasure:	D
Alignment:	Neutral
Armor Class:	8
Movement:	3, fly 18 (MC3)
Hit Dice:	1 + 1 (6 hp)
THACO:	17
Attack:	Bite (1d3)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 2
Special Traits:	Blood drain
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Small (2' wingspan)
Morale:	8
Experience Points:	175

Stirges are birdlike creatures with four appendages ending in sticky pincers and long, sharp, hairless proboscises. Each stirge has large, bat-like wings that range in color from dark gray to dull ash. Their stomachs appear either full and bloated, or shriveled and emaciated, depending on the time of their last feeding. They hunt in packs and can sometimes be found in a hive with dozens to hundreds of other stirges, as well as a hive queen.

Stirges have one attack, an attachment. A stirge flies toward an opponent and attempts to latch on to the victim to allow for an extraction of the victim's blood. They approach in packs but often will separate in pairs to allow each in the lot an opportunity to feed from multiple targets. Stirges attack as 4 hit dice creature (already calculated in their THACO score). After first hit will drain 1d3 damage per round with no further attack needed, once it has drained 10 hit points it will depart.



BESTIARY

STRANGLE WEED

Climate/Terrain:	Temperate
Frequency:	Uncommon
Number Appearing:	1
Organization:	Clusters, patches, groves
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	0
Treasure:	Special
Alignment:	Neutral
Armor Class:	Special
Movement:	0
Hit Dice:	1
THACO:	Special
Attack:	1 (1d8)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 1
Special Traits:	See below
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Large (15'–20' long)
Morale:	N/A
Experience Points:	175 per 10' square

This mass of writhing vines and leaves looks like a large patch of seaweed. Several long fronds protrude from the center of it, and it is 12 foot wide. It attacks by grappling its foe and then squeezing it. Slain creatures are digested by the strangle weed.

The strangle weed is dark green and slightly slimy, with 3d4 fronds, each about 10 foot long, protruding from its main body. Strangle weed lies still until prey comes near. It then lashes out with its fronds, attempting to grapple its foes. Grappled foes are squeezed until they die. Strangle weed must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict in the same round and every round until the target gets free. Strangle weed deals 1d6 points of damage with a successful grapple attack against man-size or smaller opponents. A victim of the grapple can escape by using their action to make a Strength check at –2.

Strangle weed has a +3 to surprise, and is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, polymorph, and mind-influencing spells and effects

Creatures caught in the fronds may attack with –2 to hit. A subterranean version of the strangle weed exists, though encounters with it are very rare. It is whitish-green and is found in underground pools, stagnant water, and the like.

TENTACLES

Climate/Terrain:	Any
Frequency:	Rare
Number Appearing:	3d6 (special, see below)
Organization:	N/A
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	1
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Armor Class:	3 (8)
Movement:	6
Hit Dice:	2 + 2 (11 hp)
THACO:	19
Attack:	Slap (1d3)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 5
Special Traits:	Wrestling, Grapple, Drag, or Squeeze (1d6), See below
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	L (10' long)
Morale:	N/A
Experience Points:	175

Tentacles are a very popular supernatural menace commonly encountered when dealing with dead gods, black magic and primeval sorcery. Tentacles tend to come from all sorts of environments and situations, from erupting from the chest of corpses to emerging from dimensional portals accidentally opened by magic gone wrong.

The most basic and primitive use of tentacles as an encounter is as the primary attack form of unseen monsters in the depths of the waters of the world or from the dark places in the deep earth. Usually the tentacles do not need any more description as the true monster they belong to is rarely seen, and by those who do see the host body, the experience is usually very brief and results in death by being devoured by a giant mouth or beak.

Tentacles tend to grapple or slap opponents, usually inflicting minimal damage as their true goal is to drag their victims to their source, resulting in the victim being lost in the darkness, depths of the waters or other forbidding location. However, when properly motivated a tentacle attack can be more than just a gentle push or pull and can be a quite deadly squeeze or hammering.

While actually part of a larger creature (or creatures), each tentacle has its own statistics, hit points and attacks and is treated as its own creature in combat. The true nature of each set of tentacles is up to the GM and adventure being played, but it is generally recommended that the following stats be used and a number of tentacles encountered (on average) are equal to the PCs in the party. Though, in the depths of the Abyss, there truly is no such thing as average.

BESTIARY



VARG

Climate/Terrain:	Any forest
Frequency:	Rare
Number Appearing:	3d4
Organization:	Pack
Activity Cycle:	Any
Intelligence:	5-7
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral evil
Armor Class:	6
Movement:	18
Hit Dice:	3 + 3 (16 hp)
THACO:	17
Attack:	Bite 2d4
Saving Throws:	Fighter 3
Special Traits:	None
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	Man-sized (4'-7' long)
Morale:	11
Experience:	120

Vargs are gigantic relatives of normal wolves which possess an unusual cunning. They resemble hulking, muscular wolves the size of ponies, with flat snouts and wary, calculating eyes.

Like normal wolves, vargs form packs led by the strongest and meanest individual. Packs of vargs are most often on poor terms with other packs, and fighting often erupts when rival packs meet.

Although vargs consider most humanoids as prey, they get along well with goblins. Varg packs often ally themselves with goblin tribes, providing each other with mutual protection. Vargs often serve as mounts for goblins, and are always willing to assist them in combat. Vargs speak their own language, but can often understand goblin speech.

When not lairing with goblins, vargs make their homes in dank, dark forests. They usually dig dens or claim existing caves as their own, driving off their previous occupants if necessary.

Vargs fight and hunt in packs, much like normal wolves.

The tentacles come from somewhere, be they emerging from a corpse, the shadows, a pool of water or another dimension. Usually these tentacles can stretch and reach up to 20 feet from its host (be it a corpse, the shadows, underwater or so forth) and once the victim is dragged to the host they have a whole new mess of problems to deal with. If dragged into the unknown (darkness, deep beneath the water, another dimension) the end results are infinite, but usually involve being digested. If dragged into water, the victim needs to worry about drowning.

Tentacles have a whole array of possible attacks. In general, they attack with a slap but may also grapple, slam, or engage in normal wrestling as if they had a Strength of 15 (increase this Strength by 1 for each extra tentacle attacking a single target, up to a maximum Strength of 20).

If a slap attack succeeds the tentacle can opt to perform the slam attack as well. If the slam attack is then successful the victim takes the extra damage and is flung 4d6 feet away. If the slam fails then the slap also fails and the tentacle is so far off its mark that it cannot attack that same victim the next round.

If the grapple attack succeeds, the victim and tentacle must both make a Strength check. If the tentacle makes their check by more than the victim makes their check (or fails by less) they the victim can be attacked by the squeeze or drag attack options the next round. The squeeze does more damage while the drag pulls the victim 2d6 feet closer to the "host" creature.

A victim that is grappled can attack the tentacle's weaker underbelly while they are still grappled. When doing so the tentacle only has AC 8, not 3. Anyone else targeting the underbelly that is not grappled suffers a -6 when attempting to hit the underbelly. If the underbelly is hit and wounded when a victim is grappled the victim can make a new Strength check to escape.

The tentacle can engage in wrestling just like any normal character using its normal combat values (THACO, Hit Dice, Armor Class), when doing so it ignores all the combat rules and special rules listed above.

Despite their hit dice being only 2 + 2, tentacles save as 5th level fighters.



BESTIARY

ZOMBIE

Climate/Terrain:	Any
Frequency:	Rare
Number Appearing:	3d8
Organization:	None
Activity Cycle:	Night
Intelligence:	0
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
<hr/>	
Armor Class:	8
Movement:	6
Hit Dice:	2 (9 hp)
THACO:	19
Attack:	Claw (1d8)
Saving Throws:	Fighter 2
Special Traits:	Spell immunities
Magic Resistance:	None
Size:	M (4'-7' tall)
Morale:	N/A
Experience Points:	65

Zombies are mindless animated corpses. The *animate dead* spell opens a connection to the Negative Energy Plane that provides these fleshy corpses with the ability to move and follow simple commands given by their controller. Their controller can be the spell caster who created them or an evil-aligned priest who successfully dominates them. As the magic that animates them does not prevent their decay, zombies are often bloated, rotting, or desiccated, depending on their surrounding environment. Zombies vary in size depending on the kind of corpses they are animated from. They do not spawn.

As mindless creatures, zombies have no society and make no contact with other creatures unless ordered to by their creators. Zombies can follow simple commands of up to 15 words, given by their controller from no more than 60 feet away. The language used to speak the command makes no difference, as long as it is a real language and the correct words are spoken aloud. Zombies attempt to obey immediately and literally. Their ability to follow commands while lacking language skills is similar to the way magical items activate when the proper command words are spoken.

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