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Beyond the Veil

BY MONTE COOK



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 9TH LEVEL AND ABOVE
REQUIRES THE USE OF THE DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® PLAYER'S HANDBOOK,
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PENUMBRA

Beyond the Veil

AN ADVENTURE MODULE FOR CHARACTERS OF 9TH LEVEL OR HIGHER

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DEDICATED TO Jonathan and Skip.

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A Rampaging Dragon

Stories about dragons rampaging across the countryside are almost always false. The creatures are just too intelligent, too crafty, and too strategy-minded to “rampage.” Rampaging brings the wrath of oath-bound knights, powerful mages and divinely-protected priests. Why would a dragon want such attention, unless it had some special secret, or unless it was insane?

Or both.

The northern reaches of the Derideth Swamp were once plagued by a rampaging dragon. This black dragon, named Storamere, attacked human villages, wiped out orc camps, drove off the lizardfolk, and decimated farmland. Storamere had inherited an impressive lair perhaps more fitting for a dragon of much greater stature. He attacked settlements in order to draw vengeful heroes into this lair to defeat them utterly within its dangerous confines. Storamere took a great deal of mad glee from this.

Over two hundred and fifty years ago, however, he met his untimely end. The monks of the Order of St. Chausle goaded him into attacking what appeared to be a defenseless monastery, and then slew him outright in a sudden surprise ambush. Storamere died with a curse upon his draconic tongue. “You could not have defeated me in my lair,” he told his slayers. “I am forever invincible in my lair.”

Adventure Synopsis

The player characters are contacted to help a small community in need. Iversham, a village on the edge of a dismal swamp, is plagued by a black dragon. This seemingly routine (if challenging) mission proves to be much more than it appears, however. Reports from witnesses who have seen the dragon and survived turn up some strange facts. The dragon has been seen to pass through trees. Its gaze seems to inflict harm all by itself. The dragon’s touch saps the life from

living things. If any of these things are true, this is no ordinary dragon.

More poking around town reveals this important bit of information: it refers to itself as “Storamere,” a dragon that hasn’t been seen for several hundred years. If this is Storamere, he should be much older (and thus bigger) than reports describe the dragon being. These clues alone might lead smart players to figure out that Storamere is dead — or rather, undead. Of course, many won’t. The same information can be learned by traipsing into the swamp looking for the dragon. After some other encounters, eventually the PCs run into the ghost of the dragon. They can either flee from Storamere or defeat him; it doesn’t matter. Ghosts just come back unless permanently laid to rest.

THE MAD MONKS

Advice from people in Iversham suggests that the PCs visit an old monastery in the swamp that may hold information about the dragon. The Monks of St. Chausle were Storamere’s original slayers. Now, unfortunately, there are only two monks left, and they are not up to the task that their forebears once undertook. In fact, they are both quite mad. It’s tricky to get information out of them, but once the PCs manage it, they learn that while Storamere was alive, he was supremely haughty, and overconfident. He always bragged about how powerful he was within his own lair. He stressed that he simply could not be defeated there. While at the monastery, the PCs must help defeat one of Storamere’s progeny, a terrible half-dragon stone giant.

And if the PCs get the information about its demise, they learn that in fact, Storamere wasn’t defeated in his lair — he was killed when he was attacking the monastery. That is the trick to laying Storamere to rest permanently: he must be defeated in his own lair. This lair has never been found, but clues learned at the monastery, linked with some other deductions (like, why

Storamere's ghost is showing up now, after all these years), lead the PCs to a strange old ruined tower recently plundered by some other adventurers. A broken bridge leading halfway across a river turns out to be a gateway to the Ethereal Plane.

THE ETHEREAL PALACE

Storamere wasn't joking when he said he was tough in his palace. His palace exists on the Ethereal Plane, on a floating island accessible by crossing the "broken" magical bridge near the ruined tower.

The palace itself is magical, in that the walls are made of solidified acid. Fecund and twisted, Storamere created a number of half-dragon creatures while he was alive — a half-dragon manticores, a half-dragon constrictor snake, and a few half-dragon dark elves. Many of his children remain in the palace with their ghostly sire.

Since they're on the Ethereal Plane, Storamere is more like a traditional dragon here than before. However, he has pools of acid to hide in, secret tricks for moving around the palace



INTRODUCTION: A RAMPAGING DRAGON

unseen, and other challenges for the PCs to deal with. Eventually, though, one epic battle later (or possibly two), the world is hopefully rid of the ghostly threat once and for all.

ENTER THE CHARACTERS

There are a number of ways the Game Moderator can get the Player Characters involved in the adventure.

- **A Plea for Help.** Perhaps through a common link (a friend, past associate, or relative local to the area around Iversham), or perhaps because of the PCs' reputation as heroes, the PCs receive a message from Iversham stating their problem with the dragon and the need for help. Mayor Unnis Mavin is offering a 1,000 gp reward — probably not enough to interest the characters, but enough to show that things are serious.
- **Just Passing By.** The characters are near the Derideth Swamp on other matters (a different adventure) when they hear that the area is being seriously threatened by a black dragon of Large size, cluing in-the-know characters (or players) that it's a mission well within their capabilities.
- **An Obscure Reference.** The PCs learn that something that they need regarding a different adventure (a lost magic item of importance, a key, a spell, etc.) is located in "the forever-hidden, always-burning fortress, deep in the Derideth Swamp." This clue refers to Storamere's lair. It should not refer to Storamere — leave that to be a connection that the players must deduce for themselves.

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The Village of Iversham

Iversham is a small community on the banks of the White River, which feeds into the Derideth Swamp. Most of the people in the village hunt or fish, shipping what they don't need to the rich farmland communities to the north. It rains frequently here, and is very humid most of the rest of the time. The temperature remains fairly moderate year round, however.

Iversham

Village

Conventional; AL LG; 200 gp limit; Assets 5340 gp; Population 534; Isolated (504 humans, 13 halflings, 8 elves, 6 dwarves, 2 half-orcs and 1 half-elf)

Authority Figures: Mayor Unnis Mavin, female human Ari5

Important Characters: Gastor Hul, male human War4 (hunter); Jassel Goldtooth, female dwarf Exp4 (blacksmith); Tae Lorenorth, female elf Wiz4; Nab Finiling, male human Com4; Strubben Seim, male human Clr4 (cleric of the sun deity); Chaserson Ibble, male halfling Com3 (merchant); Evon Kellar, female human Com3 (trapper); Siles One-Leg, male human Exp2 (craftsman); Aberith Followsong male elf Rng1

Others: Aril (2); War1 (8); Com2 (9); Exp1 (3); Com1 (390)

Places of Note

The village of Iversham has only about seventy buildings. About sixty of these are homes. The people of Iversham built most of the buildings of gray stone with thatch roofs, although they are covered in green and black moss and slime from the rain and humidity here. A few smaller homes of wood and wattle are scattered amid the others. Some of the more prominent locations in town are detailed below.

THE BURNED HOUSE

Located on the outskirts of the east end of the village, this was the home of Dack and Illa Gerrith, a weaver and a carpenter, respectively. Storamere attacked this home with a blast of his acidic breath, leaving it a burned, strangely distorted ruin. The Gerriths both died in the attack.

Everyone in the village knows that the house was recently destroyed and that the Gerriths are dead. Most people assume correctly that it was the dragon. Iversham is small enough that it's hard for anyone coming into the village not to notice the twisted remains of the house.

SWAMP MOON INN

This two-story building is the largest in town. The painted sign over the door, showing the moon setting into the green and gray mire of the swamp, is faded and chipped. Once a thriving place of drink, food, and lodging, the Swamp Moon Inn has seen better days. Tarred Mavin, the Mayor's son, has recently bought the place and has big dreams of making it great again. For now, however, it remains as it has for years — middling- to poor-quality meals, somewhat stale ale, and shabby accommodations. Perhaps even worse, the short and stocky Tarred is new to town (the Mayor sent him off to a larger city for an education) so he knows nothing and no one.

Most of the villagers ignore the Inn, but for visitors like the PCs, there's nowhere else to stay.

TEMPLE TO THE SUN

Strubben Seim, the only cleric at the temple, is an enormous human man with a friendly but quickly judgmental attitude. The building itself is large by Iversham's standards, smaller only than the Swamp Moon Inn by virtue of having no second story.

CHAPTER ONE: THE VILLAGE OF IVERSHAM

A huge stone statue of a woman holding the sun aloft in her hands stands before the double doors of the temple, although it has become black with mold and moss from all the rain. The building itself is just one large room (the sanctuary) with a few rooms in the back for storage and for Strubben. The temple is also used as a school and a meeting hall when one is needed.

STRUBBEN'S SERVICES

As a service to the community and to his patron, Strubben Seim casts whatever spells are requested of him for the standard donations (40 gp per spell level, 20 gp for 0-level spells). Strubben also makes potions, and has the following already made:

Potion	Cost
3 Potions of <i>Cure Light Wounds</i>	50 gp each
Potion of <i>Aid</i>	300 gp
Potion of <i>Bull's Strength</i>	300 gp
Potion of <i>Cure Moderate Wounds</i>	300 gp
Potion of <i>Endurance</i>	300 gp
2 Potions of <i>Lesser Restoration</i>	300 gp each

Strubben gave advice and magical aid (in the form of spells cast and potions) to some adventurers that passed through Iversham a few weeks ago. They were looking for an old tower and a bridge that they had heard about, but Strubben did not know where it was. He has not seen them

since (see the Tower and the Bridge on page 22). He worries about them now, because of the dragon sightings. They didn't seem up to the challenge of a dragon to Strubben. "Of course, there were no dragon sightings back then, or I would never have let them go off into the swamp in the first place."

Strubben has met but does not care for the monks of St. Chausle. They are strange and rude, in his estimation. He doesn't recommend going there for any reason. "Those foolish old codgers wouldn't tell you anything — if they know anything. Which is doubtful."

IBBLE'S OUTFITTERS

Chaserson Ibble, a narrow-faced, brown-haired halfling with a penchant for speaking very quickly and at great length, owns the only real store in Iversham. Long ago, the area had a much larger halfling population, and Chaserson's family was quite wealthy and influential. Most of the halflings left long ago, but the Ibble family stayed. Chaserson (Chase to his friends — which is everyone in town) sells pretty much whatever miscellaneous equipment the PCs need under 200 gp. Beyond a few knives or a small wooden shield, he sells no weapons or armor.

Chase hears everything, and so he knows all about the dragon sightings — the size of the dragon, the color, and the fact that it calls itself Storamere. He's also so dedicated a worker that he hardly ever leaves the shop — so he hasn't seen anything

STRUBBEN SEIM

4th-Level Male Human Cleric

CR 4; SZ M (humanoid); HD 4d8+4; hp 29; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (-1 Dex, +5 breastplate); Atk melee +5 (1d8+1, masterwork heavy mace); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells; AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 9, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12

Skills: Concentration +4, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (religion) +7, Spellcraft +7

Feats: Brew Potion, Dodge, Toughness

Spells: (5/4+1/3+1) Strubben's domains are Good (cast all good spells at +1 level), and Sun (greater turning once per day, undead turned are destroyed instead). Domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

0 Level — *detect magic, guidance, light, read magic, resistance*

1st Level — *bless, command, comprehend languages, endure elements*, sanctuary*

2nd Level — *aid*, bull's strength, enthrall, lesser restoration*

Possessions: breastplate, masterwork heavy mace, +1 cloak of resistance, scroll of divine favor and remove poison, potion of levitation, two flasks of holy water, 243 gp. Strubben also has several potions to sell; see insert above.

BEYOND THE VEIL

first hand. He doesn't really want to believe in the dragon, but the fact that one of the houses in town was destroyed by what looks like acid certainly makes it hard to doubt (see The Burned House on page 6).

SMITHY

Jassel Goldtooth is a friendly, golden-haired dwarf. She and her two human assistants make and all sorts of metal items, including weapons and armor under 200 gp. Jassel loves to gossip and tell stories, but she really knows little about the swamp itself. In fact, she never ventures into it. Jassel hasn't seen Storamere, but she's heard the stories. It confirms her overall fear of the

swamp. She knows that Storamere is the name of a black dragon that lived in the area over 200 years ago.

BOWYER

Siles One-Leg had always assumed that he would be an adventurer, but an accident led to an infection and his leg had to be removed when he was only 12 years old. Now, he is a bitter, long-haired man in his early forties.

Siles makes nicely crafted bows and arrows here, and even has mighty and masterwork-quality wares (even though they are beyond the price range of items typically found in a village of this size).



CHAPTER ONE: THE VILLAGE OF IVERSHAM

Siles is convinced that there is no dragon, despite what everyone says. He hates lizardfolk, and he thinks the dragon is nothing more than a trick perpetrated by the lizardfolk to scare off the villagers. He believes that the lizardfolk would like to drive off the villagers and claim the land for themselves (which is true, by the way, but the lizardfolk are far too few in number to attempt such a thing — and they certainly have no way to create a fake dragon).

the location of the ruined tower and bridge (see page 22) and is willing to share specifics, but still speaks very slowly, and only answers direct questions.

Old Nab saw the ghost dragon once, three days ago, but doesn't say anything unless asked directly. He was on the river in a boat, and saw it far off in the distance, moving through the trees — literally. It spooked him, so he tries not to think about it much.

OLD NAB'S

Nab Finiling sells and rents rowboats for use on the White River. Flat-bottomed, these boats rest high in the water and can even be used to navigate wet areas of the swamp. Nab is unbelievably old and moves very slowly. He doesn't say much unless you ask him about the layout of the swamp. On that topic he knows much, including

TAE LORENORTH'S HOUSE

This is a well-appointed but fairly small, single story wooden home. Tae, a surprisingly beautiful elf with long red hair and dazzling, almost golden eyes, is a wizard willing and able to make potions and scrolls for sale (although she rarely has customers interested in scrolls). She is friend-

TAE LORENORTH

4th-Level Female Elf Wizard

CR 4; SZ M (humanoid); HD 4d4-4; hp 8 hp; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 bracers); Atk melee +2 (1d4, dagger); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Elf Traits, Low-light Vision; AL CG; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 9, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 13

Skills: Alchemy +10, Concentration + 6, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Spellcraft +10

Feats: Brew Potion, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll

Elf Traits: As an elf, Tae is immune to magic *sleep* spells and effects. Elves also get a +2 racial saving throw bonus against Enchantment spells or effects. She also has Low-light Vision.

Low-light Vision: Characters with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

Spells: (4/4/2)

0 Level — *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *resistance*

1st Level — *magic missile*, *sleep*, *charm person*, *shield*

2nd Level — *invisibility*, *summon monster II*

Spellbook:

0 Level — all

1st Level — *charm person*, *expeditious retreat*, *jump*, *magic missile*, *protection from evil*, *sleep*, *shield*

2nd Level — *blur*, *darkvision*, *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *levitation*, *see invisibility*, *summon monster II*

Possessions: +1 bracers of armor, scroll of *expeditious retreat*, *potion of cure light wounds*, two 25 gp rings, 121 gp. Tae also has several potions and scrolls to sell; see insert box on page 11.

BEYOND THE VEIL

ly and a bit wistful when it comes to learning much about the world beyond the swamp's edge. She would love to leave Iversham, but believes her father is lost somewhere in the swamp and feels the need to remain here in case he ever returns. She doesn't get the opportunity to make many sales, but even one keeps her going for weeks.

If she meets and talks with the PCs, Tae would love to go into the swamp with them, both to get in on a little excitement and to possibly find her father. She's terrified that the stories she's heard

about a dragon in the swamp could mean a great danger for her father. She's never seen the dragon, though.

Of course, Tae is probably not nearly as powerful as the PCs, and is actually fairly fragile physically. If she does accompany the PCs, they'll need to safeguard her carefully or she will almost certainly not survive.

(The whereabouts of Tae's father are beyond the scope of this adventure, but could lead to further adventures in the area).

ROLLING FOR INFORMATION

If your group isn't up for roleplaying interactions with the townspeople, they can learn a few basic facts based on a Gather Information check, which reflects talking with villagers here and there on a casual basis for the better part of a day.

The following information is presented as quotes from various villagers. The greater the result of the roll, the more information the PCs learn:

DC	Information
5	"The dragon? It's as black as tar, long like a snake — about the size of a good-sized bear (with wings, a tail, and a long neck, of course). It talks a lot when it attacks, boasting about itself and putting down the poor folks it attacks. Calls itself Storamere. Attacked the village two nights ago — burned the Gerriths and their house pretty much to the ground."
10	"Storamere is the name of a black dragon that plagued the area over 200 years ago. Back then, the dragon was about the size of a horse and attacked everything and everyone in sight."
12	"They say that the dragon can hurt ya simply by looking at ya. Better watch out. Everyone's afraid of goin' out into the swamp now. Hunters, trappers — they's all afraid."
15	"The thing is, the monks at the Order of St. Chausle always say that they killed the dragon Storamere long ago."
18	"Oh, I seen it. Strangest thing you ever saw. Flew right through the trees like they wasn't there. I was hiding — hunting, you understand. It flew right by me. "
20	"Storamere, in the old days, talked a lot about his lair. Said he was unbeatable there. Some sort of special place — I don't know. I don't know that no one's ever found it, either, and, back then anyway, plenty looked for it. Maybe them that killed him found and plundered it."
25	"I ... saw it. It attacked my friend Ranold. It grabbed him in one of those terrible claws. Except that Ranold ... he didn't really bleed. He just sort of ... withered. It was so awful. I was lucky to get away. I don't know what happened to Ranold, but ... well, I'm sure he's dead."
30	"Some other adventurers like yerselfs was here not too long ago. Went out to some old tower or castle out in the swamp. I dunno. Never seen it myself. Sounds like hooey."

TAE'S POTIONS AND SCROLLS

Tae has the following already made and for sale:

Potion	Cost
Potion of <i>Jump</i>	50 gp
Potion of <i>Mage Armor</i>	50 gp
Potion of <i>Protection from Evil</i>	50 gp
Potion of <i>Love</i>	150 gp
Potion of <i>Intelligence</i>	300 gp
Potion of <i>Invisibility</i>	300 gp
Potion of <i>Blur</i>	300 gp
Potion of <i>Levitation</i>	300 gp
Scroll	Cost
Scroll of <i>Expeditious Retreat</i>	25 gp
Scroll of <i>Shield</i>	25 gp
Scroll of <i>Darkvision</i>	125 gp
Scroll of <i>Mirror Image</i>	125 gp
Scroll of <i>See Invisibility</i>	125 gp

LEARNING MORE

When the PCs come into the village, they may not know much more than the fact that a dragon has been attacking the people here as well as those venturing into the swamp. If they don't even know that, they'll learn about it quickly — the dragon attacks are the main topic of conversation.

Just because the PCs didn't roll high enough to learn all the information doesn't mean that they can never find it out. Speaking with various NPCs directly allows them to learn more as decided by the GM. They can also find out more information at

the monastery (see Chapter Three). Just about anyone in town can give the PCs directions to the monastery, although many of them will warn the PCs that no one really goes there anymore. In fact, only Mayor Mavin knows that there are monks there at all. She's quite forthright about it, telling the PCs that Brother Freton and Brother Savisoll are quite mad, but perhaps knowledgeable.

USING DIVINATION SPELLS

The PCs probably have a number of divination spells at their command that can help learn more about Storamere.

Divination. The PCs can use this spell for advice. If the PCs use this spell to find Storamere, it might say something like, "In the depths of the mire, Storamere will find you." If they use it to try to find his lair it would say, "Look to those in the ruins of order, though they are mad, they are wise."

Commune. This spell can confirm that the dragon attacking the village is indeed the same dragon from 250 years ago, but it won't actually reveal that he's a ghost unless the question is asked directly.

Legend Lore. This powerful spell is likely to reveal that Storamere is a ghost, and that his palace is on another plane. Further uses of this spell can be used to determine the secret to finally putting Storamere's ghost to rest — killing him in his own lair.

FINDING OUT FIRST HAND

The PCs can, of course, just wander out into the swamp to see if they can find Storamere. If they do so, they almost certainly find him eventually — or more accurately, he finds them (see Chapter Two).

CHAPTER TWO

Into The Swamp

The Derideth Swamp is thick with leafy trees and reeds; grass grows amid soggy terrain, or right up out of the frequent slow-moving streams and shallow pools that cover the area. More often than not, an explorer is standing in one to six inches of water, and has to cross areas where the water is two to three feet deep.

The swamp swarms with mosquitoes and biting flies. Leeches, frogs, and snakes are common, as are colorful birds in the branches of trees or standing with long legs amid the reeds. In drier areas, muskrats, badgers, possums, and small lizards crawl about the ground and in trees.

Legends say that the swamp is endless, and that it instills madness in whomever remains within its confines for any length of time. Today, explorers have clearly shown that it is not endless, but a few still claim that insanity lies at the center of the swamp. Who's to say they're wrong?

STORAMERE'S VICTIMS

At some point decided by the GM, the PCs eventually stumble upon the remains of eight dead lizardfolk. (For a random determination, assume that it occurs 1d3 days after the PCs enter the swamp.) Two are burned, as if by acid, their features completely unidentifiable. Five of the rest have wounds that have torn open their scaled flesh. The area around each wound is strangely black, shriveled and brittle. One dead lizardfolk has no apparent cause of death at all. All the corpses are slightly bloated from the conditions around them, but characters can tell they are about two days dead.

A character that makes a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) notes that no animals or even insects have chosen to feed on these corpses — an almost inconceivable event in the swamp.

The most evident thing about this macabre find is that the corpses have not been eaten by the

Random Swamp Encounters

If the PCs wander about the swamp, they have a 50% chance (01-50 on d%) each day of having a dangerous encounter. Encounters of a non-threatening nature, such as with birds, large lizards (including the occasional crocodile), and various other mundane animals are much more frequent. Most of these encounters will not seriously challenge the PCs. Instead, they simply stress the dangerous nature of the swamp.

Roll d10 or choose from the following list when the PCs do come in contact with dangerous beasts (don't use an encounter more than once):

D10 Encounter

- | | |
|----|----------------------|
| 1 | One Black Pudding |
| 2 | Three Trolls |
| 3 | One Ten-Headed Hydra |
| 4 | Two Ochre Jellies |
| 5 | One Will-o'-wisp |
| 6 | Two Chuuls |
| 7 | Three Green Hags |
| 8 | Shambling Mound |
| 9 | Tendriculos |
| 10 | Two Gray Renders |

dragon, nor has their gear been removed. If the PCs search them, they find that each lizardfolk has a longspear, two shortspears, and a pouch with tools, food, and 1d4 pieces of interesting carved wood (worth 3 gp each).

If desired, more such grisly remains can be found of other creatures — trolls, a hydra, a dire badger, a giant crocodile, etc. Note that these bodies, and all victims of the ghost dragon, are avoided by natural wildlife, even insects, another sign that Storamere is an unnatural creature now.

The Ghost Dragon

If the PCs are in the swamp looking for Storamere, they *will* find him. His ghostly form wanders the swamp, attacking anything he comes upon.

When the GM decides it's an appropriate time, Storamere comes to the PCs. For random determination, assume that it occurs 1d4+1 days after the PCs enter the swamp.



When this occurs, make a Spot check (+28) for Storamere to find the PCs in the swamp. Unless the PCs are hiding, assume that the ghost dragon succeeds. Remember that Storamere wanders the swamp carefully and incorporeally, so the PCs also need to succeed at Spot checks (based on his +26 hide) to see him coming, and they need to be able to see invisible creatures.

Storamere is arrogant and confident, manifesting in the midst of the PCs. He unleashes his *corrupting gaze* first, so all PCs must make Fortitude saving throws (DC 23) — only in subsequent rounds can they choose to avert their gaze. Then, Storamere breathes his *acid breath*, hoping to get as many of his foes at once as possible.

On the following rounds, Storamere attacks by attempting to touch his victims. His many claws, his maw, and his wings allow him to make multiple attacks, all of them withering his victims as opposed to actually damaging them (for effect, his bite still leaves bite marks, and his claws claw marks, but these attacks inflict no hit point damage).

For a completely unprepared party, Storamere's attack can be devastating. However, it is not his goal (despite appearances) to kill them all; if he has to, Storamere will pull back to allow the PCs to live. What he would like to do is urge them to come to his palace. He never was able to take full advantage of his lair in battle, so now as a ghost he has an overwhelming need to fight against powerful foes there — the only way to lay him to rest permanently is to defeat him in his lair.

When he comes upon other victims in the swamp, like the lizardfolk, he simply destroys them out of spite and contempt. But the dragon is smart enough to recognize the PCs as adventurers capable of coming to his lair, though too deluded to realize that no one knows where his lair is. He hisses as he attacks the PCs, "You are nothing to Storamere. I can destroy you with but a glance or gesture. As powerful as I am here, imagine the might I possess in my palace! You cannot, for you are mere mortals. The power I possess within my lair is beyond your meager mental grasp. You could never defeat me in my palace. There, I am invincible!"

RETURNING TO IVERSHAM

After their encounter with Storamere, the PCs are most likely very drained and almost certainly have discovered that Storamere is no ordinary dragon. Retreating back to Iversham is probably wise. If the PCs come back to town after a foray into the swamp, you should have the NPCs they talk to suggest that they go to the Monastery of St. Chausle (see Chapter Three).

If the PCs have destroyed Storamere's ghostly form and they don't know much about ghosts, they may believe that they are victorious. If this is the case, show them the error of their ways by having Storamere attack Iversham again, preferably before they get back or perhaps even when they are present. Multiple battles against Storamere's ghost are quite possible — he simply reforms every time, until the PCs find and confront him in his lair.

STORAMERE in the Swamp

Large Undead Dragon (Water, Incorporeal)

CR 12; SZ L (undead dragon, incorporeal) HD 19d12; hp 128; Init +1 (+1 Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd fly 150 ft (perfect); AC 14 (+1 Dex, -1 size, +4 Deflection); Atk touch +19 (special*, bite), touch +14 (special*, two claws), touch +14 (special*, two wings), touch +14 (special*, tail slap); Face 5 ft. x 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Breath Weapon, Corrupt Water, Corrupting Gaze, Frightful Presence, Spells, Withering Touch; SQ Black Dragon Immunities, Blindsight, Damage Reduction 5/+1, Darkness, Darkvision 60 ft., Keen Senses, Low-light Vision, Manifestation, Rejuvenation, Spell Resistance 18, Telekinesis, Turn Resistance +4, Water Breathing; AL CE; SV Fort —, Ref +12, Will +12; Str 30, Dex 12, Con —, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 19

*Each touch attack inflicts one point of temporary Strength and one point of temporary Constitution damage; see Storamere's Withering Touch supernatural ability.

Skills: Concentration +19, Hide +26, Intimidate +23, Listen +28, Knowledge (history) +21, Search +30, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +21, Spot +28

Feats: Hover, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Cleave, Snatch

Black Dragon Immunities (Ex): Immune to *sleep*, acid, and paralysis.

Blindsight (Ex): Storamere can ascertain creatures' locations by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibrations and other environmental clues); this dragon's range is 180 feet.

Breath Weapon (Su): Line of acid, 80 feet long, every 1d4 rounds; damage 12d4, Reflex half DC 25.

Corrupt Water (Sp): Once per day Storamere can stagnate 10 cubic feet of water, making it become still, foul, and unable to support animal life. This ability automatically spoils unattended, nonmagical liquids containing water. Magic items (such as potions) and items in a character's possession must succeed at a Will save (DC 23) or become fouled. Magic items get a Will save bonus of 2 + 1/2 caster level, while an item attended by a character gets the character's bonus.

Corrupting Gaze (Su): Storamere can blast living beings with his glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 23) or suffer 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of permanent Charisma score drain.

Damage Reduction (Su): Storamere ignores damage from most weapons and natural attacks; he takes normal damage from energy attacks, spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities. Each time a foe hits Storamere with a weapon, the damage dealt is reduced by 5 points. However, a +1 or better weapon does full damage.

Darkness (Sp): Storamere can cast *darkness* up to three times per day at a radius of 60 ft.

Darkvision (Ex): Storamere can see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 ft. Darkvision is black and white only.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Storamere can unsettle foes with his mere presence. This ability takes effect automatically (radius 180 ft.) whenever Storamere attacks, charges, or flies overhead. A potentially affected creature (one with less than 19 HD) that succeeds at a Will save (DC 23) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for one day. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with more than 5 HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds.

Incorporeal: Storamere can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. When hit by spells or magic weapons, he has a 50% chance to ignore damage from a corporeal source. He can pass through solid objects will, and his attack

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ignores natural armor, armor, and shields. An incorporeal creature can't be heard with Listen checks.

Keen Senses (Ex): Storamere can see four times as well humans in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. He also has Low-light Vision, and Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Low-light Vision: Creatures with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

Manifestation (Su): All ghosts have this ability. As ethereal creatures, they cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When they manifest, ghosts become visible but remain incorporeal. However, a manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or a ghost touch weapon. A manifested ghost remains on the Ethereal Plane but can be attacked by opponents on both the Material and Ethereal planes. When a spellcasting ghost manifests, its spells affect both ethereal targets and targets on the Material Plane normally unless the spells rely on touch. A manifested ghost's touch spells don't work on material targets.

Rejuvenation (Su): A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts in 2d4 days with a successful level check (1d20 + 19 in Storamere's case) against DC 16. The only way to get rid of a ghost for sure is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. For Storamere, being destroyed in his palace would be enough to set him to rest permanently.

Spell Resistance (Ex): To determine if a spell or spell-like ability works, the spellcaster makes a level check (1d20 + caster level). If the result equals or exceeds 18, the spell works normally, although Storamere is still allowed a saving throw.

Telekinesis (Su): Storamere can use *telekinesis* once per round as a free action, as cast by a 19th-level sorcerer.

Turn Resistance (Ex): When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add +4 to Storamere's Hit Dice total.

Undead: Undead are immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromantic effects, and they ignore mind-influencing effects. Undead are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. They have no Constitution scores and are therefore immune to any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects). An undead spellcaster uses its Charisma modifier when making Concentration checks.

Negative energy (such as an *inflict wounds* spell) can heal undead creatures. When reduced to 0 hit points or less, an undead creature is immediately destroyed. Undead cannot be raised. Resurrection can affect them, but since undead creatures usually are unwilling to return to life, these attempts generally fail.

Water Breathing (Ex): The dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Withering Touch (Su): When Storamere hits a living target with this unique incorporeal attack he deals one point of temporary Strength score damage and one point of temporary Constitution score damage. Against ethereal opponents, Storamere adds his Strength modifier to attack and damage rolls. Against material opponents, he adds his Dexterity modifier to attack rolls only (the above statistics assume corporeal foes).

Spells: (6/6) Treat Storamere as a level 3 sorcerer. He knows the following spells:

0 level — *detect magic*, *flare*, *mending*, *open/close*, *read magic*

1st level — *expeditious retreat*, *shield*, *true strike*

The Order of St. Chausle

St. Chausle was a religious martyr almost completely forgotten in the modern age, killed in defiance of an evil king who wished to suppress those religions different from his own. The Order of St. Chausle has since been dedicated to freedom and individual choice. Over the years, the order's focus changed, so that it was more of a retreat for individuals who did not wish contact with the outside world. The monks built a monastery deep in the Derideth Swamp, assuming that no one would disturb them there, and lived their ascetic lifestyle there. They were relatively undisturbed for decades, even after the tiny village of Iversham was established not terribly far away. In fact, things went very well for the order until the coming of the dragon Storamere.

When Storamere ravaged the countryside, the Monastery of St. Chausle took the brunt of his wrath. Many monks died, and the monastery itself was greatly damaged. Finally, a brother named Schinde devised a plan. Playing upon the dragon's boastful, arrogant nature, the monks stood out in the swamp and shouted insults until they provoked attention. When Storamere attacked, the monks were ready, and swarmed out to attack him together, eventually bringing him down. Storamere's last words were, "You could not have defeated me in my lair. I am forever invincible in my lair."

Despite this victory, the order suffered greatly. Many had died, and many more decided to leave, no longer able to remain in the proper frame of mind after the incident. Decades, and then centuries passed, with the order's size growing ever smaller.

Today, the only two monks that remain are Brother Freton and Brother Savisoll. Freton is a human in his nineties. Savisoll is a half-elf and is 134 years old. They have lived in the crumbling monastery for many years, just the two of them. They are difficult to interact with, since they have not experienced contact with the outside world for so long.

ARRIVAL AT THE MONASTERY

The monastery was once a large structure of mortared stone, a wood-shingled roof, and stained glass. Now, it fights a battle against the encroaching swamp, and loses. The two massive wings of the building have completely collapsed and are overgrown with plants and moss. Only the central, cathedral-like portion remains, and many of its windows are broken, letting in the elements. The entire place would look like an abandoned ruin except for two things: the door is closed tight and appears sturdy, and a steady stream of smoke billows up from a hole in the roof.

Freton and Savisoll greet the PCs together. They welcome the strangers into the monastery, although Savisoll has a bit of a suspicious glare. The building inside, or rather what is left of it, consists primarily of a great hall that probably once looked like the sanctuary of a church. Now it is filled with broken benches and tables. A clear path stretches into the middle of the room, where it appears the monks spend much of their time in meditation.

ROLEPLAYING THE MONKS

Freton has almost no short-term memory. He is likely to forget who the PCs are at any given moment, or why they are here. He remembers the past with clarity, and does not lose his memory of Savisoll, although he occasionally asks his friend, "when did you get so old?"

Savisoll is the more truly mad of the two. He lies compulsively, even when it is obvious that he is contradicting himself. But only every second thing he says is a lie. Thus, if players catch on to that fact, they can often tell when he might be telling the truth.

A typical exchange with these two could potentially go like this:

Freton: *"The dragon? Oh yes, it was a long time ago, that one was. Haven't seen him since, thank goodness."*

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Savisoll: “No, brother, we saw him flying through the swamp just yesterday.”

Freton: “Really? I thought he had died long ago.”

Savisoll: “No, he never died.”

Freton: “But Shinde’s plan. I remember brother Ustis telling me all about it himself. The brothers defeated the dragon. Ended his reign of terror.”

Savisoll: “Yes, that’s right.”

Freton: “So, why are you folks here again?”

Savisoll: “They’re here because of all the trolls in the swamp.”

Freton: “Oh, yes, the trolls. Terrible things. I wouldn’t mind if you killed every last one of them. Well, good luck!”

The PCs can try to get the monks to be more helpful, but this requires a Diplomacy (or, in theory, Intimidate) check with a DC of 25. A new check must be made for each question asked. Success means that the monks try harder to be helpful. Freton remains coherent for a little longer than normal, and Savisoll lies with only every third statement.

BROTHER FRETON

6th-Level Male Human Monk

CR 6; SZ M (humanoid); HD 6d8–12; hp 28; Init +0; Spd 50 ft.; AC 11 (+1 class bonus); Atk melee +3/+0 (1d8–1, unarmed); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Stunning Attack; SQ Evasion, Purity of Body, Slow Fall 30 ft., Still Mind; SL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 11, Con 7, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 16

Skills: Balance +9, Climb +8, Escape Artist +9, Heal +4, Jump +8, Knowledge (history) +7, Listen +2, Spot +9, Tumble +9

Feats: All of Freton’s feats have a prerequisite of Dex 13, so they are all lost to him now.

Evasion (Ex): If a monk makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, the monk instead takes no damage. Evasion can only be used if the monk is wearing light armor or no armor.

Purity of Body: A monk gains immunity to all diseases except for magical diseases.

Slow Fall: The monk takes damage as if a fall were 30 feet shorter than it actually is.

Still Mind: A monk gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against spells and effects from the Enchantment school.

Stunning Attack (Su): The monk can use this ability once per round, but no more than once per level per day. The monk must declare she is using a stun attack before making the attack roll (thus, a missed attack roll ruins the attempt). A foe struck by the monk is forced to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + one-half the monk’s level + Wisdom modifier). In addition to receiving normal damage, if the saving throw fails, the opponent is stunned for 1 round.

BROTHER SAVISOLL

6th-Level Male Half-Elf Monk

CR 6; SZ M (humanoid); HD 6d8–6; hp 34; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class); Atk melee +2/–1 (1d8–2, unarmed); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Stunning Attack*; SQ Evasion*, Half-elf Traits; Low-light Vision; Purity of Body*, Slow Fall 30 ft.*, Still Mind*; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 7, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 8, Cha 14

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +7, Escape Artist +10, Jump +7, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Listen +9, Tumble +10

Feats: All of Savisoll’s feats have a prerequisite of Dex 13, so they are all lost to him now.

Half-elf Traits: Immune to *sleep* spells, and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells. Half-elves also have Low-light Vision.

Low-light Vision: Characters with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

*See Brother Savisoll’s entry for full descriptions of these special abilities.



STORAMERE'S EMISSARY

While the PCs interact with the brothers of St. Chausle, the monastery is attacked by an emissary of Storamere — a half-dragon stone giant named Gaulmeth. His skin is black rather than the typical giantish gray, and his eyes are green. He holds a huge iron flail covered with wicked spines, and has vast, swooping dragon wings. His mouth is particularly wide and tooth-filled. Gaulmeth is a terror, and his flail makes him even more horrifying. The half-dragon giant begins his attack by pounding on the walls of the monastery, shouting, “Storamere has not forgotten you, you misbegotten monks! Your deaths will be slow and terrible!”

Storamere sent Gaulmeth here not just to attack the monks that slew him, however. The dragon/giant is here to encourage the PCs to come to the dragon's acid palace, by antagonizing them. Even if they've not yet encountered Storamere, assume that the dragon has been spying on them incorporeally and thinks they are just the sort of foes he would like to fight. Thus, Gaulmeth's tactics are as follows:

- Gaulmeth hammers on the monks, incapacitating or killing them.
- Gaulmeth chooses one PC target and ignores the rest, attempting to kill the single PC. During the fight, he bellows, “I am the

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scion of Storamere the Mighty. I come from his palace, where he waits, invincible, to destroy all his foes!”

- If Gaulmeth’s foes appear to be good at melee combat, he flies up to the top of the monastery and uses his breath weapon, and then tears portions of the roof off to throw as boulders.

He can scoop up three handfuls worth of bricks and stone as a move-equivalent action and throw one as an attack that round, and then two the next, grabbing more stone on the third.

PCs attempting to climb the crumbling monastery walls must make a Climb check with a DC of 20. As a free action, Gaulmeth can stomp on the monastery, forcing a climber to make a new check (DC 25) or fall.

- If Gaulmeth’s foes appear to be good at ranged combat, he wades into the middle of them, smashing and sundering weapons with his flail. (He loves to destroy the magic bows of skilled archers.)

NEW WEAPON SPECIAL ABILITY:

SUNDERING

A *sundering* weapon grants the wielder the Sunder feat and adds a +4 circumstance bonus to Strength checks made to break an object of Medium size or smaller.

Caster Level: 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *shatter*; *Market Price:* +1 bonus

Gaulmeth

Large Male Half-Dragon Half-Giant (Water, Stone)

CR 10; SZ L (dragon); HD 14d10+70; hp 151; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 29 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +15 natural); Atk melee +22/+17 (2d6+17, +1 *huge sundering flail*), or ranged +16/+11 (2d8+12, rock); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Breath Weapon, Rock Throwing; SQ Black Dragon Traits, Darkvision 60 ft., Low-light Vision Rock Catching; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 35, Dex 15, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13

Skills: Climb +14, Hide +0, Jump +14, Spot +3

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot

Black Dragon Traits (Ex): Half-dragons are immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, as well as acid. They also have a Breath Weapon, Darkvision to a range of 60 ft., and Low-light Vision.

Breath Weapon (Su): Storamere’s progeny can breathe a line of acid 5 ft. high, 5 ft. wide, and 60 ft. long that inflicts 6d4 damage (Reflex save DC 17 for half damage) once per day.

Darkvision (Ex): Half-dragons can see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 ft. Darkvision is black and white only.

Low-light Vision: Characters with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

Rock Catching (Ex): Gaulmeth can catch Small, Medium-size, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, he can make a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 11 for a Small rock, 16 for a Medium-size one, and 21 for a Large one. (If the projectile has a magical bonus to attack, the DC increases by that amount.) Gaulmeth must be ready for and aware of the attack.

Rock Throwing (Ex): Gaulmeth is an accomplished rock-thrower and receives a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls when throwing rocks. Gaulmeth can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each (Small objects) up to 5 range increments of 180 feet.

Possessions: +1 *huge sundering flail*, key to the chest in his chamber (Area 10 of Storamere’s palace), sack with 348 gp and a worthless collection of strangely shaped rocks.

CHAPTER THREE: THE ORDER OF SAINT CHAUSLE

- If confronted by other flyers while in the air or on the roof, Gaulmeth attempts to smash through the roof and enter the main hall of the monastery.

Smashing through the roof requires a Break check versus DC20.

A character making a successful Search check (DC 20) finds a book that has the handwritten title “Deeds of the Order of St. Chausle, and of the Dragon.”

During the battle, Freton and Savisoll try to defend their home against the monstrosity. Their age and their deteriorating mental conditions have made them fairly feeble. They may indeed be far more of a hindrance to the PCs than a help.

Gaulmeth does not fight to the death. Instead, if he is hard-pressed, he takes to the air. If followed, he takes a circuitous route back to the tower and the bridge, although if he is followed by flying characters, he almost certainly won't be able to get away. If he obviously cannot flee, he disobeys his sire's commands and attempts to take out as many of his foes as he can.

AFTER THE BATTLE

If Freton and Savisoll are alive after the fight, they are both more eager to tell the PCs what they want to know. Savisoll will begin to mumble his lies and speak the truth eagerly. Freton struggles to remember what just happened, but even after he forgets the fight and who the PCs are exactly, he feels that he should help them for some reason.

If the monks are dead, the PCs can search the remains of the monastery if they choose. They find the monks' living quarters behind the great hall, a long, high chamber with a pair of wooden pallets, a fireplace with a simmering pot of soup over it, and a large collection of old books piled in five- to six-foot-high stacks.

The book contains an account of 250 years ago, when Storamere first began his rampage, the plan of Brother Schinde, and the slow downfall of the order after that. Most importantly, however, it tells of Storamere's ethereal palace, and even a little of his father, Leashadram, who actually created the place (see page 25). Details of the palace are few, but a reader can find directions to the old tower and bridge and a bit of their history (see page 22). It takes a character about four hours to read the musty, damp book.

If the PCs manage to capture Gaulmeth, he won't give them any more information than what he's been instructed to: he is an emissary of Storamere, who dwells in his far-off palace, where he has never known defeat. Reading his mind through magical means could potentially reveal the following facts:

- Storamere sent him to encourage them to come, because he truly believes he can't be beaten in his lair (this may inadvertently encourage the PCs to try to draw Storamere out of his lair to fight, which of course is exactly the wrong thing to do).
- Storamere, his father, is dead. His ghost remains tied to the palace, where he seems fairly normal.
- The palace can be reached by crossing the broken bridge near the old tower.

Of course, following Gaulmeth's path or scrying on him could lead the PCs right to the entrance to the dragon's lair.

The Tower and the Bridge

Clues learned in the monastery should lead the characters to an old abandoned tower and what appears to be a broken arch bridge.

diameter of the tower. There is little of interest to find up there, although the roof is still just barely intact; searching the upper area causes the ceiling to collapse (see insert).

The Tower

The bridge to Storamere's ethereal palace is located next to a ruined tower. The ground here is fairly dry and solid, rising up from the swamp like a little island. Nearby, a branch of the White River moves past, faster than the river travels in most places through the swamp. This stream is about twenty-five feet across. The Bridge rises up near the tower and halfway over this stream, broken in the middle as if it once bridged this rise in the terrain with another on the opposite bank. However, it never did. Characters searching the other side find no evidence of supports for the bridge there.

About three weeks ago, some adventurers came and explored this tower, believing it to be the site of a long-lost treasure. These characters are long since gone, and have scoured the rubble thoroughly. Their continued presence here, however, was what awoke Storamere. The tower and broken bridge have been long forgotten by the villagers in Iversham, but the tower was once the abode of a mighty but malevolent warrior who worshipped dragons. He set it up as a shrine next to the bridge that led to the palace of an ancient black dragon named Leashadram — the very place where Storamere lived and now haunts.

The door of the tower is on the second level; a set of crumbling stone steps leads around the tower up to it from the ground. The door is not locked, and in fact hangs open. Leaves and dirt and broken wooden planks cover the stone floor on this level. Some old wooden furniture lies smashed beneath the broken boards, rotting in the damp of the swamp.

Stone steps curve around the wall opposite the door, leading to the upper level. The wooden floor there has long since collapsed, leaving only a few planks around the edges and one rafter still crossing the

Collapsing Roof (CR 2)

Searching the upper level of the tower causes its barely intact ceiling to collapse. Anyone within the tower at that point suffers 4d6 points of damage (Reflex save DC 20 for half damage). A Search check DC 20 while on the stairs to the upper level, or specifically looking at the roof while on the main level, will note that the roof is structurally unsound and possibly dangerous. There is no Disable Device roll for this trap; reinforcing the roof with additional support beams, or triggering the roof while outside of the tower are the only ways to disable it without resorting to magic.

A hole in the floor of the second, main floor leads to the lower level of the tower. It has been cleared of rubble, perhaps recently. The lower, ground level of the tower appears to be in better condition than that above. It is a cool dark place filled with fungus and damp slime. A dirt floor shows signs of recent digging. One hole is in fact almost twelve feet deep.

A black pudding has very recently made its lair in this lower level, having oozed in through a crack in the foundation. To make matters worse, two patches of green slime coat the ceiling, ready to drop on anyone who moves under them, although they ignore the pudding.

A character making a successful Search check (DC 25) can find black, ashy evidence that someone burned some green slime in here earlier — apparently, they didn't wipe it out completely. That same check also reveals that something indeed was unearthed here a few weeks ago by people with tools.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE TOWER AND THE BRIDGE

THE RED HERRING

There is every reason to believe that the players might think that whatever was dug up here is what awoke Storamere (which is partially correct), and that returning it will put him to rest (which is not at all correct). If this is the case, unless you want the PCs off on a wild goose chase — which might be

fun, but potentially frustrating and counterproductive — arrange an encounter in which the PCs find the four adventurers with their unearthed treasure, lying dead in the swamp. The treasure is a silver statue of a rearing, black dragon in a chest still covered with caked-on dirt. They were carrying it away, and then were killed, Storamere's first vic-

Black Pudding

Huge Ooze

CR 7; SZ H (ooze); HD 10d10+60; hp 120; Init -5 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 3 (-2 size, -5 Dex); Atk melee +8 (2d6+4 plus 2d6 acid, slam); Face 5 ft. x 20 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Acid, Constrict, Improved Grab; SQ Blindsight, Split; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref -2, Will -2; Str 17, Dex 1, Con 19, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Acid (Ex): The pudding secretes a digestive acid that dissolves organic material and metal quickly. Any melee hit deals acid damage. The pudding's acidic touch deals 50 points of damage per round to wood or metal objects. The opponent's armor and clothing dissolve and become useless immediately unless he succeeds at a Reflex save (use its wielder's save bonus DC 19). The acid can dissolve stone, dealing 20 points of damage per round of contact.

A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a black pudding also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds at a Reflex save (wielder's save DC 19).

Blindsight (Ex): The black pudding can ascertain creatures' locations by nonvisual means (scent and vibration); this pudding's range is 60 feet.

Constrict (Ex): A black pudding deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor suffer a -4 penalty to Reflex saves against the acid.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the black pudding must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Ooze: Oozes are immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. They have no clear front or back and are therefore not subject to critical hits or flanking. Oozes are blind but have the Blindsight special quality. They have no Intelligence scores and are therefore immune to all mind-influencing effects.

Split (Ex): Weapons deal no damage to a black pudding. Instead, the creature splits into two identical puddings, each with half the original's hit points (round down). A pudding with only 1 hit point cannot be further split.

Green Slime (2 at CR 4 each)

A single patch of green slime deals 1d6 points of temporary Constitution score damage per round while it devours flesh. On the first round of contact, the slime can be scraped off a creature (most likely destroying the scraping device), but after that it must be frozen, burned, or cut away (applying damage to the victim as well). Extreme cold or heat, sunlight, or a *remove disease* spell destroys a patch of green slime. Against wood or metal, green slime deals 2d6 points of damage per round, ignoring metal's hardness but not that of wood. It does not harm stone.

BEYOND THE VEIL

tims. The weeks-old, bloated and rotting corpses are burned and withered, but not eaten by scavengers. The statue is worth 250 gp, and of course burying it back under the tower accomplishes nothing.

The Bridge

The bridge appears broken. It isn't.

A character making a Craft (stone) check with a DC of 15, or even a Search check with a DC of 20 (dwarves get a +2 bonus from stonecunning), notices that it's not broken — it was made that way.

Any character who breaks the plane of the very edge of the “broken” end of the bridge sees the rest of the bridge and that it connects to a far off island shrouded in strange mist. Pulling back, the character sees just the broken bridge.

The “missing” portion of the bridge is actually there — but it is ethereal. The place where the two meet, the “veil,” is a magical gate that leads directly to the Ethereal Plane.

Only a character who actually passes through the veil and steps onto the ethereal part of the bridge can truly see what's beyond with clarity. The exception to this is a character who becomes ethereal through a spell.

For the rest of this adventure, while they are in the Ethereal Plane, the characters are called *ethereal*. An ethereal creature interacts with other ethereal creatures and objects the way material creatures interact with material creatures and objects. When a spell-casting ghost is on the Ethereal Plane, its spells work normally against ethereal targets.

The description of what lies beyond the veil — the Palace of Storamere — lies in Chapter Five. Of course, there's nothing stopping a character from going through the veil and coming back. It might be important to note that passing through the veil from the wrong side (such as if a character is flying in the Material Plane and circles around to pass through from the “broken” side) accomplishes nothing.

THE WATCHER ON THE BRIDGE

Storamere has made a deal with an invisible stalker (actually, the deal was first made by Storamere's father Leashadram) to watch the bridge and alert him (and his guards, such as those in Area 1 of the palace) of any intruders. It has been a lonely mission for the stalker, but when the PCs first arrive, it excitedly carries out its duty. Characters able to see the invisible will spot the creature in the center of the bridge, moving quickly away. If seen, the creature looks like the vague outline of an amorphous cloud. It fights only if attacked. Once it reports intruders it returns to the bridge.

INVISIBLE STALKER

Large Elemental (Air)

CR 7; SZ L (elemental); HD 8d8+16; hp 52; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 17 (–1 size, +4 Dex, +4 natural); Atk melee +10/+5 (2d6+6, slam); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Improved Tracking; Natural Invisibility; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 11

Skills: Listen +9, Move Silently +15, Search +9, Spot +13

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Track, Weapon Focus (slam).

Darkvision (Ex): Invisible stalkers can see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 ft. Darkvision is black and white only.

Elemental: Immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits. Elementals have Darkvision to a range of 60 ft.

Improved Tracking (Ex): Invisible stalkers are consummate trackers and make Spot checks instead of the usual Wilderness Lore checks to trace a creature's passage.

Natural Invisibility (Su): This ability is constant, allowing the stalker to remain invisible even when attacking. This ability is inherent and not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell.

STORAMERE'S PALACE

This strange and forbidding place was created through powerful spells cast by a great black wyrm named Leashadram, the sire of Storamere. Three centuries ago Leashardam ruled from this palace, served by dark elves and a few humans, as well as a small number of half-dragons and dragon bloodspawn (see below). His mate, Estarandil, was much younger than he, and left Leashardam soon after her only child, Storamere, was born.

Leashadram left when Storamere was very young and never returned, leaving Storamere as the sole owner of the place. Storamere was an immature young dragon and the responsibility and power thrust upon him drove him a bit insane (perhaps the stories of the Derideth Swamp inducing madness are true). The two signs of his madness were his rather disgusting desire to mate and produce offspring with whatever crossed his path (the *lotion of size and shape alteration* found in Area 12 helped in this unsettling endeavor), and the wanton, and ultimately ill-advised swath of destruction that he spread in his lifetime.

When a character passes through the veil on the bridge she sees a wondrous and amazing sight. A huge island floats in midair, the bridge spanning toward it much farther than would have been expected — this “half” of the bridge is longer than the one by the tower. And speaking of the tower, a look back reveals that it is still there, as is the “broken” bridge and the swamp, but all are misty, distant, and indistinct.

Rising up from the stony surface of the island is a palace of sickly green — it positively glows with a wavy, churning emerald light. A harsh odor permeates the air, burning the inside of a character's nose and mouth. From the bridge, the player characters can see a set of iron doors built into the base of this strange, three-story structure, but no other entrances or apertures; there is not even a window. (There is another set of doors on the other side of the palace, but the PCs aren't able to see them from this vantage.)

Below and above, everything fades into a distant, swirling mist. All appears to be slightly green, although that may be from the pale glow of the palace.

Acid Made Solid

As the characters approach, the palace seems to bubble and seethe. It becomes clear that the walls are somehow made of liquid — and a dangerous, volatile liquid at that. The exterior walls of the fortress are five feet thick, and made from an opaque, magically semi-solid corrosive of great strength. It actually has a liquid consistency, but it retains its shape.

It is possible to move through the exterior walls of the palace as one would move through a thick liquid, but doing so inflicts 10d6 points of acid damage per round. It takes a corporeal creature not inherently immune to acid a move-equivalent action to move through the wall. Even simply touching the wall inflicts 1d6 points of acid damage. Anyone knocked into the wall must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) or “fall” into the wall, becoming immersed enough to suffer the full 10d6 points of acid damage. Success means that the character only touched the wall for 1d6 damage.

The two sets of double doors leading into the palace are iron, pitted and burned, with corrosion stains covering their surfaces. Because of the weakening effect of the acid, the doors have a hardness of only 9, 50 hit points, and a Break DC of 27.

The interior walls, floors, and ceilings are only one foot thick and are actually truly hardened corrosive acid. No damage is suffered by touching them and a creature can't pass through them normally, but they are still unpleasant to touch or smell.

BEYOND THE VEIL

The interior walls have a hardness of 8, 60 hp, and a Break DC of 25. They are immune to acid.

Each hour spent in the place requires a character to make a Fortitude saving throw. Failure results in a loss of 1d6 points of damage from breathing in acid fumes.

Unless otherwise noted, the ceilings are 25 feet high. This gives some of the smaller rooms and hallways an imposing feel, since many are higher than they are wide or long.

All of the rooms are lit with a *continual flame* spell (or more than one, if needed), providing eerie, flickering light that plays upon the green sheen of the scattered acid pools within the palace, as well as on the outer walls.

Storamere's palace is an unpleasant place to spend a lot of time in. Adventurers certainly will not want to spend the night.

Level One

1. ENTRANCE CHAMBER

There are two of these rooms.

Through the great iron doors leading into the palace is an entrance chamber. A narrow walkway encircles a huge pit of steaming, churning acid in this room. The smell burns the nose and throat of anyone who approaches. An iron door stands on either side wall, the surface of each stained with



CHAPTER FIVE: STORAMERE'S PALACE

corrosion. Another set of double doors stands opposite the entrance.

The pool of acid in each of these entrance rooms is twenty feet deep and connects under the surface to the Grand Chamber, and thus to the pool in the other entrance chamber. These unseen passages are twenty feet in diameter — large enough to allow even Storamere to swim through them.

Each of these areas is guarded by a half-dragon dark elf fighter. These two, Derim and Tellifar, are actually Storamere's half brothers. They have sworn to protect the palace against any intruder. Neither particularly

likes Storamere (alive or dead), but each has remained true to his word. Both have exaggerated features — particularly large and pointed ears, and angular facial features, as well as stark white hair. They are far more massive and muscular than a typical dark elf, and their legs bend slightly backwards like a reptile's.

Neither of them listens to entreaties of diplomacy, although they may pause for just a moment to consider looking the other way if — and only if — the PCs say that they are there to defeat Storamere and nothing else.

DERIM AND TELLIFAR

Medium-Sized 8th-Level Male Half-Dragon Half-Drow Fighters

CR 10; SZ M (dragon); HD 8d12+8; hp 54; Init +7 (Dex, improved initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 22 (+2 Dex, +6 Chainmail, +4 natural); Atk melee +14/+9 (1d8+9 double-bladed sword, first blade), and melee +14 (1d8+4, double-bladed sword, second blade); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Breath Weapon, Spell-like Abilities; SQ Black Dragon Traits, Darkvision 120 ft., Drow Traits, Elf Traits, Light Blindness; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 22, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 15

Skills: Climb +16, Hide +8, Spot +1, Swim +17

Feats: Ambidexterity, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Two-weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (double-bladed sword), Weapon Specialization (double-bladed sword)

Black Dragon Traits (Ex): Half-dragons are immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, as well as acid. They also have a Breath Weapon, Darkvision to a range of 60 ft., and Low-light Vision.

Breath Weapon (Su): Derim and Tellifar can breathe a line of acid 5 ft. high, 5 ft. wide, and 60 ft. long that inflicts 6d4 damage (Reflex save DC 17 for half damage) once per day.

Darkvision (Ex): Dark elves can see with no light source at all, to a range of 120 ft. Darkvision is black and white only.

Elf Traits: They are immune to magic *sleep* spells and effects. Elves also get a +2 racial saving throw bonus against Enchantment spells or effects.

Drow Traits (Ex): +2 racial bonus to Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities, Darkvision up to 120 ft., Spell-like Abilities, and Light Blindness.

Light Blindness (Ex): Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a *daylight* spell) blinds drow for 1 round. In addition, they suffer a –1 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls, saves, and checks while operating in bright light.

Low-light Vision: Characters with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

Spell-like Abilities: 1/day — *dancing lights*, *darkness*, and *faerie fire*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a sorcerer of 8th level.

Possessions: +1 double-bladed sword (immune to acid), +1 chainmail (immune to acid)

BEYOND THE VEIL

Because they loathe their mad half brother Storamere, the dark elf half-dragons would consider letting characters past who are going to attack the dragon and leave everything else in the palace alone — if the characters make a Diplomacy check with a DC of 30. Under these circumstances, they might also tell the PCs the history of Storamere and his sire Leashadram (see the first two paragraphs of this chapter). Of course, if the characters are not true to their word, Derim and Tellifar attack them immediately.

Both Derim and Tellifar like to keep in close contact, so neither actually sits in the entrances and just waits for intruders. Instead, they patrol back and forth between each of the entrance rooms and Areas 4, 5, and 6. They are allies with Verrit in Room 7 and the half-dragons in Room 2. The invisible stalker warns them if someone is spotted crossing the bridge. Only if they are warned of intruders coming into both entrances will they split up to

their separate stations. Usually, intruders encounter them both at the same time, ready in whichever entrance is used.

If they know that foes are coming, the half-dragon elves hide in the acid pools (total Hide bonus +8) and leap out to attack, hopefully with surprise.

With the pools of acid and other dangers here, don't be surprised if the PCs opt to go in with *protection from elements* and *fly* spells cast. This is a good strategy, however, the residents of the palace know how *protection from elements* spells work. If they see acid inflicting no damage on their foes, they don't give up, in fact, they keep trying. They assume that eventually the protection provided will wear down, making their foes more susceptible to Storamere's breath weapon.

FIRST FALSE-HOARD GUARDIAN

Huge Half-Dragon Half-Manticore

CR 7; SZ H (dragon); HD 6d12+30; hp 70; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy); AC 20 (−2 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural); Atk melee +13 (2d4+9, two claws), melee +9 (1d8+4, bite), or ranged +6 (1d8+4, six spikes); Face 10 ft. x 20 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Breath Weapon, Spikes; SQ Black Dragon Traits, Darkvision 60 ft., Low-light Vision, Scent; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 28, Dex 15, Con 21, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 11

Skills: Listen +9, Spot +9

Feats: Multiattack

Black Dragon Traits (Ex): Half-dragons are immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, as well as acid. They also have a Breath Weapon, Darkvision to a range of 60 ft., and Low-light Vision.

Darkvision (Ex): Half-dragons can see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 ft. Darkvision is black and white only.

Breath Weapon (Su): Storamere's progeny can breathe a line of acid 5 ft. high, 5 ft. wide, and 60 ft. long that inflicts 6d4 damage (Reflex save DC 17 for half damage) once per day.

Low-light Vision: Characters with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

Scent (Ex): The creature can detect the presence of opponents by sense of smell, generally within 30 feet. If it moves within 5 feet of the scent's source, the creature can pinpoint that source. The creature can follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

Spikes (Ex): A manticore can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action. This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. A spike deals a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 19 or 20. The creature can launch only twenty-four spikes in any one day.

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2. THE GRAND CHAMBER

This huge chamber takes up much of the first floor. The floor is covered in 15 feet of bubbling acid, except for a small island of stone and dirt in the center of the room. Atop this island lies Storamere's "false hoard": a chest, about a thousand loose coins, and a large golden harp.

Swimming through the acid is just like swimming through water except that the character sustains 10d6 acid damage per round and has only about a foot of visibility.

They attack anyone who enters other than the residents of the palace.

Flying guardians, such as these two, attempt to foil PC *fly* spells by leaping up and pulling the characters into the acid pools. Treat this as a normal grapple attack. If an NPC manages to get a pin (not just a hold) on a flying PC, he can drag her down into the acid simply as a free action (by dropping).

3. THE ISLAND AND THE FALSE HOARD

The two permanent guardians in this chamber are more of Storamere's progeny — a half-dragon manticore and a half-dragon giant constrictor snake. The manticore is covered in black scales and the snake has bat-like wings. Both bear the dark green eyes of all of the dragon's children.

As mentioned above, an island of coarse gray rock rises up from the acid. There are 983 copper coins piled near the center, atop of which sits a chest and a large golden harp. The harp is actually only gold-plated, but is still worth 200 gp due to its workmanship. It weighs about 150

Second False-Hoard Guardian

Huge Half-Dragon Half-Giant Constrictor Snake

CR 7: SZ H (dragon); HD 11d10+22; hp 82; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (average); AC 19 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural); Atk melee +17 (1d8+16, bite); Face 15 ft. x 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Breath Weapon, Constrict, Improved Grab; SQ Black Dragon Traits, Darkvision 60 ft., Low-light Vision, Scent; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 33, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 4

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +22, Hide +3, Listen +9, Spot +9

Feats: Flyby Attack, Snatch

Breath Weapon (Su): Storamere's progeny can breathe a line of acid 5 ft. high, 5 ft. wide, and 60 ft. long that inflicts 6d4 damage (Reflex save DC 17 for half damage) once per day.

Black Dragon Traits (Ex): Half-dragons are immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, as well as acid. They also have a Breath Weapon, Darkvision to a range of 60 ft., and Low-light Vision.

Constrict (Ex): A constrictor snake deals 1d8+10 points of damage with a successful grapple check against Large or smaller creatures.

Darkvision (Ex): Half-dragons can see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 ft. Darkvision is black and white only.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the constrictor snake must hit with its bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Low-light Vision: Characters with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

Scent (Ex): The creature can detect the presence of opponents by sense of smell, generally within 30 feet. If it moves within 5 feet of the scent's source, the creature can pinpoint that source. The creature can follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

pounds and is five feet high and almost as long. The chest is locked and is nothing but a trap — an empty decoy with a kick.

Empty Fire Trapped Chest (CR 4)

Characters must make an Open Locks check with a DC of 30 to open this ironbound chest. When opened, however, it activates a *fire trap* spell cast at 15th level. It inflicts 1d4+15 points of damage (Reflex saving throw DC 16 for half damage) to all within 5 feet. The DC to find this trap is 29, and the DC to remove it is also 29.

Of course, Storamere himself might lie in wait for the PCs here, to do battle with them in the company of the chamber's guardians (see his Ethereal Plane stats on page 44). In fact, this is the most likely place for the ghost dragon to be when the characters first arrive. He rises up out of the acid, and announces that this is his lair and the intruding PCs are doomed.

"So," Storamere might say to characters finding him here, "you have foolishly thought me in error when I told you that I am invincible here. Gaze upon the splendor of this palace — its very nature is anathema to you, but it is a delight to me. Now, at long last, I will show you insignificant worms what true power is — look upon me and know utter defeat!"

It's important to realize that Storamere never refers to himself as a ghost, and while he is in his palace he attempts to behave and act as though he is still alive as much as possible, falling back on ghostly powers only when he absolutely has to. On the Ethereal Plane, Storamere is solid and so forgets that he's dead. He plays out the scenario that's been going through his insane brain for the last few hundred years — he believes the PCs are enemies who have come to confront him in his lair, just as he always wanted them to in life.

Storamere utilizes the two half-dragon guardians in the Grand Chamber when he fights here. For example, while they attack, Storamere casts *true strike* on himself and then swoops in next round, using Power Attack to switch +19 from his attack bonus to damage (since the *true strike* adds +20 to more than compensate). He uses his Breath Weapon as often as he can, hoping to wear down any acid resistance the PCs might have.

The dragon also uses the acid pool to his fullest advantage, diving in and back up to attack the PCs with surprise. Characters must make a DC 20 Spot check to see Storamere's black form in the acid beyond the normal one-foot limit to visual range. A new check is required every round, but if successful, the dragon under the surface can be targeted with spells and attacks with 50% miss chance and the character cannot be attacked with surprise. Failure means that the character in question has no idea where Storamere is, and if attacked by the dragon loses his Dexterity bonus to AC.

Storamere has no intention of dying here, or rather, of dying his second death here. If seriously hurt, he can become corporeal, leaving the palace and entering the real world. In this form, he floats up to the True Hoard to wait for his foes there. In most cases, even this isn't necessary. Doing nothing but moving, Storamere can swim to one of the entrances (room 1) and then fly through the outer acid wall (harmlessly), flying up into room 21 on the next round.

4. ARMORY

When this place was more of an organized fortress under Leashadram, this is where the dark elf guards stored their weapons. Now spears, swords, shields, crossbows, and bolts hang rusting on the walls or sit neglected atop old wooden tables. Every weapon is rotten, pitted, or corroded so as to make it worthless.

5. EMPTY ROOM

This room appears empty, with nothing but an old, threadbare and scorched rug on the floor. However, it is where Derim and Tellifar keep a secret cache of things important to them.

There is a secret compartment hidden under the rug. Characters must make a Search check (DC 20) to find it. When the floor panel is slid away, it reveals a small cache with three objects within it. The objects are a gold amulet, a flask of orange liquid that holds three doses of *cure moderate wounds*, and a dagger. All of the items are magical.

NEW WONDROUS ITEM: Amulet of Dragon Will

This gold amulet has a curled-up dragon imprinted upon it. When the amulet is held up to the surface of a *wall of will*, such as those found in Areas 14 and 16 on Level Two (see page 37), it deactivates the wall for one minute.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *dispel magic*; *Market Price:* 2,000 gp; *Weight* —

NEW MAGIC WEAPON: Dragon Dagger

This dagger has a bronze hilt made to look like a dragon and an iron blade in the shape of the flame it is breathing. In addition to being a standard *+1 dagger*, it is actually a key that when inserted into the columns in Room 20 gives access to the secret passage up to the third level. Also, if inserted into the statue of Leashadram found in the half-stone giant Gaulmeth's chest (Area 10), it activates a special power of the statue, turning it into a *figurine of wondrous power*. Even Derim, Tellifar, and Gaulmeth don't know about the last effect.

Caster Level: 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor; *Market Price:* 2,302 gp

6. HALL OF REMEMBRANCE

This long, dark hall has a floor of black, reflective, marble-like stone. Carved into this stone is a winding path of runes. Each rune is dark green, and carved so as to resemble a writhing serpent. The walls also bear reliefs carved into their crumbling surfaces, depicting dragons in various scenes, such as fighting, sleeping, flying, casting spells, etc.

Anyone who knows the draconic language or makes a Decipher Script check DC 25 can tell that runes are draconic characters and serve as a genealogy that ends with Leashadram's sire Havastrene, Leashadram himself, and Storamere (no half-breeds are recorded).

These runes become important knowledge to anyone wishing to open the secret door in Room 20. The runes are not magical.

7. THE SHRINE TO DRAGONKIND

A dark room with twisted features, this chamber is dominated by a 12-foot-high statue of a black dragon so realistic that it's likely to catch newcomers off guard. Before the dragon is a bowl-shaped altar of dark granite, with stone draconic heads at four points around its circumference. The curved back wall is covered with carved stone reliefs like those seen in Area 6.

Unless they make a Spot check with a DC of 15, the GM should tell the PCs that they see a large black dragon in the room, and play out at least a round's worth of actions as if it were a real dragon (that takes no actions itself, of course).

The vampire priest Verrit, who is eternally bound to this chamber, takes actions as well, preparing to launch an attack against anyone who would defile his temple home. Verrit casts *divine favor* and *bull's strength* while the players are distracted by the statue.

Dragon Bloodspawn

When a half-dragon has offspring with another creature of its non-dragon heritage, this union produces a quarter dragon, or a dragon bloodspawn. For example, if a half-dragon/half-human has a child with a human, the offspring is a dragon bloodspawn. In this case, the creature is a normal human character except that it has the following ability modifiers:

- +4 Strength
- +2 Constitution
- +2 Charisma

It also has a resistance of 20 to whatever breath weapon its dragon grandparent had, and a natural armor bonus of +1. Dragon bloodspawn CRs are +1 higher than normal, and they gain "dragon bloodspawn" as a subtype.

VERRIT, Undead Cleric

Male 7th-Level Undead Vampire Cleric (Dragon Bloodspawn)

CR 10; SZ M (undead); HD 7d12; hp 54; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 24 (+2 Dex, +5 breastplate, +7 natural); Atk melee +12 (1d6+7, slam); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Blood Drain, Children of the Night, Create Spawn, Domination, Energy Drain, Spells; SQ Damage Reduction 15/+1, Darkvision, Turn Resistance +4, Resistances 20, Gaseous Form, Spider Climb, Alternate Form, Fast Healing 5; AL CE; SV Fort +6 Ref +7 Will +11; Str 25, Dex 14, Con —, Int 13, Wis 20, Cha 20

Skills: Bluff +13, Concentration +11, Hide +10, Knowledge (religion) +12 Listen +15, Move Silently +10, Search +9, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +6, Spot +18

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Silent Spell

Alternate Form (Su): A vampire can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a *polymorph self* spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer, except that the vampire can assume only one of the forms listed here. It can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of permanent Constitution score drain each round the pin is maintained.

Children of the Night (Su): Vampires command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth a pack of 4d8 dire rats, a swarm of 10d10 bats, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to one hour.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by a vampire's Energy Drain attack rises as a vampire spawn 1d4 days after burial.

If the vampire instead drains the victim's blood, leaving his Constitution at 0 or less, the victim returns as a vampire spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under the command of the vampire that created it and remains enslaved until its master's death.

(Vampire spawn should not be confused with dragon bloodspawn.)

Damage Reduction (Su): Verrit ignores damage from most weapons and natural attacks; he takes normal damage from energy attacks, spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities. Each time a foe hits Verrit with a weapon, the damage dealt is reduced by 15 points. However, a +1 or better weapon does full damage.

Darkvision (Ex): Undead can see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 ft. Darkvision is black and white only.

Domination (Su): A vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking onto his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must take a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed at a Will save (DC 18) or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer. The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a vampire's slam attack suffer 2 negative levels.

Fast Healing (Ex): A vampire heals 5 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points or lower, a vampire automatically assumes *gaseous form* and attempts to escape. It must reach its coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (It can travel up to nine miles in 2 hours.) Once at rest in its coffin, it rises to 1 hit point after 1 hour, then resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire can assume *gaseous form* at will, as the spell cast by a 5th-level sorcerer, but can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Resistances (Ex): Verrit can ignore 20 points of cold or electricity damage each round as a vampire. As a dragon bloodspawn he can also ignore 20 points of acid damage each round.

Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Turn Resistance (Ex): When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add +4 to Verrit's Hit Dice total.

Undead: The undead are immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromantic effects, and they ignore mind-influencing effects. Undead are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. They have no Constitution scores and are therefore immune to any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects). An undead spellcaster uses its Charisma modifier when making Concentration checks. Undead have Darkvision at a range of 60 ft.

Undead cannot be raised. Resurrection can affect them, but since undead creatures usually are unwilling to return to life, these attempts generally fail.

Spells: (6/6+1/4+1/3+1/2+1) Verrit's domains are Evil (cast all evil spells at +1 level), and Destruction (can make one attack with a +4 bonus to hit and +7 damage once per day). Domain spells marked with an asterisk.

0 Level — *detect magic, guidance* (2), *inflict minor wounds, resistance* (2)

1st Level — *cause fear, command, divine favor, inflict light wounds** (2), *protection from good, summon monster I*

2nd Level — *bull's strength, cause moderate wounds, hold person, shatter**, *spiritual weapon*

3rd Level — *contagion**, *create food and water, dispel magic, summon monster III*

4th Level — *deeper darkness* (silent), *inflict critical wounds, unholy blight**

Possessions: +1 breastplate of spell resistance (13), +1 cloak of resistance, scroll of spell immunity.

CHAPTER FIVE: STORAMERE'S PALACE

Verrit is a vampire cleric who once worshipped all dragonkind, a dragon bloodspawn himself (see insert). He dwelled in the palace until Leashadram left, at which point he committed suicide. However, Verrit had no idea that his actions, carried out in this evil shrine, would lead to his terrible, unwilling “resurrection” as an undead vampire.

Verrit’s meager service to dragonkind now is to use his spells to feed the still-living inhabitants of the palace, while he himself slowly (over hundreds of years) starves with no blood to drink.

Now, his hairless skin dark black-blue, his eyes piercing and yellow, Verrit throws his cape back with a flair like dragon’s wings and attacks any non-dragon worshippers who enter the shrine, shouting, “You are not welcome here! But the gates of Hell open wide for you. Let your spirit and your blood feed me, that I may serve the lords of scale and claw a while longer!”

If the PCs take the time to try to speak with Verrit, a Diplomacy check of DC 25 gets him to pause. A check with a DC of 30 actually gets the vampire to talk.

If Verrit speaks, he is willing to explain his strange origins, and discuss even the history of Leashadram and Storamere (see the first two paragraphs of this chapter). But he only speaks of them with reverence, and has no idea that Storamere is dead. He himself has been trapped in the shrine since well before the dragon’s death at the hands of the Order of St. Chausle.

During combat, Verrit doesn’t hesitate to pull back and use his *inflict wounds* spells to heal himself — sometimes climbing up a wall to do so. Verrit has no coffin to retreat to, if reduced to gaseous form. Instead, he floats up and *into* the dragon statue, through the mouth. The statue is hollow and serves as a strange resting place for this unique vampire. Inside, he has hidden a scroll with two spells: *inflict serious wounds* and *dispel magic*.

The sides of the hollow dragon statue have a hardness of 8 and 60 hit points, with a Break DC of 27. The DC to Spot the hole that Verrit uses to get inside is 25. If the Spot check fails, the character has no idea where Verrit actually went. It will seem as if he just disappeared. If the character searches the statue however, the DC to find the hole is only 15.

8. DRAGONPODS

This large chamber was once a gathering hall with tables and benches, and trophies on the wall. There are only vague remnants of these now. Instead, the room has a number of strange brown and yellow pods on the floor, and clinging to the walls and ceiling, each about three to four feet across. Six of them remain unopened, while at least a dozen have burst from the inside. A few smaller dragonpods lie cracked and brittle on the ground, unopened but obviously long-dead. All of the pods are of some hard organic matter covered in a thick, sticky mucus. They smell of sour fruit.

Storamere’s mating with a carrion crawler produced some strange results. Carrion crawlers normally lay hundreds of eggs at a time. But Storamere’s crawler mate produced dozens of strange, egg-like pods. Some of them hatched, and produced half-dragon carrion crawlers. Others never produced anything viable. Still others have yet to hatch, even though their parents are long dead.

Strangely enough, the union of dragon and carrion crawler seems to have spawned a creature with entirely new abilities. These half-breeds thrive for a time and then curl up and die, producing yet another dragonpod. Even if slain conventionally, the body of the dead dragon crawler will create a new pod and thus a new creature. Only destruction by fire prevents a dead specimen from forming into a pod.

As soon as anyone without dragon blood enters the chamber, four dragon crawlers scuttle out from behind the pods and attack. The round after combat starts, another one drops down from the ceiling to attack a random character. These creatures are covered in black scales and have green, dragon-like eyes on their stalks. Each has dragon wings but they are too small and ill-fitting to allow them to fly. Instead, flutter and flap their wings to distract opponents.

Characters must make a Spot check based on the hide check of the monsters (total bonus of +10 due to circumstances) to avoid being surprised. If they achieve surprise, the creatures make a partial charge and one tentacle attack.

The character attacked from above must make an additional Spot check on the round she is attacked, or the dragon crawler can make its attacks and she gains no bonus from her Dexterity to AC.

BEYOND THE VEIL

The spiral stairs in this room rise up to Level Two. They are made of rusted black iron, but are still quite sturdy and safe.

9. KITCHEN

In years previous, when the palace was staffed by dark elves and dragon bloodspawn that served Leashadram, this kitchen was used to prepare meals eaten in Area 8. Now, the place is a shambles, with old rusted pots and broken dishes everywhere.

10. GAULMETH'S CHAMBER

Judging by the size of things in this chamber, it is clearly the domain of a giant. A huge bed, ten feet long and five feet wide, sits next to a wooden table with a brass lamp shaped like a bird with upturned wings. A towering wooden chair and a large chest also occupy the room. The wall to the left of the door bears a faded tapestry of a beautiful mountain scene at dusk (it is worthless, however).

DRAGON CRAWLERS (5)

Large Half-Dragon Half-Carrion Crawlers

CR 6; SZ L (dragons); HD 3d10+9; hp 25 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 21 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural); Atk touch +8 (paralysis, eight tentacles), melee +3 (1d8+6, bite); Face 5 ft. x 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Breath Weapon, Paralysis, Wing Buffet; SQ Black Dragon Traits, Darkvision, Dragonpod, Low-light Vision; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 22, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 15, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +14, Hide +8, Listen +6, Spot +6

Feats: Alertness

Black Dragon Traits (Ex): Half-dragons are immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, as well as acid. They also have a Breath Weapon, Darkvision to a range of 60 ft., and Low-light Vision.

Breath Weapon (Su): Storamere's progeny can breathe a line of acid 5 ft. high, 5 ft. wide, and 60 ft. long that inflicts 6d4 damage (Reflex save DC 17 for half damage) once per day.

Darkvision (Ex): Half-dragons can see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 ft. Darkvision is black and white only.

Dragonpod (Ex): If slain, the body of a dead dragon crawler curls up to create a dragonpod, out of which comes a new dragon crawler. Only destruction by fire prevents a dead specimen from forming into a pod. The time it takes for a dragonpod to hatch is completely random, ranging from a few minutes to several centuries.

Low-light Vision: Characters with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a dragon crawler's tentacle attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be paralyzed for 2d6 minutes.

Scent (Ex): The creature can detect the presence of opponents by sense of smell, generally within 30 feet. If it moves within 5 feet of the scent's source, the creature can pinpoint that source. The creature can follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

Wing Buffet (Ex): Anyone within 10 ft. of a dragon crawler suffers a –1 circumstance penalty to attacks and reflex saving throws due to its fluttering wings. This penalty is cumulative when a character is within reach of multiple dragon crawlers.

CHAPTER FIVE: STORAMERE'S PALACE

The large chest (see insert) holds Gaulmeth's personal things as well as an important magical statue.

Inside the chest, characters find an assortment of giant-sized clothing, a large and very sharp knife, two flasks of acid, a large empty sack, an iron pot and some dishes, and a small statuette of a black dragon — this is *Leashadram's statue*.

Gaulmeth's Chest (CR 3)

Gaulmeth's chest is locked. A character must make an Open Locks check (DC 30) to open it, or he must bring back the key found on Gaulmeth's body (see page 20). The chest is also trapped. When opened by any means other than the proper key, tiny spikes fly out in all directions up to thirty feet. These spikes inflict 1d6 damage (Reflex save DC 18 for half). Plus, anyone suffering damage from the spikes must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 16) or suffer 1d6 points of temporary Dexterity score damage and another 1d6 points of temporary Dexterity damage one minute later.



NEW WONDROUS ITEM: Leashadram's Statue

A small statue of a grinning black dragon, this object has two different magical powers. This statue, if given the proper command word (which is found in Area 19), allows a character to make a safe path through the acid in Area 21.

There is a small slot in the back of the statue that can only be found if a character makes a DC 20 Search check. If the magic *dragon dagger* found in Area 5 is inserted into this slot like a key, the statue's main power is activated, and it henceforth becomes a *figurine of wondrous power*. When commanded, this statuette changes into a writhing black dragon under the command of the owner. *Leashadram's statue* can be used for up to one hour, once per week. It obeys only its owner. If it is slain, it reverts back to statue form.

Caster Level: 11th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*; *Market Price:* 14,500 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

11. STORAGE

Once a storeroom and larder, this room is now unused since the living inhabitants of the palace get their food from Verrit's spells. Old crates and barrels have rotted through, spilling their putrid contents on the floor. This terribly ancient mass of food and moldering wood has become a breeding ground for yellow mold.

Yellow Mold (CR 6)

If the barrels or crates are disturbed, a patch of yellow mold bursts forth with a cloud of poisonous spores. All within ten feet of the mold must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 1d6 points of temporary Constitution score damage. Another Fortitude save (DC 15) is required one minute later — even by those who succeed at the first save — to avoid taking another 2d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. Fire destroys yellow mold and sunlight renders it dormant.

Amid the moldy rubble and ruin in this chamber is a key that fits one of the locked chests in Area 21. It was dropped here long ago and forgotten.

12. THE LAB

When Leashadram ruled here, his dark elf servitors used this room as an alchemical laboratory. They developed a great many strange mixtures, some of which remain.

There are three tables in the room — one large one near the door, another large one on the opposite wall, and a smaller bench in the middle of the room. All are covered with alchemical tools, dishes, beakers, and various bits of strange liquids, powders, and ingredients of all sorts. The whole setup, if transported out of here, is worth 100 gp as an alchemical lab.

The table near the door has a number of glass flasks and beakers, three of which contain doses of *alchemist's fire*. A small box on the same table has nine *tindertwigs*. A *thunderstone* is amid the clutter, as are three normal rocks.

The far table has still more vials, jars, and glass dishes, including a *potion of see invisibility* and a ceramic pot with three doses of a *lotion of size and shape alteration* (see insert).

The small bench has three large bottles, one with clear liquid, one with a greenish liquid, and the last with a bubbly red mixture. The clear liquid is actually water. The green and red liquids have special abilities (see inserts).

NEW MAGIC POTION: Lotion of Size and Shape Alteration

This oily cream comes in a pot, with only enough to coat most of the flesh of a Medium-sized or Large creature, or two Small or Tiny creatures. Once applied, it allows a character to take on the form of a single creature within one size category of its own. The character gains the extraordinary abilities of the new form, just as if under the effect of the spell *shapechange*. Only one form can be adopted by the character, and the new form lasts for an hour, whether the character wants it to or not.

Caster Level: 17th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, Brew Potion, *shapechange*; *Market Price:* 4,000.

NEW ALCHEMICAL
POTION/TRAP:

Venenum Erratus (CR 2)

If this bottle of greenish liquid is uncorked, the liquid bubbles over the edge and emits green fumes that fill the room quickly. Everyone within ten feet of the bottle must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 18). Failure produces a random result:

d6	Result
1	Character gains +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity score for 1 hour
2	Character is healed 2d8 hp (if hurt) but spends 1d6 rounds incapacitated by coughing
3	Character suffers 3d6 hp loss and spends 1d6 rounds incapacitated by coughing
4	Character suffers 1d6 points of temporary Constitution score damage now and another 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage one minute later.
5	Character suffers 1d6 points of temporary Intelligence score damage now and another 1d6 points of temporary Intelligence damage one minute later.
6	Character falls unconscious for 1d10 minutes, and is unable to be awakened.

As a trap, this potion has a CR of 2. There is no Search roll or Disable check, but an Alchemy roll DC 25 could identify the potion's properties in an hour's time, at a cost of 1 gp.

Prerequisites: Alchemy roll DC 35, access to an alchemical lab; *Market Price:* 200 gp

NEW ALCHEMICAL
POTION:Venenum Acidus
Repueno

The reddish liquid is safe to uncork, and in fact has no special effect unless it is mixed with an equal amount of water. If this happens, the liquid becomes a coating that can be applied to an inanimate object, rendering it immune to acid. This alchemical mixture will provide enough to protect any Medium-sized object, four Small objects, or eight Tiny objects.

Prerequisites: Alchemy roll DC 30, access to an alchemical lab; *Market Price:* 100 gp

Level Two

13. MORE DRAGONPODS

Spreading like an infestation, the dragonpods from Area 8 are here as well. Occasionally, a dragon crawler splits after it dies, creating two pods. Thus, slowly but surely, the dragonpods will eventually fill this entire palace. But that won't happen for another hundred years at least.

The top of the stairs is, in fact, almost completely surrounded by more dragonpods. There are ten in this room. As the PCs reach the top of the staircase, a pod near them hatches, and a dragon crawler comes out. If the PCs attack this newborn (which is fully formed and has the same stats as the others; see page 34), the other two creatures in the room lunge out from behind other dragonpods. If the PCs do not attack, they can pass through the area safely, while the two adults concern themselves with the newborn. This is not true if the PCs re-enter this room later, however. In that instance, all three attack.

14. SLAVE QUARTERS

Both of the doors in this room are locked (Open Locks DC 28 to open).

Long ago, a number of slaves were kept in this room. A few very old blankets and woven straw mats lay on the floor, so ancient that they crumble to the touch. The walls bear scratched marks and carved graffiti that speaks ill of dragons in a variety of languages. The wavy line on the map indicates a special magical wall, called a *wall of will*, that seals off the prison in Area 15 (see insert).

15. THE PRISON

Beyond the *wall of will*, chains dangle from the ceiling and hang from the walls, attached to manacles covered in dried blood. This room stinks of the foul odors of both life and death. Ancient, dust-covered piles of straw and bones lie about the floor, now nothing more than clumps of dried, brittle matter.

This is where Storamere once kept captives. Often, the place was used to hold his unruly offspring. Some of the shorter-lived individuals died here. In fact, only one prisoner remains.

NEW SPELL:
Wall of Will

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: Wall whose area is up to one 10-ft. square/level or a sphere or hemisphere with a radius of up to 1 ft./level

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will passes through; see text

Spell Resistance: No

A *wall of will* is a visible sheet of bluish-white energy, which the caster can form into a flat, vertical plane whose area is up to one 10-foot square per level, or into a sphere or hemisphere with a radius of up to 1 foot per level. The wall inflicts 6d6 points of force damage against anyone attempting to pass through it. Further, the character attempting to pass through must make a Will save to force himself past the barrier (this is an enchantment effect, DC 18). Failure means that the character is

repelled by the barrier, but can attempt to cross it again as many times as he likes — on subsequent tries a character will suffer an additional 6d6 points of damage and have to make another saving throw. The *amulet of dragon will* in Room 5 allows a character to dispel the wall for one minute.

A *wall of will* cannot move, it is immune to damage of all kinds, and it is totally unaffected by most spells, including *dispel magic*. Spells and breath weapons cannot pass through the wall in either direction, although *dimension door*, *teleport*, and similar effects can bypass the barrier. It blocks ethereal creatures as well as material creatures (though ethereal creatures can usually get around a *wall of will* placed on the Material Plane by floating under or over it through material floors and ceilings). Gaze attacks cannot operate through the *wall of will*, since it is opaque.

Material Component: A small piece of agate.

Udalaag

Large Male Half-Dragon Half-Umber Hulk

CR 8; SZ L (dragon); HD 8d10+40; hp 87; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; AC 20 (–1 Size, +11 natural); Atk melee +15 melee (2d4+10, two claws), melee +13 (2d8+5, bite); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Breath Weapon; SQ Black Dragon Traits, Tremorsense; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 31, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 15

Skills: Climb +21, Jump +18, Listen +12

Feats: Multiattack, Power Attack

Black Dragon Traits (Ex): Half-dragons are immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, as well as acid. They also have a Breath Weapon, Darkvision to a range of 60 ft., and Low-light Vision.

Blind (Ex): Udalaag's blindness robs him of the Darkvision and Low-light Vision inherited from Storamere, and his umber hulk Confusing Gaze. He is able to function normally in combat using Tremorsense, however.

Breath Weapon (Su): Storamere's progeny can breathe a line of acid 5 ft. high, 5 ft. wide, and 60 ft. long that inflicts 6d4 damage (Reflex save DC 17 for half damage) once per day.

Tremorsense (Ex): Udalaag can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

CHAPTER FIVE: STORAMERE'S PALACE

Rattling its way through the suspended chains, a stooped creature with black scales and green eyes lumbers forward soon after the PCs enter. Obscenely long arms ending in twisted, barely-usable claws drag on the ground. Its mouth is mandibled and drips with a greenish saliva. It growls and sputters.

If a character makes a Listen check with a DC of 15, he realizes that the growl is actually the beast attempting to speak: "Who comes here?" the creature asks.

Udalaag is a half-dragon umber hulk that was born particularly slow-witted and clumsy. He is really far too stupid to carry on in the tradition of either of his parents, and has long suffered mistreatment by Storamere's other progeny. His *confusion*-inducing eyes were gouged out long

ago, so he does not share that ability with most umber hulks. He is evil, but only because he has known nothing else. In another environment, particularly if he is well treated, his alignment could shift to chaotic neutral.

Characters attempting to deal with Udalaag need to make a Diplomacy check (DC 25). If successful, the characters can actually make an ally in this creature.

Udalaag is far too unintelligent to say anything in much more than two- or three-word sentences, but he makes his mistreatment over the last few hundred years clear. Udalaag just wants to escape from the palace and be free.

If asked, he knows the general layout of the palace, but he doesn't know any of the secrets — how to shut down the barriers in Areas 14 and



BEYOND THE VEIL

16, the existence of the secret door in Area 20, etc. He does know about all of the creatures that live in the palace still, and refers to Storamere as “fappa.” He knows the history of Leashadram and Storamere (see the first two paragraphs of this chapter), but can only relate it in the simplest of terms. He hates all of them for the abuse he has suffered but will not attack or deliberately work against his father. If the PCs free Udalaag and make him their ally, they will get no direct help against Storamere in the final battle, but he won’t harm his new friends, either — even if commanded to by his father.

16. GUARD ROOM

Both of the doors in this room are locked (Open Locks DC 28 to open).

A total of ten shields, all bearing a device resembling a black dragon, hang on the walls. Three halberds are propped in one corner, and a single longsword lies on the floor. The other furnishings in the room are more grisly — a rack, an iron maiden, and a coal pot filled with irons (cool now, of course) mark this room as a torture chamber as well as a guard room.

The wavy line on the map indicates another *wall of will* (see page 38) that seals off the prison in Area 15. Again, the *amulet of dragon will* found in Room 5 allows its bearer to dispel the wall for one minute.

17. LIVING QUARTERS

This room is full of bunks and other furniture indicating that once dozens of people called this chamber home. Judging by the dust and filth that coats everything, no one has lived here in many decades.

18. COMMANDER’S QUARTERS

This smaller chamber has a single (but very large) bed, a dresser, a mirror on the wall, a tub for bathing, a rack for towels and clothing, a wardrobe, a desk and chair, and a large chest. Everything is old and long since past any semblance of use. Characters find all sorts of mundane items here —

clothing, combs, cosmetics, and even some weapons and papers (the writing is in dark elvish, and it simply discusses finances and administrative duties important to the palace 280 years ago). Nothing of real value can be found.

If the room is searched, however, the characters stir up an ancient spectre of one of the room’s former occupants. First, the bed rattles and the door slams shut. On the next round, the characters hear a moaning sound that grows in intensity. They can flee, but even if they do, the spectre, which appears the next round, follows them. The spectre is the horrible gaunt figure of a female dark elf with shriveled features, billowing white hair and wild, red eyes.

The spectre attacks until it is turned or destroyed.

19. THE LIBRARY

Rotten, torn books, yellowed papers, and various scrolls lie scattered about this room, where aging wooden shelves eventually collapsed under the weight of their contents. A single book remains open and undisturbed in the middle of the room, resting atop a bookstand.

The book is entitled *Notes from a Dark Cliff*, and it is about arcane magic theory (specifically transmutation magic). Tucked within the book is a fragment of a parchment that reads “with the statuette in hand, speak the name of he who built the palace and the pathway shall become evident.”

The parchment is referring to Leashadram, and the fact that if someone in Area 21 holds the statue found in the chest in Room 10 and speaks the old dragon’s name, a path will form through the acid.

Getting to the book is tricky, however, since a number of the books in the library that are now laying about the ground were once magically trapped (see insert).

Fire Trapped Books (CR 4 each)

Characters walking across the room must make a Balance check (DC 15). Those who fail kick over 1d4 books on their way. Each book kicked over has a 25% chance (01-25 on d%) of having a *fire trap* spell cast upon it that inflicts 1d4+15 points of damage to the character and anyone within 5 feet (Reflex saving throw DC 16 for half damage). Characters searching for these traps must succeed at a Search check DC 29 for each book, while a Disable Device check with a DC of 29 will deactivate one.

20. THE FINAL HALL

A long green and yellow carpet, still in good condition, runs down the center of this hall. In the middle of one wall, three stone cylinders about a foot long are positioned in small niches so that they can spin on their axes when pushed. However, none of the cylinders will move until they are unlocked by inserting the *dragon dagger* found in Area 5 into the small slot below each of the cylinders in turn, and then withdrawing it.

Once the cylinders are manipulated, anyone who knows the draconic language or makes a Decipher Script check DC 25 can tell that there are draconic runes marked on their sides, just like the ones in Area 6. Each rune is the name of a dragon.

Spectre

Medium-Size Undead (Incorporeal)

CR 7; SZ M (undead); HD 7d12; hp 45; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (good); AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 deflection); Atk melee +6 (1d8 and energy drain, Incorporeal Touch); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Create Spawn, Energy Drain; SQ Sunlight Powerlessness, Turn Resistance +2, Unnatural Aura; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Intuit Direction +10, Listen +13, Search +10, Spot +13

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a spectre becomes a spectre in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the spectre that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a spectre's incorporeal touch attack receive two negative levels. The Fortitude save to remove a negative level has a DC of 15.

Incorporeal: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, and own attacks pass through armor. Always moves silently.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex): Spectres are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only partial actions.

Turn Resistance (Ex): When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add a +2 bonus to the creature's Hit Dice total.

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

BEYOND THE VEIL

When the cylinders are spun, different runes are revealed. If the cylinders are rotated so that they display (in order, from left to right) the last three members of Storamere's line — Havastrene, Leashadram, and Storamere — a secret door to the true hoard opens.

The secret door on the wall opposite the cylinders can be found with a Search check of 25, but cannot be opened until the cylinders are in the right positions.

However, unless someone is searching for traps, careless characters will reveal the runes on the third cylinder that are a trap (see insert).

Explosive Runes (CR 3)

The runes are *explosive runes* and detonate when read, inflicting 6d6 points of damage on the reader (no save) and the same to anyone within 10 feet (Reflex saving throw DC 15 for half damage). This trap has a Search DC of 28 to find and a Disable Device DC 28.

Level Three

21. THE TRUE HOARD

This room, accessed only by the stairs, is all of the Third Level and actually takes up a good portion of the level below as well. The steps lead up to a narrow area next to what appears to be a wall of liquid corrosive, like the outside walls of the palace. However, this is different, for this is actually just a huge pool of acid. In the middle of the pool lies a bubble of fresh air, inside which Storamere keeps his real horde.

If the characters found *Leashadram's statue* in Area 10 and learned the command word in Area 19 ("Leashadram"), they can form a ten-foot by ten-foot passage through the acid to the hoard bubble. A magically created iron platform forms a floor in the path.

Without the statue, if the PCs seek the hoard they will have to *teleport*, use *dimension door*, or swim through the acid. Swimming through the acid is just like swimming through water except that the character sustains 10d6 acid damage per round and has only one foot of visibility.

Of course, if Storamere has not yet been destroyed, this is where he makes his final stand, using the acid to his advantage. He can not only swim effortlessly through the acid, he can also see through it with perfect clarity.

If the PCs enter the acid, he goes after one character with all of his attacks (with reach) and then pulls back five feet, well out of the character's limit of vision. If the character manages to follow him and make an attack, he makes only a single attack and then uses a move action to get completely away from the character and within reach of a different, probably unsuspecting character to attack the following round.

If the PCs manage to create the passage through the acid and Storamere is defending, he swims close to the tunnel and attacks (probably with surprise) through the acid into the tunnel.

In either event, it is a DC 20 Spot check to see Storamere's black form in the acid beyond the normal one-foot limit to visual range. A new check is required every round, but if successful, the dragon can be targeted with spells and attacks with 50% miss chance and the character cannot be attacked with surprise. Failure means that the character in question has no idea where Storamere is, and if attacked by the dragon loses his Dexterity bonus to AC.

The hoard floats on a magical circular platform of iron 10 feet across, which disappears if taken from the palace. The treasure consists of the following:

- A locked chest with 1,238 gp (Open Locks DC 30 to open, the key is lost).
- A locked chest with 2,457 sp (Open Locks DC 30 to open, the key is in Area 11).
- A locked chest with 2,849 sp (Open Locks DC 30 to open, the key is lost). This chest has a false bottom (Search DC 25 to find) that holds an ivory and wood box (worth 50 gp) that contains ten 200 gp agates. The false bottom has a false bottom (Search DC 25 to find) hiding a small wooden velvet-lined box that holds a *ring of chameleon power*.
- A two-foot-tall ebony statue of a halfling woman with a vase (worth 250 gp)
- A jeweled longsword (worth 400 gp) in a jeweled scabbard (worth 200 gp)
- A *candle of truth* in a tall brass candleholder (worth 30 gp)
- A small red wooden box with a necklace of gold and emeralds (worth 1,300 gp)

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- A *staff of healing* (24 charges) leaning against one of the chests
- A *+1 greatsword of wounding* with a silver-studded strap and harness to wear on one's back (worth 120 gp)
- A scroll tube of ivory (worth 50 gp) that holds not only an arcane scroll of *acid fog* but a wooden *wand of shatter* (19 charges).

A dangerous but crafty strategy the PCs might take is to bust through the walls surrounding this room on Level Two and drain the acid from the chamber. This can work, but it will destroy almost everything on Level Two, and eventually Level One. If a hole is made in Area 16, for example, the acid fills that room destroying its contents (the acid ignores the magical barrier)

until it eats through the doors and moves into Areas 15 and 17. The outer walls cannot be “breached” in any way, and the inner walls are immune to acid, so the acid burns through the doors and eventually reaches the stairs, burning its way through the Second Level and eventually out the main doors. Depending on the size of the hole made by the PCs, this process will probably take about six hours. If they open the doors, it takes only about an hour. Characters caught in the deluge suffer damage as though they were immersed in acid, but what if they were to leave the palace and convince Udalaag (who is immune to acid) to do it for them, with his burrowing claws ...

Of course, Storamere is enraged at this destruction and attacks the PCs immediately if this happens, wherever they are. He attempts to kill them as



quickly as he can and then do something to plug the hole — even if it means using one or more of the acid-immune half-dragons to do it.

If Area 21 is completely drained, the iron platform still floats in the room, 25 feet off the floor. *Leashadram's statue* and the command word will still create a safe bridge to the platform as well.

AFTERMATH

If Storamere is permanently laid to rest, any surviving half-dragons — except for the dragon crawlers — leave the palace to attempt to make lives for themselves elsewhere.

The people of Iversham are of course delighted to learn that the menace of the black dragon is ended.

STORAMERE IN HIS PALACE

Large Undead Dragon (Water, Ethereal)

CR 12; SZ L (undead dragon); HD 19d12+114, hp 237; Init +1 (+1 Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.; AC 28 (+1 Dex, -1 size, +18 natural); Atk melee +28 (2d6+10 plus special*, bite), melee +23 (1d8+5 plus special*, two claws), melee +23 (1d6+5 plus special*, two wings), melee +23 (1d8+15 plus special*, tail slap); Face 5 ft. x 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Breath Weapon, Corrupt Water, Corrupting Gaze, Frightful Presence, Spells, Withering Touch; SQ Black Dragon Immunities, Blindsight, Damage Reduction 5/+1, Darkness, Darkvision 60 ft., Keen Senses, Low-light Vision, Manifestation, Rejuvenation, Spell Resistance 18, Telekinesis, Turn Immunity, Water Breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +12; Str 30, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 15

*Each attack Storamere makes on the Ethereal Plane does normal damage, but also inflicts one point of temporary Strength and one point of temporary Constitution damage; see Storamere's Withering Touch supernatural ability.

Skills: Concentration +26, Hide +26, Intimidate +23, Listen +28, Knowledge (history) +21, Search +30, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +21, Spot +28

Feats: Hover, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Cleave, Snatch

Black Dragon Immunities (Ex): Black dragons are immune to *sleep*, acid, and paralysis.

Blindsight (Ex): Storamere can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibrations and other environmental clues); this dragon's range is 180 feet.

Breath Weapon (Su): Line of acid, 80 feet long, every 1d4 rounds; damage 12d4, Reflex half DC 25.

Corrupt Water (Sp): Once per day Storamere can stagnate 10 cubic feet of water, making it become still, foul, and unable to support animal life. This ability automatically spoils unattended, nonmagical liquids containing water. Magic items (such as potions) and items in a character's possession must succeed at a Will save (DC 23) or become fouled. Magic items get a Will save bonus of 2 + 1/2 caster level, while an item attended by a character gets the character's bonus.

Corrupting Gaze (Su): Storamere can blast living beings with his glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 23) or suffer 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of permanent Charisma score drain.

Darkness (Sp): Storamere can cast *darkness* up to three times per day at a radius of 60 ft.

Darkvision (Ex): Dragons can see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 ft. Darkvision is black and white only.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Storamere can unsettle foes with his mere presence. This ability takes effect automatically (radius 180 ft.) whenever Storamere attacks, charges, or flies overhead. A potentially affected creature (one with less than 19 HD) that succeeds at a Will save (DC 23) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for one day. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with more than 5 HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds.

CHAPTER FIVE: STORAMERE'S PALACE

Finding out that Storamere was a ghost is going to be confusing for most of the townsfolk, although Tae Lorenorth, Strubben Seim, or Unnis Mavin would all be interested to hear about the details of the dragon, the palace, and the Order of St. Chausle. Mayor Mavin offers the PCs 1,000 gp in reward, but it is clear (and if it's not, she makes it clear) that the amount is the entire town treasury.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

GMs who want to have direct links to further adventures can do so in an interesting way by simply placing other bridges that lead from Storamere's palace to other "half-bridges" located elsewhere. These are places that Storamere and his father Leashadram had access to, but could be in entirely different lands, on different continents, or on completely different worlds. Perhaps Leashadram himself is in one of these places.

Keen Senses (Ex): Storamere can see four times as well humans in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. He also has Low-light Vision, and Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Low-light Vision: Characters with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

Manifestation (Su): Manifestation allows the ethereal Storamere to appear on the Material Plane as an incorporeal creature, as he did earlier in this adventure. Storamere will not use this ability while the characters are in his palace, unless they somehow return to the Material Plane.

Ethereal (Su): While on the Ethereal Plane, a creature is called ethereal. An ethereal creature interacts with other ethereal creatures and objects the way material creatures interact with material creatures and objects. When a spellcasting ghost is on the Ethereal Plane, its spells work normally against ethereal targets.

Rejuvenation (Su): A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts in 2d4 days with a successful level check (1d20 + 19 in Storamere's case) against DC 16. The only way to get rid of a ghost for sure is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. For Storamere, being destroyed in his palace would be enough to set him to rest permanently ... he intends his final confrontation with the characters to be in Area 21 with his true hoard.

Telekinesis (Su): Storamere can use *telekinesis* once per round as a free action, as cast by a 19th-level sorcerer.

Turn Immunity (Ex): Storamere cannot be turned in his palace.

Undead: Undead are immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromantic effects, and they ignore mind-influencing effects. Undead are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. An undead spellcaster uses its Charisma modifier when making Concentration checks.

Negative energy (such as an *inflict wounds* spell) can heal undead creatures. When reduced to 0 hit points or less, an undead creature is immediately destroyed. Undead cannot be raised. Resurrection can affect them, but since undead creatures usually are unwilling to return to life, these attempts generally fail.

While on the Ethereal Plane, Storamere does have a Constitution score, and is therefore no longer immune to any effect requiring a Fortitude save.

Withering Touch (Su): When Storamere hits a living target with this unique incorporeal attack he deals one point of temporary Strength score damage and one point of temporary Constitution score damage. In his palace, Storamere inflicts damage as if he were a normal dragon in addition to the withering effect.

Spells: (6/6) Treat Storamere as a level 3 sorcerer. Storamere knows the following spells:

0 Level — *detect magic*, *flare*, *mending*, *open/close*, *read magic*

1st Level — *expeditious retreat*, *shield*, *true strike*

Experience Chart

The experience point awards below are calculated for characters of 9th level. Potentially, they will gain 69,132 experience points as a group, if they encounter everything. Thus, if there are four characters, each receives 17,410 XP — enough to take them well into 10th level. In fact, if such characters stop in the middle of exploring the palace, retreat and rest, you may wish to award experience points to see if anyone gains a level. This is a well-deserved reward, since so many of the encounters are challenges above 9th level.

It is indeed possible to defeat Storamere at least three different times over the course of the adventure. PCs should be awarded the experience points for each time. For example, they could destroy Storamere's ghost in the swamp, and then come to his palace and make him retreat from the false hoard in Area 3, but Storamere could then go up to Area 21 where he recovers and waits in ambush with his true hoard. The PCs make it up to the top of the palace and fight the dragon again, defeating him for the third and final time. However, if the PCs defeat him in Area 3 and then immediately carry the battle to Area 21 before Storamere can has rested or gained back any hit points, it should be treated as a single encounter and a single defeat of the dragon (assuming the PCs win).

Encounter	CR/EL	Experience Points
Storamere in the Swamp ¹	CR 12	8,100 XP
Gaulmeth ²	CR 10	4,050 XP
Black Pudding & 2 Green Slimes	EL 9	2,700 XP
Collapsing Tower Roof	CR 2	225 XP
Invisible Stalker ³	CR 7	1,350 XP
Derim & Tellifar	EL 13	10,800 XP
Manticore & Constrictor Guardians	EL 9	2,700 XP
Empty Fire Trapped Chest in Area 3	CR 4	506 XP
Storamere at the False Hoard ⁴	CR 12	8,100 XP
Verrit the Vampire	CR 9	2,700 XP
5 Dragon Crawlers in Area 8	EL 10	5,400 XP
Gaulmeth's Chest in Area 10	CR 3	338 XP
Yellow Mold in Storeroom	CR 6	900 XP
Venenum Erratus in Lab	CR 2	225 XP
3 Dragon Crawlers in Area 13	EL 9	2,700 XP
Wall of Will in Area 14	CR 5	675 XP
Wall of Will in Area 16	CR 5	675 XP
Udalaag ⁵	CR 9	2,700 XP
Dark Elf Spectre	CR 7	1,350 XP
Fire Trapped Books in Library ⁶	CR 4 each	506 XP each
Explosive Runes in Area 20	CR 3	338 XP
Storamere in the True Hoard ⁷	CR 12	8,100 XP

¹ Points awarded for destroying Storamere, even though he'll come back later.

² Points awarded for making Gaulmeth flee.

³ Points awarded for destroying the stalker before it reports to Storamere.

⁴ Points awarded for making Storamere retreat; award a +10% experience point bonus for the environmental conditions.

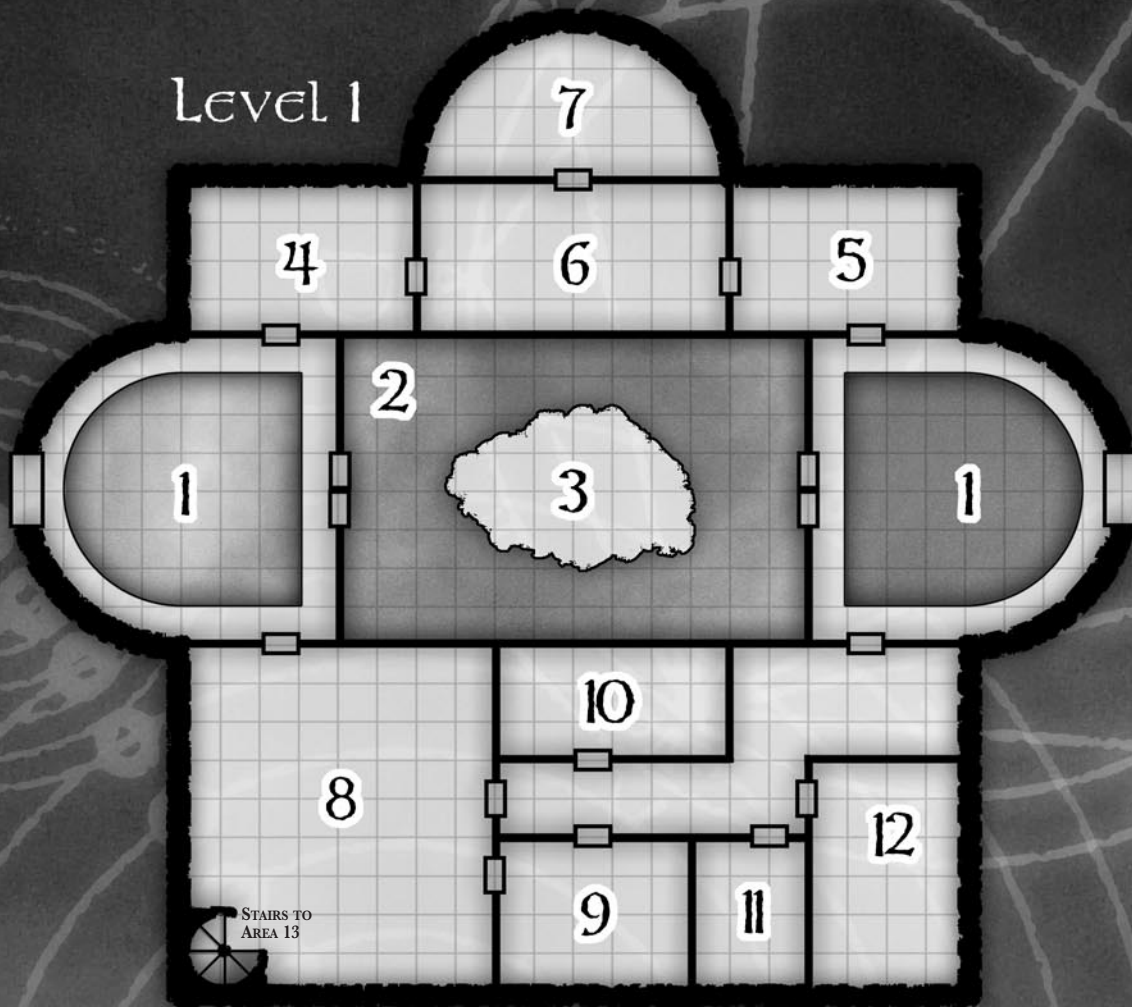
⁵ Allying with him earns the experience award as well as killing him.

⁶ Figure a minimum EL of 4, even if none are encountered.

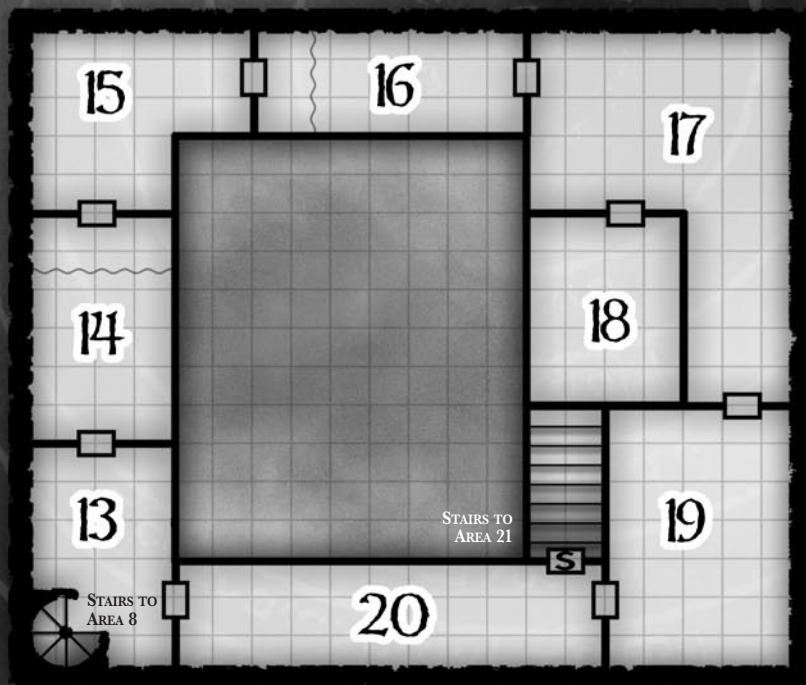
⁷ Points awarded for destroying Storamere, which finally puts him to rest; award a +30% experience point bonus for the environmental conditions.

Map of STORAMERE'S PALACE

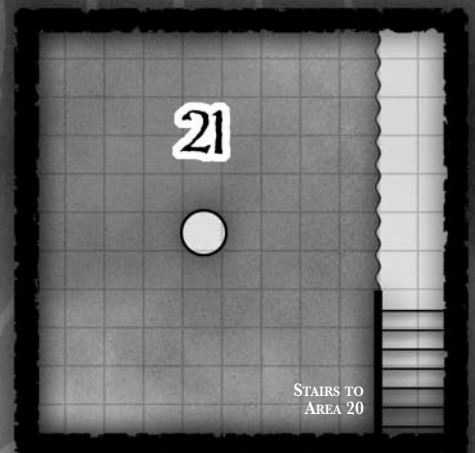
Level 1



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ONE SQUARE = 10 FEET

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